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Fate and fiction: Tragedy and the American Henry James

McDonald, William Henry, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1991

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FATE AND FICTION: TRAGEDY AND THE AMERICAN HENRY JAMES

by

W. Henry McDonald

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1991

1991

HENRY MCDONALD

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Feb. 25, 1991
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Abstract

FATE AND FICTION: TRAGEDY AND THE AMERICAN HENRY JAMES

by

W. Henry McDonald

Adviser: Professor Morris Dickstein

This study draws on the thought of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein to analyze Henry James's late style as seen in such works as The Golden Bowl (1904) and The Wings of the Dove (1902). The analysis has three facets: interpretive, narratological, and philosophical. Interpretively, the study argues that James's late novels are "tragedies" in a distinct and definable sense. First, I compare the structure of James's late novels to that of some of Shakespeare's tragedies, pointing out both the continuities and discontinuities. Secondly, I draw on the insights of Americanist and Shakespearian New Historians to place Jamesian tragedy within a social, cultural, and political context, just as Shakespearian tragedy has been placed in such a context. Narratologically, the study employs the methods developed by structuralists and post-structuralists to analyze the components of Jamesian narrative discourse. The analysis shows that James used not just tragedy but the traditional fairy tale to create a highly stable metonymic

plot structure or histoire that would not only contain and delimit the consciousness embodied in his metaphorical narrative discourse but also give it a controlled and disciplined freedom to expansively pursue its own elaborate, continuous, and self-generating train of associations. Such analysis concludes that James subverts in many ways the techniques of traditional and even modernistic narrative discourse. Philosophically, the study argues that the development of the novel as a genre rests in part on an essentialist concept of the nature of self-identity that finds its counterpart in the works of Hume and Kant and its logical antithesis in those of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein. Jamesian tragedy subverts not only the techniques of much novelistic discourse, but the essentialism that is its philosophical basis. This view is at odds with the widespread notion that James's late works belong thematically and narratively within the organicist and romanticist tradition of Emerson and Coleridge.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction. The Religion of Doing: James, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein. 1-56

Chapter I. The Elements of James's Late Style: Tragic, Narratoglogical, and Philosophic. 57-111

Chapter II. Jamesian Tragedy: "The Terrible Law of the Artist" 112-69

Chapter III. Artistic Self-Representation: James, Hawthorne, and The Lesson of Gabriel Nash (The Tragic Muse, The Europeans, and The Portrait of a Lady). 170-219

Chapter IV. The Value of Lying and the Faith of Governesses (The Liar and The Turn of the Screw). 220-72

Chapter V. Frustrated Fairy Tales: Epistemology and Nihilism (In the Cage, The Aspern Papers, Tales of the Literary Life, and The Sacred Fount). 273-325

Chapter VI. James's Late Narrative Style: The First Paragraph of The Ambassadors. 326-77

Chapter VII. Beyond Good and Evil: The Pathos of Distance (The Wings of the Dove) 378-436

Chapter VIII. The Redemption of the Past: Into the Heart of Consciousness (The Golden Bowl and The American Scene). 437-97

Works Cited 498

Introduction

The Religion of Doing: James, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein

Are James's late works really "novels"? Or does such fiction as The Wings of the Dove (1902) and The Golden Bowl (1904) stretch the limits of the genre to its breaking point? Those who would answer no to the latter question tend to emphasize James's affinities with writers like Thackeray, George Eliot, and Trollope, placing stress on his role in fashioning the tradition of the "well-made" novel and viewing his late narrative techniques less as radically experimental than as stylistically eccentric. Such readers see James as a Victorian who wished to preserve the status quo, was socially and politically unmotivated and -- many critics over the years have pronounced-- was emotionally and sexually repressed.

By contrast, readers who would answer yes to the latter question stress the complex and experimental nature of James's narrative techniques and point up his affinities with romantics and modernists, including Emerson, Coleridge, William James, Flaubert, Proust, Joyce, and Woolf. It is the association of James with such writers that has determined, at least partly, the dominant critical perceptions of him since the early 1940s, when New

Criticism became a major force in the English departments of American universities. (1) New Critics influenced by authors like Eliot and Pound intimated that James not only tried to revise the traditional form of the novel, but that he foresaw the spiritual crisis which awaited the 20th century.

Such a perspective has become increasingly plausible as critical examination of James's enormous -- and enormously varied -- oeuvre has revealed how far, in many ways, he was "ahead of his time." But that he was a romanticist precursor of modernism, as critics have often maintained, seems to me quite a different matter. Terms like "modernism" and "romanticism," of course, are notoriously difficult to pin down. Nonetheless, some light may be shed on them by considering the following famous passage from Joyce's Ulysses:

> -- History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.
>
> From the playfield the boys raised a shout. A whirring whistle: goal. What if that nightmare gave you a back kick?
>
> -- The ways of the Creator are not our ways, Mr Deasy said. All human history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God.
>
> Stephen jerked this thumb towards the window, saying:
>
> -- This is God.
>
> Hooray! Ay! Whrrwhee!
>
> -- What? Mr Deasy asked.
>
> -- A shout in the street, Stephen answered, shrugging his shoulders. (28)

This passage reflects several of the main concerns of modernists: (1) their disillusionment with history, society, and culture; (2) their revolt against religious dogma; and (3) the extraordinary value they invested in subjective experience, as seen in Stephen's equation of "God" with his hearing a shout in the street (it is the phenomenology of Stephen's experience, the value given to it as a subjective event, more than the shout itself, that the passage focuses attention on).

James, I believe, was non- or even anti-modernistic in all three respects. The religious or atheistic angst of Stephen Dedalus was not a feeling that would have preoccupied James. The "death of God" was for him much as it was for Zarathustra in Nietzsche's parable: old news (Thus 124; cf. Gay 180, 280). What did concern James was precisely the issue that most modernists, and Joyce in particular, were relatively unconcerned with: the moral status of the subject in the modern world.

It is true that James and Nietzsche evoked, in a manner we have come to associate with some of the poetry of Yeats and Eliot, apolcalyptic visions of "The wild waters...of our terrible time....this age of sound and fury....the mad, ghastly climax," in James's words (In the Cage 299; "Shakespeare" 1215; Complete Notebooks 126), and of "great

wars to come," in Nietzsche's words. But neither shared in the general sense of disillusionment -- the moral relativism, subjectivism, and skepticism -- that characterizes much of the fiction and poetry of the early 20th century. James and Nietzsche certainly empa-thized with the intense personalizing of values seen in 19th-century romantic poetry. And no doubt both would also have empathized with a related, if more grim and despairing, propensity in later poetry and fiction. Nonetheless, the novelist and the philosopher, each of whom devoted himself in different ways to cultural and social commentary, judged that such personalizing or privatizing was at bottom a delusion which masked the collapse of a coherent moral world order.

In this sense, James and Nietzsche were possessed of the same radical antipathy to subjectivism and empiricism which caused Wittgenstein to despise psychology, to argue against the existence of "private language," and to maintain that the modern world was in need of a new way of thinking. (2) Wittgenstein's new way of thinking and James's late style treated consciousness (and feeling) not merely as private, internal processes which took place wholly "within" autonomous individuals. On the contrary, all three, and James in particular, argued strenuously

against any artistic endeavor which pretended to "go behind" the character's behavior to reveal some supposedly "internalized" dimension of her or his self ("Prefaces" 1064, 1106, 1211, 1320). Rather, Wittgenstein, James, and Nietzsche viewed psychology as public; like any other form of experience, thought and feeling were shaped by, and could potentially exert force on, society, culture, and history. "Experience," said James, "is our apprehension and our measure of what happens to us as social creatures" ("Prefaces" 1091). Similarly, the artistic act -- and James repeatedly spoke of his own writing as an "act" in the theatrical, social, and spiritual senses of the word -- was "conduct minutely and publicly attested" in which "the 'private' character...quite insists on dropping out" ("Prefaces" 1039).

It follows that for James art, far from being divorced from social and political concerns, cannot avoid being deeply engaged with them, a view that James eloquently propounds in the last part of the preface to The Princess Casamassima, where he maintains that "the artistic consciousness" is a social and political consciousness (1100-02). Which in turn implies that James's own artistic practices and purposes were not "romantic" in the sense which he characterized the term:

> The only general attribute of projected romance that...fits all cases, is the fact of the kind of experience with which it deals -- experience liberated, so to speak; experience disengaged, disembroiled, diencumbered, exempt from the conditions that we usually know to attach to it...and operating in a medium which relieves it...of the inconvenience of a related, a measurable state, a state subject to all our vulgar communities ["vulgar" clearly has a positive connotation in this, as in many other, passages of James]....[romance deals with] experience blooming in a medium "cut off" and shut up to itself. ("Prefaces" 1064, 1069; cf. 1259)

James offers this definition of romance in the context of a self-critique of his own early novel, The American (1877), which he argues suffers greatly from such romanticism. Elsewhere in the New York Prefaces (1907-9) -- in fact, beginning on their first page -- James characterizes his artistic ideals in ways that show such ideals, by his own terms, to be radically "non-romantic":

> ..."developments"....are the very essence of the novelist's process, and it is by their aid, fundamentally, that his idea takes form and lives...They are the very condition of interest, which languishes and drops without them; the painter's subject consisting ever, obviously, of the related state, to each other, of certain figures and things.... Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so. He is in the perpetual predicament that the continuity of things is the whole matter, for him, of comedy and tragedy; that this continuity is never, by the space of an instant or an inch, broken....(1040-41)

For James, "the sneaking attempt to substitute the American romantic for the American real" results only in

works that are "artless" (1204). In his discussion of The Turn of the Screw, he virtually apologizes for his adoption of a "romantic" form: "...briefly, I cast my lot with pure romance, the appearances conforming to the true type being so little romantic" (1187). None of this means that James did not see romance as an important experiential source of fiction, as he so uses the romantic setting of Venice in The Aspern Papers (1888). Rather, it means that he believed the artist's "use" of such sources -- as James himself puts it (1175) -- must be non-romantic.

But to say this is to say that for James the artistic act was necessarily a social and moral one: "To deny the relevancy of subject-matter and the importance of the moral quality of a work of art strikes us as, in two words, ineffably puerile" ("Baudelaire" 157). Moreover, it is not just the characters in a story, but the author portraying those characters, who is socially and morally "related": "...a living work of art, however limited, pretends always...to some good faith of community, however indirect, with its period and place" ("Prefaces" 1221). James even speaks of characters'

> ...needful communities with our [i.e., the artist's] own precious liability to fall into traps and be bewildered. It seems probable that if we were never bewildered there would never be a story to tell about us; we should partake of the superior nature of the

all-knowing immortals....of bored Olympians. (1090)

The point is that the good artist does not so partake which is why the "us" in "a story to tell about us" applies both to the fictional character and the "creator" of that character.

For James, the artist did not simply represent reality; he made of himself a tool to exert force on it, selecting from and molding his experience. The artist's "act" was simultaneously a performance put on by his imagination -- a performance in the sense that the nature of his representations was inseparable from what his imagination had accumulated, from what he had learned and experienced. "Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has been conscious" ("Prefaces" 1075). Feeling and thinking, James said repeatedly, are doing: "What a man thinks and what he feels are the history and character of what he does." (3) As we will see later, this viewpoint is connected to some of James's cherished beliefs about art. Those beliefs, which help to give a sense of what he was aiming for in his late style, include the notions that the form of a literary work is its substance; that the metaphorical descriptions of consciousness and feeling are consciousness and feeling; and that meaning and value in art -- and life -- have no referential basis (which is why

James doesn't explain or name Milly's illness in The Wings of the Dove, the Newsome's business in The Ambassadors, "what Maisie knew" in the novel of the same title, "the figure in the carpet" in the story of the same title, "what Adam knows" in The Golden Bowl, etc.) Odd as it may sound to those readers of James who have been frustrated and irritated by what they perceive as the obscurity of his late style, that style was developed precisely to avoid obscurity -- to be clear, that is, not about "the facts" or even "events" of the plot, but about the emotions and thoughts which constitute the subject:

> With the preference I have noted for the "neat" evocation [of the subject of the tale] -- the image, of any sort, with fewest attendant vaguenesses and cheapnesses, fewest loose ends dangling and fewest features missing, the image kept in fine the most susceptible of intensity...I feel myself show them best by showing almost exclusively [my emphasis] the way they are felt....We want it clear, goodness knows, but we also want it thick, and we get the thickness in the human consciousness that entertains and records, that amplifies and interprets it. (1258-59)

James's notion of art has important similarities (for all its obvious differences) to the ancient Greek view that art is an arete, a craft or form of doing. James was indeed old-fashioned enough to insist on the importance of a shared system of values, of what Wittgenstein called a "form of life," that would constitute the milieu in which any "language game" could be played. At the same time,

however, he was also, like Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, radical enough to recognize that the old system must be "revalued," to use Nietzsche's expression, or "re-envisioned" "redreamed," and "reconstituted," to use James's ("Prefaces" 1252, 1337). James developed his late style for much the same purpose that Wittgenstein developed his new way of thinking: to serve as a medium for such re-envisioning. As he wrote in his Complete Notebooks, "To live in the world of creation...to get into it and stay in it -- to frequent and haunt it -- to think intently and fruitfully...." (62) James, like Wittgenstein and Nietzsche, urged not a different set of beliefs or ideas, but what he called in a late essay a form of "action of the mind" ("Is There Life" 231), that would enable people to think, feel, and see differently.

It is just such "action of the mind" that the structure of James's late novels dramatizes or stages. That structure, I will argue throughout this work (drawing on Aristotle and especially Nietzsche), is tragic. By terming James's late novels "tragic," I mean in part that their protagonists undergo cathartic experiences which make them aware that they do not control their own fates -- make them aware, as Orestes, Oedipus, Hamlet, and Lear are made aware, that truth, wisdom, freedom, and morality are not

centered in the self. Crucial to tragedy is a critique of the dominant concept of identity held by the society and culture of the artist. The importance of tragedy to James's late fiction is signalled by James himself in his frequent use of the term. (4) Much more significant than the terminology, however, is the substance behind it -- the consistently "tragic" way in which James conceives of both his own characters and those of other novelists. For example, in the New York Prefaces, which were written between 1907 and 1909 during James's late period, he speaks of Roderick Hudson's "large capacity for ruin" (1047), of the fateful "traps" set for Christopher Newman and Milly Theale in The American and The Wings of the Dove (1056, 1300; cf. 1090), of Isabel Archer "affronting her destiny" (1076), of Strether in The Ambassadors facing his "doom" (1093), and of Hyacinth Robinson in The Princess Casamassima and Maggie Verver (on the last page of The Golden Bowl) feeling evoking "pity and dread" (1097). (The latter is Aristotle's formulation of the emotions associated with tragedy.) Elsewhere, James praises George Eliot and Anthony Trollope for the genuinely "tragic" nature of some of their characters ("George Eliot" 960, 963; "Anthony Trollope" 1351).

James's tragic perspective permeated almost everything

he wrote, from his critical comments about characters to his construction of the plots of his tales. It was a tragic perspective which dictated that James see the crucial feature of any story as the portrayal of the protagonist's state of "bewilderment," a word which plays a very important role in James's vocabulary because it captures the basic confusion, despair, and frustration which Jamesian tragedy enacts: "The whole thing comes to depend thus on the quality of bewilderment characteristic of one's creature ("Prefaces" 1092). James's tragic perspective dictated that he end many of his novels, early and late, by inverting the Victorian comic formula of a happy marriage and substituting instead "the formula" of disillusionment, isolation, and sometimes death. "'Frustration's only life,'" says the autobiographical hero of "The Middle Years" (Tales 276). As for comedy, James applies to it the same term we saw above he applied to romance: "artless" ("Prefaces" 1309). Comedy is only artless, however, when it comes to overwhelm what is really essential to any story -- the tragic:

> [Comic characters] have their subordinate, comparative, illustrative human value -- that appeal of the witless which is often so penetrating....no "story" is possible without its fools -- as most of the fine painters of life, Shakespeare, Cervantes and Balzac, Fielding, Scott, Thackerary, Dickens, George Meredith, George Eliot, Jane Austen, have abundantly felt. At the

> same time I confess I never see the leading interest of any human hazard but in a consciousness (on the part of the moved and moving creature) subject to fine intensification and wide enlargement. (1092)

It is the central purpose of Jamesian tragedy, as we will see, to enact such intensification and enlargement. For James, comedy and even romance are far less capable of showing their protagonists undergoing a radical transformation in character and identity than is tragedy. The point here is not that the "Masterpiece Theater" view of James as a comic novelist of manners, as well as the arguments of such fine critics as Richard Poirier (in his The Comic Sense of Henry James), are utterly without foundation. Certainly a large number of James's works, especially his early ones (like Shakespeare's), are predominately comic in nature. Moreover, even James's "tragedies" contain comic characters, such as The Golden Bowl's Fanny Assingham and The Portrait of a Lady's Henrietta Stackpole, who are vitally important to their respective novels. Nonetheless, it is clear that by James's late period, and probably long before, he saw "the leading interest of any human hazard" in his tragic, not in his comic characters. Indeed, one might note that the phrase, "human hazard," read within context, is used virtually as a synonym for "story" or "tale." I believe

that this is yet another indication of how utterly saturated and consumed by the literary tradition of tragedy James was.

Informing James's tragic perspective was a propensity -- instinctive during his early period and highly developed during his late -- to focus on his characters' capacity to experience self-consciously the disintegration of their sense of identity, their capacity to be the dramatic locus of the uprooting of any aesthetic (Chapter III), moral (Chapter IV), or epistemological (Chapter V) foundation for the self. But in order to function as such a locus, the characters must be, as in traditional tragedy, in some sense "superior." For example, James says of George Eliot's Gwendolyn Harleth, a character who strongly influenced the creation of James's own Isabel Archer: "...she is extremely intelligent and clever, and therefore tragedy <u>can</u> have a hold upon her." James then adds, in a remark that tells volumes about <u>how</u> he conceived of tragedy: "Her conscience doesn't make the tragedy....It is the tragedy that makes her conscience..." ("George Eliot" 989)

The tragic deracination which James enacts in his novels simultaneously establishes a new, albeit still tenuous and unsupported, basis for the self. Such deracination is ultimately affirmative only because of the

representative and "exemplary" nature of James's heroes, because of "the force of the characteristic" embodied in them ("Prefaces" 1202, 1338, 1441). To put this in another way, the deracination is constructive because the protagonists' identities are public, theatricalized, and "active," not private, interiorized, and "passive"; they have the power to engender or "make" meaning and value amid the frustration, bewilderment, and disintegration which they undergo. (5) "Everyone was a little some one else," the narrator of "The Great Good Place" (1900) says (In the Cage 313). Or, as James wrote to a friend during a time of grief:

> You are right in your consciousness that we are all echoes and reverberations of the same....We help each other -- even unconsciously....we contribute to the sum of success, make it possible for others to live. Sorrow comes in great waves...but it rolls over us....It wears us, uses us, but we wear it and use it in return; and it is blind, whereas we after a manner see. (Letters, Lubbock II 101)

(2)

Viewed within the context of American literature, James's late style presupposes a concept of self and identity which owes little to the romantic tradition of Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, Twain, Hemingway, etc., and a great deal to the more tragic tradition of Hawthorne, Melville, Faulkner, Malamud, Flannery O'Connor, etc. The

reader should be aware, however, that the latter assertion goes against the critical consensus on James of the last few decades, a consensus which, besides seeing James as a precursor of 20th century fiction, grounds his work in Emersonian and Coleridgean idealism. For example, influential critics ranging from Quentin Anderson to Richard Brodhead have viewed The Golden Bowl as a "romance" indebted to Whitman. By contrast, I will argue that The Golden Bowl, whose last sentence, as I have noted, contains Aristotle's formulation of the emotions evoked by tragedy, makes use of elements of romance and the fairy tale only to heighten its strikingly tragic structure.

Although my argument is aimed principally at the general reader and only secondarily at the Jamesian specialist, it cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of the scholarship on James, for it has been strongly influenced by, even when in radical disagreement with, such scholarship. For this reason, I think it will be useful to say a few words about how the above-mentioned critical consensus was arrived at, as well as, more basically, to explain what I mean by asserting that there exists such a consensus. It is no small part of the enormous influence the Emersonian view of James has on critics to this day that it has gone largely undiscussed as

a consensus -- not to say, as a dogma.

The acceptance of James's late works into the American literary canon can be dated with relative precision as occurring during the years following closely the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939. Prior to this time, the more influential critics of the day, such as Van Wyck Brooks, tended to dismiss the later James as an elitist and aesthete whose late work betrayed American literary ideals, was without social or political relevance, and was overly preoccupied with technique. Of course, during the same time period, there was a sizeable minority of critics, some renowned, who held James's late works in great esteem. (6) Yet, paradoxically, this minority did little to challenge mainstream views of James as a detached and passive aesthete. On the contrary, to a large extent they reinforced them, if sometimes unintentionally. For example, Percy Lubbock, author of The Craft of Fiction (one of the more influential books ever written on James) wrote in 1920 that the foundation of James's existence was his belief "in the sanctity and sufficiency of the life of art...[James] did not scruple to claim that except through art there is no life that can be known or appraised....His life as a creator of art, alone with his work, was one of unclouded happiness" (xv-xvi). (Today, such a characterization is

recognized to be fantastic: James repeatedly denounced aestheticism in his critical essays [e.g., "Baudelaire" 157] and ridiculed it in his fiction [e.g., "The Author of Beltraffio"]. His formulation in a letter to H.G Wells, "art makes life" [Portable 485], stresses art's relevance to and involvement with all human endeavors; aestheticism does just the opposite.)

With the passage of the Hitler-Stalin pact, the relative positions of James's detractors and champions were reversed. The socialist, prescriptive criticism practiced by many of the former was undermined and the latter were made free to continue Lubbock's project of examining James's works as hermetically aesthetic and technical representations of reality. The results were fairly predictable. Although James came less to be charac-terized as a champion of art for art's sake, pretty much the same themes were repeated endlessly: the passivity, detachment, and sense of his characters leading an "unlived life"; the use of symbolist techniques to represent subjective experience or "the inner life"; and the notion that James conceived of the artist in Flaubertian and Joycean terms as a God, invisible and all-powerful, although James had explicitly repudiated the former conception in his essays on Flaubert and Maupassant. (7)

By the late 50s and 60s, critics began to show signs of dissatisfaction with the New Critics' hermetic approach to James, an approach that did not, after all, answer the charge that James was fundamentally unAmerican, a traitor to American literary ideals, but to some extent reinforced it in the manner of James's defenders in the 20s and 30s. Nonetheless, the situation was radically different after the early 40s in that James was now given a revered status by mainstream critical opinion. Jamesians accordingly felt a much stronger need to bring James into the American literary orbit and justify his canonization on something other than purely aesthetic and technical grounds.

The result was the critical consensus referred to above that James is best viewed as a part of the tradition of Emerson, Whitman, Coleridge, and others. That consensus, I believe, was prompted by the increased need created by New Criticism to see James as "American." This contention is supported by the facts that: (1) the establishment of the link with Emerson was pretty much simultaneous with the triumph of New Criticism and did not exist previously (8); and (2) such linkage was not only maintained but was perhaps reinforced during the 60s. (9) The latter point indicates that the longer James occupied the revered position given him by New Critics, the greater was the need

to assimilate him into the American tradition. In this sense, the title of Quentin Anderson's magnum opus, The American Henry James (1957) contending that The Ambassadors, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl were parts of one vast Swedengorgian allegory, makes explicit the motive which underlies the movement to read James from an Emersonian point of view (Emerson and James's father were strongly influenced by Swedenborg).

But why -- anyone who has read James's critical writings might be especially inclined to ask -- associate James with Emerson rather than with other American writers? In James's essays on Emerson (one of which concerns Carlyle as well), he recognizes the transcendentalist as an extremely important representative of a limited spectrum of American values and treats Emerson with courtesy and deference. But on almost every issue of importance to James, his tone when speaking of Emerson ranges from mocking to disdainful. Such issues include the "simplicity" of Emerson's morals, which, according to James, entailed an inability to believe in the reality of evil, an inability James contrasted with Hawthorne's sensitivity to human pain and suffering ("Emerson" 269); his indifference to fiction and the visual arts ("certain chords in Emerson did not vibrate at all" [269]); the monotony of his style together

with his failure to master "the art of composition" (262); his tendency to speak "of his friends too much as if they were disembodied spirits" (246); and his "detachment" and "narrowness," which produced a "paleness" and "thinness" of character such that "he was altogether passionless" (260) and had only "a kind of hearsay, uninformed acquaintance with" life (254). Of Emerson's "genius" and transcendentalism in general, James said:

> If it be his great distinction and his special sign that he had a more vivid conception of the moral life than any one else, it is probably not fanciful to say that he owed it in part to the limited way in which he saw our capacity for living illustrated....Nothing is more perceptible today than that [the transcendentalists'] criticism produced no fruit -- that it was little else than a very decent and innocent recreation -- a kind of Puritan carnival. (253, 267)

That James was highly critical of Emerson does not mean -- necessarily -- that he was not in some basic sense "like" him. Nor do I mean to deny in any blanket fashion such a contention. For if James was an "anti-Romantic," he was, like Nietzsche, a <u>romantic</u> anti-Romantic, as I will discuss later. Rather, my point is that James sharply objected to certain aspects of Emerson's perspective both explicitly and implicitly in his nonfiction and fiction. Those aspects might be called -- keeping in mind my characterization of tragedy as involving the subversion of a culture's dominant concept of identity -- "tragic." As

James put it in a passage of his 1879 critical biography, Hawthorne, the context of which is a contrast of Hawthorne and Emerson:

> He [Emerson] said "all that is clearly due to-day is not to lie," and a great many other things which it would be still easier to present in a ridiculous light....The doctrine of the supremacy of the individual to himself, of his originality and, as regards his own character, unique quality, must have had a great charm for pepole living in a society in which introspection, thanks to the want of other entertainment, played almost the part of a social resource. (382-3)

Written well within his "early period" (i.e., two years before publication of The Portrait of a Lady in 1881), James in this work is hardly fair to Emerson. Moreover, his tone is irritatingly condescending (a trait of many of his early critical essays). But fairness and condescension are not what are at issue here. What is at issue is that James held Emerson in relatively low regard because the latter tended to do what a large number of critics have maintained James "did": deify the individual and propound the infinity of the private mind ("The Divinity School Address" 875, 880, 882).

The issue here is certainly a tricky one and should not be dealt with simplistically. It must be recognized not merely that James was a romantic anti-Romantic, but that the romantic tradition, as exemplified in the works of

Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, Shelley, and, in a different way, Emerson, is permeated by "tragic" elements. Such elements, even given the way in which I characterize tragedy in Chapter II, are genuinely tragic. They include an acceptance that there is ultimately no "compensation," in this world or in heaven, for the sufferings of the individual; a realization that the individual's struggle to gain mastery over the forces of chaos is a futile one; and an emphasis on moments of tragic "recognition." (Romantic melancholy, incidentally, is not a feature of Jamesian or Nietzschean tragedy.) Yet even when such tragic elements are taken into account, there are few readers who would claim them dominant in the above-mentioned romantic authors. It is one of the crucial contentions of this work that for the later James, such tragic elements, as well as others to be discussed in detail later, are dominant. How well such a contention holds up can only be evaluated in the context of my readings of James's fiction in Chapters III-VIII.

In discussing James's essays on Emerson quoted above, certain critics have referred to the "balance" of "James's estimate" of Emerson, his "ultimate assent to Emersonian values" (Donadio 81), and his "ambivalent attitude to the Concord sage" (Buitenhuis 115). These judgments seem to me

implausible and can only be motivated by a fierce need, within the critical community, to read James as romantic. Yet they have been accepted by generations of critics and have led to readings in which James's fictional parodies of transcendentalism (e.g., in Washington Square, The Europeans, The American, The Bostonians, etc.) have often gone unrecognized or ignored, or in which the tragic development of many of James's heroes, a development that involves the rejection of Emersonian or at least romantic values, has been inverted as an acceptance of those values.

But beyond all this, if critics have wanted to "Americanize" James, why haven't they focused on the far more plausible choice, a writer whom James deeply admired, especially during his late period -- Hawthorne? For although essays or books asserting a James/Hawthorne connection have always been plentiful, they have been outnumbered since the 40s by studies relating James to Emerson. (10) More importantly, the "Hawthornian connection" has been invoked commonly to account for more or less limited aspects of James's writings -- their symbolism and residues of puritanism. The "Emersonian connection," on the other hand, is potentially all-encompassing, for it has seemed, to many critics, to provide the key to the problematic nature of James's late

techniques and themes. Perhaps that is why so many Hawthornian readings of James have simultaneously invoked the Emersonian tradition. (11)

Some perspective on these matters can be gained by observing that at least two of the early studies relating James to the Emersonian tradition -- Stuart P. Sherman's and Katherine Anne Porter's -- also characterized him as an aesthete in the tradition of Walter Pater. (12) The connection between Pater and Emerson, odd as it may sound to us today, seemed more plausible in the pre-40s period, at least within the context of Jamesian criticism. During this period, James's preoccupation with "the inner life" was explained as a form of aestheticism. As greater attention was given to his work by New Critics, however, James's moral concerns became impossible to ignore and the aesthetic explanation increasingly untenable. The need was felt to account for James's focus on consciousness in moral, not just in aesthetic terms. And what American writer could meet this need better than Emerson, who conceived of morality as <u>essentially</u> inward? Moreover, the views of Emerson and Pater were not so different as one might think. Emerson spoke derisively in "Experience" (1844) of the "unnecessary deal of doing" (959), words that may be contrasted rather pointedly with James's tendency in

the Prefaces to speak of great works of literature, as well as his own, as "ados" -- not to mention his artistic "religion of doing" discussed below. Emerson in general counseled an an ethic of passivity, counsel which new historicists have -- rightly, in my view -- made much of. (13) As for Pater, he maintained that literature is concerned with ultimate ends, not moral and political ones, stating that "the end of life is not action but contemplation -- being as distinct from doing" (qtd. in Tompkins, "Reader" 218).

The point is that the transition from a Pateresque to an Emersonian view of James was a fairly smooth one; both views rested on the assumption that James tried to represent in his fiction a glorified inner life opposed to a devalued outer one. Moreover, the Emersonian view of James fixed that assumption of James's inwardness far more solidly than the view of James as aesthete, in such a pragmatic country as the United States, could ever have done.

Here we see why Hawthorne was such an inadequate figure to serve as a means of "Americanizing" Henry James. Hawthorne's moral perspective was at far remove from the so-called "inwardness" of Henry James. The Unpardonable Sin of Ethan Brand, Roderick Elliston, Roger Chillingsworth, and countless other Hawthornian characters is their

elevation of the head over the heart, which is in turn the isolation of the self from the commmunity. Hawthorne was intensely distrustful of the inwardness which Emerson championed -- even viewing it as dangerous, hypocritical, and, in some circumstances, immoral. Indeed, from a late Jamesian perspective, Hawthorne's "romances," as he liked to call them, were far more "tragic" than much of the "realistic" literature of the second half of the 19th century -- including some of James's own early work (see Chapter III).

In sum, it was due to their assumption of James's inwardness that not Hawthorne but Emerson was chosen to redeem the later Henry James from the academic wasteland to which the New Critics had unintentionally consigned him -- to guide him, not back (for he had never really been allowed entrance), but into the American literary garden. Nonetheless, the success of this project of redemption has been dubious at best. It is true that James's works are widely accepted as Emersonian and Coleridgean in their preoccupation with subjectivity and narrative techniques organically structured by the faculty of imagination. But for most readers and critics, James's late works have been simply too contrary to so-called American culture to relate them to the Emersonian tradition's project of creating a

new and American form of literature. It would seem that James has been read mostly in just one sense of the term, "Emersonian" -- in the sense of valuing internal over external experience, not in the sense of reflecting a "determination to forge or shape a changing world, to create a new society, and to take his place in a community-in-the-making by joining in the process of making it" (ix).

These words are from Laurence Holland's The Expense of Vision (1964), a study to which I am greatly indebted. Holland emphasizes the applicability to James of one connotation of the term, "Emersonian" -- the connotation of social engagement. And he also criticizes, in his quiet way, the applicability to James of another -- the connotation of idealistically valuing inner over outer experience. (14)

Probably because of its superb scholarship and use of the method of close reading, The Expense of Vision is generally recognized among Jamesians as a "seminal work" and cited in just about everyone's bibliographies. For example, J.A. Ward, in his 1967 book, associates Holland's view of James with his own (x). I find little or no basis for such association and am in general struck by how minimal has been the impact of Holland's views on Jamesian

criticism since the publication of the first edition of his book more than 25 years ago. Not only are the major features of Holland's interpretation at odds with the dominant view of James, but Holland's main emphasis -- James's social, cultural, and, political engagement with America's future through his attempt to "reconstitute" the novel (xi, 225) -- is at best a minority view among critics.

In the chapters following this Introduction, I will develop further such a "minority view," as well as discuss recent and contemporary criticism on James, in an effort to make sense of James's late style. I will try, that is, to "figure out" what, in plain terms, James sought to accomplish by writing in such "a peculiar fashion." For this purpose, the categories of Victorianism, romanticism, modernism, and even post-modernism are inadequate. If critics have for so long clung to these categories -- have, since the forties, viewed James as a romanticist precursor of modernism -- it has been more out of a sense of ambivalence toward James's relation to the American literary tradition than the dominance of romantic or modernistic elements in James's late fiction. I should emphasize that I certainly do not mean to deny the existence of such elements; rather, I feel that they have

been greatly over-emphasized and that such over-emphasis has impeded full recognition of the tragic nature of James's late works. It is because critics have badly wanted to assimilate James to the American tradition but have never quite convinced themselves that he could be -- have always been influenced by the popular sentiment that there was something not quite "American" about James's works, especially those of the late period -- that the "romantic/modernist" compromise has been made. For as a "romantic," James could be linked to Emerson; as a "modernist," the Emersonian connection could be reasonably qualified without being broken (given both the similarities and differences between romantics and modernists).

By contrast, I feel that any such ambivalence should be thrown off and that James's work, including his late work, should be recognized as thoroughly "American." It should be recognized that in developing his late style -- in creating a narrative form radically "different" and (to this day) completely distinctive -- James was consciously or unconsciously being influenced by or operating under nationalistic expecta-tions that America would create a genuinely new and great form of literature. Certainly there are few major British writers of James's time (George Meredith being perhaps among them) who took anything like

the risks with their reading publics that James did in developing his late style. Moreover, if one asks whether there were any such American writers besides James, an obvious candidate comes to mind: Melville. For it was Melville who not only "tried to fail" as a popular author (because popularity was somehow degrading -- a sentiment James did not share). (15) He also succeeded in that effort to an extent which left even James far behind. In this sense, James belongs to the same literary and cultural currents that prompted Melville to write "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (1850), an essay which proclaims Hawthorne an "American Shakespeare." James would certainly have liked to be an American Shakespeare -- even more, during his late period, than he would have liked to be an "American Balzac." (16)

The "American Henry James" I speak of here is one very different from the "American Henry James" of Quentin Anderson and countless other critics. It is a tragic, at least in part anti-Emersonian, Henry James. What this means is that: (1) like Emerson and Hawthorne, James felt a compulsion to strive to realize a literary form of the American Dream -- to create a new kind of literature that would champion democratic individualism; and (2) like Hawthorne but <u>unlike</u> Emerson, James was possessed of a

critical capacity to subvert such individualism and project through tragedy a future for America that was at once continuous with the European past, and new and radical. In sum, James tried to "Americanize" the tradition of tragedy; he even refers to (a large) part of his corpus as "my comprehensive picture of bewildered Americanism" ("Prefaces" 1150) -- "bewildered" being, as we have seen, a word which James imbues with tragic connotations. It is because of Americans' bewilderment, innocence, lack of a sense of history and manners, etc., that they retain the capacity for tragic affirmation. Although James speaks of Americans in Europe as "almost incredibly unaware of life -- as the European order expressed life" ("Prefaces" 1198), and of young American women as needing to undergo a "sea-change," he also comments, referring particularly to the latter:

> Conscious of so few things in the world, these unprecedented creatures...were least of all conscious of deficiencies and dangers; so that, the grace of youth and innocence and freshness aiding, their negatives were converted and became in certain relations lively positives and values....[They testified] to a suffered and suffering state...working beauty and comedy and pathos into that compass...(1199)

The convergence of James's "American" and Shakespearian, tragic preoccupations, as well as his cherished view that language, through art, "makes" life and is an important

part of the creation of new forms of society and literature, all come together in the following passage. The passage alludes to Antony's "new heaven, new earth" line in the beginning of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra:

> A body of English people crossed the Atlantic and sat down in a new climate on a new soil, amid new circumstances. It was a new heaven and a new earth. They invented new institutions, they encountered different needs...they began to speak in a new voice. They went in for democracy, and that alone would affect -- it has affected -- the tone immensely. C'est bien le moins (do you follow?) that that tone should have had its range and that the language they brought over with them should have become different to express different things. ("Animated" 90)

(3)

The expatriated American novelist, who died a British citizen, (17) threw himself into the effort of Americanizing tragedy, of making a new language "to express different things," with an almost religious -- or rather, religously artistic -- zeal. His frequent references to himself in the New York Prefaces as "wasteful," "dishonourable," and subject to the experience of "loss" (i.e., in effectively transmuting life into art) mirror the way his tragic protagonists inevitably "waste" their lives and "lose" and "dishonour" themselves. (18) Indeed, James's epigrams, "Strangely fertilising, in the long run, does a wasted effort of attention often prove" ("Prefaces" 1071),

and "there is no convincing art that is not ruinously expensive" ("Balzac" 133; cf. 130) could hardly express better the essence of tragedy viewed from the artist's point of view. "Some acute mind," James says, "ought to have worked out by this time the 'law' of the degree in which the artist's energy fairly depends on his fallibility. How much and how often...must he be a dupe...to be at all measurably a master?" ("Prefaces" 1295) -- Could there be a better description of the basic situation of the heroes of The Portrait of a Lady, The Wings of a Dove, The Ambassadors, The Golden Bowl, etc., characters whose final wisdom is in exact proportion to their initial foolhardiness and "bewilderment"? Frequently, James evokes the images of "beast," "monster," and insidious "trap" -- metaphors for the tragic fates which many of his protagonists face -- to convey the "danger" and "difficulty," the "monstrosity" and "immorality," that the artist faces both in the performance of his art and within himself. (19) James's narrators, who are personas of "James" himself, the author of the Prefaces maintains, undergo on an artistic level, through the experience of narrating, what their heroes are subjected to fictionally, a relation stressed by Holland. (20)

The making of art was for James a tragic process which

entailed an interaction between the artist and his society, a process which made the artist, as James put it in Arnoldian terms, a "critic of life" ("Prefaces" 1216). The interaction is "tragic" in both a "European" and "American" sense; it involves at once the sacrifice of life (i.e., the artist's sacrifice of himself and his personal experience to art) and the making of new life (i.e., the making of a new form of society). The undermining of self effected in the greatest tragedies, Greek and Shakespearian, is accompanied by a positive, life-renewing moment. Jamesian fictional tragedy entailed the development of narrative techniques which are properly understood not merely as anticipating 20th-century approaches, all of which are more skeptical and subjectively based than James would have felt comfortable with. Rather, they differ from such approaches in their affirmativeness, in their ability both to subvert the values of the artist's culture and to re-envision new ones for the future of that culture.

That the later James distrusted democracy almost as much as he did capitalism and big business (21) has seemed to many readers to disqualify him as a cultural critic -- to disqualify him as a candidate for "subverting" much of anything. And certainly it is true that anyone who equates morality with an idealistic (and non-tragic) belief in

personal autonomy and freedom -- with what Wittgenstein called "private language," Nietzsche "slave morality," and deconstructionists "essentialism" -- is unlikely to see the point or value of James's tragic notion of self, which was the basis of his criticism of America's at once naive and rapaciously capitalist, pastoral and aggressively technological, form of democracy.

Yet it seems to me that such criticism was in the best tradition of American democracy, entailing an artistic ethic of activism and engagement or of what James called "the religion of doing." In "The Real Right Thing," James said: "The artist was what he did -- he was nothing else" (Complete Tales X 475). And in the New York Prefaces, James repeatedly imbued his artistic "religion of doing" with a sense of tragic inevitability:

> The great truth in the whole connexion...is that one never really chooses one's general range of vision -- the experience from which ideas and themes and suggestions spring: this proves ever what it has had to be, this is one with the very turn one's life has taken; so that whatever it "gives," whatever it makes us feel and think of, we regard very much as imposed and inevitable. The subject thus pressed upon the artist is the necessity of his case and the fruit of his consciousness....to "put" things is very exactly and responsibly and interminably to do them. Our expression of them, and the terms on which we understand that, belong as nearly to our conduct and our life as every other feature of our freedom; these things yield in fact some of its most exquisite material to the religion of doing. ("Prefaces" 1210-11; 1340; cf. 1227)

James's "religion of doing," which he also called "the sacrament of execution" (1135-6), and "the sacred beneficence of doing" (Complete Notebooks 94), is the fruit, in part, of his many years in Europe. It implies a "non-puritanical," non-American view of self, a view that our consciousness, what we are, is anything but pure and innocent. On the contrary, it is constituted by what we do with our individual, social, and historical "experience." Yet the formulation is also very American in the faith it invests in the power of consciousness to make so much of that experience, a "making" that James describes as nothing less than a life and death struggle in which each of us gets only one chance. As the dying author Dencombe of "The Middle Years" (1895) says: "A second chance -- that's the delusion. There never was to be but one. We work in the dark -- we do what we can -- we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task" (Tales 276).

This basic idea -- that "life" is all there is -- is enunciated in countless passages of James's fiction and nonfiction. In The Ambassadors, for example, James has Strether say: "What one loses one loses....The affair -- I mean the affair of life -- couldn't, no doubt, have been

different for me..." (132) And in the following passage from The Portrait of a Lady, James has Isabel renounce "any appetite for renunciation," that very appetite which so many critics have (mistakenly, in my view) identified with James. Renunciation, which James signalled his disapproval of not only by associating it with Gilbert Osmond (227), but by criticizing its artistic manifestations in his essays on Balzac and Flaubert (88, 308, 318), is in general anti-tragic from James's perspective:

> Deep in her soul -- deeper than any appetite for renunciation -- was the sense that life would be her business for a long time to come...It couldn't be she was to live only to suffer...it seemed to her she was too valuable, too capable, for that. Then she wondered if it were vain and stupid to think so well of herself. When had it ever been a guarantee to be valuable?....Wasn't it much more probable that if one were fine one would suffer? It involved then perhaps an admission that one had a certain grossness; but Isabel recognised, as it passed before her eyes, the quick vague shadow of a long future. She should never escape; she should last to the end. Then the middle years wrapped her about again and the grey curtain of her indifference closed her in. (Portrait 466)

James's use here of the phrase, "the middle years," is striking; it is the title not only of one of his more autobiographical stories, but of the third and incomplete volume given to his Autobiography. It signifies, to put the matter crudely, "life" -- that life, as Dencombe puts it, which is "only frustration." It is the overcoming of "the middle years," an overcoming that, as we will see, can be

at best a form of "truthful illusion" or "honest hypocrisy" (in Nietzsche's sense), which permits affirmation. That James used the phrase, "the middle years," in such different contexts shows how deeply and personally he identified with his protagonists' tragic fates, with that "passion," in Dencombe's words, which is one's "task."

James's task was dictated by his artistic commitment to the American Dream -- to molding himself into an American Shakespeare. That he often painted in his writings this Dream turning into a nightmare indicates how restless, fearful, and active his religion kept him, how much he felt there was to be "done." As he said in a 1901 essay on Thackeray, modernity was "the age of the loss...of illusions at large" (1290). James viewed his commitment, notwithstanding its wasteful, irremediable consequences, as bringing him, in the tradition of classical and Shakespearian tragedy, high honor. "It is glory," says Dencombe, "to have been tested" (Tales 275).

NOTES

1. The era of New Criticism can be dated with relative precision as the years following immediately upon the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939. The pact undermined socialistic, prescriptive criticism and reversed the relative positions of James's detractors and champions, throwing the former into a defensive posture and leaving

the latter free at last (free, that is, from bothersome questions of social, cultural, and political relevance) to continue Percy Lubbock's project, in The Craft of Fiction (1921), of examining James's works as hermetically aesthetic and technical representations of reality.

It is not that antagonism for James's supposed neglect of political and social issues did not live on. There was, for example, Maxwell Geismar's massive, but fundamentally hysterical denunciation of James in Henry James and the Jacobites (1963). And even the far more discerning study of Irving Howe in 1950 dismissed James's effort in The American to represent the American "national character" by characterizing that effort as at best "impossible to defend" ("Millionaire" 442), while Philip Rahv portrayed the traditional split between American critics as an opposition of "palefaces," one of whose champions was James, and "redskins," whose champions ranged from Whitman to Twain ("Paleface").

More importantly, the best criticism of the period was written by critics who fell into neither group, such as Lionel Trilling, whose 1948 essay on The Princess Casamassima is a flawed but extremely insightful and powerful exposition of the Arnoldian (and Jamesian) view that art should be a "criticism of life," as well as Alfred Kazin, whose all too few pages on James in his wonderful On Native Grounds (1942), in which he compares James to Faulkner, Wharton, and others, are so intensely perceptive that it is difficult to believe the same author wrote the utterly mediocre and conventional chapter on James in The American Procession (1985).

It was the New Critics, however, who dominated the American critical scene from the mid-forties to the early sixties. Their missions included scholarship and close readings and these they performed in great abundance, beginning with F.O. Matthiessen's Henry James, The Major Phase (1944), which initiated the widespread acceptance of Lubbock's (and Dorothy M. Hoare's) contention that James's late works were his greatest. Yet despite such abundance of scholarship and delving into then obscure texts of James, very little in the way of conceptual and theoretical development took place. Although James came less and less to be characterized as a champion of art for art's sake -- the association with Pater is still found in Matthiessen's The Major Phase, but in highly qualified form (41) -- pretty much the same old themes were dragged out and repeated endlessly: the passivity, detachment, and sense of leading an "unlived life" of James's characters -- as well

as of James himself; the use of symbolist techniques to represent subjective experience or "the inner life"; and the notion that James conceived of the artist in Flaubetian and Joycean terms as a God, invisible and all-powerful (although James had explicitly repudiated the latter conception in his essays on Flaubert and Maupassant). Some efforts were made to connect James's modes of representation with depth psychology and myth criticism, but these have not left a lasting mark on Jamesian criticism.

The most striking failure of New Criticism, given its emphasis on close reading and the text as an autonomous unit, occurred in the area of narrative methods and techniques. With the exception of one major aspect of James's techniques, the movement remained stuck in 1921, adopting without extending or defining more precisely Lubbock's emphasis on authorial effacement, point of view, and the distinction between showing and telling. Allen Tate, in fact, criticized James's "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903) for not adhering to a fully dramatic method of rendering the story entirely from the hero's point of view (76) -- a method Tate never doubted for an instant was James's ideal. What made such uncritical acceptance of Lubbock's thesis even more regrettable is that earlier critics, for example L.C. Knights in 1938, had tried to qualify the dogmas of authorial effacement and point of view by pointing out that (in "The Beast in the Jungle") "we are aware of two views-- [the hero's] and that of James himself -- existing simultaneously" (612). But as late as 1963 and 1967, Dorothea Krook ("Ordeal" x) and J.A. Ward ("Search" ix) --in almost exactly the way E.M. Forster had done in 1927 (72) -- were still lavishly praising Lubbock's interpretation and treating it as more or less the final word on Jamesian techniques. Another effort at qualification of the Lubbock thesis was made by Krishna Baldev Vaid in Technique in the Tales of Henry James (1964), which pointed up, for example, the presence of the narrative voice (239) in James's 1908 story, "The Jolly Corner." But her interpretation in general does not move much beyond such observations.

The exception to the New Critics' treatment of James's techniques mentioned above was their elaboration of the concept of "the unreliable narrator," which was applied by Wayne Booth in The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961) to "The Liar" (1889) and The Aspern Papers (1888) with much success. Although the concept is flawed by a certain fuzziness around the edges, as Susanne Kappeler in Writing and

Reading Henry James (1980) shows, it at least focuses attention on an extremely important aspect of all of James's late works and the dominant concern of most of his first person narratives: epistemology. By developing the notion of the unreliable narrator far beyond Booth's relatively simplistic formulation, later critics have been able to surmount two unprofitable, but extremely popular critical debates. The first centered on the issue of whether the ghosts were "real" or not in The Turn of the Screw. Initiated by Edmund Wilson in "The Ambiguity of Henry James" (1934) and Robert Heilman in "'The Turn of the Screw' as Poem" (1948), the debate went on for decades among many critics (see Martina Slaughter for a capsule review) until it was shown to be pointless by the epistemological readings of the novelette offered by Shoshana Felman in "Turning the Screw of Interpretation" (1977), by Terry Heller in The Turn of the Screw: Bewildered Vision (1989), and others.

The second debate centered on The Sacred Fount (1901) and was initiated by W.D. Howells, who declared in 1903 that "I have mastered 'the secret' of The Sacred Fount -- but I am not going to divulge it" ("James's Later" 17). The likelihood is great that Howells was having fun by consciously enacting the plot of James's "The Figure of the Carpet" (1896), whose point, of course, is that there is no such "figure" or thing, but only an endless series of metaphorical images of it (Kappeler, 190). Whatever the case, however, later critics such as Joseph Warren Beach (147), Percy Lubbock ("Introduction" xxx), and Edmund Wilson did not seem to get the point. Wilson even went so far as to suggest that "if anyone really got to the bottom" of the novel, it might provide, in a manner analogous to that pictured in "The Figure in the Carpet," the key to all of James's writings ("Ambiguity" 169). The crucial breakthrough that finally put a halt to this search for the thing-in-itself --what James in various contexts called "the figure in the carpet," "the real thing," "the real right thing," etc. -- was made by Jean Frantz Blackall in her epistemologically oriented study, Jamesian Ambiguity and The Sacred Fount (1965), whose thesis was in turn improved on by Sergio Perosa's Henry James and The Experimental Novel (1983). Perosa views The Sacred Fount as a self-reflexive novel about the possibility -- or rather impossibility -- of writing a novel.

Notwithstanding its productive use of the notion of the unreliable narrator, the era of New Criticism in Jamesian studies was a conceptually barren one. By this I do not

mean to deny that the era succeeded in producing many works of excellent scholarship. F.O. Matthiessen's Henry James, The Major Phase (1944), Oscar Cargill's The Novels of Henry James (1961), Dorothea Krook's The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (1962), and too many others to even name here, are impressive for the range and depth of their knowledge of James. Among my favorite essays of the period are Ernest Sandeen's "The Wings of the Dove and The Portrait of a Lady: A Study of Henry James's Later Phase" (1954), which makes the all-important observation that the late novels contain no Ralph Touchett-like character; Austin Warren's "Symbolic Imagery" (1959), which stresses the social and relational nature of James's characters; Viola Hopkins's "Visual Art Devices and Parallels in the Fiction of Henry James" (1961), whose treatment of James's identification with the Renaissance Mannerists and his ambivalent attitude toward the Impressionists I find more helpful than Adeline Tintner's and almost as good as Laurence Holland's in The Expense of Vision (1964); James W. Gargano's "What Maisie Knew: the Evolution of a Moral Sense'" (1961), which calls attention to the strong narrative presence in this novel, as so many critics, before and after Gargano, have failed to do; and, to exceed the temporal limits of the period being considered, Mildred Hartsock's "Unweeded Garden: A View of The Aspern Papers" (1967), which challenges the widespread notion that due to some emotional deficiency, James was detached from life, passive, and uninvolved -- a notion that has always seemed rather peculiar to me in light of James's superhuman productivity, his championing of "the grasping imagination," and his devotion to "the religion of doing." The pervasiveness of the notion of James's passivity says more about Americans' inability to see art as a form of doing which requires intense involvement than it does about James himself.

Which is why, for all the excellence of the critical studies mentioned above, there is something radically unsatisfactory about them all. Lacking both social and conceptual perspectives in which to frame their aesthetic and scholarly insights, such insights are, as it were, choked off and deprived of life. This seems to me nowhere so evident as in Ian Watt's "The First Paragraph of The Ambassadors" (1960). The latter essay is of the typically high quality of most of Watt's work and in its careful, yet thoughtful analysis of James's sentences opens up a range of imaginative possibility that seems, throughout much of the essay, to be continually on the verge of establishing

for itself -- as, I think, Watt's The Rise of the Novel (1957) succeeds in doing -- a context that will give his analysis social and theoretical significance. But then, like a censor blotting out dangerous passages, such significance is suddenly suppressed and the analysis is turned into an illustration of New Criticism's most tiresome dogmas about James (the scenic method, authorial effacement, and point of view).

What the New Critics in general failed to take sufficiently into account -- if I might offer a Jamesian critique of the movement that made James its exemplar -- was that any really "close" reading is necessarily a critical reading, the product of the intensity of consciousness applied to it, and consciousness gains intensity only in proportion to its ability to act on the socially, culturally, and politically determined forms of experience with which it is presented -- such forms being, for the critic, the works which he studies and the contexts in which those works were written and read. The critic, in other words, can only "see" what is "in" his texts by placing himself inside them; engagement is a precondition of perception and genuinely "close reading." The New Critical tendencies to disengage and detach, conversely, lead only to blindness. To cite examples which seem to me representative of just how little, even on a technical level, New Critics "saw" (or how little they were disposed to make distinctions crucial to understanding James's methods), James's metaphorical narrations were commonly referred to by many critics, such as Christof Wegelin ("Image" 90-1), Dorothea Krook ("Ordeal" 225-6), and Richard Poirier ("World" 29) as "interior monologues." Wayne Booth, in The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961), termed Strether of The Ambassadors and Fleda Vetch of The Spoils of Poynton -- characters who are never, except in quoted dialogue, identified with the pronoun "I" -- as "the narrators" of their respective novels.

2. The key step in Wittgenstein's transition from his early period (represented by the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus) to his late period (represented by the Philosophical Investigations) was his abandonment of the theory of simples (see my The Normative Basis of Culture, LSU, 1986, Chapter II), along with its presumption that there exists some one structure of reality or substance that can be read a priori out of language. The function of Wittgenstein's earlier theory was to anchor language to reality. For the later, quite as much as for the earlier,

Wittgenstein, language was embedded in reality. What the later Wittgenstein rejected was the presumption that it is embedded in reality in any one way. Wittgenstein rejected not the answer that the Tractatus gave to his question "What is the connection between thought and reality, language and world?" but the question. This comes out in a remark he made to Waismann: "Unklar war mir die logische Analyse and die hinsweisende Erklarung. Ich dachte damas, dass es deine 'Verbindung der Sprache mit der Wirklichkeit' gibt." (When I wrote the Tractatus I was unclear about logical analysis and ostensive definition. I then thought that there was 'linking up of language and reality'") (Waismann 56).

We do not have to posit some a priori basis by which language is connected to reality; we need merely to accept that they are so and then look to see in what ways, that is, to see in particular cases what kind of language games are being played. For the later as much as for the early Wittgenstein, language and reality are on an equal footing; they are bound together by one logical structure. Only now thie one logical structure is not the only one. Rather, there exists a multiplicity of languages and worlds, of language games and their accompanying forms of life, each of which may have various features in common with one another (and therefore be related like members of a family) but not single feature common to all. Within any given language game, the logical or conceptual features may be sharply distinguished from the empirical features (as a standard of measurement may be distinguished from the particular results of measurements, or as a paradigm or model may be distinguished from the judgments made on the basis of the paradigm or model). That is why Wittgenstein throughout his later writings spends so much time and energy providing detailed examinations of concepts and the ways they are expressed in language. What he is doing in all cases is unraveling the logical or grammatical features of our uses of words from their empirical ones; he is trying to focuse attention on the conceptual features of our language presupposed by its use. Of course, it is often difficult to make such distinctionbs betweeen the empiricaland logical features of phenomena, precisely because they always appear in our language and its systems of use tightly bound together. It is difficult for us to see, for example, that the proposition, "Such and such is a standard of length" is of a different kind from any proposition giving a particular measurement of length; or that the proposition, "Such and such are samples of the

colors red and yellow," is of a different kind from any particular proposition stating that a given patch is red or is yellow; or that "I have a pain" is a proposition of a different kind than "He has a pain." The first proposition in each of these examples has no empirical grounding or causal status. Rather, it is the standard or norm by which we make empirical judgments. That is, if we lacked a standard of length, we would be unable to make any particular measurement of length in the way we are accustomed to doing. If the statement "I have a pain were not accepted as incorrigible -- as being, to a large extent, incapable of being contradicted -- then the meaning of such propositions as "He has a pain" would be quite different. Where and how the line is to be drawn, for any particular phenomenon, between its empirical and logical features cannot be decided a priori, but only through an examination of the forms in which it occurs in our lives.

The sense of the term logic thus undergoes a metamorphosis in the later Wittgenstein. Logic is no longer correlated with the empirical, scientific world; it is no longer the structure or form that exists between language and reality. Rather, logic is what belongs to the descriptions of a language game: it cannot be absolutized. The later Wittgenstein does not abandon his Kantian predisposition (apparently inherited through Schopenhauer, who was also a strong early influence on Nietzsche) to see meaning as logical. But he has grasped that single logical structure is necessarily an empirically grounded structure -- grounded in a particular way of life or in a set of "hardened" (erstarrten) uses (On Certainty, sec. 96). To adopt the conceptual structure supplied by Newtonian physics or any other science is but to project the "conditions of our preservation as predicates of being in general," as Nietzsche said. One of the main purposes of the later Wittgenstein's definition of meaning as use was to keep us from absolutizing certain concepts the way Hume, Kant, and the early Wittgenstein had done, to keep us from believing that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones. The view of meaning as use lets logic loose.

The later Wittgenstein was not a linguistic philosopher in any usual sense of the term; as G.E. Moore reported, "He did not think...that language was the subject matter of philosophy" (Moore 324). Nonetheless, he certainly was concerned with the question, in Rush Rhees's words, "of how words mean" (55). To aid himself in answering this question, Wittgenstein fashioned, among others, two conceptual tools -- the notions of language games and forms

of life. As he employed these terms, they had several major functions. First, they allowed him to conceive of the meanings of words in terms of both the linguistic and nonlinguistic contexts in which the words occur. Thus, the first section in which the term language game occurs in Philosophical Investigations states: "I shall...call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the language game" [emphasis mine] (sec. 7). Similarly, the first section in which the term form of life occurs states: "To imagine a language game is to imagine a form of life" (sec. 19).

For Wittgenstein, language and reality were inseparably connected -- not in the sense that our linguistic categories determine reality, but in the sense that we cannot say anything about one without revealing some feature of the other. Language is grounded in a context of human behavior and actions: "It is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting which lies at the bottom of the language game" (On Certainty 204; see 110). As Finch says, "Forms of life are established patterns of action shared in by members of a group" (90). These patterns of action cannot themselves be conceptually justified (for they are the basis of all conceptual justification): "Why should the language game rest on some kind of knowledge?...You must bear in mind that the language games is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable)...It is there -- like our life" (On Certainty 559; see 34, 110).

Although Wittgenstein said that the best way to approach the solution to philosophical problems is through an examination of the uses of words, he added, "That does not mean that I want to talk only about words...Your questions refer to words; so I have to talk about words" (Philosophical Investigations 120).

Wittgenstein talks a great deal about the uses of words because he thinks that doing so provides a good method for revealing the nature of the phenomena of which words are a part. In particular, such a method helps one avoid the trap -- which linguistic and philosophers fall into -- of thinking of language as a sort of autonomous, conceptual process that points to an underlying, empirical relaity. Language is an element of reality, not a third eye hovering outside it. Wittgenstein asks: "Did we invent human speech? No more than we invented walking on two legs" (Remarks on Philosophy I, sec. 435). Elsewhere he says, "The term 'language game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of

a form of life" (Philosophical, sec. 23); and: "Words are also deeds" (Philosophical, sec. 546).

The second major function that Wittgenstein's notions of language games and forms of life served was that they allowed him to conceive of meaning in terms of a loosely structured, logical framework or range of possibility. In th early Wittgenstein's view, the "old logic" was flawed because it treated logic as a system of laws that could be abstractly formulated and then applied to our reasoning processes; it presupposed a self capable of examining the grounds of its own possibility, an inner god that could reliably assure itself of what it could and could not conceive, that is, of what was and was not possible. For the early Wittgenstein, on the other hand, what was logical, what marked the limits of what was possible, was presupposed in our thought and language and could not be formulated by them; to do this would require another, extrahuman form of thought and language (Tractatus 2.0121). Logic could be shown by a correct logical notation, but this notation could not in turn describe itself. The early Wittgenstein writes: "The fact that the propositions of logic are tautologies shows the formal -- and logical -- properties of language and the world" (Tractatus 612). He also says: "There is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas" (Tractatus 5.631); and: "The subject does not belong to the world; rather, it is a limit of the world" (Tractatus 5.632).

In his later work, Wittgenstein radically changed his views from what they had been in the Tractatus. Nonetheless, important features in Wittgenstein's critique of the old logic are retained in his concept of language games: logic is the possibilities presupposed by or implicit in our use of language (Lee 12-13, 21, 99, 124, 138-9, 143). It is what is presupposed in our description of a language game: "Everything descriptive of a language gam is part of logic" (On Certainty, sec. 56). And: "Understanding the description itself already presupposes that he has learned something" (Remarks on Colour, sec. 121).

To "do" logic is thus not to detach oneself from one's immediate frame of reference, that is, to appeal to some rule or law that can be applied a priori. Logical status is context dependent (Morawetz 47), and to do logic is to be "self-conscious about all the possible uses of language" (51). Logic, Wittgenstein says, is rooted not in something that can be called an assumption or presupposition, but in a way of acting: "It belongs to the logic of our scientific

investigations that certain things are in deed not doubted" (On Certainty, sec. 342; see 401). Logic is something "animal" "I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination" (On Certainty, sec. 475). Logic is based on the nonlogical: "If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simple what I do'" (Philosophical Investigations, sec. 217). And: "When I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule blindly" (Philosophical Investigations, sec. 219).

But if logic is so concrete, so deeply rooted in the morphology of behavior, how can one even talk about logic from a standpoint outside logic; what one can do is note the language game, describe it, and thereby reveal the logic: "Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it" (On Certainty, sec. 501). Or, as Morawetz puts Wittgenstein's view: "Propositions of logic do not describe logic" (51). We thus make contact in Wittgenstein's later work with one of the essential tenets of his earlier work: that logic can only be shown, not stated. The reason, again, is that logic, being the structure of action, is also the structure of thought, because "thought is an event" (Lee 34), and is rooted in action: "If I say 'we assume that the earth has existed for many years past' (or something similar), then of course it sounds strange that we should assume such a thing. But in the entire system of our language-games it belongs to the foundations. The assumption, we might say, forms the basis of action, and therefore, naturally, of thought" (On Certainty, sec. 411).

As in the Tractatus, Wittgenstein viewed meaning in terms of possibility, thereby both distinguishingand connecting the realms of Hume's relations of ideas (the conceptual) and matters of fact (the empirical). But his understanding of the nature of possibility -- of what logic was based on -- wholly changed. Meaning became for him not primarily cognitive, but rather normative, given not by what is possibly true or false, but by the rules or norms embedded in use, which can include, but is by no means limited to, cognitive elements.

The later Wittgenstein's definition of meaning as use forces us to give up any a priori distinction between what

is empirical and logical, between the sayable and the unsayable, and between what can be cognitively justified and what can only be shown or revealed through description. These distinctions are, for the later Wittgenstein, always there, but always different. Indeed, no statement for Wittgenstein is intrinsically empirical or logical, whether it be "Two and two equals four" or "The sun will rise tomorrow": "A priori and empirical are not two kinds of propositions -- the same expression can be an hypothesis or a proposition in a strict sense. So also a proposition a priori or empirical" (Philosophical Investigations, sec. 81).

One can legitimately say that a given statement is universally and necessarily true (or false), but only if one attaches the qualifier "by virtue of the way we have always used it." How the distinction between the empirical and the logical is drawn depends on the particular language games and forms of life of the people who are making it. Meaning is normative and logic is a "normative science" (Philosophical Investigations, sec. 81). Thus, Wittgenstein says: "If language is to be a means of communication, there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so" (Philosophical Investigations, sec. 242). Wittgenstein also emphasizes the normative character of our aesthetic judgments (Lectures 3) and our judgments about other languages (Ambrose 21). That we can even doubt is normatively grounded (On Certainty, sec. 117). What human beings mean when they use language can't be detached from who they are and how they live: "I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false" (On Certainty, sec. 94).

Wittgenstein's notion of language games is thus very different from the pedestrian concept it may at first sight appear to be. It entails the view that there exist loosely formed structures or systems of use that provide the tracks along which meaning (and nonsense) run. Our thoughts and actions follow courses, exhibit forms, show patterns -- all in a multitude of overlapping, intertwining ways. Such channels of meaning, however, are not things of a special nature (that is, subjective entities or processes added onto or accompanying phenomena); they cannot be explained or interpreted as though they were discrete substances any more than logic in the Tractatus could be stated. All

explanations and interpretations are themselves part of a logical or conceptual framework; they are not explanations or interpretations of that framework.

For Wittgenstein, our perspective or point of view is not something that "gives" meaning to phenomena or events; the philosopher needn't rummage around in his mind for the right ideas or concepts (like Plato's philodoxers). Rather, the meaning is already there, embedded in the framework. That is why Wittgenstein declares: "We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place" (Philosophical Investigations, sec. 109; see Remarks on Colour, sec. 55). After the early 1930s, by "explanation" (Erklarung), Wittgenstein means empirical scientific, or causal explanation. The use of the word description, on the other hand, conveys Wittgenstein's conviction that meaning does not have to be invented or posited, but is simply there. "Don't think, but look!" he says, meaning we should take off our conceptual blinders and see what is all around us (Philosophical Investigations, sec. 66).

Like St. Augustine, whom he deeply admired, Wittgenstein believed that the philosopher must open himself to the meanings that permeate his existence; he must not close himself off from such meanings by objectifying them, by making that which grounds all interpretation and explanation itself subject to interpretation and explanation. Wittgenstein writes in On Certainty, which was composed during the last 18 months of his life: "I really want to say that a language-game is only possible if one trust something (I did not say 'can trust something')" (sec. 509). Elsewhere in the same work, he says: "My life consists in my being content to accept many things" (sec. 344).

3. Note that these formulations are non-idealistic in that thinking and feeling are not posited as primary categories. Rather, thinking and feeling are forms of doing.

4. For example, "Prefaces" 1086, 1089, 1094, 1127, 1162, 1212, 1223, 1229; Wings 262, 272; "Balzac" 94, 103, 133, 151; "Flaubert" 172, 315, 325, 330, 335.

5. "Prefaces" 1127, 1147, 1158, 1244; Autobiography 415, 490; Golden 512, 553; Wings 348, 365, 366; Maisie 273; Portrait 466; In the Cage 261; "Eliot, George" 989.

6. For example, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Max Beerbohm, Percy Lubbock, Joseph Warren Beach, W.D. Howells,

William Brownell, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Edmund Wilson, Stuart P. Sherman, Cornelia Kelly, Matthew Josephson, William Troy, Constance Rourke, Edna Kenton, R.P. Blackmur, Pelham Edgar, Grahame Greene, Morton D. Zabel, Yvor Knights, and L.C. Knights.

Detractors of James's late works, besides Van Wyck Brooks, included Henry's brother, William, Vernon Louis Parrington, Edith Wharton, AE, Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennett, Somerset Maugham, George Bernard Shaw, and E.M. Forster. Virginia Woolf, in a 1921 essay, "The Ghost Stories," characterized James condescendingly as "that courtly, worldly, sentimental old gentleman."

7. See, for example, "Flaubert" 295 and "Prefaces" 1166.

8. With the triumph of New Criticism in the early forties, the notion of self reflected in James's work, as well as the basis of his late style, came increasingly to be characterized as Emersonian (as well as Coleridgean, Kantian, and Swedenborgian, the latter because James's father, and Emerson himself, was a follower of the 18th century Swedish religious philosopher). Moreover, a fewer but still substantial number of critics began to associate James's views with the pragmatist philosophy of his brother William and with the empiricism of Locke. The latter two philosophers belong within the analytic, empirical Anglo-American tradition of philosophy, as opposed to the Kantian, romantic, and phenomenological Continental tradition, of which Emerson is an American variant. At times, critics assimilated James simultaneously to both traditions, apparently untroubled by their longstanding antagonism. Such characterizations of James, dominant until at least the mid-seventies and by no means rare today, were in general the result, I believe, of the increased need created by New Criticism to see James as "American."

This thesis is borne out by the survey below of the relative rates, during different periods in the history of Jamesian criticism, with which the Emersonian tradition and the pragmatist tradition of William James were invoked as a context in which to read James. In presenting the following data, I make no claim for completeness, but feel that such data may be very roughly representative, especially since I have tried to concentrate on influential critics. Thus, of the Jamesian studies I have had a chance to look at in recent months, only one critic prior to the early 1940s characterized James as Emersonian (Stuart Sherman in 1917). Moreover, an anonymous reviewer of <u>The American</u> in 1877

contrasted Emerson and James with a sharpness that finds no counterpart until the late 1970s and 80s (Tuttleton, "Contemporary" 403), while Vernon Parrington in 1930 stated that James "was independent enough to break with the romantic tradition" (128). As for critics who invoked the empirical and pragmatist tradition of William James during this time, I found none. (Without doubt, I have missed some critics, but that is true as well of the two other periods examined below.)

During the heyday of New Criticism, from the early 40s to the late 50s, 11 critics characterized James as within the Emersonian tradition. Of these, four placed almost exclusive emphasis on Swedenborg and James's father: William Troy and Katherine Anne Porter in 1943, Joseph Warren Beach in 1954, and Quentin Anderson in 1957. Two placed exclusive emphasis on Kant: Dorothy Van Ghent in 1953 and William Gass in 1958. Three other -- extremely influential -- critics pointed up, in a rather mild fashion, certain differences between James on the one hand and Emerson and Whitman on the other: F.O. Matthiessen in 1944, Philip Rahv in 1949, and Austin Warren in 1959. The non-Swedenborgian, non-Kantian Emersonian critics were: Irving Howe in 1950, F.W. Dupee in 1951, R.P. Blackmur in 1952, Richard Chase in 1957, and Rene Wellek in 1958.

As for critics associating James with the pragmatist and empirical tradition during this period, there were three: William Troy in 1943 (note that Troy also associated James, in the same essay, with Swedenborg, failing to mention the opposing nature of the traditions to which he was appealing), John Henry Raleigh in 1951, and Joseph Firebaugh in 1954. There were also two critics who maintained that the views of the two brothers were opposed: Lionel Trilling in 1948 and Eliseo Vivas in 1955.

9. During the period from the early sixties to the mid-eighties, there seemed to be a continuation and perhaps increase of the trend set in the prior period. I say "perhaps" for two reasons. On the one hand, the significance of the data is debatable, given the much longer time span covered. On the other hand, there is during this period: (1) a much greater proportion of critics linking James directly with Emerson rather than with non-American figures like Kant and Swedenborg; (2) a much greater proportion of critics advocating the linkage with Emerson rather than disputing it; and (3) a probably greater proportion of critics whom I have missed, due to the unmanageable amount of criticism produced during this

period.

The data are as follows. There were 17 critics who placed James within the Emersonian tradition. Of these, two associated James exclusively with Kant (and Rousseau): Dorothea Krook in 1963 and Tony Tanner in 1965. None placed their main emphasis on Swedenborg. The remaining "Emersonians" (two of whom, William Goetz and Paul Armstrong, also linked James with phenomenology) were: John Paterson and Richard Poirier in 1960, Walter F. Wright in 1962, Naomi Leibowitz in 1965, J.A. Ward in 1961 and again in 1967, Peter Buitenhuis in 1970, Edwin H. Cady in 1971, Stephen Donadio in 1978, Daniel Mark Fogel in 1981 (Fogel's is probably the best presentation of the Emersonian thesis), Carolyn Porter in 1981, Stuart Hutchinson in 1982, Alfred Kazin and Paul Armstrong in 1985, and William Goetz and Richard Brodhead (the latter relates James to Whitman, not Emerson) in 1986. Two critics opposed the linkage of James with Emerson: John Carlos Rowe in 1976 and Ross Posnock in 1985.

As for critics associating James with the pragmatist and empirical tradition during this period, there were again three: Ian Watt in 1960, William McMurray in 1962, and Richard A. Hocks in 1974. Only one critic opposed the association: John Carlos Rowe in 1976.

10. Examples are T.S. Eliot in 1918, Edmund Wilson in 1925, Constance Rourke in 1931, F.O. Matthiessen in 1944, Marius Bewley in 1952, Richard Chase in 1957, and Laurence Holland in 1964.

11. See the studies of Philip Rahv, Edwin Cady, Peter Buitenhuis, and Richard Brodhead.

12. As James said in his essay on Baudelaire, "The crudity of sentiment of the advocates of 'art for art's sake' is often a striking example of the fact that a great deal of what is called culture may fail to dissipate a well-seated provincialism of spirit" (157).

13. It is significant that F.O. Matthiessen referred so often to Shakespeare in his American Renaissance, thereby helping to justify "the age of Emerson and Whitman" as a renaissance of the Renaissance. As Jonathan Arac has argued, although Mattheissen was torn between national and internationalist images of the American Renaissance, it was the former that were by far to exert the greater influence in the subsequent development of American Studies (93).

Similarly, Donald Pease has noted that Mattheissen's treatment of Moby Dick posits that Melville first assimilated "the rhetorical power...[of] Shakespeare's language," then went on to master such language in order to create, in Mattheissen's words, a new "vital rhetoric" said to "build up a defense of one of the chief doctrines of the age, the splendor of the single personality." Or in Pease's own words summarizing Mattheissen's perspective, "Melville's recovery from Shakespeare's rhetoric becomes a means for Emerson to defend his doctrine of self-reliance" (128). It was, as Pease notes, Emerson who was the central figure of Mattheissen's American Renassiance, not to mention nearly everyone else's since the publication of Mattheissen's book in 1941. Still more generally, the most influential figure of the project to "break the back" of European cultural domination through the creation of a uniquely American literature was Emerson. For it was Emerson who defined and glorified the basic parameters on which such a project, in all its various forms, would arise: individual freedom and autonomy, democratic self-reliance, and resistance to oppressive social and economic institutions modelled on foreign ones. "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe," said Emerson in "The American Scholar" (873). These words have traditionally been interpreted as revolutionary. According to some New Historicists, however, they have served to justify an ethic of passivity and capitulation to reigning American social norms.

14. In The Expense of Vision, Holland constantly reaches out toward a social, cultural, and political context to sustain and give significance to his analysis. Not only does he emphasize the applicability to James of the socially engaged sense of the term, "Emersonian," but he radically subverts, in his quiet way, the applicability to James of the unengaged, passivistic sense. Concerning the latter, Holland demolishes the Beach-Lubbock-Booth thesis that James's late techniques entail narrative effacement and the predominance of "the scenic method" over metaphorical narration (57, 128, 168, 180); contends that James's methods involve the narrator in a "complicity with his characters" (15); clears up the widespread misunderstandings about James's "house of fiction" metaphor in the Prefaces to the New York Edition (4, 44); shows that James's concept of narrative structure was not an "organic" one in the Coleridgean and Emersonian sense (10); notes the importance to James's non-essentialist concept of self and

consciousness of acting, make-believe, theatricality, lying, deceit, and "humbugging" (xii, 380, 387) -- an importance which points to James's affinities with Nietzsche; gives a very insightful, although not fully developed account of the tragic structure of James's works, observing that such a structure is "constructive" rather than "representational" (in a sense similar to my own in the first part of this Prospectus) and that it does not involve "renunciation" on the part of the hero, as innumerable critics have maintained (52, 119); sees that for James the artist is less an original creator than an "editor" producing "editions of experience" (134); shows the fallacies in Booth's presentation of the notion of "the unreliable narrator"; and so on.

15. As Leon Edel and others have shown at length, James was preoccupied throughout his lifetime with financial and literary "success." It is such preoccupation, along with a life-long love of the theatre, that accounts for why James wrote no novels and only plays during the height of his career, 1890-95, producing a lifetime total of 16 plays and one dramatic monologue.

16. Although critics have traditionally made much of James's admiration of Balzac, he was in fact intensely critical of the French novelist during his late period, writing in 1902 that "our hero is after all not in his magnificence totally an artist...the artist of the Comedie Humaine is half smothered by the historian" and speaking of "Balzac's catastrophe" and his "tragic waste of effort" ("Balzac" 94). For James, Balzac was the preeminent novelist of realism: "The real, for his imagination, had an authority that it has never had for any other" ("Balzac" 67). During his early and middle periods, James saw such a tendency toward realism as a literary virtue; it will be recalled that James, during the same periods, criticized Hawthorne for his lack of realism. Beginning in the late 1890s, however, James's perspective changed; in a rarely cited commentary on Hawthorne written in 1904, James praises the American "romancer" extravagantly. His late essays on Balzac, published in 1902, 1905, and 1914, by contrast, are sharply critical -- although James certainly never lost completely the deep admiration he felt for the French author (on the other hand, James's opinion of other French authors, such as Baudelaire, Zola, Maupassant, and Flaubert, was never high in the first place).

James's view of Shakespeare was consistently adulatory.

That James, in his 1875 essay on Balzac, compared Shakespeare and Balzac is in a sense a tribute to the high opinion he held of the latter, despite the fact that Balzac suffers greatly in the comparison: "M. Taine says of him [Balzac] very happily that, after Shakespeare, he is our great magazine of documents on human nature. When Shakespeare is suggested we feel rather his differences from Shakespeare -- feel how Shakespeare's characters stand out in the open air of the universe, while Balzac's are enclosed in a peculiar artificial atmosphere..." (68) (See also Note two of Chapter I.)

17. It was mainly as a gesture of support for Britain's war effort, rather than a repudiation of American culture (as Ezra Pound maintained), that James adopted British citizenship a year before his death in 1915. Of course, that did not stop James's critics, during the 20s and 30s, from making much of James's alleged betrayal. As late as 1943, The College Book of American Literature stated: "It is not certain that Henry James really belongs to American literature, for he was critical of America and admired Europe" (qtd. in Dupee, "Question" 273).

18. See "Prefaces" 1063, 1078-81, 1108, 1128, 1139, 1149, 1179, 1237, 1245, 1257, 1271.

19. See "Prefaces" 1107, 1111, 1120, 1123, 1164, 1169, 1209, 1216; "Shakespeare" 1209, 1216, 1220; "Balzac" 93, 98-99, 101, 102-3, 108.

20. For example, speaking of James's preface to The Portrait of a Lady, Holland says: "It brings into focus, along with the world of affairs in Venice, the writer 'picking over' his stock of subjects and taking over the figure of Isabel, and it presents an artist who is at once the receiving medium of his material and the manipulator of it" (11). The Expense of Fiction, I believe, is the best critical work on James yet written.

21. James's critique of capitalism and the nouveau riche permeates most of his late work, including The American Scene, The Ivory Tower, "Julia Bride," "Crapy Cornelia," "A Round of Visits," "The Jolly Corner," etc. It is also deeply relevant to such better known works as The Golden Bowl and The Wings of the Dove.

Chapter I

The Elements of James's Late Style: Tragic, Narratological, and Philosophic

The central contention of this work is that James was involved during his late period in an effort to develop an authentic form of novelistic tragedy. Such development was made possible by two kinds of innnovations that James effected in fiction: philosophic and narratological. In this chapter, after introducing the Jamesian concept of tragedy (to which the whole of Chapter II is devoted), I will discuss, respectively, the narratological and philosophic aspects of James's late style.

As tragic writer, James has often been viewed impression-istically as a writer possessed of "tragic vision." And many such impressionistic studies, ranging from Grahame Greene's "The Private Universe" (1936) to Charles Feidelson's outstanding "The Moment of The Portrait of a Lady" (1968) have made valuable contributions. But even the best treatments of James as tragedian have been essentially casual and undeveloped. (1)

To my knowledge, there is only one major study that seriously examines James's late works in relation to tragedy, comparing them to the dramas of Shakespeare and

others: Dorothea Krook's The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (1962). Although I have learned much from Krook's fine work, her concept of tragedy is ahistorical; moralistic and Christianized a la Kant; and fails to recognize certain crucial components of Jamesian tragedy, which I shall discuss later.

In The Ordeal of Consciousness, however, Krook made a good case for comparing Jamesian and Shakespearian tragedy, a comparison that has not been followed up on, except in incidental ways. (2) The relative paucity of sustained comparisons between Jamesian and Shakespearean tragedy, in light of the staggering number of parallels that have been drawn between James's works and those of other writers, can probably be attributed to the more general neglect of James as a tragic writer. This neglect is all the more regrettable in that Shakespeare, and especially Shakespearian tragedy, was the original source of James's lifelong obsession with the theatre (James himself wrote 17 plays, including one dramatic monologue) and therefore the fundamental inspiration behind the development of James's "scenic method." Shakespeare is the author to whom James most often compares himself, as well as the author whose characters he most often likens to his own. As Adeline Tintner says, "this constant referring to Shakespeare shows

that he was the great influence..." (Book 2)

There is, of course, a relative lack of violence and death in James's novels compared to Shakespeare's tragic dramas (all of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, except Troilus and Cressida, die). But it should be noted, first, that a fairly large number of James's novels and stories entail the deaths of major characters. To mention only important tales, such works include Roderick Hudson (1876), "Daisy Miller" (1879), The Portrait of a Lady (1881), "The Author of Beltraffio" (1885), The Princess Casamassima (1886), "The Pupil" (1892), "The Middle Years" (1895), The Other House (1896), "The Altar of the Dead" (1895), "The Turn of the Screw" (1898), The Wings of the Dove (1902), and "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903).

More importantly, any notion of tragedy requiring that violence or death be one of its defining characteristics is surely inadequate. Such a view of tragedy would lead logically to the conclusion that of Shakespeare's two revenge tragedies, Titus Andronicus and Hamlet, the former is more "tragic" than the latter -- a view that few critics would share -- or that getting killed in a car accident is "tragic" in the literary sense of the term. The fact is that most "tragedies," whether those by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, or Henry James, are tragedies of

consciousness, for the simple reason that their central action involves a drastic change in the awareness of the protagonist and is only secondarily -- even if, in many cases, importantly -- external.

Yet, for all that, it is a crucial aspect of Jamesian tragedies that so much of their "action" takes place in the drawing room. This fact signifies not that James's late works aren't genuinely tragic but rather how different was James's concept of tragedy from Shakespere's -- just as Shakespeare's concept of tragedy was, in turn, radically distinct from that of the ancient Greeks. (3) The difference between Jamesian and Shakespearian tragedy that I refer to is one between the conceptions of self in Elizabethan and modern times, conceptions dictated principally by society and culture and not by any personal eccentricities of the authors. It is a difference, ultimately, of the meanings or ranges of significance of "consciousness" and "mind" in Elizabethan and modern times.

Here we touch on "the definition" of tragedy -- or, better expressed, the language games in which this term is used. To put the matter very crudely, romance and comedy tend to reinforce a culture's dominant concept of self because they are built around a type of plot that does not allow fundamental change in the character of the

protagonist. Tragedy, by contrast, undermines or subverts its culture's dominant concept of self because it is built around a type of plot that allows for -- indeed, requires -- such fundamental change.

This distinction between tragic and comic forms explains why novels like Charles Dickens's The Old Curiosity Shop, Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth, all fairly depressing works in which the protagonists die, are not "tragic" in an Aeschylean, Sophoclean, or Shakespearian sense, whereas James's The Ambassadors and The Golden Bowl, in which leading characters undergo metaphorical, but not literal deaths, are prototypes of novelistic tragedy.

There is an intimate relation between tragedy and social conceptions of self. For example, as many recent students of Shakespeare, including New Historicists, have argued, the Elizabethan concept of self was far less internalized, privatized, and genetic (or organic) than is the modernized one. Elizabethan tragedy therefore entailed the subversion of a notion of self far less romantic and "modern" than our own.

What this means is that the "fall" of the Shakespearian tragic hero is not just a psychological event such as disillu-sionment but an external event that changes the

situation and status of the hero (e.g., Lear being forced out into the storm, Coriolanus's expulsion from Rome, Hamlet being denied the kingship, Antony's defeat by Octavius, etc.). This is not to claim that psychological consequences are insignificant -- witness the number of Shakespearian tragic heroes who experience episodes of madness -- but to stress that such consequences are effects of the forces of misrule and chaos that have invaded their worlds. Death, the most extreme and visible change that a person can undergo, dramatizes such misrule and chaos more effectively, for the Elizabethan, than psychological change can do.

But perhaps more importantly, literal death for the Elizabethan is the only way of silencing the hero, of preventing him from reestablishing a metaphoric link between the social/moral and transcendent spheres -- a link that was the basis of the Elizabethan concept of identity. At the end of Hamlet, the hero entreats his friend, Horatio, to "speak" for him, knowing that the most important part of what he has to "say" will be omitted ("The rest is silence," V.ii.358) from the new social order to be established by Fortinbras. It will be omitted because Fortinbras is blind to, or has at least given no indication of being aware of, the tragic knowledge Hamlet has gained.

The situation with Lear at the end is even worse; all he can do is signify his own incapacity for speech by entreating others to "Look there, look there" (V.iii.313).

James's tragic heroes, by contrast, as noted above, do not always die. And even when they do, as with Milly Theale of The Wings of the Dove, Stransom of The Altar of the Dead, and Marcher of The Beast in the Jungle, it is not death as a physical event which is the main focus. The death of Milly, for example, is, in a special sense, "symbolic," for, in the first place, her place or role in the structure of the tragedy is taken over by Merton Densher. In the second place, the new discourse that she has created (the new meaning of "the wings of the dove" that Kate Croy acknowledges at the end), not to mention the inheritance she has willed, exerts force and influence in the society she has left behind. Milly undergoes a symbolic death, precipitated by her discovery of the "plot" into which she has fallen, prior to her literal death. It is the former, not the latter, death which is crucial, as James intimates in the preface to the novel (1288).

The tragic deracination of self enacted in Jamesian tragedy is first and foremost a psychological, internalized event, not an external one. As such, the imposition of silence, the destruction of discourse, is rendered by the

breaking of a metaphorical link not between social and transcendent realms (as in Elizabethan times) but between private and public ones (as in modern times). Death thus need not be literal, but only symbolic, consisting in the exclusion of the individual from the social order, an association made explicit in James's story, "The Abasement of the Northmores" (1900), where the ejection of a husband from society results in his "non-existence."

Modern, Jamesian tragedy is concerned with the subversion of a highly internalized notion of self, and to dramatize such an internalized state, one obviously does not require the accoutrements of Elizabethan tragedy, including battlefields and political arenas. The modern concept of self, as James said, assumes "a kind of inwardness that doesn't become an outwardness -- effectively -- theatrically" (Letters, Lubbock I 382). Only by dramatizing "what does not happen" could James get at the modern concept of self -- a concept that is defined repeatedly (e.g., by Emerson) as inward and passive -- and therefore subject it to what I call tragic deracination. Jamesian tragedy was at once radically different from and fundamentally related to Shakespearian and Greek tragedy.

Tragedy, it is true, is a socially and historically determined product, a set of interconnected language games

which necessarily assumes radically distinct forms in different cultures. Nonetheless, one point that such forms share to greater or lesser extents is their propensity to question their cultures' social, cultural, and political assumptions -- and to do so in a way, as I have already indicated in the Introduction, which James believed comedy and romance do not do. Especially important is tragedy's questioning of a particular concept of self, an example of which is J.S Mill's concept of personal freedom or "doing as one likes," which Matthew Arnold attacked as "machinery" and which James alludes to in The Wings of the Dove 221, 242). It might even be said that such "cultural criticism" centering on the self constitutes, in Wittgenstein's terms, a "family resemblance" among different forms of tragedy -- not a definition, but the best that can be done in the case of such a difficult, meaning-filled word.

As to why Jamesian critics have neglected James as tragedi-an, the reason has much to do with the pervasive view of him as a romantic in the tradition of Emerson and Coleridge. The point is not that romance and comedy do not play an important role in much of James's fiction; the number of James's works whose pro-tagonists are described as "princes" or "princesses" inhabiting "castles" and combatting "dragons" -- as figures in a fairy tale, in

other words -- is extraordinary. Yet such romantic and comic elements are, I believe, incorporated into a larger structural pattern that is emphatically tragic. James's fairy tales are, as I will discuss later, "frustrated fairy tales."

For example, in what are generally agreed to be James's four most important novels, The Portrait of a Lady (1881), The Wings of the Dove (1902), The Ambassadors (1903), and The Golden Bowl (1904), the portrayal of the heroine or hero as initially romantic dramatizes her or his blindness and arrogance. Such dramatization is comparable to the way, in plays like Oedipus the King, dramatic irony heightens self-deception on the stage. The dramatization is in both cases used to intensify the effect of the hero's tragic downfall.

(2)

Given the general critical failure to recognize the tragic structure of many of James's late novels, it should come as no surprise that the narrative techniques he used to effect such structure have been misconstrued. Possibly aided by careless readings, possibly by the assumption that it would somehow reflect well on James, or at least make him more interesting, if he could be viewed as a precursor

of modernism, such misconstrual has become widespread. However, as I will show in Chapter VI, James's later narrative techniques are at odds not only with those employed in his own early and middle period works, but with many of those used by novelists from Charles Dickens and George Eliot to James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The techniques of Dickens and Eliot differ radically, of course, from those of Joyce and Woolf. The former make use of an omniscient narrator who does not hesitate to intrude upon the story and discourse freely in the first person singular or plural. The latter, by contrast, push their third person narrators "behind the scenes" and use "point of view" techniques to transfer certain narrative functions such as "telling the story" and "describing the mental states of the characters" to the characters themselves.

According to the usual account of his role in the historical development of the novel, James's work served as a link between these two different narrative approaches. The "usual" account I refer to is that of such critics and theorists as Percy Lubbock, Joseph Warren Beach, and Wayne Booth. The use by critics in this tradition of terms like "showing and telling," "point of view," "implied author," and "unreliable narrator" have had incalculable influence on the critical theory of the novel.

The two different narrative approaches that Jamesian fiction links are often thought to be reflected in the changes that his own fiction from early to late underwent, including the gradual effacement of the narrator/author and the increasing use of the point of view technique, "free, indirect discourse." James is supposed to have adopted the latter so widely in his later works that his practice can be seen as anticipating the still more radical modernist technique of Joycean interior monologue and "stream of consciousness" autonomous monologue. Some critics have abandoned all restraint and referred flatly to James's narrations as unquoted "interior monologues." (4)

Such references are inappropriate first, because James's use of "point of view" techniques is actually greater in his earlier than in his later works; and secondly, because there is no conceivable definition of the term, "interior monologue" -- assuming that one means something remotely similar to the technique used in Joyce's Ulysses and other modernist classics -- that could apply to James's works. It is even debatable, I believe, whether James's later works were written in free, indirect discourse. It is testament to the critical carelessness with which James's narrative techniques have generally been approached that leading critics could label both Strether

of The Ambassadors and Fleda Vetch of The Spoils of Poynton (1897) -- protagonists who are never, except in quoted dialogue, identified with the pronoun "I" -- as "the narrators" of the novels, respectively, in which they appear. (5)

One reason that it is important to be careful about James's use -- or non-use -- of interior monologue and free indirect discourse is that the latter are vital in assessing the extent to which James establishes a "narrative presence" in his novels. In The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Stephen Dedalus, perhaps speaking for Joyce himself, asserted that "the tragic emotion...the dramatic emotion...the esthetic emotion...is static...arrested and raised above desire and loathing" (205). Such a view of Aristotelian tragedy is at the opposite pole from the Jamesian and Nietzschean concept of tragedy, which is nothing if not active and which involves the intense involvement of the narrator in his story. As James said, "I catch myself again shaking off [the muffled majesty of authorship] and disavowing the pretense of it while I get down into the arena and do my best to live and breathe and rub shoulders and converse with the persons engaged in the struggle..." ("Prefaces" 328). No wonder that James disliked Flaubert's works so much, commenting

that Flaubert's pursuit of the ideal of the artist as "impersonal" and "disinterested" had resulted in works "absolutely dishumanized" ("Flaubert" 297).

It was, in short, an essential aspect of James's narrative technique to establish explicitly the presence of the narrator, however different from Dickens, Thackerary, and Trollope the nature of that presence was. As James said reverentially of Shakespeare: "...every inch of [his productions] is personal tone, or in other words brooding expresssion raised to the highest energy" (1213). Or speaking in the context of literature in general and Balzac in particular: "...the only detachment is the detachment of aversion -- the creative intimacy is reaffirmed, and appreciation, critical apprehension, insists on becoming as active as it can" ("Prefaces" 1046; see also 1095).

Crucial to understanding "the creative intimacy" James tried to establish is the relationship between metaphor and metonymy found in his works. Metonymy is a mode of joining or identifying with one another two figures by means of association, contiguity, or, more subjectively, influence. To use a common example, "He abandoned the sword" means "He abandoned his military career" because the term, "sword," is associated or contiguous with the term, "military career." Fiction sets such a process of contiguity within a

time frame. Thus, in Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South (1855), the plot is developed so that the heroine is brought into contact with the hero, who is a factory owner; her maternal behavior toward the workers suggests that the factory owner also adopt the role of mother to his workers, a suggestion that he resists until the end, when he becomes more caring and thoughtful of those he employs. The point is that the analogy between mother and employer is created through a process of plot development; time is the vehicle by which a metonymic relation is established.

Such relation contrasts sharply with that of metaphor, which may be employed without recourse to any time-bound, associative process. In the opening sections of Dickens's Hard Times, for example, the cold, impersonal behavior of Gradgrind toward his children is described using the image of an employer and his workers. The image is used prior to the introduction into the plot of an actual employer and his workers. As in much pre-Romantic lyric poetry and dramatic discourse, one situation is described in terms of another without any temporal mediation in the unfolding plot to link the two. The case of Hard Times shows that the traditional novel can be metaphoric, but this is not its dominant mode. Its dominant mode is to establish relations, analogies, or identities by means of an unfolding sequence

of events in time, which is in turn -- or so I will argue at length in Chapter VI -- a reflection of the unfolding consciousness of the narrator/author.

The metaphor/metonymy opposition was developed by Jakobson and has been discussed at length by critics such as David Lodge. My use of the terms is oriented toward fiction, not poetry. Moreover, I have taken liberties with the meaning of the terms. In the sense I will be using "metonymy," as I have said, it refers to a relationship of contiguity or association between images or figures that is set within a spatial and, more importantly, temporal context. The association, in order to be metonymic, must be a function of plot, with characters brought into temporally mediated contact with one another. It is because novels characteristically "tell stories," creating in the process the illusion that the represented time of the story mirrors "real time," that the dominant mode of the traditional novel, as is generally agreed, is metonymic. That James was acutely aware of the difficulties intrinsic to the metonymic representation of time is made clear by his frequent references, in the New York Prefaces and elsewhere, to such difficulties (e.g, "Balzac" 136).

If, on the other hand, there is no temporal or spatial relation between the two figures, then the relation is

metaphoric, which is the dominant mode of lyric poetry and much dramatic discourse. Metaphor, unlike metonymy, need not have a referential basis, for in metaphor, "nothing was simply one thing," as Virginia Woolf puts it in To the Lighthouse (277), a novel that illustrates the tendency of modern fiction to employ metaphor far more than does the traditional novel. It is crucial to understand that the opposition between the "metonymic" realistic novel and metaphoric modes of lyric poetry and dramatic discourse applies most clearly to pre-Romantic forms of the latter. As Bakhtin and others have pointed out, novelistic forms have had great influence on poetry and drama since the 19th century. The contrast thus becomes enormously more complex, is certainly not polar, and sometimes breaks down altogether, in the modern era.

Metaphor during his late period played a greater role in James's narrative technique than did metonymy, because for James "the presence" of the narrator was established primarily by his metaphorical description, not by metonymical elaboration, either in the form of "plot" or "story" as in the traditional novel or interior monologue and free indirect discourse as in the modernist novel. As we shall see in detail in Chapter VI, James's preference for metaphor over metonymy as a means of establishing the

narrative presence distinguishes him not just from 19th-century practitioners of the novel but, in a different way, from modernists as well.

The issue of James's use of metaphor and metonymy is by no means only a technical one but goes to the heart of the philosophical basis of the novel and of James's effort to radically revise that basis. Metonymy makes much use of temporal, cause and effect sequences and contrasts with metaphor (the typical mode of lyric poetry and drama), whose objects of comparison may have no temporal relation. In many, though certainly not all traditional and modernist novels, a metonymic story-line presupposes a narrative presence that is essentialist and intentional because it takes on the function of the omniscient narrator or modernistically pretends to be invisible. Thus, in his essay on Flaubert, James quoted the latter disapprovingly: "It's one of my principles that one must never write down one's self. The artist must be present in his work like God in creation, invisible and almighty, everywhere felt, but nowhere seen." (6)

James, by contrast, severed the narrator from metonymic focalizations by establishing a strong narrative presence dis-tinct from his characters. He used such character focalizations to unravel his plots and tell his stories --

functions reserved in the traditional novel, but much less so in the Jamesian one, for the narrator. This allowed him to construct a tragic structure which, metonymically considered, was tremendously stable, tight, and even "pre-determined." Consider, for example, his remarks on the structure of The Wings of the Dove, a novel which he called in the preface "solid blocks of wrought material" (1294), endowing the reader with a sense of fatality in regard to what happens to the protagonist. Such a sense invites comparison with the import of Strether's famous speech to Little Bilham in Gloriani's garden in The Ambassadors. (7)

The tragic structure that informs James's greatest novels was antithetical to that of many 19th-century novels -- "large loose baggy monsters," James, no doubt unfairly, called them ("Preface" 1107) -- which not only "sprawl" metonymically across diverse sectors of society and types of characters, but promote in the reader the illusion that the protagonists and other characters act essentially from their own "free will." Philosophic considerations aside, James needed a tight metonymic structure in order to endow his metaphoric discourse -- by which I mean mostly the discourse of the narrator, not that of the protagonist -- with the maximum amount of freedom while not running away with itself. As Nietzsche said, artists know "only too well

that precisely when they no longer do anything 'voluntarily' but do everything of necessity, their feeling of freedom, subtlety, full power...reaches its peak...that necessity and 'freedom of the will' then become one in them" (Beyond 330). Similarly, James: "Who can imagine free selection -- which is the beautiful, terrible whole of art -- without free difficulty?" ("Prefaces" 1061) For James, the metonymic structure of his novels is in a sense "beyond the control" of the narrator; the latter gains what "freedom" he has by submitting himself to such structure, an act of submission which requires him to dispense with the role of epistemological god and give up absolute control over "his" artistic universe.

Narrative "freedom" in James's late novels is mainly a function of metaphorical discourse. A predominately metaphoric mode of narration, which in James's late work is not so much "opposite" to a metonymic one as shorn of its essentialist pretensions, makes no effort to hide its "presence." The metaphoric narrator establishes a relation between himself or herself and the protagonist which is analogous to that between the protagonist and the other characters. The narrator, in other words, does not attempt to hide the fact that he or she has a status not qualitatively different from that of the other characters.

As James emphasized repeatedly, in the New York Prefaces and elsewhere, the fictional author/narrator is not present "behind the scenes," like the director of a play. He does not try to conceal his concealment. He appears fully "disguised" on the stage, like any other actor. I place "disguised" in quotes because it is of course intrinsic to the language game of "actor," to our use of the word, that he or she be disguised -- just as it is intrinsic to the meaning of the term, "metaphor," that one thing be viewed in the light of another. A metaphor is, indeed, very much like an actor in costume -- a person playing the part of another -- for in much metaphor a natural or concrete image may "play" a literary or philosophical "part." Which image or part is ultimately more "real" or closer to "the truth" is in either case impossible to determine unless one specifies beforehand which language game is to be given priority. As Nietzsche, in the context of a critique of modern epistemology, put it:

> No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to "truth at any price," this youthful madness in the love of truth, have lost their charm for us: for that we are too experienced, too serious, too merry, too burned, too profound. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything and "know" everything.
> "Is it true that god is present everywhere?" a little girl asked her mother; "I think that's indecent" -- a hint for philosophers!....
> Oh those Greeks! [Nietzsche habitually associated "the

> Greeks" with his own tragic, artistic, and anti-metaphysical perspective.] They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial -- out of profundity. And is not this precisely what we are again coming back to....Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore -- Artists? (Gay 38)

This dramatic, performative view of art was crucial also to James's notion of fictional narration. James was extremely fond of imagining his characters as actors or performers. For example, the image of "an actress" on a stage is used at the beginning of chapter 36 of The Golden Bowl to represent heroine Maggie Verver's sense of herself in relation to others. The image is not formulated or "thought" by Maggie herself (the way it would be in free indirect discourse or interior monologue); it is imposed externally by the narrator on Maggie, as if the narrator were saying: "This image corresponds to and gives the feeling of something in Maggie's consciousness, but it is not that consciousness itself." The reader is thus excluded from "the real thing" -- in this case, the "actual" (supposing there is such a thing) contents of Maggie's thoughts and feelings. (8)

More generally, James's tales are constructed via the imposition of tragic structure on "the raw experience" from

which they derive. This imposition requires that the "natural" form of expeience first be obliterated: "...the first thing to be done for the communicated and seized idea is to reduce almost to nought the form, the air as of a mere disjoined and lacerated lump of life, in which we may have happened to meet it" ("Prefaces" 1138).

Yet because Jamesian metaphoric narration is often so elaborate and extended, constituting a mode of time-dilation, the reader feels "cut off" from the story line and enclosed within the character's consciousness as represented by the metaphorical construction. Of course the construction is a product not of the character's labors but of those of the narrator; the metaphors should therefore be considered a form of narrative discourse. Critics' tendency to see them as "consciousness dramatizing itself" -- as though there could be a "point of view" without a witness to that view -- betrays an essentialist desire for "the real thing," a desire which James purposely frustrates. Such purposefulness can be seen in "The Figure in the Carpet" (1896) and many other tales, which successively replace one metaphorical description of "the real thing" with another, never telling us what "it" is. The phrase occurs in the titles of two other stories, "The Real Thing" (1893) and "The Real Right Thing" (1900), as

well as in much other fiction and nonfiction; it is most often used in an ironic sense to indicate that which is unobtainable, as in "the real thing, the romantic life itself," in The Wings of the Dove (78). Such irony is prominent in more than a dozen of James's other tales, especially those focusing on the literary life and written after the 1880s.

Metaphor is an extremely noticeable feature of the technique of James's fictional narration. Indeed, he often carries it to such extremes that it seems sometimes to overwhelm the structure of the novel as a whole, creating a deceptive impression of uncontrolled subjectivity. That James had a remarkable tendency to allow his narrative discourse, the means by which he presented the consciousness of the protagonists, to overpower the stories themselves, resulting in works far longer than he had originally planned, has been well documented by Leon Edel and is evident to anyone who has compared the preliminary sketches James outlined in his Notebooks with the final, published results.

But what is still more significant is the way the nonfiction of James's late period, including the Autobiography (first volume published in 1913) and The American Scene (1907), tended to get out of hand. The

Autobiography began as an effort by James to publish a selection from his brother William's letters, along with a brief memoir of his life, yet very quickly digressed to the subject of the novelist himself. The digression proved permanent, unravelling into three volumes of about 600 pages (in Dupee's edition) -- the last one only an incomplete fragment that begins at James's twenty-sixth year (James died in 1916 at the age of 72). The American Scene, too, is incomplete in that James had planned to elaborate more fully his "impressions" of the American West but decided to reserve such elaboration for a later volume -- never written -- when his account of the rest of the country reached 465 published pages. Moreover, both of these works exhibit a lack of control and of structure that seems paradoxical for an author whom New Critics characterized as the champion of "the well-made" novel.

I suggest that what accounts for the diffusiveness and seemingly endless elaboration of the most minute details in his nonfiction is that James lacked in these works the tragic structure which in his fiction served to contain and control -- if, at times, just barely -- his metaphoric discourse. As James himself put it, "Form alone takes and holds and preserves, substance -- saves it from the welter of helpless verbiage that we swim in as in a sea..." Or, as

Susanne Kappeler explicates James's attitude toward his art, "He feels by no means that it is he who treats the theme; the theme is being treated in the ground so prepared for it and according to a law that exists outside the author's will" (104). Jamesian tragic structure or form is sustained or kept in place, at least in the later sections of the novels, mainly because it is focalized through the point of view of other characters and therefore technically out of the narrator's control. James's metonymic, tragic structure is continually being challenged and subverted dialectically by his wide-ranging, metaphoric discourse.

In summary, James's reliance on metaphoric narration during his late period shows that he was chiefly interested in presenting the consciousness of his characters not modernistically "from within" but from the standpoint of an external source, either that of the narrator or of another character. Moreover, he did not regard such consciousness as "private" but rather as part of a larger context of social and interpersonal relations. James recognized that, as the Wittgenstein-influenced philosopher, Stephen Toulmin, puts it: "...our mental lives are not essentially inner lives. Rather, they become inner because we make them so...inwardness is in many respects an acquired feature of our experience, a product, in part, of cultural history"

(29).

James showed the thought processes of his characters only in relation to received social customs and behavior -- in relation to what <u>others</u> thought, felt, and did. And for such a purpose the external point of view implicit in narration (as opposed to interior monologue and even free indirect discourse) is essen-tial. That is why the image of Maggie Verver as "an actress on a stage" -- and James applies the image to virtually all the the major character of his late works -- is such a telling image. For James, the drama of consciousness is akin to an actor performing on a stage. And the "scenes" enacted on that stage are subject more to public than to private viewing. The minds of James's late heros are almost never seen in communion with themselves only. Although the characters are often <u>physically</u> separated from others, the metaphoric constructions project their imaginative experience into a public sphere, presenting it as embedded in a network of interpersonal and social relations.

(3)

All of which brings us to James's philosophic significance. Ever since T.S Eliot's assertion, made in the context of his argument that James criticism was

"feeble," (9) that he "had a mind so fine no idea could violate it" ("Prediction" 31), James's capacity for theoretical and philosophical thought has been greatly underrated. Either James has been linked to thinkers of the Continental and romantic tradition (10) or to those of the empirical and pragmatist tradition. (11) Such characterizations seem to have been prompted, at least in part, by a felt need to give James a philosophical respectability he would otherwise have lacked. As for sustained comparisons between James on the one hand and Wittgenstein and Nietzsche on the other, there have been few (Stephen Donadio's well-known book, for all its virtues, is not really an exception since his likening of James to Nietzsche is based on a misreading of Nietzsche and James as Emersonian.)

In this study, by contrast, I argue that Wittgenstein and Nietzsche's views shed a great deal of light on James's motivation for developing such an eccentric -- or more kindly put, "original" -- narrative technique during his late period. To use the term, "motivation," here is, however, misleading. James, who celebrated in his fiction "the triumph of intentions never entertained" ("Prefaces" 1122), was certainly not, either in theory or practice, intentionalist. Rather, as he emphasized repeatedly, James

felt that the writer of fiction could not perform his task properly without being critically aware that he must first relinquish epistemological control over his work. The novelist, in other words, must give over his artistic consciousness to -- must allow that consciousness to become responsibly absorbed within -- the social and cultural environment which shapes his work. In his contrast of French writers such as Balzac with English writers such as Thackeray, James maintains that the latter lack such absorption or "saturation," and goes on to characterize that saturation in non-epistemological terms: "[The author's love of his characters is] the joy in their communicated and exhibited movement, in their standing on their feet and going of themselves and acting out their characters....It was by loving them...that he knew them, it was not by knowing them that he loved them" ("Balzac" 131-2).

What Nietzsche and Wittgenstein accomplished philosophically, James accomplished narratologically. The numerous comparisons that have been made between Henry and his brother William's epistemologically oriented philosophy, an orientation which Wittgenstein attacked and even ridiculed in his Philosophical Investigations, derive from a misunderstanding about James's narrative techniques. The latter were based on a realization which William,

unlike Wittgenstein and Nietzsche, never grasped: that experience is not under subjective or empirical control -- that epistemology is not an adequate substitute for "the death of God." Nietzsche's proclamation in the preface to Beyond Good and Evil that "We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge" (451), as well as Wittgenstein's critique of private language (at bottom an argument that language does not have an empirical or subjective basis) were both attacks on Kantian and Humean (or Lockean) epistemologies.

These attacks have their narrative counterpart in a view which is the philosophical basis of Jamesian narrative discourse and which following chapters will explicate in detail. The view is that consciousnesss, whether of the narrator, protagonist, or any other character, cannot dramatize itself. Which is why, in James's fiction, the presence of the narrator plays an important role; such presence is necessary as a means of revealing the characters' minds which, contrary to romantic, modernist, and post-modernist perspectives, cannot "speak for themselves" -- anymore than "the facts," from an empirical perspective, can. It is a view sharply at odds with those of Coleridge, Emerson, Kant, Hume, Locke, and William James, all of whom, albeit in different ways, invested consciousness with god-like, hidden powers. For James, as

for Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, the mind has little control over itself but is subject to historical, social, and cultural processes. The novelist does not choose what he imagines; rather, his imagination is grounded in what he is as a person. "I don't know what 'me' is like," James wrote. "I can't see my own tricks and arts, my own effect, from the outside at all" (Letters I, Lubbock 346). Or, as Milly Theale says in The Wings of the Dove, "One never knows oneself" (138). Similarly, in an essay on Balzac, James maintained that the artist's most important effects were achieved "unconsciously," springing "from his very presence, his spiritual presence, in his work, and...not a matter of convention and artistry" (125).

For James, the novelist is a geographer of experience; he uses his "recording eye" to delineate the boundaries of how we act, feel, and think. As the recording eye sweeps across experience, it carves the novel's scale of representation -- the boundaries of the countries it traverses, the form in which experience is enacted. This form, however, represents not actual experience but the possibilities embedded in such experience; it is dictated by the scope and limits of the recording eye. The novelist's map of experience is also a plot of his own imagination; he represents a certain concept of self

through his delineation of a certain range of experience. The recording eye maps identity in the images that it reflects.

The novel thus shows us the author's (or narrator's) "self" in process of formation. It does this not directly but indirectly, usually by means of the characters it portrays. The author devises agents, sends out vessels of consciousness across the ocean of experience, in order to carry out his mapping. It is these agents or characters that enable the recording eye not merely to passively represent experience but to mold and shape it by determining its range (in a manner analogous to the way the geographer forms territories by marking their boundaries), showing that "to put things [in art] is to do them" ("Prefaces" 1340).

The task of the artist is thus simultaneously descriptive and "normative." (12) It is descriptive in that the artist, as geographer of experience, does not "create out of nothing"; his imagination is partially constrained by what it is presented with. But the artist's task is also normative -- by which I mean that it entails the positing of values and the making of meaning -- in that his descriptions are conceptual, not empirical. His subject is not experience but the possibilities of experience: "not

the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen," as Aristotle said (1463). The imagination is the medium in which such possibilities swim, though their source lies outside the imagination. And since this medium is bounded -- bounded, that is, by the limits of the artist's vision -- the act of describing is simultaneously an exercise of control in which the artist dramatizes, or puts on display, the range of his own imagination. Such an exercise is not private but, on the contrary, a mode of public conduct -- a mode that makes meaning, forms character and identity. In the process of "staging" himself, the artist gives birth to himself. As James puts it in the Prefaces, the artist is a "note-taker" or "recorder" -- a student -- sitting in on a lecture given by his own imagination. The artist can of course guide and even direct his imagination by the way he lives, but he must first let it speak, must let the god within him descend and "adopt" him, as James says ("Prefaces" 1334). That is why the identity that the novelist maps remains in a fundamental sense unknown to himself; the novelist's recording eye is also the stage of his own consciousness. He therefore cannot see the complete range, the totality of those images that the recording eye reflects. The recording eye does not record itself.

James embraces the motif of the novel as a kind of "map" when, in the preface to The Aspern Papers, he compares the novelist fashioning his "subject" to an explorer discovering territory: "...his discoveries are, like those of the navigator, the chemist, the biologist, scarce more than alert recognitions. He comes upon the interesting thing as Columbus came upon the isle of San Salvador, because he had moved in the right direction for it..." (1173).

James here is opposing the notion that the artist is a creator ex nihilo, one who reaches into himself, into the depths of his private experience, and pulls out his subject. For James, the novelist does not create his subject matter any more than the geographer creates the world he lives in. Rather, "Art deals with what we see, it must first contribute full-handed that ingredient; it plucks its materials, otherwise expressed, in the garden of life..." (1308). The artist must be completely open to life's experiences because it is only these that provide "the germs" which nourish artistic creation.

James's frequent use of the term, "germs," has caused many critics to judge that his view of art was organic in a Coleridgean sense. But James makes clear in countless passages of the Prefaces that the source of such "germs" is

basically mysterious, implying often that they do not come from within the artistic imagination but rather from the social and historical environment external to the imagination:

> As for the origin of one's wind-blown germs themselves, who shall say, as you ask where they come from? We have to go too far back, too far behind, to say. Isn't it all we can say that they come from every quarter of heaven, that they are there at almost any turn of the road? They accumulate, and we are always picking them over, selecting among them. They are the breath of life -- by which I mean that life, in its own way breathes them upon us. They are so, in a manner prescribed and imposed -- floated into our minds by the current of life (1072-3). [That is why] the teller of a story is primarily...the listener to it, the reader of it, [one who makes out his story] on the crabbed page of life. (1089; 1072-3)

Artistic creation is an activity, but an activity that is based on a prior receptivity. Like the geographer, the artist is tied to the territories of experience; he molds and shapes what he sees, but he does not bring into existence what he sees, as the romancer would suppose:

> The balloon of experience is in fact of course tied to the earth, and under that necessity we swing, thanks to a rope of remarkable length, in the more or less commodious car of the imagination; but it is by the rope we know where we are, and from the moment that cable is cut we are at large and unrelated. ("Prefaces" 1064)

James's use of the metaphor of the explorer or geographer to describe the functions of the artist is extremely significant, for James himself was of course just

such an artistic and/or conceptual explorer or geographer -- one who mapped, in his fiction, the social, cultural, and psychic boundaries of America, England, and France, as Ezra Pound noted (27-8). Through this metaphor, James not only images the American artist's attempt to create a new form of literature as the literal discovery of America, but shows that he grasps what so many "American Shakespeares," before and after him, have failed to understand -- that "creation" is never ex nihilo but the manipulation, in part, of pre-given materials. If Columbus "moved in the right direction" for the so-called "discovery of America," then he did so with European eyes and instincts. Similarly, James's expatriation was motivated by an effort to gain a partly "European" vantage point from which he might see America aright -- might redream, re-envision, and re-discover America, so as ultimately to help remake her.

The Jamesian artist is the antithesis of the passive figure many generations of Jamesian critics have drawn. The novelist "represents," but as he represents he acts on what he represents; his consciousness is a feature of the very novelistic landscape he traverses. Literature for James is not the expression of the subjective, more or less private thoughts and feelings of the artist. Nor is it the representation of an "external" (e.g., natural, social, or

historical) reality logically separate from the artist's personal experience. Rather, the object of the artist's endeavors is both external and internal; it permeates him.

Artistic representation for James was not a "reflection" of a pre-given, static reality but a category established by the act of artistic creation, just as the development of the protagonist is established as she or he acts on the things or people in the story. Art makes life. As James says,

> One cherishes, after the fact, any proved case of the independent life of the imagination; above all if by that faculty one has been appointed mainly to live. We are then never detached from the question of what it may out of simple charity do for us. ("Prefaces" 1166)

Countless critics have failed to note when citing this passage that James is not claiming autonomy for the imagination. Rather, the imagination is always partly "dependent," always embedded in forms of experience, always serving purposes which, "after the fact," can be recognized as outside the mind. James's esteem for the powers of the imagination is an esteem tied to the uses the imagination serves -- to what it may "do for us" -- and therefore quite different from that of at least some romantics. I refer in particular to the linking of James's perspective to Coleridge's formulation of the imagination as the "repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of

creation in the infinite I AM" (qtd. in Goetz 60-1; cf. Fogel 11); to William James's notion (in Ralph Barton Perry's words) of "the supreme value of those strivings which are unique in every individual and whose authentic quality is revealed to him alone" (qtd. in Michaels, "Interpreter's" 188); and to the phenomenological notion of a consciousness as an intentional act, the act having the characteristic that extraneous features can be "bracketed out" to leave a purified form of subjectivity (Armstrong 46). All of these formulations give the imagination an autonomy or freedom that James meant specifically to exclude by linking himself, in the preface to The American, to the "realistic" rather than to the "romantic" artist.

In so doing, however, James identified his works as neither realistic in a traditional nor a modernistic sense. On the contrary, by realist, James meant not one who represents experience accurately, but one confines himself, in his representations, within the possibilities of experience, within that manifold of relations that "stop nowhere":

> The real represents to my perception the things we cannot possibly not know, sooner or later, in one way or another; it being but one of the accidents of our hampered state, and one of the incidents of their quantity and number, that particular instances have not yet come their way. ("Prefaces" 1062-63)

Careful attention must be paid in this passage to the language of James's complex formulation; he is defining the real not as what we know, but as a range of possibility encompassing what we can know. The importance of such a formulation is impossible to exaggerate since it rests on a distinction crucial to James's late style: the distinction between what is conceptual and what is empirical. (13) Such a distinction subverts the basis of modern epistemology; it sees knowledge not as hypothetical, as true or false ideas which the self is free to judge as "real" or not, but as forms of reality. It follows that knowledge is gained by describing these forms and that the quality of such knowledge depends on the artistry of the description. The novelist represents through fictional devices a range of reality that encompasses the consciousness of the main character, then shows that consciousness -- through "particular instances coming his way" -- in relation to that reality, that is, as either opening itself up or closing itself off to it. Realism in the novel is thus the product not of the author's capacity to adhere to some abstract notion of "experience," but of his capacity to stay within the possiblities of experience that he has himself presented.

By contrast, the "romantic" novelist does not confine

himself within the possibilities of experience; he portrays the consciousness of his main character as free and autonomous and therefore out of relation to the represented range of experience. This is exactly the criticism that James makes of his own "romantic" handling of Newman in The American, in which "the experience here represented is the disconnected and uncontrolled experience -- uncontrolled by our general sense of 'the way things happen' -- which romance more or less successfully palms off on us" ("Prefaces" 1064-65).

But what did James mean by referring, as I have cited him above, to artistic creation as "action," "performance," and even "conduct"? He meant that "to 'put' things...is to do them." In his 1905 essay, "The Question of Our Speech," he said:

> All life...comes back to the question of our speech, the medium through which we communicate with each other; for all life comes back to the question of our relations with each other. These relations are made possible, are registered, are verily constituted, by our speech....The more it suggests and expresses the more we live by it -- the more it promotes and enhances life. Its quality, its authenticity, its security, are hence supremely important for the general multifold opportunity, for the dignity and integrity, of our existence. (200-1)

James's views of art as conduct and of language as constituting life strike at the heart of the assumptions underlying the debate on modernism, romanticism, and

aestheticism; they challenge the notion that art exists in a sphere bracketed off from the rest of life. It was just this notion that James was referring to in his famous exchange of letters with H.G. Wells after the publication of the latter's Boon in 1915. Wells had compared literature to architecture, saying that the latter "has a use," the former did not. James's reply was that literature, far from being useless, was the model upon which our concept of "use" should be based. This perspective implies that William James's pragmatism, as Wittgenstein was later to state more directly in his Philosophical Investigations, was superficial:

> There is no sense in which architecture is aesthetically "for use" that doesn't leave any other art whatever exactly as much so; and so far from that of literature being irrelevant to the literary report upon life, and to its being made as interesting as possible, I regard it as relevant in a degree that leaves everything else behind. It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, for our consideration and application of these things, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process. (Portable 484-85)

These considerations may seem to take us far from my emphasis on James as tragic writer. Nonetheless, I maintain that they in fact go to the heart of such emphasis. An important component of tragedy, in Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, and James, is the subversion of a given concept of self and the construction of the possibility of

a new and different concept. (Comedy and romance, by contrast, may allow for self-development, but only on the basis of a notion of identity that assumed from the outset.) James, like Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, denied that human behavior has an empirical basis -- which is to say ultimately a subjective basis, since empiricism, as Hume put it in his classic formulation, derives from what "appears to the mind's eye," from what appears to the isolated individual. Empiricism on the one hand and subjectivism or romanticism on the other, of course, differ sharply; the former treats the mind as a recipient of impressions from the external world while the latter treats the mind as playing a creative, "imaginative" role in constituting such impressions. Both, however, reflect a central epistemological concern with the functions of the individual consciousness; they posit the self as a kind of fixed freedom or enclosed infinitude that stands opposed to and distinct from social forms.

James, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein, in contrast, posited character as finite, contingent, and radically unstable due to its dependence on social, cultural, and historical forms that are themselves continually fluctuating. All three -- in a sense alienating especially to modern French theorists -- were <u>moralists</u>. They would

have tended to agree with French theorists that moral issues cannot be referred back to an essentialist, privatized self. But they also would have refused to remain content with a sceptical refutation of essentialism and have insisted that consciousness is social. (I should note that I use the term, "essentialism," here and elsewhere, with some misgiving. On the one hand, it serves as a convenient way to relate Wittgenstein and Nietzsche's attack on modern epistemology to the concerns of critical theorists in recent decades. On the other hand, deconstructionists' critique of essentialism employs methods and assumes philosophic views that neither Nietzsche nor Wittgenstein would have felt comfortable with [for an explication of this point see McDonald, "Crossroads" and "Nietzsche Contra Derrida"].)

The differences between Nietzsche's and deconstructionists' perspectives -- in particular, the former's tendency to go beyond the latter's skeptical preoccupation with language as a "prison-house" -- are reflected in Nietzsche's contention that "consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature.... Consciousness is only a net of communication between human beings" (Gay 298-9). Similarly, Wittgenstein stated clearly in The

Philosophical Investigations that his term "language game" was used to emphasize the non-linguistic backdrop or Lebensform necessary for understanding language; that "An intention is embedded in its situation, in human customs and institutions" (Philosophical sec. 337); and that language is not "private" because the individual ultimately lacks epistemological and moral autonomy. (14) As for James, he declared that: Experience, as I see it, is our

> apprehension and measure of what happens to us as social creatures ("Prefaces" 1091).... Character is developed to visible fineness by friction and discipline on a large scale, only by having to reckon with a complexity of forces....No kind of person...is a very good kind...when its education has not been made to some extent by contact with other kinds, and, to that degree, by a certain relation with them. (American Scene 427)

In the New York Prefaces, James speaks of "a represented community of vision between several parties to the action" (1297) and of "a practical fusion of consciousness" between different characters (1297). And in his fiction, he speaks of "the power not one's self, in the given instance, that made for passion" (Sacred 17).

But it is Nietzsche, more than Wittgenstein, who seems closest to James in his overt preoccupation with morals and tragedy. For Nietzsche and James, tragedy is the means by which an affirmative response to the moral crisis of modern culture may be mustered. Such a response assumes a

non-romantic, relational wholeness of character and personality. Nietzsche, whose conception of the philosopher was modeled to a large extent on that of the artist, wrote:

> The moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy [constitute] the real germ of life from which the whole plant [has] grown (Beyond 203, sec. 6)...We have no right to isolated acts of any kind: we may not make isolated errors or hit upon isolated truths. Rather do our ideas, our values, our yeas and nays, our ifs and buts, grow out of us with the same necessity with which a tree bears fruit -- related and each with an affinity to each, and evidence of one will, one health, one soil, one sun. (Genealogy 452, sec. 2)

James uses the same metaphor to make the same point:

> The question comes back thus, to the kind and degree of the artist's prime sensibility, which is the soil out of which his subject springs. The quality and capacity of that soil, its ability to "grow" with due freshness and straightness any vision of life, represents, g strongly or weakly, the projected morality ("Prefaces" 1074)....In greatness as much as in mediocrity the man is, under examination, one, and the elements of character melt into each other (Selected 307)....Everything hangs together, I say, and there's no isolated application of taste, no isolated damnation of delicacy. The interest of tone is the interest of manners, and the interest of manners is the interest of morals, and the interest of morals is the interest of civilization. (qtd. in R.B.J. Wilson 276)

Again, the organic terminology of these quotations should not mislead; the "soil" from which character and consciousness spring rests not on a clear core, a self-contained seed of self. Rather, such soil is an historically contingent, artificially fertilized soil, one which is continuously being laid down even as it gives rise

to new and increasingly exotic species. As Patricia McKee says in her discussion of The Golden Bowl, "truth is a fiction with a capacity to change the way things are" (Heroic 52). For both James and Nietzsche, the self is an artificial construct with a capacity to act on and become a new form of "nature" -- to "project the conditions of our existence as predicates of being in general," in Nietzsche's words. Such a posited, performed unity of self is reflected in James and Nietzsche's use of the words, "morals" and "morality," in the above passages. For Nietzsche as for James, the aesthetic sensibility is the very fount or origin of consciousness, providing the materials or at least the tools by which life is "constructed." But such aesthetic concern is not a form of aestheticism. On the contrary, "the advocates of art for art" manifest, in James's words, though they could equally well be Nietzsche's (cf. Beyond 320, sec. 208), "a well seated provincialism of the spirit." (15) Art is too important to life to be separated from it; the wellsprings of art are not just aesthetic but also moral. That is why, as James said, "...the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very close together...the esthetic pattern is the moral pattern" (Selected 30). Similarly, Nietzsche: "An artist chooses his subjects; that is his way of praising...Every

art...may be viewed as a remedy and an aid in the service of growing and struggling life" (Gay 215, 328, secs. 245, 370; cf. James, Notebooks 78, 99).

But simply to point up the similarity of James and Nietzsche's moral and aesthetic concerns is not to do justice to what they regarded as essential to that similarity: a force of character that was deep and integral enough to be felt as a force of consciousness. James and Nietzsche lived during a time when the ideals of goodness and beauty seemed to be losing their basis in "truth" (cf. Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn"). James and Nietzsche were "modern" enough to feel this crisis of values in all its immensity and "traditional" enough to believe that it could be resolved. What could resolve it were the conduct and actions, the cultivated consciousness and knowing innocence, of a noble human being, one who could face fully the falseness of our moral and aesthetic values, take that falseness into himself and by being whole and entire, by being sufficiently self-sacrificing and self-affirming, redeem and tragically transfigure it.

The unity of aesthetic and moral concerns in James and Nietzsche is inseparable from the power they gave to the fictitious to act on and become a form of the real. In Nietzsche quite as much as in James, there is much emphasis

on the value of deception and artifice. (16) For both, "the essence of tragedy," in James's words, "is full both of realities and illusions, the latter insistently living through all the distress of the former" (Autobiography 544; see also 542). What James and Nietzsche were after was a new kind of sincerity, one in which consciousness could let itself be the battleground of opposing forces and yet not strive for victory, not strive for intellectual certainty and conviction, not allow itself the bad faith of believing in a unified consciousness centered in an autonomous and disembodied self. (17) James and Nietzsche's quest for a new form of sincerity was sustained by a faith in the value of personal experience, particularly its linguistic forms, that dispensed with the romantic (and still operative) ontology of the self and equated identity with the socially and historically rooted process of its appearance, with the capacity of action and conduct to erect a bridge of consciousness over what James called "the dark depths" of "madness, surrender, collapse" (In the Cage 299).

As is well-known, Nietzsche distinguished between what he called "master" and "slave" morality (see Chapter VII for further discussion). Actually, a better way to characterize these two forms of morality is to say that the former is not a "master" but a tragic morality of art and

that the latter is not a "slave" but an essentialist morality of ressentiment; the latter characterizations are "better" simply because they are the terms Nietzsche himself most often applied to them and because the most common examples he gave of master moralists -- the artist, the philosopher, the saint -- are not in general "masters" and because the most common examples he gave of slave moralists -- the Christian, the socialist, the proto-fascist (and much less often, the Jew) -- are not in general "slaves." To think of master morality as an "artistic" morality and slave morality as an essentialist one is in keeping with Nietzsche's motivation for making the distinction in the first place. Although essentialist and artistic moralities were not for Nietzsche polar opposites, but rather concepts in dialectical tension, they allowed him to pose an alternative to the nightmare of modern essentialism which he saw following upon "the death of God." This alternative was what he sometimes called amor fati (love of fate), sometimes the eternal recurrence of all things: it was the alternative of a tragic and affirmative morality.

It is just such a dialectic between the morality of ressentiment and essentialism on the one hand and the tragic morality of art (of form, appearance, and

play-acting) on the other, that is enacted in James's late works. In chapters VII and VIII, I will examine this dialectic in detail as it takes shape in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl. By arguing that Nietzsche's "philosophic" categories were relevant to James's late works, I do not mean to claim that James was in a rigorous sense a "philosopher" or that he sought to embody philosophic notions in his fiction. When Nietzsche in Ecce Homo called himself "the first tragic philosopher" (729), he meant that he was the first philosopher in the western tradition who had been able to combat what he regarded as the pernicious influence of Socrates, who had discredited the notion that philosophy was an art or craft (as Socrates' diatribes against the Sophists show) and transformed it into an abstract and passive way of thinking. Since the time of Socrates, only Nietzsche (as a Nietzsche verging on insanity believed) had succeeded in valuing life over thought, action over systematic thinking. And he had done this precisely by incarnating himself in his work, by submitting himself to his craft, rather than trying to gain conceptual mastery over it -- and the world. Nietzsche was quite as much "artist" as philosopher.

But the same applies to James as novelist. Just as Nietzsche required the philosopher to be partly an artist,

so too James required the novelist to be -- T.S. Eliot notwithstanding (see page 52 above) -- a philosopher. The great novelist, said James in the New York Prefaces, "must know man as well as men, and to know man is to be a philosopher." Like Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, James opposed a philosophic current going back to Socrates -- a current that severed art from philosophy and on which the genre of the novel is partly based. As both Nietzsche and Bakhtin suggested, Socrates was in a sense "the first novelist" because he was the first to establish the artist not as a "maker" or "doer" -- and thereby one who submitted himself to his materials (i.e., his social, cultural, and historical experience) -- but as one who created ex nihilo, who transformed the artist into a "novelist" or epistemological god. James, by inserting the narrator/author back into his "story" and making him subject to it, undermined such a view of the novelistic author or narrator and produced a genuinely tragic form of novel -- that is, a kind of novel in which the narrator was enmeshed in the tragic economy of loss and gain, of slave and master morality, that the novel itself dramatizes.

R.P. Blackmur once said, referring to James's response to the outbreak of World War I (James died before its end): "James had nothing but his sensibility, which withstood

nothing, but sucked up the horror like a vacuum" (Primer 263). This characterization is accurate, but there is an implication in it that James stood helpless and unprepared against the onslaught of the horrors of the 20th century as represented by the war. Though James "had nothing but his sensibility," that was a great deal and left him anything but helpless before what he called, in 1900, "the wild waters...of our terrible time" (In the Cage 299). In The American Scene and other essays, as well as in much of his late fiction, James foresaw the developments of the 20th century quite as clearly and intensely as did Nietzsche. It is true that James suffered much from the war, but his suffering was a consequence of his life-long application of what he called in his Notebooks (in words that one can easily imagine Nietzsche, who invoked the notion of amor fati, having written):

> ...the terrible law of the artist....the law of the acceptance of all experience, of all suffering, of all suggestion and sensation and illumination...to go on, by one's own clear light, with patience, courage and continuity, to live with the high vision and effort, to justify one's self -- and oh!, so greatly -- all in time: this and this alone can be my only lesson from anything. (61; cf. Autobiography 295)

James's acceptance of all experience, the opening of his sensibility to the horror and suffering he saw the twentieth century ushering in, was his response, his tragic

affirmation of them; and this response can be seen in its most complete form in such tragedies as The Golden Bowl, where Maggie Verver provides a basis for a new concept of self by using and taking into herself the forces of evil she finds around her. It is indeed the late tragedies that are the real "birthplace" of James as artist, the locus of his self-construction and self-affirmation, of the making of what James might have called -- thinking of Matthew Arnold -- not his best but his "better self." "Tragedy," James wrote in his Autobiography, "has but to be of a pure enough strain and a high enough connecton to sow with its dark hand the seed of greater life" (490).

NOTES

1. Even Holland's treatment of James as tragedian, insightful as it is, is still essentially casual and undeveloped; so too are J.A. Ward's The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James (1961), Ellen Leyburn's Strange Alloy: The Mixture of Comedy and Tragedy in the Works of Henry James (1968), and Frederick Crews's The Tragedy of Manners (1971). Similarly, influential studies such as Jacques Barzun's "Henry James, Melodramatist" (1943) and Peter Brooks's The Melodramatic Imagination (1985) exaggerate the role of melodrama in James's works -- although I don't mean to deny that such a role is important -- to the point where a tragic reading is obviated.

2. For example, although critics have frequently noted that the heroine of The Ambassadors (Marie de Vionnet) is several times compared in the novel to Cleopatra, few have observed that the title of the novel is probably taken from a line in the first scene of Antony and Cleopatra, or that

the contrast between Paris and moralistic New England is in many ways a modernized version of the contrast between Egypt and Rome in Shakespeare's play.

3. See Notes 9, 10, and 11, Chapter II.

4. Wegelin, Image 90-1; Poirier, World 29; Krook, Ordeal 225-6.
5. See Booth, Rhetoric.

6. "Flaubert" 295. See also 326, in which James criticizes Flaubert's portrait of Emma Bovary in terms that cannot fail to remind one of his discussion of Isabel Archer in the "Prefaces"
-- as being, that is, "really too small an affair."

7. Strether's message is similar to that of artist-hero of "The Middle Years": "What one loses one loses; make no mistake about that" (132). Strether also makes clear a point I have been at pains to emphasize: by comparing consciousness to a "helpless jelly" and by speaking of "the illusion of freedom" (132), he reflects James's own non-idealistic, non-romantic propensity to value acting and doing over thinking and feeling -- or, more accurately, to see the latter as forms or manifestations of the former.

8. Readers' desire to view James's metaphorical psycho-narrations as consciousness dramatizing itself betrays an essentialistic desire for "the real thing," a desire which James purposely frustrates in such stories as "The Figure in the Carpet," a story which successively replaces one metaphorical description of "the real thing" with another, never telling us what "it" is. The phrase occurs in the titles of two other stories, "The Real Thing" and "The Real Right Thing (1900), as well as in much other fiction and nonfiction. It is most often used in an ironic sense to indicate that which is unobtainable, as in "the real thing, the romantic life itself" (Wings 120).

9. The same paragraph in which this often quoted characterization of James occurs begins by dismissing James's critical writings, including the New York Prefaces.

10. See Notes 8 and 9 of the Introduction.

11. See Notes 8 and 9 of the Introduction.

12. See the Introduction of McDonald, Normative, as well as Note 2 of the Introduction of this work.

13. See Note 2 of the Introduction of this work.

14. See McDonald, Normative 73, 101-2, 109, 195, 221.

15. Selected Criticism 30-1. James also satirizes the aesthetic movement in such stories as "The Author of Beltraffio" (via the portrait of Miss Ambient) or more good-humoredly in "The Coxon Fund," a caricature of Coleridge, who comes off looking like a modern-day Dylan Thomas. As James was well aware, romanticism is characterized partly by a tendency toward aestheticism; see Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism 352, 418, 427. James's distaste for Oscar Wilde is well-documented.

16. Nietzsche's works abound in references to the importance of roles and masks, an importance closely connected to his epistemological critique of essentialism. See Gay, secs. 77, 80, 361, 365; Beyond, secs. 4, 5, 25, 40, 204, 221, 270, 289.

17. Nietzsche wrote: "A very popular error: having the courage of one's convictions; rather it is a matter of having the courage for an attack on one's convictions" (Beyond, sec. 226). Nietzsche's formulation of a dialectic between master and slave morality is based in part on a valuation of experience over knowledge (see Chapter VII of this work). James, similarly, disparages "learning" when it is at the expense of "life" in his Autobiography 125, 254-5; in many of his novels and stories; and in the New York Prefaces.

Chapter II

Jamesian Tragedy: The Terrible Law of the Artist

The concept of tragedy adopted in this study, which will be applied to James's late novels, is what I call "constructive" as opposed to "representational." By characterizing tragedy as non-representational, I do not mean to contest Aristotle's view of tragedy as mimesis, but to show, following several scholars, including Gerald Else, John Jones, Walter Kaufmann, and Timothy Riess, that such a view has often been interpreted too narrowly in modern times.

The modern representational view of tragedy rests on a dis-tinction between tragedy as work of art and the tragic as extra-artistic reality. This distinction assumes a conception of the tragic as a fixed, universal condition that all people are subject to -- that is, the condition of being placed in a world where we must die and suffer the extinction of individuality and consciousness. The representational view leads to a notion of tragedy as pessimistic, since it dictates that the function of tragedy is to mirror or reflect the tragic condition.

By contrast, the "constructive" view of tragedy sees the chief function of tragedy not as representation but as

enactment. Tragedy creates the categories, the space of discourse, by which the tragic is conceptually delimited and encompassed. Prior to this delimitation, the tragic subsists only as a dimension of meaninglessness and irrationality that cannot be represented or even named because it cannot be juxtaposed against a contrary dimension of reason, freedom, or divine providence. Disorder constantly spills into and subsumes any form of order, including the order implicit in art. It is only when the unnameable -- or what is described in Sophocles's Oedipus at Colonus as "something awful,/Fearful and unendurable to see" (Greek III 182) -- can be incorporated within a signifying process, encompassed within an artistic structure, that tragedy's crucial function, the negation of system, order, and providence, can be served. Unlike the epic poet, who acts as a mouthpiece of the gods, the tragic poet is a mouthpiece of unmeaning.

Such negation, however, as Nietzsche often emphasized, implies an affirmation. Although tragedy enacts the tragic, this very enactment provides the conditions for the latter's overcoming. At the same time tragedy unfolds unmeaning, it creates a space of discourse within which tragic knowledge can be concealed and made bearable. The silences indicated or referenced by tragic heroes like

Prometheus (Aeschylus, Greek I 83), Oedipus, Hamlet, Lear, and, I will argue, Maggie Verver of The Golden Bowl and Milly Theale of The Wings of the Dove, give form to such concealment; they act as containers of unmeaning, not so much justifying injustice as allowing us to enclose it within the category of the tragic and thereby give it reference.

This containment is necessarily ideological; it affirms moral and political meaning and reflects, gives support to, or even helps to create in a revolutionary sense, a form of life. This may help to explain why tragedy has seemed to flourish in societies undergoing rapid and deep-seated changes. For example, Greek tragedy was cultivated during a period when the belief in reason, the foundation of the city-state, was being established. Renaissance tragedy, too, achieved its greatest triumphs at a time when a new concept of human freedom and individuality was on the rise. Jamesian tragedy, similarly, must be seen in the context of the crisis of the 20th century that found its forma-tive expression in modernism. Tragedy in general gives vision to blind fate. It creates an horizon of possibility, a canopy of consciousness, under which meaning can emerge.

James's late novels tend to expand their metaphoric discourse as the novels develop, to create a space of

discourse that emerges out of the narrator's description (or what we will see later is "psycho-narration") of the heros' expanding consciousness. To show the heros' consciousness as expanding, it must first be shown as constricted or what James calls "bewildered"; the heros are in this sense "exposed and assaulted." The story as a whole thus "comes to depend on the quality of bewilderment characteristic of one's creature" ("Prefaces" 1092). The creation of a space of discourse allowing for an expanded consciousness is preceded by the puncturing of the hero's self-deception, his "awakening," which is dictated by the novel's metonymic structure. This structure consists, in part, of the succession of events showing the idealistic hero falling into "the trap" ("Prefaces" 1090) set for her by Machiavellian villains. The metaphoric discourse accompanying such a succession of events is firmly grounded in, or arises out of, the metonymic base. It is a discourse which sets up a metaphoric relation between the hero's consciousness and larger cultural, social, and political realities, as when, for example, James uses the figure of a victim of the French Revolution to image the fate of Milly Theale of The Wings of the Dove (148, 369; cf. "Prefaces" 1082).

But when the hero "awakens," this metaphoric relation

is destroyed; a wedge is driven between the two poles so that the hero's loss of self-identity, the deracination of her consciousness, is experienced not just as a personal crisis, but as an ideological one. Only with the growth of a new metaphorical discourse, one that allows for the enunciation of silence or unmeaning -- the latter being, in The Golden Bowl (445) and The Wings of the Dove (243), Maggie and Milly's refusals to "know" -- is the metonymic base gradually displaced and the relation between metonymy and metaphor reversed. That James ultimately gives priority to metaphoric description (employing metaphor) is apparent in such comments as:

> My report of people's experience -- my report as "story-teller" is essentially my appreciation of it, and there is no "interest" for me in what my hero, my heroine or anyone else does save through that admirable process....The matter comes back again, I fear, but to the author's irrepressible and insatiable, his extravagant and immoral, interest in personal character and in the "nature of a mind".... ("Prefaces" 1091, 1169)

That the metaphoric discourse is displaced and has no base, no "realistic" foundation or secure referentiality (and therefore also no organic closure), constitutes not only a subversion of the traditional form of the novel, but is the narrative expression of one of James's principal tragic themes.

The theme I refer to is that the hero's moral economy

is based on "surplus value" rather than "exchange value" (my use of these terms, strongly influenced by McKee, Heroic, allude only slightly to Marxist formulations; see below). Surplus value is what James calls "the economy not of poverty, but of wealth" ("Shakespeare" 1212). The economy of poverty, of exchange morality, of "the tragi-comedy of waste" (Flaubert 335) is a "bankrupt state" that is not "artistically interesting" because "there is no meanness in art...so mean as the sneaking economic" ("Flaubert" 332). By contrast, surplus morality is self-generating. Just as Jamesian discourse fuels itself through its own acts of expression, so too the more the hero "gives," the more she gains and thereby has to give. For James, it is Shakespeare who provides the best and most complete example of artistic surplus morality, of that creative capacity which transforms every act into a value-generating one. Such capacity is like a "storehouse" that never runs out:

> ...the resources of [Shakespeare's] style, the provision of images, emblems, energies of every sort, laid up in advance, affects us as the storehouse of a king before a famine or a siege -- which not only, by its scale, braves depletion or exhaustion, but bursts, through mere excess of quantity or presence, out of all doors and windows. It renders the poverties and obscurities of our world...in the dazzling terms of a richer and better. ("Shakespeare" 1211)

As James describes Shakespeare, his own heroes, and the

artistic act in general, so too Shakespeare describes his tragic protagonists. Thus, Juliet says of Romeo: "They are but beggars that can count their worth/But my true love is grown to such excess/I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth" (II.vi.32-4); Antony to Cleopatra: "There's beggary in the love that can be reckoned" (I.i.14-15); Enobarbus of Cleopatra: "[She] did make defect perfection....she makes hungry where most she satisfies" and the sight of her "beggared all description" (II.ii. 204 ff.); Enobarbus of Antony: "thou mine of bounty" (IV.vi.32); Sonnet 64: "Increasing store with loss and loss with store" (exchange morality operates by exactly the opposite logic); and Cleopatra about Antony after his death: "For his bounty, there was no winter in it: an autumn 'twas that grew the more by reaping...[such a man was] past the size of dreaming" (V.ii. 86ff.)

One might contrast these expressions of surplus morality with Antony's plunge into "the heart of loss" (IV.xii.28; cf. Conrad's "the heart of darkness"); the Senators' response to Alcibiades in Timon of Athens: "He forfeits his own blood that spills another" (III.v.88); the words of Lucius's servant about Timon: "'Tis deepest winter in Lord Timon's purse" (III.iv.15); and what Alfred Kazin calls "the most important sentence" in Thoreau's Walden:

"The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it" (American 70). Such logic is the antithesis of Pompey and Antony's in Antony and Cleopatra (e.g., II.vii.78), as well as Ralph Touchett's in The Portrait of a Lady (160). It might also be remembered that Melville said of Emerson that "there was something lacking in the region of his heart" and that in The Confidence Man, he characterized Emerson and his "disciple," Thoreau, as mean-hearted purveyors of exchange morality.

In keeping with surplus morality, James's tragedies are neither ambiguous nor pessmistic but affirmative. Such affirmation is ungrounded in negation; it is not the act of an existential self responding to or reacting against the "reality" of death, suffering, and meaninglessness. Rather, it is an affirmation asserting through deed the unreality of negative forces. It is a pure positivity, one that does not rely on "grounds" or "justification" outside itself but makes its grounds and justification, makes its meaning, by the very acts through which it becomes manifest.

Although I will be placing much emphasis on "the tragic structure" of James's late novels, I do not mean to imply that such structure contains consciousness in a fixed way. On the contrary, it is the purpose of such structure to

give us a sense of consciousness exceeding the bounds set for it, of being continually on the verge of overrunning its territory. Though in a literal sense, James's "plots" of the imagination come to an end (the draftsman runs out of paper), in another sense they run on and on. Such excess characterizes not just the novels, The Wings of the Dove, The Ambassadors, and The Golden Bowl, but the relationships between the characters in the novels. The boundaries of Milly, Strether, and Maggie are not contained or demarcated only by the pronouns "I," "she" or "he." Rather, the personalities of these characters are constantly exceeding their linguistic limits, merging their identities -- not losing them -- with those of the other characters. The moral economy by which they are enabled to do this is what James calls, in the New York Prefaces, a "sublime economy" (1139) and, in The Wings of the Dove, a "splendid economy" 346). It is an economy such that the more one gives (the more one "puts oneself" into others), the more there is to give (since the more one has absorbed from others in the process of giving). Similarly, the more one takes (the wider one expands the dimensions of oneself), the more there is to take (since the more there is of one). The sublime economy, in other words, collapses any fixed distinction between giving and taking by opening up the

boundaries of the self. As Maggie Verver of The Golden Bowl puts it:

> "...when you love only a little you're naturally not jealous -- or are only jealous a little, so that it doesn't matter. But when you love in a deeper and intenser way, then you are, in the same proportion, jealous; your jealousy has intensity and, no doubt, ferocity. When, however, you love in the most abysmal and unutterable way of all -- why then you're beyond everything, and nothing can pull you down." (506)

There is neither foundation nor ceiling to Maggie's love. Loving, like living, simply is; it does not have a goal, a beginning or end point outside itself to which it could refer. The act of loving is all. But what is true of Maggie Verver's "love" applies also, on a different level, to James's art. Just as James makes it the task of his tragic heroines and heroes not to explain or assign a goal or purpose to their lives but simply to work, and rework, the materials of their lives, so too James makes it his task to work and rework, unendingly, the materials of his art, accepting without question the subject matter which life, through no act of his own, has "floated into his ken." "Behold me so behaving," James says in his famous letter to Henry Adams concerning the writing of his Autobiography (671). And so too are we meant to behold the deeds of his protagonists; it is the deeds themselves, not any cause or consequence of them, that constitute the

tragic affirmation. A less sentimental, romanticized love is scarcely imaginable. Maggie's is a constructed, a performed and artistic love, a love which constitutes a sort of truthful "illusion" -- a word that James uses in innumerable places to describe both the ideals of his protagonists and those of the artist (e.g., Wings 1289; "Prefaces" 1294-5) -- that carries the force of passion and life. It is a love that reminds us of "the deep human expertness in [artist] Gloriani's charming smile -- oh the terrible life behind it" in The Ambassadors (121). Following the presentation of Maggie's ahistorical and romantic Americanism, there is enacted the intimate intrusion, the sensitive slow-motion onslaught of evil, duplicity, and sensuousness upon her character and imagination. Maggie is invaded by history, by what both James and Nietzsche regarded as the "cruelties" and "rapacities" on which "the fabric of civilization" is based. What we witness is Maggie opening herself up to such forces, taking them into herself, and using them to weave the fabric of a new truth, a new good, a new beauty. By receiving evil into herself, she simultaneously shields it from others, accomplishing what Milly Theale, in The Wings of Dove, does in a different way: the carving out of the conceptual horizons under which others may live. These

"others," who include Kate Croy and Densher, Charlotte Stant and the Prince, embody a morality whose values are referential and thereby equated with things, which when given are lost. They embody a morality that Deleuze, following Nietzsche, terms "reactive" (64); it is a morality that sees happiness (goodness, truth, beauty) as the opposite of pain, suffering, and death. By contrast, for James's tragic protagonists, pain, suffering, and death are but the relative lack of joy, passion, and life and constitute the materials out of which the latter are constructed and tragically affirmed. All of James's late tragedies, as well as The Portrait of a Lady, enact the victory of an active morality over a reactive one. For example, by the end of The Golden Bowl, Maggie has triumphed to the extent of enclosing her husband within the boundaries of her consciousness. That is why he says: "See? I see nothing but you." This declaration is followed by the last sentence of the novel: "And the truth of it had, with this force, after a moment, so strangely lighted his eyes that, as for pity and dread of them, she buried her own in his breast" (580).

Maggie's "pity" is prompted by her realization that her domination, the enclosure of her husband, has become complete. Her "dread," on the other hand, is prompted by

her realization that in the process of absorbing and "taking" him she has absorbed and "given" herself. The act by which she has determined him has determined herself; her complete domination of him is indistinguishable from her complete submission to him. She has imposed herself on fate by sacrificing herself to it. She has, in a formulation used by Nietzsche, become what she is.

And so it is also with James as artist; language is for him a "grasping," creating power that is exercised only by submission. Just as James, in his Notebooks, often lapses into the first person singular in describing the perceptions and emotions of his characters, so too Maggie Verver is a performed, an enacted self-portrait. She shows James in the process of his own self-construction:

> Ah, just to let one's self go -- at last: to surrender oneself to what through all the long years one has (quite heroically, I think) hoped and waited for -- the mere potential, and relative, increase of quantity in the material act -- act of application and production. And now...it seems...to have come....I bow down to Fate, equally in submission and in gratitude. (Complete Notebooks 114)

Closely related to the morality of surplus value is the acceptance of the lack of any intrinsic basis for morality, whether that basis be in consciousness, self, society, or God. It is the hero's awareness of this lack, mirrored by the lack of a metonymic basis for the narrator's metaphoric

description of such awareness, that constitutes her "tragic knowledge" -- the knowledge, as the Prince says in The Golden Bowl, that "Everything's terrible, cara, in the heart of man" (566). These words are the counterpart, but a moral and internalized counterpart, to Sophocles's words in Oedipus at Colonus (124ff.), which Nietzsche points out, in The Birth of Tragedy, are a rendering of the words of Silenus, a companion to Dionysus:

> Oh, wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and misery, why do you compel me to tell you what it would be most expedient for you not to hear? What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best for you is -- to die soon. (Birth 42, sec. 3)

Which is in turn comparable to the words of Macbeth:

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> and then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing. (V.v.24-8)

One begins to grasp from these expressions of tragic knowledge why Nietzsche as tragic philosopher placed so much emphasis on the necessity of illusion for life. And James, in his late tragedies, placed fully as much emphasis on that necessity -- on what Densher, in The Wings of the Dove, calls "the make-believe of freedom" (345), a freedom that is make-believe because, as Enobarbus puts it in Antony and Cleopatra: "...men's judgments are/A parcel of

their fortunes, and things outward/Do draw the inward quality after them..." (III.xiii.31-3; cf. "Prefaces" 1289, 1294-5; Strether makes the same point to Little Bilham in his famous speech in Gloriani's garden in The Ambassadors). It is those characters, such as Kate in The Wings of the Dove, Charlotte in The Golden Bowl, and Caspar Goodwood in The Portrait of a Lady, who believe in "freedom" as an intrinsic aspect of the self, and not as a fiction which must be earned, who are self-deceived, who have fallen victim to what James, speaking of Balzac, calls "self-deceptive charlatanism" (76). As I will show later, James is deeply "Shakespearian" in his emphasis on theatricality and play-acting.

(2)

For Nietzsche, quite as much as James, tragedy was neither pessimistic nor ambiguous but rather affirmative. For example, immediately after calling himself "the first tragic philosopher" in Ecce Homo, he added "that is, the most extreme opposite and antipode of a pessimistic philosopher" (729). Similarly, in Twilight of the Idols, he wrote:

> Saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems; the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its

> highest types -- that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. (110)

As early as The Birth of Tragedy (1872), Nietzsche viewed the great tragedies as an affirmative response to the meaning-lessness and absurdity of existence. Only by virtue of the sublime beauty of the great tragedies could man both face up to such meaninglessness and still retain the will to live. As Nietzsche put it in The Will to Power:

> Tragedy does not teach "resignation" -- To represent terrible and questionable things is in itself an instinct for power and magnificence in an artist....The tragic man affirms even the harshest suffering: he is sufficiently strong, rich, and capable of deifying to do so. (434; cf. 543)

Or, as Deleuze, explicating Nietzsche's view -- which at least in one respect can be interpreted as anti-Aristotelian (1) -- says:

> Nietzsche can attack all theories of the tragic for failing to recognise tragedy as an aesthetic phenomenon. The tragic is the aesthetic form of joy, not a medical phrase or a moral solution to pain, fear or pity. It is joy that is tragic. But this means that tragedy is immediately joyful... (17)

The crucial feature of tragedy for Nietzsche, then, was affirmation in the face of pain, suffering, and death. But what kind of affirmation and how does the tragic poet accomplish it? Any approach to answering this question, for both Nietzsche and James, I believe, must begin with Aristotle's pronouncement in the Poetics that "Tragedy is

essentially an imitation, not of persons, but of action and life" and that therefore "the first essential, the life and soul, so to speak is the Plot...the Characters come second" (1461).

At first sight, nothing would seem to be less Nietzschean or Jamesian. Nonetheless, I think that Aristotle's assertion, far from conflicting with Nietzsche and James's views, greatly illuminates them. To see this, however, we must divest ourselves of certain modern assumptions the Greek philosopher did not share. As John Jones has argued cogently in his On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy, our reading of Aristotle's remarks as entailing an opposition between plot and character is based on such assumptions. When Aristotle compares tragedy with painting, likening plot to a "simple black and white sketch" and character to color (1461), he is pointing out that color is a subjective quality when viewed in isolation; he is not saying that it doesn't play an essential or at least important role in constituting the painting. In Jones's words,

> Aristotle's analogy bears mainly upon the function of character: he wants to make the proposition that character serves action seem no less assured than is (for a Greek) the proposition that the only legitimate use of colour in painting is to support the finished likeness. He is saying that character is included for the sake of the action; he is not saying, or he is

> saying only incidentally, that character is less important than action. (31)

The potential opposition we see between plot and character did not exist for Aristotle; to be significantly represented -- to have a form unlike an incoherent mass of color in a painting -- character must be represented by action. For moderns, by contrast, character has its source in an autonomous self apart from action and experience:

> Aristotle is assaulting the now settled habit in which we see action issuing from a solitary focus of consciousness -- secret, inward, interesting -- and in which the status of action must always be adjectival: action qualifies; it tells us things we want to know about the individual promoting it; the life of action is our ceaseless, animating consideration of the state of affairs 'inside' him who acts, without which action is empty and trivial, an effluvium. This movement from adjectival action to the substantive self would seem, were it conscious, not merely natural but inevitable. Were it conscious, however, we should have to admit that we are first rejecting Aristotle's injunction to make character serve action, and then replacing it with its opposite. (Jones 33)

In Aristotle, according to Jones, "the self-maintained continuity of the modern ego is lacking" (37). Just as "The virtuous man...is always one who has learned to be good through acting well" (37), so too self is revealed in and through action and appearance. Self is not "the face" --the reality or substratum -- behind the mask, but the mask itself:

> ...mask and face were at one in their sufficiency; unlike the modern face and the modern mask, they did

> not owe their interest to the further realities lying behind them, because they declared the whole man. They state; they did not hint or hide. (45)

In The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche had posited as essential to tragedy a Dionysian "shattering of the individual and his fusion with primal being" (65, sec. 8). In his later works, he rejected such a simplistic account of the Dionysian (Kaufmann, Nietzsche 281-2). But he continued to treat "character" in the modern, subjective sense as precisely what is unessential to art and tragedy:

> Only from [the] angle of the problem of the actor...can [one]...can get at the dangerous concept of the "artist"....Falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation exploding as a power that pushes aside one's so-called 'character', flooding it and at times extinguishing it; the inner craving for a role and mask, for appearance....Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live...What can we understand of [the ancient life] as long as we do not understand the delight in masks and the good conscience in using any kind of mask! (Gay 316, sec. 361; 38, Preface, sec. 4; 132, sec. 77)

Not only did Nietzsche embrace Aristotle's ideal of "the great souled man" (Nietzsche, Will 513, sec. 981; cf. Kaufmann, Nietzsche 382), but he rejected "the self-maintained continuity of the ego." Nietzsche (like James) was preoccupied with the phenomenon of consciousness in a way that Aristotle was not. Nonetheless, all three were united in their view that the self is a form of action and that therefore character can be portrayed only by means of

action -- what John Jones calls in reference to Aristotle "the gradual emergence of personality in a channelling of action-pattern" (38).

But in order for character to emerge through the channels of action, it is essential that the action be typical or representative. Aristotle conceived of a "human action" as something which is characteristic of man as man, not as something which is characteristic of man as individual. "Poetry is the imitation of human action" in the former, not in the latter sense.

But here we must be careful about the sense in which we understand the term, "imitation" or "mimesis." Aristotle's concept of art was more "constructive" than "representational" in the sense characterized above. As Timothy Reiss notes, recent commentators have translated mimesis as "make believe" or "ways of pretending," with the connotation of "unveiling" and "evocation." For Aristotle, "the idea of representation, in the modern sense, is not available" (Riess 28). In Aeschylus, for example, there can be no confusion between the order of tragedy and some reality conceived as exterior to it" (Riess 30). Mimesis, as Thomas Else argues, refers not to the completed artistic product (or to the resemblance between it and reality) but to:

> ...the drafting of the plot, the "making" of the overall form of the action and by "plot" Aristotle means the shaping of the structure of incidents, the forming process which goes on in the mind (soul) of the poet: in other words muthos [plot] really signifies a working part of the art of tragedy. (12; cf. 263)

Kitto makes a similar point about Aeschylus and Sophocles when he says that "both are constructive rather than representational" (208).

As Nietzsche stressed, ancient Greek tragedies resemble traditional folk tales in that both suppress "subject matter" or any suspense associated with the realistic unfolding of events, for the sake of a predetermined structure or form:

> The effect of tragedy never depended on epic suspense, on a fascinating uncertainty as to what is to happen now and afterward, but rather on the great rhetorical-lyrical scenes in which the passion and dialectic of the protagonist swelled to a broad and powerful current....what interferes most with the hearer's pleasurable absorption in such scenes is any missing link, any gap in the texture of the background story. So long as the spectator has to figure out the meaning of this or that person, or the presuppositions of this or that conflict of inclinations and purposes, he cannot become completely absorbed in the activities and sufferings of the chief characters or feel breathless pity and fear. (Birth 84, sec. 12)

That is why the chorus for Nietzsche is such a vital element of tragedy. It is the means, in Tracy Strong's words,

> ...by which the audience is brought on stage and bound up into the myth....The spectator can see himself as the chorus, which in turn sees [the protagonist]....The

> audience is wholly in the world of the play and through the perfect illusion, finds the dramatic world whole and perfect... (169; 164-5)

In common with Aristotle, what is crucial to Nietzsche about tragedy is that it affirm an "order of reality" -- not present a series of accidental events:

> The profundity of the tragic artist lies in this, that his aesthetic instinct surveys the more remote consequences, that he does not halt shortsightedly at what is closest at hand, that he affirms the large-scale economy [cf. James's "sublime economy"] which justifies the terrifying, the evil, the questionable -- and more than merely justifies them. (Will 451, sec. 852)

Tragedy for Nietzsche was thus affirmation in the face of pain, suffering, and death, an affirmation tied to the unfolding of the drama as a totality, not necessarily to the character of the protagonist as individual. Even in cases where the protagonist is given much grandeur, what the poet is "affirming" is not the hero as individual, for "all individuals, taken as individuals, are comic and hence untragic -- from which it would follow that the Greeks simply could not suffer individuals on the tragic stage" (Birth 73, sec. 10; cf. James's repeated emphasis that "kinds are the life of literature"). Nietzsche would have agreed with Aristotle that "character" in the subjective sense -- as mere "color" --was secondary to plot, just as he would have agreed with him that "character" in its

deepest sense was plot (as James said in an often quoted passage in "The Art of Fiction") -- that is, plot not as a more or less accidental sequence of events but as reflecting the "order of reality" posited by the poet. In the New York Prefaces, James repeatedly emphasizes how the structure of a work of art has logical priority over the character of the hero (to the extent there is any difference between the two in the first place). For example, speaking of The Awkward Age, he says:

> The central object was my situation, my subject in itself, to which the thing would owe its title, and the small rounds [i.e., the points of view of the different characters] represented so many distinct lamps, as I liked to call them, the function of each of which would be to light with all due intensity one of its aspects. ("Prefaces" 1130)

Note how similar is James's metaphor to Aristotle's; chararacter is "color" for Aristotle, "light" for James. The function of each is to illuminate the structure or plot or "subject" of the work of art as a whole. For James, as for Aristotle and Nietzsche, "'Kinds' are the very life of literature" (1131); artists who fail to recognize this dictum are no artists at all (which is James's ironic point in his story, "The Real Thing" (1893)). So "functional" does James regard his characters that at one point he even speaks of them, in the mannner of Thackerary, as "mannikins" ("Prefaces" 1146; cf. 1098).

One point on which James and Nietzsche probably differ from Aristotle is in the latter's view that hamartia or "tragic flaw" is not essential to the structure of tragedy. Thomas Else has interpreted Aristotle to mean by this term not a moral flaw of the protagonist that would make his suffering "deserved" but rather the ignorance of the latter in carrying out some action (378-85) -- "missing the mark," like an arrow aimed at a target. According to Nietzsche and James's views, however, even if hamartia is a moral flaw, it still does not explain or justify what happens to the protagonist. As Tracy Strong explains Nietzsche's view:

> Tragedy...depends, as does much of the ethos of the Iliad, on the fact that intentions often turn out to be irrelevant to the moral problems that are confronted. In Homer or Aeschylus there is no obvious point by point relation between the choices an individual makes, and the outcome to which he submits. The action is the unfolding of a person's character... (176)

For example, the hubris or excessive pride and belief in his own self-knowledge of Sophocles's Oedipus do not account for the tragic events that befall him. On the contrary, such events, taken as a whole, are uncaused and unexplained; they are a given that form the backdrop by which the real focus of the play can be made manifest. That focus is the revelation of Oedipus's (representatively important) character -- a revelation conveyed to us by the manner in which Oedipus responds to his fate and the "use"

he makes of the events that befall him. If Oedipus's pride plays a role here, it is to help him make that use a good one by intensifying his awareness of his fate far more fully than persons not possessed of such a "flaw." Oedipus's pride and arrogance are the means by which his experience of suffering is heightened and so also the means by which he achieves final wisdom and self-fulfillment. Classical and Shakespearian tragedies are "unhappy" only in the very general sense that they accept the inevitability of pain, suffering, and death. This is not to slight the grimness of such plays as Oedipus the King and King Lear. Rather, it is to argue that the central "action" of such tragedies is the unfolding and bringing to fruition, the affirmation, of character. The affirmation is all in the action and events, not in any explanation or justification for them.

Tragedy affirms through the act of making meaning; the tragedy does not depend on some prior meaning for its affirma-tion. The "meaning" of tragedy is not a meaning of, but a meaning that is made by the act of the artist overcoming unmeaning. Such unmeaning, in Nietzsche's words, is:

> ...the greatest danger that always hovered over humanity and still hovers over it...the eruption of madness -- which means the eruption of arbitrariness in feeling,

> seeing, and hearing, the enjoyment of the mind's lack of discipline, the joy in human unreason. Not truth and certainty are the opposite of the world of the madman, but the universality and the universal binding force of a faith... (Gay 130, sec. 76)

The word "faith" here is appropriate, for the tragic artist cannot overcome unreason, the fundamental irrationality of human life, with reason; he can do so only by an act that "makes" reason (much as medieval philosophers reasoned on the basis of, not in conflict with, their faith):

> This seems to me to be almost the norm among fertile artists -- nobody knows a child less well than its parents do -- and it is true even in the case, to take a tremendous example, of the whole world of Greek art and poetry: it never "knew" what it did....the divine Plato almost always speaks only ironically of the creative faculty of the poet, insofar as it is not conscious insight, and places it on a par with the gift of the soothsayer and dream-interpreter: the poet is incapable of composing until he has become unconscious and bereft of understanding. (Gay 327, sec. 369; cf. Birth 86, sec. 12)

Greek art did not "know what it did" because it did not arise from a logic or knowledge; it established a logic and knowledge. Similarly, James often referred to artists, including himself, as "dupes," and consistently valued faith or belief over knowledge. As Timothy Riess says in Tragedy and Truth, what is "specific to tragedy" is "the act of overcoming unmeaning, the 'treading on the brink of meaning'...the approach to 'the precipice of

absurdity'...." It is therefore "the way in which the discourse of tragedy functions that has created" its meanings; "we have not in fact derived the meaning of tragedy from what tragedies say so much as from what they do" (6; 15; 14). That is why, in tragedy, character is fate: because tragedy delineates character in and through the presented action; the performance of the tragedy displays to us character in the process of being made. The boundaries of character are the limits of the presented action. As Orestes says in Aeschylus's Eumenides, "This is my case. Decide if it be right or wrong. Where my fate falls, I shall accept." (Grene III, 21)

(3)

Like Nietzsche's concept of tragedy, Jamesian tragedy is radically subversive of modern epistemology. It subverts, that is, both the ideology of the novel and the concept of author and the notions of self and consciousness that are dictated by such an ideology. By "ideology of the novel," I refer mainly to the philosophical presuppositions of the traditional novel, using as a model for such presuppositions the views of Hume and Kant and contrasting them with the views of Wittgenstein and Nietzsche. (2) Hume and Kant, as well as many of their philosophical

descendants such as Coleridge, Emerson, and William James, not only glorified the intrinsic, if unrealized powers of self ("A man is a god in ruins," said Emerson in "Nature" [855]), and characterized these powers as inherently nonsocial. It was due in part to the influence of Emerson, Coleridge, and others that in so many 19th- and even 20th-century novels, both British and American, the hero's struggle to achieve an authentic self-identity is represented as a struggle to break free from the constraints and imprisoning forces of society. The flight of heros of British novels from social forces (often symbolized by the city) often results in their taking refuge in a sentimentalized vision of the family, as in the novels of Dickens, (3) or in a Kantian ideal of good fellowship and neighborliness, as in the novels of George Eliot. (4) By contrast, a large number of American novels, from Twain's Huckleberry Finn to Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises to Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye, have portrayed heroes who resist social forces by taking refuge in a childlike innocence that leaves them remarkably unburdened by their collective or individual past. They seem to remain uncommitted and unbound to any social group or ideal whatsoever.

A characteristic feature of such novels, British and

American, is how little the character of the protagonist undergoes significant change from beginning to end. This feature should not, however, be surprising. If our "authentic" identities are rooted in a privatized and autonomous essence, then change can only be precipitated by pernicious contact with society, resulting in an infection that must be expelled from "the system" in order to maintain or regain good health. Moreover, technology may serve a medicinal function in preserving the individual's essential purity. As Leo Marx in The Machine in the Garden points out, the forces of technology during the 19th century were frequently regarded -- for example, by Emerson and Whitman -- as a potential ally in the individual's effort to achieve autonomy or realize his true self.

They were a potential ally because, first, such forces seemed to serve as the instruments of man's Promethean will, making possible the realization of a pastoral ideal that would return man back to the garden of his inner self, except this time with a machine by his side; and because, secondly, technology had the capacity to subvert through rapid social change the traditions and social conventions that were repressing individual freedom. Nonetheless, the history of technology's role in social development shows that no sooner was the machine enlisted as a means of

maintaining the essentialist self than it began to be perceived as betraying such essentialism. At this point, the peculiar, Kafkaesque logic of mass culture, described by D.A. Miller in The Novel and the Police, began to assert itself. The further the individual retreats into the garden of his self, the more he relinquishes social and political power and opens himself to the prying gaze of Foucault's panopticon -- to the unlocalizable, omnipresent, and authoritarian structure of modern institutions. Miller shows how Dickens's Bleak House represents and fictionally enacts this self-defeating dynamic. Or, as George Lukacs puts it, the "self-destruction of reality" appears in the form of a "disharmony between the interiority of the individual and the substratum of his actions; the more genuine is the interiority ...the more clearly this disharmony will appear" (79).

Although James's late fiction, as we will see, avoids becoming entangled in such a dynamic, he was nonetheless strongly influenced by Victorian fiction. First, the structure of his plots is overtly Dickensian in that they typically open with the portrayal of an idealistic individual, usually young, naive, and inexperienced like Dickens's child-heroes, who eventually finds himself (or, more often, herself), surrounded and entrapped by a corrupt

society which plots to rob her, sometimes of her money (Isabel Archer, Milly Theale, Maggie Verver), sometimes of her freedom and personal autonomy (Maisie of What Maisie Knew, Nanda Brookenham of The Awkward Age, Ralph Pendrel of The Sense of the Past), and sometimes of both. In James's works, the idealistic hero is often American, while the corrupt society is either European or composed of Americans whose values have been debased by contact with Europe.

The second feature that James's fiction shares in common with Victorian fiction is that his heroes are often young women or girls (this is also true of the overwhelming majority of mid-19th-century American popular fiction, though not of the far less popular works of such "masculinist" authors as Melville). There are many exceptions during the late period, including Strether of The Ambassadors, John Marcher of The Beast in the Jungle, Stransom of The Altar of the Dead, the unnamed narrator of The Sacred Fount, Spencer Brydon of The Jolly Corner, and Ralph Pendrel of The Sense of the Past. Yet most of these protagonists are, in the sense discussed by Ann Douglas in The Feminization of American Culture, feminized men -- what James called, making fun of his penchant for portraying such a type -- "sensitive poor gentlemen" ("Prefaces" 1251, 1253). They bear a striking resemblance to those

19th-century liberal Protestant ministers who, as Douglas shows, generally adopted and promoted the sentimental values of their overwhelmingly female congrega-tions. James's feminized male heroes often betray to greater or lesser extents a sense that their masculinity is a liability and that women are generally more perceptive, intelligent, and morally sensitive. James himself often expressed the view, common among 19th-century observers (e.g., Henry Adams), that women dominated American culture, as well as social and interpersonal relations. Similarly, Toqueville said of America, "I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked...to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply -- to the superiority of their women" (48).

Such an image of women is put into perspective by contrasting it with that held by Elizabethan society. As Stephen Greenblatt points out in Shakespearean Negotiations, the convention of women disguising themselves in male clothing, as seen in several of Shakespeare's comedies, reflected a view of women as essentially poor imitations of men. The greater their ability to act like men -- within limits -- the more esteemed they were as persons. For example, Portia in Julius Caesar earns

Brutus's admiration by wounding herself in the thigh; Volumnia in Coriolanus, who is presented in general as having many admirable qualities, hopes that her son will return from the war wounded; Cordelia of King Lear is described (in Act IV.iii) as fitting Hamlet's masculinist ideal of not being "passion's slave"; and even Desdemona in Othello is repeatedly described in such terms as "my fair warrior," "general of my general," and "master of my master." As for The Merchant of Venice's Portia, James describes her in terms that make clear she served as the basic model of most of his female protagonists -- as "the very type and model of the young person intelligent and presumptuous" ("Prefaces" 1078).

A very different image of women is conveyed in much 19th-century literature; an ideal of self-identity is posited in which men, however great their economic and political dominance, are seen as essentially weak imitations of women. In the novels of Austen, Dickens, and Eliot, as well as in 19th-century American popular fiction, men often rely on women, and even fathers on their daughters, for moral guidance. Men seem to be able to achieve an authentic self-identity only through women's salutary examples. As Oscar Wilde has the Duchess of Berwick say in Lady Windermere's Fan (whose original title

was A Good Woman, which is reminiscient of the subtitle of Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles [1891], A Pure Woman): "Oh, men don't matter. With women it is different. We're good" (261). This sentiment is echoed later by Lady Windermere's husband (266). James, similarly, points up "the extraordinary absence...of a serious male interest" in American culture ("Prefaces" 1274) and has Darcy, in "An Animated Conversation," say: "...if they [women] are...the great consumers of to-day, they are still more the great producers...Literature is simply undergoing a transformation -- it's becoming feminine" (68; see also "Prefaces" 1159; Wings 168, 219).

Douglas connects the rise of such a feminine -- contrary to Jane Tompkins, I will distinguish it from a feminist -- model of individuality with the decline of belief in the patriarchal Calvinist God. Donald Pease makes a parallel connection when he argues that "the rhetoric of pure persuasion," a "feminine" rhetoric which was associated with 19th-century liberal Protestant ministers, including Emerson, "was used to 'purify' the [more masculinist] rhetoric of the American jeremiad of the charge of coercion" (148). Both connections are reinforced by the large number of febrile, morally weak and vacillating fathers that populate 19th-century fiction. As

has often been noted, the modernist internalization of the basis of identity involved a usurpation of the properties formerly ascribed to a transcendent deity. The birth of the essentialist self was a product of, or at least accompanied by, the death of God.

That this modern self was at its core feminine did not mean that political and economic power could be handed over to women. On the contrary, that the self was internalized and privatized -- defined as in essence non-social and non-public -- dictated that political and economic power continue to be denied to women. Exemplifying that autonomy, freedom, and domestic tranquillity for which men every day competed in the capitalistic system and acted "like beasts" in order to support, preserve, and return home to, women had to be kept out of such a sphere. Otherwise not only their essentialist feminine nature would be "violated," but also the essentialist feminine core within man, the hidden, but pure self whose existence he was assured of only because he could witness its embodiment in women, receiving testimony through her of the survival of the ideals he could not himself live up to -- that inner self would be threatened as well. In that case, the man would become disillusioned, despondent, despairing -- a process enacted in many of Saul Bellow's novels.

These two inherited features of Jamesian fiction -- the situation of an idealistic protagonist entrapped by the villainous forces of society, as well as the femininity of his heroes -- are elements of a retelling of the traditional fairy tale on which many 19th-century novels modelled their structure on. Fairy tales often revolve around the simple plot of a prince hazarding various dangers such as dragons or evil characters in order to "save" the princess and in the end marry her. The "retelling" that the 19th-century novel accomplishes consists mainly in the substitution of a princess in place of the role traditionally performed by the prince. In Dickens's Bleak House and Eliot's Middlemarch, for example, it is clearly the princess who occupies center stage and plays the crucial role in overcoming the obstacles that lead to the final marriage (cf. Tennyson's The Princess). And in James's works, it is also the princess, or the feminized man, who remains the focus of the narrative throughout.

Yet here the similarity breaks down. For in James's novels the "trap" which the idealistic hero walks or falls into is never really eluded. Compare, for example, Dorothea Brooke of Middlemarch with Isabel Archer of The Portrait of a Lady, a work that was in fact influenced by Middlemarch,

as well as Daniel Deronda. Each protagonist is a young, rich, beautiful, idealistic, somewhat arrogant and egotistical woman who makes a disastrous marriage choice that seems to condemn her to a miserable, constricted life dominated by a tyrannical and morally weak husband. In Middlemarch, however, the tyrannical husband suddenly dies and Dorothea goes on to marry a man whom she not only really loves but who manages more or less to fulfill (with her help) her ideal. In The Portrait of a Lady, the man whom many readers feel Isabel proably should have married, Ralph Touchett, dies, and the husband, Gilbert Osmond, surely one of the more melodramatically fiendish characters James created, not only goes on living but becomes increasingly tyrannical. Isabel, unlike Dorothea (as well as Vanity Fair's Amelia and David Copperfield), gets no "second chance." And to make matters worse, the novel ends in a way that has discomfited readers from James's day to the present; Isabel chooses of her own free will to remain with Osmond -- to submit herself, possibly everlastingly, to the wrath of the dragon. That James saw Isabel as a more successfully tragic version of Dorothea or Gwendolyn Harleth of Daniel Deronda -- as possessed of an intelligence, sensitivity, and vulnerability that made her ripe for tragic experience -- is indicated by his

description of the latter, in "Daniel Deronda: A Conversation" (1876), as:

> "...a perfect picture of youthfulness -- its eagerness, its presumption, its preoccupation with itself, its vanity and silliness, its sense of its own absoluteness. But she is extremely intelligent and clever, and therefore tragedy can have a hold upon her....The universe forcing itself with a slow inexorable pressure into a narrow, complacent, and yet after all extremely sensitive mind, and making it ache with the pain of the process -- that is Gwendolyn's story." ("Eliot" 990)

These words are spoken by "Constantius," who is agreeing with a remark made by "Theodora":

> "Her [Gwendolyn's] conscience doesn't make the tragedy; that is an old story and, I think, a secondary form of suffering. It is the tragedy that makes her conscience, which then reacts upon it; and I can think of nothing more powerful than the way in which the growth of her conscience is traced, nothing more touching than the picture of its helpless maturity." ("Eliot" 989-90)

It should be noted that James criticized Adam Bede for not being sufficiently tragic; he would have "infinitely preferred" to see Hetty Sorel executed (921) and accuses Eliot of having committed "the error of showing [Adam] as redeemed by suffering" (925) -- perhaps James's most direct attack on a Christian (or, more generally, rationalized) concept of tragedy. As for Eliot's other works, James criticizes her for reverting, "even in 'The Mill on the Floss,'" to the device of closing with "the factitious happiness of a fairy-tale" (932) -- for not, in short,

writing tragedies. Indeed, as James makes clear in "Daniel Deronda: A Conversation," Gwendolyn's "tragic potential" is not fully realized by Eliot, who makes her suffer in the end a purely pathetic fate. Isabel's fate, by contrast, may be dismaying, but it is not pathetic.

James's other works do not end much more happily than does The Portrait of a Lady. If they begin by seeming to imitate the comic and romantic form of many 19th-century novels in their feminized retelling of the traditional fairy tale, it is not long before they begin to frustrate the expectations generated by this form, a frustration that only grows more intense and more complete as the novel develops. They are, in this sense, frustrated fairy tales, or tragedies.

But what makes them "tragic"? Certainly it is not just that they subvert the comic and romantic form, allowing the hero's happiness to be gradually destroyed by the forces of villainy, oppressive social institutions and mores, or simply "fate." For if that were the case, then Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Wharton's The House of Mirth, or even Dickens's The Old Curiosity Shop, could also be legitimately characterized as "tragedies" -- a characterization I would at the least qualify in a manner similar to that of D.H. Lawrence who,

referring to Hardy, spoke of the fundamental "weakness of modern tragedy" (qtd. in King 95). If the above mentioned novels are to be regarded as "tragic," then they are tragic in a qualitatively different sense of the word than are James's late novels (or even The Portrait of a Lady), not to mention Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, Antony and Cleopatra, and Coriolanus. Moreover, what makes James's novels "tragic" in a qualitatively different sense than most 19th- and early 20th-century novels with unhappy endings is integrally related to the late Jamesian technique of fictional discourse. That is why The Portrait of a Lady, written in James's early style, fails to achieve the intensity of tragic effect which the best of the late tragedies do -- why it is an effort "redolent of good intentions baffled by a treacherous vehicle, an expertness too retarded" ("Prefaces" 1337).

Let me begin by comparing the way Shakespeare's tragic heroes (mostly those of the plays listed above) are initially characterized, that is, before their fall and consequent disillusionment, to the way James's are. Shakespeare's tragic heroes all have a relatively high social position. They are kings (Lear), courtiers and princes (Hamlet), or generals and noblemen (Othello, Coriolanus, Antony, Brutus). All have something in them of

that highmindedness and nobility of character which Hamlet is consistently characterized as having had before his father's death ("The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword," as Ophelia says, (III.i.154)) and which he continues to manifest, albeit with melancholic bitterness, until the fifth act. Even such villain tragedies as Richard III posit a normative ideal of honor by representing its opposite. There can be no question, in all this, of the split between family and state or individual and society that we saw earlier is characteristic of the 19th and even 20th century novel. As Cominus says in Coriolanus, "I do love/ My country's good with a respect more tender,/ More holy and profound, than mine own life,/ My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase/ And treasure of my loins" (III.iii).

Such highmindedness and nobility of character are closely associated, not only in the minds of others but in the minds of the heroes themselves, with a number of other features. First, they are all possessed of what was a prerequisite for Elizabethans of nobility: strong masculinity. (Cleopatra's endearing and very "feminine" lack of principle and honor -- until the very end -- illustrates how "masculine" the Elizabethan concept of nobility was.) Secondly, the heroes' nobility is linked to

their position near or at the top of the social ladder. Below them, in continuously descending order, are the lower nobility, merchants, peasants, homeless beggars (like "Poor Tom" of King Lear), slaves, and finally "the lower order of nature" represented by beasts. (Shakespeare's villains are consistently described as slavish, bestial, and whorish -- as being what Hamlet calls "passion's slave.") The heroes thus manifest a state of existence, on this lower half of "the great chain of being," which is at the furthest remove from bestiality, from the non-human; they exemplify, in its fullest and most complete form, what it is to be human. They are the highest expressions of an ideal of individuality that is shared more or less by all of society but nonetheless relegates certain of its sectors -- the majority -- to a lowly place.

Thirdly, the hero's position at the top of the social/human ladder is at the same time a position at the bottom of the heavenly one. For example, Cassio in Othello refers to his reputation as "the immortal part of me," without which he resembles the beasts; Hamlet and many others make the same associations. Just as kings, princes, and noblemen authorize who winds up where on the rungs below them, so too God authorizes the former's position at the top of the human ladder (as is emphasized in Richard

II). Social order is not only hierarchical; it is transcendently grounded in a yet higher hierarchy. The subversion of this order results in "chaos," as Ulysses says in the "degree" speech of Troilus and Cressida. The nobility of the tragic heros is linked to both the dominant ideal of self-identity and the moral order on which that ideal is grounded.

If we consider now the initial presentations of James's tragic heroes, focusing mainly on Isabel Archer, Milly Theale, and Maggie Verver, we find embodied in such heroines the modern counterpart to the Elizabethan ideal of self-identity. First, all three are young women and therefore express, as I argued above, the modern ideal far more completely than men can do.

Secondly, all three are wealthy -- Maggie and Milly fabulously so -- and because wealth is the modern equivalent of noble birth in Elizabethan times (social standing being essentially purchasable in capitalist countries such as America and even England by the late 19th century), the three female "princes of capitalism" regard themselves and are regarded by others as occupying the higher strata of society. It is for that reason they are provided, despite their American birth, immediate entrance into the English aristocracy. Although in some novels

(e.g., The American) such capitalist princes are looked down upon by the aristocracy, in these three novels and, I think, generally, they are possessed of more real social power than are the relatively impoverished members of the English upper class. The point is not that James regarded wealth as an end-in-itself, anymore than Shakespeare regarded noble birth as such. Rather, money and nobility were in their respective societies the necessary pre-condition for living a full and free life -- which does not mean a life free of burden but one having the highest potential for realizing all that life could offer. "I call people rich," says Ralph Touchett of Isabel, "when they're able to meet the requirements of their imagination" (160).

That James gave the "mere" possession of wealth such a vital, life-giving function shows how free of hypocrisy was his judgment of the social realities dictated by capitalism. It is a judgment that contrasts with the perspective of most 19th and early 20th-century novelists, British and American; the contrast ranges from being nearly absolute (Dickens, Twain) to relative (Eliot, Wharton). It is hard to think of many English writers of fiction in this time period who attached so much importance to wealth. That being said, many Jamesian protagonists are not rich and in

his later years, few authors attacked the values of "the vulgar rich" more stridently than did James, as we will see in the final chapter. More importantly, the social value James attached to wealth did not imply an endorsement of that value: just the contrary.

Thirdly, the three tragic heroes are unbound by social and familial attachments. Their social freedom is a product of their American birth and is relative to the more structured British society in which the stories mostly take place. Their familial freedom (absolute in Milly's case, compromised in Isabel's, and restricted in Maggie's by her close relationship with her father) is reminiscient of the situations of the immense number of orphans or children lacking parental guidance that populate 19th century British fiction. Yet there is a crucial difference. In James, familial ties are not in the end reestablished or substituted for but, on the contrary, more severely disrupted (e.g., the endings of The Golden Bowl, The Awkward Age, and What Maisie Knew). In this respect, as in so many others, James is surely more American than British (cf. Huckleberry Finn, The Great Gatsby, and The House of Mirth). For James, the family was no haven.

Finally, and most importantly, the three tragic heroes are intensely idealistic. Such idealism is analogous to the

nobility of Shakespearian heros, yet it is only "analogous." There is in fact an enormous gulf that separates the Elizabethan ideal of self-identity from the modern one. The former is essentially public, socially defined, and transcendently grounded. It is true that there is a movement inward on the part of some Shakespearian tragic heros at the end that is manifested by a certain passivity and acceptance of the limits that fate places on the exercise of the will (e.g., Hamlet's "The readiness is all" (V.ii.223); Lear's "we'll...take upon's the mystery of things, as if we were God's spies" (V.iii.16)). But it seems to me anachronistic to attribute much in the way of inwardness to the initial presentation of their essentially aristocratic and Christian idealism.

Even Hamlet is predominately concerned with public behavior and external appearances. (5) For example, his assertion that "I have that within which passes show" (I.ii) should be understood in the context of the soliloquy that follows a little after (I.ii.129). The latter is mostly concerned with his mother's failure to observe appearances in marrying his uncle so quickly -- or at all. It contains no direct expression of grief "within" for his father. This is not to deny that Hamlet is a man internally divided who is recognizing, perhaps for the first time in

his life, that there is a split between reality and appearance, i.e., that the happy appearance his uncle and mother are putting on is masking an unpleasant reality. (6) It is, indeed, that split which is forcing him to keep hidden his real feelings ("But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue" (I.ii.159)). The main point, however, is that Hamlet feels such a split, whether in himself or in others, to be profoundly unnatural and contrary to the social, moral, and transcendent order which until now he has not questioned and which he struggles throughout much of the play with mixed feelings to uphold. And what is true of Hamlet in this regard applies even more to most of Shakespeare's other tragic heros.

The idealism of Isabel, Milly, and Maggie, by contrast, is deeply internal, founded on a negation of that which would impinge on their individual autonomy. The classic formulation of such humanist essentialism, one that is based on Carlyle's Sartor Resartus and appears again in the preface to The Education of Henry Adams, is found in Isabel's declaration to Madame Merle early in the novel:

> "I don't know whether I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me. Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything's on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one. Certainly the clothes which, as you say, I choose to wear, don't express me; and heaven forbid they should. [To which Madame Merle replies caustically]:

You dress very well." (175)

Madame Merle's reply to Isabel expresses a social view of the self which "exposes the hollowness of the philosophical dualism of both Isabel and Carlyle," as John Carlos Rowe says (Henry 34), as well as the fact that there is "no clear core of self," as Jackson Lears characterizes the central issue of the debate (197).

Maggie Verver, in The Golden Bowl, reflects a more casually expressed idealism in her romantic denial, during an early conversation with the Prince, of the realities of history and evil. In a manner similar to that which Isabel early in Portrait says to Ralph, "I don't care about the past" (125), so Maggie says to the Prince: "'Oh, I'm not afraid of history.' She had been sure of that" (47). Her contention that she "knows" her husband-to-be, despite her total ignorance of the cultural and historical background that has formed him, which James highlights by describing in detail the Prince's acute, but bewildered and troubled sense of it, is at bottom an assertion that history, culture, and environment "don't matter." The latter are but the "external garments" in which the real self is draped, garments which she, Maggie, can see through. As for the Prince, the narrator states flatly "how little one of his race could escape after all from history" (48).

The presentation in The Wings of the Dove of Milly Theale's initial idealism is more sympathetic than in Maggie and Isabel's cases, but still sharply ironic. For example, although Milly is described as a "dove" and "the heiress of all ages" in the early sections of the novel, these descriptions are made later to turn in on themselves; as "dove," Milly is slaughtered, while as "the heiress of all ages," she receives nothing. What these initial presentations show in all three cases is that far from being in the "mainstream of Romanticism," as some critics have described him, James rejected, in the words of Ross Posnock, "the Romantic (and Emersonian) cult of sincerity and its correlative notion of the self as absolute, existing in autonomous isolation," placing "in question the Romantic self's potential for unconditional subjectivity and freedom" (10).

The initial presentations of both James and Shakespeare's heroes convey the high degree to which such characters embody the ideals of self-identity of their respective cultures. In making this contention, I have followed Nietzsche (and many modern scholars) in de-emphasizing the importance of any so-called "tragic flaw" to the heroes' fates. The point is not that Shakespeare and James's heroes do not have weaknesses, but

that such weaknesses are impossible to separate from those aspects of character which make them embodiments of socially and culturally determined ideals of identity. As Othello says at the end of the play, "For naught I did in hate, but all in honor." Othello's sense of honor, which is tied of course to his virtues, is inseparable from his "tragic defect" of character. It is, indeed, the hero's representativeness of a social ideal which undermines any clear distinction between his or her defects and virtues. Applied rigidly, the notion of a tragic flaw misses the point of tragic action -- or at least what is one of the more important features of Jamesian, Shakespearian, and Greek tragedy. That point is that the fall of the hero does not have its ultimate source in any flaw or defect of his character, but rather in his virtues, in what makes him heroic for the reader or audience. And since these virtues are the expressions of certain socially held ideals of identity and self, the "fact" of the hero's fall constitutes a social, moral, and even political critique of those ideals. It constitutes a critique, that is, to the extent that the fall is represented as undermining and subverting, even deracinating or uprooting, the hero's self --and not simply the result of external forces, whether these be environmental, social, religious, or accidental,

which have nothing intrinsically to do with that self but operate mechanically or melodramatically to crush it. That is why Tess, Gatsby, and Lily Bart are not "tragic"; the idealism which constitutes their integrity is not undermined but, on the contrary, maintained in the face of hostile, mostly social forces (in the case of The Great Gatsby, I refer not to the narrator, Nick Carraway, but to Gatsby himself). Such protagonists undergo no fundamental change in identity and remain "pure" until the end.

By contrast, the traumas which Sophoclean, Shakespearian, and Jamesian heroes experience transform them; they experience an invasion of "unmeaning" into their lives that not only undermines their personal identities but also the socially constructed world that has formed and supported those identities. Such unmeaning, in Sophocles and often in Shakespeare, is represented as blind fate or the wheel of fortune and chance; in Shakespeare and James, the vehicle of unmeaning is often the Machiavellian villain. But neither as blind fate nor Machiavellian villain are the forces of unmeaning external to the hero's sense of self; their effect is to render that "sense" senseless, to destroy the very belief in a moral order that could be used to fight off and expel unmeaning.

That is why Euripides's plays are at once the least

tragic (as Nietzsche (Birth 75) and Lukacs felt (40)) and the most tragic of ancient Greek dramas. According to Nietzsche, Euripides's rationalistic cynicism about the gods (acquired from Socrates) prevented him from representing a moral order coherent enough to make the portrayal of its disintegration truly tragic. For other readers of Euripides, however, his tragic power obtains precisely from this cynicism, which allowed him to represent the gods as far more savagely and incomprehensibly unjust than Aeschylus and Sophocles could. Indeed, his representation of the gods in some plays (e.g., Heracles and The Bacchae) seems to call into question the gods' very existence. (7)

In this sense, Shakespeare is more Sophoclean than Euripidean; he not only takes the Christian moral order seriously, but refuses to make the existence of God a crucial issue. (8) In Shakespeare's plays, unmeaning manifests itself mainly as a disruption or severing of the ties between the human moral and political order and the transcendent powers that are supposed -- but have in fact failed -- to serve as its basis. Not even Lear doubts the existence of God; his "God's spies" speech referred to above emphasizes only what in the earlier storm scene he could not yet accept: the remoteness of earth from heaven

and the relative insignificance of human activities. Similarly, Hamlet's "defiance" of augury is not inconsistent with his "There is a divinity that shapes our ends" (V.ii.10). The point is that human knowledge and understanding do not flow from God, as Hamlet's former idealism had presupposed; the link, metaphorically constructed, between the moral and social order on the one hand and its transcendent basis on the other has become indiscernible and we can no longer distinguish between the significant and the insignificant. That is why Hamlet says, "The readiness is all" (V.ii.223); why Antony says "Be a child o'th' time" (II.vii.103); why Brutus in Julius Caesar says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men/Which, taken on the flood, leads on to fortune...we must take the current when it serves" (IV.iii.217ff.); why Feste in Twelfth Night says "And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges" (V.i.378-9); why Edgar in King Lear says, "Men must endure/Their going hence, even as their coming hither: Ripeness is all" (V.iii.9-11); and so on. Because we cannot know that anything has significance ("Since no man of aught he leaves knows," as Hamlet says in passage quoted above), everything, even "the fall of a sparrow," must be endowed with significance. We must be in a state of perpetual readiness.

By the time we get to the modern era of James, the situation has drastically changed. God's existence is not merely doubted or denied; his death and "reincarnation" within the autonomous self have become the basis of the modern social and moral order. Humanist essentialism has replaced Christian essentialism. (9) Tragic action, the subversion of the dominant concept of self and the social and moral order on which it rests, consequently takes a radically different form than in Shakespeare. Because the Shakespearian hero's identity is public in nature, embodied in explicitly social and political roles, the uprooting of this identity must be at once an uprooting of the state. Hence political upheaval is a feature of all of Shakespeare's tragedies, including even Romeo and Juliet, widely recognized to be -- because of its comic form in the first part -- the least "tragic" of Shakespeare's great tragedies.

That James is often viewed by critics as "apolitical" denotes not just a failure to pay attention to the crucial role the money culture, the mass psychology of journalism, etc., play in the plots of his works (especially the late ones), but, more fundamentally, a failure to recognize the tragic structure that informs those works. Such structure dictated that James's artistic purposes be inseparable from

social, cultural, and political criticism, as James makes clear in his comments about his portrayal of anarchists in The Princess Casamassima:

> There was always the chance that the propriety might be challenged -- challenged by readers of a knowledge greater than mine. Yet knowledge, after all, of what? My vision of the aspects I more or less fortunately rendered was, exactly, my knowledge...[However,] I had to bethink myself in advance of a defence of my "artistic position." Should n't I find it in the happy contention that the value I wished most to render and the effect I wished most to produce were precisely those of our not not knowing, of society's not knowing, but only guessing and suspecting and trying to ignore, what "goes on" irreconcileably, subversively, beneath the vast smug surface? ("Prefaces" 1102)

In the nonfictional The American Scene, the incomplete The Ivory Tower, and many of his late stories, James explicitly criticizes the mass culture generated by capitalism and the ideology of the autonomous self. However, the critique is also implicit in his major novelistic tragedies as well. His heros, introduced to us as rich, young, feminine, autonomous, and "free" from the oppressiveness of history and social tradition, are representatives of what, in its highest form, modernism (by which I mean here very generally post-Enlghtenment culture) ideally seeks to produce, just as Hamlet represents what, in its highest form, Elizabethan culture ideally sought to produce.

The reason, then, that James's late works appear not to

deal with the social and political dimensions of life is that the modern ideal of identity, at its most extreme, is founded on a negation of social and political life. In The Golden Bowl especially, James tried to represent this extreme, to enclose the reader within a realm, as Husserl would say, of "pure ideality." The sense of claustrophobia generated in the reader by such enclosure is reflected in Edith Wharton's questions to James about the novel: "What was your idea in suspending the four principal characters in The Golden Bowl in the void?....Why have you stripped them of all the human fringes we necessarily trail after us through life?" (qtd. in Edel, Henry V 357). What Wharton failed to grasp is that James was writing modern tragedy in The Golden Bowl, and as such sought to construct a metaphoric discourse rooted in moral and epistemological idealism that he could then overturn. The novel does not endorse the values of idealism, but rather carries them to their logical extreme in order to make its tragic subversion of them all the more thorough-going and dramatic.

James's method of introducing his tragic heroes follows a pattern seen in works ranging from Oedipus the King to King Lear to Middlemarch. It is sharply ironic, showing the hero as radically self-deceived, almost begging, so to

speak, for a fall. In The Golden Bowl, the narrowness of Maggie's initial idealism, the superficiality of her mind (10) is conveyed by presenting her from the point of view of the Prince. But by the time the Prince says to Maggie, toward the end of the book, "Everying's evil, cara, in the heart of man" -- by which he probably means men more than women, a meaning tinged with narrative (or "dramatic") irony -- it is clear that she has not only recognized the truth of this statement but much more. Like Maisie, her "knowledge" has expanded beyond the limits of any "moral sense" and she has at last understood what that sound coming from inside the pagoda (described at the beginning of the second half of the novel) signified: the pagoda was a metaphor of herself and the sound coming from within dramatized psycho-narratively her awakening to a sense of evil not just in "men," but in herself. It is thus fitting that the final sentence of the novel, as I have already mentioned, renders Maggie's state of consciousness using the Aristotelian formulation, "pity and dread."

The Golden Bowl achieves "high tragedy" not in spite of, but because of the sharply delimited dimensions of the world it describes: the delimitation makes possible that "sublime economy" which allows art to do exactly the opposite of what life does -- to endow everything with

significance because, as Hamlet understands, we cannot know that anything has significance. Maggie, the beloved daughter of the ultimate American capitalist and therefore also the fruit of the capitalistic system, is a sensitive register of the modern world, of its moral, social, and political dimensions, because she incarnates the essentialist idealism which is its structural basis and because she serves as James's vehicle of the tragic subversion of that basis. James is no Dickens, concerned with the abuses of specific institutions, but Dickens, as suggested above, tends to endorse the very mass culture he wishes to attack by his recourse to a privatized familial and interpersonal structure which generates that mass culture. James, by contrast, subjects humanist essentialism itself to a thorough-going critique. And that critique is necessarily social and political because Maggie's initial essentialism is metaphorically psycho-narrated using social and political images (e.g., the description of Maggie "buying" the Prince, or of Adam Verver "buying" Charlotte). By metaphorically linking the supposedly most private of realms (consciousness) with the most public of them (capitalist enterprise), James subverts the delusion on which so much Victorian (and modern) fiction is based: that there is a fundamental opposition

between the private/public, free/determined, familial/social, and personal/political realms. That James delimits the metonymic range of represented reality only reinforces its metaphoric significance, tightening and strengthening the similarity or identity of what are normally regarded as polar opposites. (Novelistic metaphors, as Catherine Gallagher says in regard to Dickens's Hard Times, are only weakened by being made literal.)

More fundamentally, James's use of a metaphoric rather than a metonymic mode is necessary because only the metaphoric can contain the full import of the meaning James seeks to create. Metonymy is the mode of the time-mediated unfolding of events, of realism, empiricism, and referentiality, of, in short, what James called "the fatal futility of Fact" ("Prefaces" 1140). And as philosophers from Kant to Wittgenstein have recognized, referentiality always presupposes a framework of value and meaning, a network of language games and forms of life that define the range of what is empirical or realistic. As James puts it in "The Great Good Place," "one's vision seemed less from the facts than the facts from one's vision" (In the Cage 306). Or again, in The Golden Bowl: "Maggie...had so shuffled away every link between consequence and cause that

the intention remained...subject to varieties of interpretation" (563). The referential is therefore unable to challenge the framework of value and meaning that it presupposes, which is perhaps one way of explaining why the traditional metonymic novel usually winds up endorsing the norms it sets out to subvert: because its "reach" is prescribed by those norms themselves. James's displacement of the metonymic base of his tragedies by metaphoric discourse is in any case the necessary precondition for the social critique those tragedies perform.

Moreover, when James then breaks the metaphoric link he has established (e.g., the splitting of the golden bowl, the inversion of the meaning of the dove), a breakage that corresponds to the "fall" of the hero, the whole structure, the unity of polar oppositions, comes tumbling down. What ensues, in James's words written in 1900, are "madness, surrender, collapse" (In the Cage 299). James even describes the breaking of the golden bowl by evoking images, in the Shakespearian manner, of bestiality and barbarism (488). Such images recur often in James's works, including "The Beast in the Jungle," The Turn of the Screw, "The Jolly Corner," "Broken Wings," etc.) Just as Shakespeare undermines the divine as basis of the social order, thereby depriving the divine of meaning, so too

James undermines the private as basis for the public, thereby depriving the private of meaning.

But at the same time one set of metaphors, in James's works, is destroyed by the invasion of unmeaning, another set, or another meaning given to that set, is gradually built up. This other set is very different from the first; it takes as its basis not the privatized, essentialist self, but a public self that posits consciousness as social and interpersonal. Its range is potentially unlimited, for it partakes of what I called earlier "surplus value," the ability of self to generate out of itself an endless train, an inexhaustible wealth, of forms, roles, and masks. Illusion, maintained in part by lying and "humbugging" (as James describes in innumerable places Maggie's behavior), is essential to the Nietzschean creation of that new space of discourse which "keeps back" unmeaning and makes life possible. Hence, in The Golden Bowl, images like the pagoda, which represent Maggie's mind as wholly isolated, give way to images like that of Maggie as actress "improvising" on a stage, an improvisation characterized mostly as a movement of mind ("Maggie went, she went") because the extent of such movement is unlimited and its direction unknown. The improvisation points up Maggie's new sense of herself as processive and decentered, formed in

and through her interactions with others; like Hamlet, she must be "ready" to respond to the changing demands that her role requires, and cannot take refuge in an off-stage existence (or essentialist self) that would allow her to "read" from a script already written out within. In a similar fashion, the image of Milly in The Wings of the Dove changes from lonely dove cut off from all of "humanity" to a dove whose wings spread themselves over, and cast a darkening shadow on, others. "I give and give and give," says Milly at one point (274). The giving, by the terms of the moral economy of surplus value, is life-creating. Her adherence to such a form of morality explains why she rejects the morality of fair exchange: "I can't listen or receive or accept...I can't make a bargain" (274) -- the very sort of morality that Kate pursues and is eventually trapped by (39, 53, 346).

But with such creating, with the growth of new images of self, the loss entailed by the destruction of the idealistic self -- "the dark hand" of tragedy -- is not suppressed. Almost all of James's tragedies emphasize this sense of loss, or symbolic death, which critics have misread as "renunciation." Maggie's expulsion of her father, the maker of her former identity as "capitalist prince"; Densher's refusal of Milly's money; Isabel and

Strether's return to closed and terribly uninviting societies -- none of these are "renunciations," for they result not from acts of will, but rather from the formation of new identities that disallow retreat from society, whether that retreat take the form of an isolating relationship with a father (Maggie), the autonomy and freedom money can buy (Densher), a marriage that will sever all ties with the past (Strether), or a lover, Caspar Goodwood, who will allow her, Isabel, to do, in the fashion of J.S. Mill's On Liberty (which Matthew Arnold attacked in Culture and Anarchy), "whatever she wants." Moreover, these endings, with the possible exception of that of the early Portrait, show the hero not only transcending her former arrogance and egotism, but rejecting the values of the money culture that had been metaphorically linked to such arrogance and egotism.

Tragic action in Shakespeare is directed from outward to inward; Lear, Hamlet, Coriolanus, Antony, all manifest toward the end, however inconsistently, elements of passivity and inwardness that are the consequence of the uprooting of their former, more publicly defined identities. By contrast, tragic action in James is directed from inward to outward; Isabel, Milly, Strether, and Maggie move toward an active engagement with the society that is

the consequence of the subversion of their former, more privately defined identities. Shakespeare's tragic heroes experience a fall within society, from high to low, whereas James's experience a fall into society. (11)

NOTES

1. Nietzsche disagreed with Aristotle that pity and fear are characteristic of tragedy or that they lead to catharsis. See Will 449, sec. 851; Gay 135, sec. 80; Ecce 729. However, Humphry House shows in Aristotle's Poetics (100-3) that catharsis for Aristotle was the bringing about of a "trained potentiality" of emotion and that, therefore, contrary to Nietzsche, the arousal of pity and fear need not necessarily be a destructive (and non-tragic) process.

2. See McDonald, Normative Chapter II, etc.

3. See Welsh (145) and Aries, Centuries.

4. See Eliot, Middlemarch 544.

5. One might cite, for example, Hamlet's worries that Claudius's carousing is tarnishing the image of Denmark; his fondness for euphuistic expression prior to his father's death; his stricture to his mother to "assume a virtue, even if you have none"; his willingness to engage in a public match with Laertes in the histrionic and hyperbolic expression of grief for Ophelia; and his final words to Horatio to protect his reputation.

6. I say "unpleasant" because Hamlet has no evidence at this point, only a "prophetic soul," that his father was murdered. See Maxwell (311).

7. Heracles, a drama by Euripides, Milton's favorite Greek tragedian, consists largely of two discrete, almost autonomous actions between which, as William Arrowsmith says, "there is neither causal necessity nor even probability" (Euripides, Heracles 46) -- actions which lack, in other words, what Samuel Johnson accused Samson Agonistes of lacking, a "middle." The first action, which

is presented in a melodramatic, conventional manner, casts Heracles as a nearly unblemished hero who returns home to save his wife and children from being killed by a cruel tyrant. In the second action, which follows immediately upon the first, Heracles is possessed by Madness (sent by Hera) and viciously slaughters the wife and children he has just saved. These two actions are jammed tightly against one another with no attempt to mitigate the violence of their contradiction.

Heracles's words at the end of the play are not adequate to resolve the contradiction. Referring to the disreputable deeds recounted of the gods (among which we may include the one Hera has just committed), Heracles says: "If god is truly god, he is perfect, lacking nothing. These [i.e., the gods' disreputable deeds] are poets' wretched lies" (111). Heracles's words seem merely to deny the murders he has just committed; certainly he has not taken the horror of what he has done into himself and learned in some fashion to understand it. On the contrary, as Adrian Poole says, "Nothing can erase the horror of the rift in Heracles' life. It has turned a hero into a murderous maniac" (69). The result is two radically incongruent images of Heracles that fracture his being and render him a highly paradoxical, ambiguous figure. Heracles does not, in the Aeschylean formulation, "suffer into truth" (Aeschylus, Eumenides 23); the senselessness or unmeaning that invades his self is not encompassed and contained by newly gained powers of wisdom. Rather, it is allowed to dwarf and overwhelm Heracles's character and consciousness.

The case is different with many of the protagonists of Sophocles such as Oedipus or the Heracles of The Women of Trachis. Although both Sophocles and Euripides's protagonists are made subject to radically destructive forces that negate system, order, and providence, in Sophocles's heroes there is a movement toward cohesion and coherence of character. This movement is propelled in at least two ways. First, Sophocles's protagonists are from the very beginning flawed heroes; Oedipus is arrogant and boastful, Heracles (of The Women of Trachis) a philanderer. The tragic fate that befalls them is therefore (to a greater extent than in the case of Euripides's Heracles) prepared for and made continuous with
our initial view of them. Secondly, the horror that invades these heros does not finally overwhelm them but becomes the vehicle of an enlargement of consciousness. That is why the Oedipus of Oedipus at Colonus is so articulate, so

successful at fashioning a harmony between words and deeds or words and emotions; he is able to give voice self-consciously to tragic despair and thereby stem or contain its destructiveness. Of course, this is exactly what Oedipus in Oedipus the King is unable to do; there he is subjected to a dramatic irony in which his words are deprived of the meaning which he intends. But in Oedipus at Colonus, the Oedipus who was marked by the gods has become somewhat godlike; he has been invested with such powers of understanding, has gained such a comprehensive vantage point from which to observe human existence, that what he knows becomes crucial to the future of Athens. Just as Athene, near the end of the Aeschylus's Oresteia, warns the people of Athens "not to cast fear [in the form of the Furies] utterly from your city" (Eumenides 30), so too Oedipus passes onto Theseus the terrible but life-constituting knowledge he has gained in the course of his sufferings.

The point here is not that Sophoclean tragedy is affirmative, Euripidean tragedy pessimistic. Rather, there are positive and negative elements in both types of tragedy. Indeed, as Nietzsche, especially in his later work, stressed, the affirmativeness of tragedy is founded on its negativity. Yet such affirmativeness takes radically different forms. In Sophoclean tragedy, as we have seen, the affirmation formed by the unfolding and concealment of the tragic is a feature of the protagonist's character; the unmeaning that invades his being does not finally overwhelm that being but is rather incorporated within it as he undergoes the process of "suffering into truth." The silence which serves as a container of unmeaning is indicated self-consciously by the protagonist. In Euripidean tragedy, by contrast, the integrity of that self-consciousness is itself interrogated and made the vehicle of ambiguity and paradox. Such ambiguity can only be resolved outside the parameters of the play itself -- within the consciousness of the audience and the historical situation in which that consciousness exists. When Euripides has Heracles say, "If god is truly god, he is perfect, lacking nothing. These are poets' wretched lies," he points at once to the fractured nature of Heracles's character and consciousness and the possibility of healing that fracture outside the context of Heracles's actions as presented -- that is, in a radical debunking of the myths upon which the play is founded.

It is precisely the inadequacy of the protagonist's consciousness, combined with an appeal to a context that

transcends such consciousness, that Milton's Samson Agonistes, as well as many of Euripides's plays, embody. To a greater extent than in Sophoclean, Shakespearian, and Jamesian tragedy, the character and consciousness of the protagonist in Euripides (Milton's favorite Greek tragedian) and Milton is what is at issue. The blind Oedipus, for example, remains to the end an awesome figure who needs no guidance in his final walk to death. The blind Samson, by contrast, is a human, all-too-human man who needs in the final scene to be guided to the pillars he brings down. For further discussion of this issue, see McDonald, "Long Day's Dying."

8. As Stephen Greenblatt points out in Shakespearian Negotiations, "atheism" during Elizabethan times, which connoted not so much doubt of God's existence but failure to obey the Church's authority, was only something one was accused of, not something one admitted to being.

9. These are the terms used by Jonathan Dollimore in his Radical Tragedy. According to Dollimore, Shakespearian tragedies represent a transitional phase between Christian essentialism and humanist essentialism.

10. Such superficiality, which is a component of the initial state of many of James's tragic heroines and heros, might be compared to Hamlet's propensity, prior to his father's death, for euphuistic expression, as well as, more generally, for playing the role of a courtier.

11. This contrast is obviously relative; if one were comparing Shakespearian and Aeschylean heros, it would not do at all to say that the former's identities were basically public. On the contrary, one might maintain just the opposite. Tragedy is a social and historical product and its heros can bedescribed only in terms relative to social and historical categories.

Chapter III

Artistic Self-Representation: James, Hawthorne and The Lesson of Gabriel Nash

In Homer's The Odyssey, a poet interrupts Odysseus's slaughter of his wife's suitors to plead for his life:

> ...mercy on a suppliant, Odysseus! My gift is song for men and for the gods undying...No one taught me: deep in my mind a god shaped all the various ways of life in song. [The plea is successful and Odysseus, after first killing a priest, sends the poet out of the room, saying] Go and sit down outdoors where there's no carnage, in the court...while I attend to certain chores inside. (420-21)

More than two millenia later, Brutus in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar expresses an attitude toward poets which is comparable to that of Odysseus. Like the latter, Brutus sends the poet away from the scene of battle preparations after he has tried to meddle in an argument between Brutus and his brother. Unlike Odysseus, however, Brutus is motivated not by respect for the poet's gift but by contempt, declaring "What should the wars do with these jigging [rhyming] fools?" (IV.iii.136)

Whether as jigging fool or mouthpiece of the gods, the poet is portrayed in these works of Homer and Shakespeare as unsuited by his nature for "the real world" of war and bloodshed. And so it is in the works of Henry James. James's real world is not, of course, a literal battlefield

but rather the battlefield of social intercourse. Nonetheless, his portrayal of the poet is similar to those of Homer and Shakespeare in that the poet is consistently "sent out of the room" whenever the real action starts (e.g., when Milly Theale dismisses writer Merton Densher late in The Wings of the Dove). James, like Odysseus, clearly honors the poet and views him as possessed of a gift that is of special value to society. But this value cannot itself be represented in a work of art since James believed that the latter is nothing more than "the doing" of the artist and such doing can only be shown by, not stated in, the work of art. As James says in the New York Prefaces:

> Any presentation of the artist in triumph must be flat in proportion as it really sticks to its subject..."His" triumph, decently, is but the triumph of what he produces, and that is another affair. His romance is the romance he himself projects; he eats the cake of the very rarest privilege, the most luscious baked in the oven of the gods -- therefore he may n't "have" it, in the form of the privilege of the hero, at the same time. (1118)

James is contending here that the artist, as artist -- that is, the artist in the act of his artistic endeavor, in "the triumph of what he produces" -- cannot be artistically presented because to do so would be like a person giving a representation of what makes possible representation, of

what constitutes his inmost subjectivity and uniqueness. Such uniqueness is precisely what others, not the person himself, sees. The artist may express his deepest feelings, but he cannot at the same time artistically position himself so as to view "objectively" such such feelings. The artist cannot paint himself as others see him; his view of how others see him is inexorably his view. The fly, to adapt an expression of Wittgenstein, cannot escape from the fly-bottle (Philosophical 103, sec. 309).

But this doesn't mean that the artist as person, as a public, social being who shares in common with other artists certain features, can't be represented. Homer's pleading poet and Shakespeare's meddling one are, after all, just such representations. Similarly, James finds it possible to represent the artist in the light of those social functions which highlight his non-artistic, non-creative activities. For James, such representations bring out not the "glories" of the artistic endeavor but its defeats, defeats that are inevitable in a world that does not give credence to the language from which the terms of artistic glory emerge:

> The privilege of the hero -- that is of the martyr or of the interesting and appealing and comparatively floundering person -- places him in quite a different category, belongs to him only as to the artist deluded, diverted, frustrated or vanquished; when the "amateur"

> in him gains, for our admiration or compassion or whatever, all that the expert has to do without. ("Prefaces" 1118)

James's effort not to falsify himself by trying to represent himself -- as a character -- in his fiction is an indication of how conscientious he was in the performance of his art. Such refusal is especially striking in light of the fact that James lived at a time when, he believed, something analogous to Brutus's attitude toward the artist, rather than that of Odysseus, reigned -- when the prevailing social sentiment toward the poet tended to be disdainful. Indeed, James felt that the romantic glorification of the artist widespread during the 19th century, as well as the aestheticism that developed during this period, were a concealed form of such contempt:

> Art indeed has in our day taken on so many honours and emoluments that the recognition of its importance is more than a custom, has become on occasion almost a fury: the line is drawn -- especially in the English world -- only at the importance of heeding what it may mean. ("Prefaces" 1106)

That situation, the embarrassed and false situation of the artist in modern society, James could and repeatedly did represent in his fiction. It was a subject or theme in which he was intensely interested not just for its own sake but because it bore directly on his central artistic concern: the possibilities and limits of dramatizing

consciousness.

(2)

James's most sustained treatment of "the case" of the artist is in The Tragic Muse (1890), a novel written during his "middle years" when his views concerning the artist as fictional character indicated above were still in the process of being formed. In The Tragic Muse, Nick Dormer turns his back on a promising political career, a sizeable inheritance, a rich and beautiful bride, and even his own family to pursue "the vocation" of painting. It is noteworthy that The Tragic Muse is James's only major novel in which all of the main characters are British. This fact is important to getting around "the territory" of The Tragic Muse, for although James was certainly critical of American culture, particularly in his younger years, such criticism did not cause him to close his eyes to the deficiencies of British culture. On the contrary, in The Princess Casamassima (1886), as Lionel Trilling pointed out, James satirized British social institutions, just as he satirized American ones in The Bostonians (1886). (The result was that James alienated both his British and American readers and began to gain the reputation of being -- for these works of cultural criticism -- a "socially

disengaged" writer.) Among the deficiencies of his adopted country that James commented on were the condescension and outright contempt with which the British regarded the artist. In The Tragic Muse, James uses such attitudes to put "the problem" of the artist into sharp focus; he allows us to see Dormer's actions from the standpoint of a morality and way of life that give them little positive value. Indeed, Dormer's decision to take up painting is, from the perspective of his mother, his prospective bride, and English upper class life in general, not only against "his own interests," but verging on the self-destructive and irrational. Dormer's life as artist begins only with his willingness to renounce society in favor of art.

The antagonism between art and society is also a feature of James's portrayal of another character in the novel, Peter Sherringham. A wealthy young patron of the arts embarked on a highly successful political career, Sherringham declares early in the novel that his feeling for art is so strong he prefers "the representation of life" to life itself (86). The insincerity of this statement is fully revealed in a climactic scene which takes place toward the end of the novel. In that scene, Sherringham tries to convince a young actress named Miriam Rooth -- the nominal subject of the novel -- to give up a

promising acting career and marry him. However, unlike a similar plea made at the end of The Bostonians, in which the heroine is literally swept off her feet by a similarly far from perfect hero, Miriam turns the tables on Sherringham, demanding that he give up his career to serve the theatre: "Haven't you always insisted on the beauty and interest of our art and the greatness of our mission?...Of course if you're not serious we needn't talk at all...." (777)

The truth is that Sherringham isn't really serious. Meditating on what Miriam says, he asks himself: "Art be damned: what commission, after all, had he ever given it to better him or bother him?" (790) For Miriam, on the other hand, it is art, not security and social power, which is "the real life." Speaking of her past attitude toward taking "the plunge" into theatre, she says: "Of course there's a hateful side: but don't you see how that very fact puts a price on every compensation, on the help of those who are ready to insist on the other side, the grand one..." (788)

Miriam is here echoing Nick Dormer's idealism, his recognition that art thrives only when it is at odds with society and that therefore the genuine artist cannot expect to gain social success from his art. The point is not that

the artist should turn his back on society. On the contrary, Dormer's own renunciation is not complete but is tempered by his willingness to live cheerfully with the social consequences of his decision. James highlights this acceptance, this moderation, by creating a character who is immoderate in his devotion to art. (1) Gabriel Nash, a free-spirited friend of Dormer's, once wrote a book that Dormer describes as "a sort of a novel...with a lot of good writing" (30). By the time he is introduced to us early in this one, however, Nash has adopted the view that even the writing of books is too worldly a pursuit. He is so committed to art as an ideal that he refuses any longer to make artistic products that could sully that ideal; to allow art to acquire social use -- even a use that would be deemed honorable by most people -- is to betray art. Social accomplishment is for him self-defeating. As he says to Dormer, "'Oh, having something to show is such a poor business. It's a kind of confession of failure'" (195).

The character of Gabriel Nash serves a clear function in the novel: to act as one of the two "poles" (the other is Peter Sherringham and English society in general) between which Dormer struggles to orient himself. As such, Nash encourages Dormer not just to give up his extremely promising political career and become a painter, but to

cease concerning himself even with the question of whether he will be a good painter:

> "Ah, you cling to the old false measure of success. I must cure you of that. There will be the beauty of having been disinterested and independent; of having taken the world in the free, brave, personal way."
> "I shall nevertheless paint decently if I can,' Nick declared.
> "I'm almost sorry! It will make your case less clear, your example less grand." (196-7)

Nash is one of a line of characters (whose grandest expression is the narrator of The Sacred Fount) that have given critics a good deal of difficulty. On the one hand, such charac-ters express views that have the ring of integrity, the integrity of the sincere and deeply committed artist. On the other hand, these characters are portrayed in so extreme a way that they lose credibility as characters and hence fail to engage our sympathies. Gabriel Nash, for example, strikes a cord deep with-in us when he argues that art stands or falls with the personal vision of the artist -- with his capacity to directly and imme-diately experience beauty: "'We must feel everything, everything that we can ...We must train our special sense. It is capable of extraordinary extension. Life's none too long for that'" (34).

Nonetheless, Nash goes too far when he claims that the consequences or effects of "our special sense" are in

"one's own spirit. One is one's self a fine consequence. That's the most important one we have to do with. I am a fine consequence" (35).

Nash is here enunciating the notion that the highest calling of the artist is to make himself a work of art. James seems to be dramatizing an illusion that he himself took seriously. His portrait of Nash enacts the contradictory feelings and attitudes by which James was possessed.

Nash's notion is illusory because it presumes that one can more or less "leap outside oneself" to judge oneself as a work of art. When Nash declares, for example, that "I've no profession...I'm perfectly independent" (35), he presumes the existence of a self founded on an autonomous subjectivity apart from all social categories. Such a self is unnameable, unspeakable: "...you don't begin to have an insight into the art of life till it ceases to be of the smallest consequence to you what you may be called" (36). And when Dormer points out that it is the very task of the artist to distinguish and categorize by means of language, Nash's answer reveals him to be under the conceptual grip of that "picture" of language which Wittgenstein worked so hard in the Philosophical Investigations to dispel. (2) Nash refers to a "private language" that has no need of

public discourse or even literature:

> "Ah, trust him to distinguish!....That's for his own convenience; he has, privately a terminology to meet it. That's one's style. But from the moment it's for the convenience of others, the signs have to be grosser, the shades begin to go. That's a deplorable hour! Literature, you see, is for the convenience of others. It requires the most abject concessions." (36)

By contrast, Dormer feels, in the manner James expressed in the Prefaces and elsewhere, that "if you go in for shades, you must also go in for names...The observer is nothing without his categories, his types and varieties" (36). It is not our private thoughts, sensations, and feelings that give our languages meaning. Rather, the meanings of words are normative, grounded in a public context of use. Similarly, the consciousness of the artist is not self-sufficient, but is fed by experience, whose range and boundaries are delineated by the social world in which the artist exists. "'Can you want or not want as you like?'" asks Mrs. Dyott of the romantic Mrs. Blessingbourne, in the 1903 story, "The Story In It" (Better 185) -- the implied answer being in the negative.

Art draws on a source, a "the power not oneself...that made for passion" which feeds life (Sacred 17). Yet if the artist gets too close to that source and tries, as it were, to live in it -- to incarnate his life in art -- he will only end by dissolving himself. Art must be valued within

life, not allowed to rule over it.

Nash instinctively understands that art is at bottom a representation of self; its beauty and efficacy are but an expression of "the felt life" of that self. But if the artist then turns himself inside out and tries to make himself a work of art, he acts as one who can grasp the conceptual sources of his own identity. The artist must therefore recognize, as the deluded narrator of "The Author of Beltraffio" (1885), in common with a long line of first person narrators of tales of the literary life, does not, that art naturally and inevitably exists in tension with life.

In the character of Gabriel Nash, James unmasks the illusion of an absolute divorce between the artist and society by pushing this illusion to its ultimate, logical extreme. That is why Nash, like the narrator of The Sacred Fount (1901), is not a fully credible character. Though his function is "serious," the portrait that James actually draws of him is tongue-in-cheek. This fact becomes abundantly clear toward the end of the novel when Dormer asks Nash if he can do his portrait in order "to prove to me in the future that you were once a solid, sociable fact, that I didn't invent you, launch you as a hoax" (846). Nash agrees, but reluctantly: "He was so accustomed to

living upon irony and the interpretation of things that it was strange to him to be himself interpreted ...From being outside of the universe he was suddenly brought into it..." (848) In such speeches, James -- as Nash -- is making reference to himself as a being who exists outside the universe of his artistic creations, but doing so in such a way that the reference negates itself. Nash does not want to be painted because he fears that Nick's representation of him may, in a sense, overpower his representation of himself. To serve as material for someone else's work of art would be to assume the form of a person (not a self-created work of art). But a person or credible character is exactly what Nash is not -- no more, that is, than James is a credible character within the universe of his own creations. Nash is, therefore, a sort of joking self-portrait drawn by James, one in which the act of authorial self-reference is intentionally brought to the reader's attention in order to dramatize the impossibility of actually accomplishing such self-reference. To the extent Nash "is" James, he cannot be what we know he is -- a character in a story told by James. But to the extent Nash is "just" a character, he isn't credible; the realistic form of the novel in which Nash appears disallows such walking embodiments of pure idea -- which James, in

his early biography of Hawthorne, characterized as walking embodiments of pure idea (413, 404).

James accomplishes the same kind of negation at the end of "The Story In It" -- by "referring" to his writing of the story within the story, a reference whose logical impossibility our attention is purposefully and playfully drawn attention to. In both The Tragic Muse (1890) and "The Story In It" (1903), James adopts the role of "the Master," Henry St. George, in "The Lesson of the Master" (1892). In all three cases, James teaches the obvious "lesson" that one cannot simultaneously be Master of one's artistic universe and a character in that universe. To put this in another way, the content of what is said (the reference made) is contradicted by the act of saying, as when St. George tells his young disciple, Paul Overt, "'Consider at any rate the warning I am at present'" (Figure 187). In order to heed St. George's words, Overt must not heed them -- since what St. George "is" is partly what he has just said. So too is the reader put in Overt's position when faced with the task of "interpreting" the character of Gabriel Nash, who only makes sense as a "character" by being understood as referring to the character's creator -- i.e., James. Unlike Henry St. George in "The Lesson of the Master," however, James does not play the role of

"mocking fiend" (Figure 187) to the readers of The Tragic Muse. On the contrary, the story of Gabriel Nash closes with an allegory designed to free us from the vicious hermeneutical circle in which we have become trapped. This allegory, though Hawthornian in form, has a moral such as Hawthorne never gave us. Its meaning, which is spelled out after Nash has disappeared and before Nick Dormer has completed his portrait of him, is that the artist, as artist, cannot "exist" within the world of his creations. Artistic self-representation is a contradiction in terms. Thus, in one of the final chapters of the novel, Nick Dormer begins to notice that:

> ...the picture he had begun had a singular air of gradually fading from the canvas. He could n't catch it in the act, but he could have a suspicion, when he glanced at it, that the hand of time was rubbing it away little by little (for all the world as in some delicate Hawthorne tale), making the surface indistinct and bare -- bare of all resemblance to the model. Of course the moral of the Hawthorne tale would be that this personage would come back on the day when the last adumbration should have vanished. (850-1)

(3)

The reference above to Hawthorne is instructive and provides a crucial index to James's view not only of the artist but of the basis of personality. Comparing James and Hawthorne, however, is no simple matter. The difficulty

might be expressed by saying that Hawthorne was simultaneously James's single most important influence -- not excluding Balzac, as Tony Tanner has maintained (Henry James: The Writer 29) -- and the author from whom James most completely diverged. The reference above must accordingly be understood as both an act of homage and a form of mockery. To see how this is so, let us briefly examine some of James's earlier works modeled after those of Hawthorne.

In James's "The Story of a Masterpiece" (1868), John Lennox commissions the portrait of his bride to be painted shortly before their marriage. The portrait turns out to be so masterfully done that it reveals a side -- a not very pleasant one -- of his bride that he was not previously cognizant of. Only when he finally decides to destroy the painting is he able to go on with the marriage. As many critics have pointed out (e.g., Buitenhuis 41; Babiiha 121), this story was probably taken from Hawthorne's "The Prophetic Pictures," in which the portraits of a young engaged couple seem to prophesy -- and perhaps also to act as causes of -- the tragedy which ensues after the marriage. Hawthorne's treatment of the theme is allegorical, James's (unconvincingly) psychological. Nonetheless, both stories point up the capacity of the

artist as detached observer to "violate the souls of others" (in the manner of Roger Chillingsworth of The Scarlet Letter) and commit acts that are immoral (Babiiha 121). In his criticism, James often refers to the project of the artist, like the behavior of his protagonists, as "immoral" (e.g., "Prefaces" 1169). Similarly, both affirm the priority and value of life over art when the two are in conflict. As Thaddeo Babiiha, summarizing Annette Baxter's position, says, "neither for Hawthorne nor James was the creative life of itself the answer to the artist's problem" (117).

To fully appreciate Hawthorne and James's attitudes on this issue, it is necessary to juxtapose them with 19th-century transcendentalism, which tended to gloss over (in words amenable to both Hawthorne and James) "that evil which lies in the heart of man" and maintain instead that man as individual, freed from social and other external conditions, is essentially good. Hawthorne stood out among many of his contemporaries in his refusal to affirm what John Carlos Rowe has called "the transcendentalist cogito" (Henry 23) --that center of consciousness which functions as a source for morality and epistemology. As Randall Stewart puts it, both James and Hawthorne were:

> ...counter-romantics because they recognize Original

> Sin...show the conflict between good and evil...show man's struggle toward redemption...[and] dramatize the necessary role of suffering in the purification of the self. They do not apotheosize the self...." (106)

Whether James recognized Original Sin in a Christian sense is a very debatable point. Nonetheless, it is clear that he shared from the beginning of his career as writer Hawthorne's mistrust of transcendentalism -- "that remarkable outburst of Romanticism on Puritan ground," James called it ("Emerson" 265)-- as well as, more generally, the Emersonian "natural goodness of man." For example, the idea behind another of James's early tales, "A Landscape Painter," is that "the romantic notion of an independent self is unrealizable," as Donald Mull puts it. (3) And in James's own words:

> Hawthorne's vision was all for the evil and sin of the world: a side of life as to which Emerson's eyes were thickly bandaged....He had no great sense of wrong...no sense of the dark, the foul, the base. There were certain complications in life which he never suspected....His optimism makes us wonder at times where he discovered the errors that it would seem well to set right, and what there was in his view of the world on which the spirit of criticism could feed. He had a high and noble conception of good, without having...a definite conception of evil... ("Emerson" 269; 243)

James and Hawthorne's view of the artist as a potential source of evil was thus shaped by their anti-romantic, anti-transcendentalist distrust of man as a detached being -- such detachment being essential to the artist in his

role as observer. Yet, such distrust had in the work of the two artists radically different effects. Hawthorne's view of isolated man as potential source of evil operated in concert with his allegorical (albeit ambiguously allegorical) method of writing. And this method required that the consciousness of his characters, far from being "opened up" as in the case of James's later novels, be always at least partly closed off by the imposition of what might be called a "blocking narrator" -- that is, an openly self-referential narrator, yet not one who functioned as a character in the story. Except that such a narrator, in Hawthorne's case, was far more massive, far more effective in closing off our view of the psychological processes of the characters than in the cases of such "realistic" novelists as George Eliot -- not to mention French authors like Maupassant, Zola, and Flaubert.

This remark, however, should not be construed as a negative criticism of Hawthorne. On the contrary, the effectiveness of his romances as a literary form depends precisely on the massiveness or solidity with which the narrator is presented; for it is only <u>through</u> the narrator that the significance of his tales is revealed. In a Hawthorne tale, meaning never arises out of the unfolding of consciousness of the characters but is rather imposed on

such consciousness "from the outside." As James says in his critical biography, Hawthorne (1879), "the people in The Scarlet Letter strike me not as characters but representatives...of a single state of mind...They are all figures rather than characters -- they are all pictures rather than persons" (404, 413). These comments were made during an early period of James's life when he was inclined to be critical of Hawthorne; his comments in later years tended to be far more positive. (4) Nonetheless, even at such an early time James's judgments are best understood less as an indictment of Hawthorne's fiction than as a characterization of his allergorical method. Indeed, James implied as much in his comments to Hawthorne's son, Julian, concerning his competence to write a biography of Hawthorne:

> "I don't want to do it....I'm not competent: and yet, if I don't, some Englishman will do it worse than I would. Your father was the greatest imaginative writer we had, and yet, I feel that his principle was wrong....Imagination is out of place; only the strictest realism can be right." (qtd. in Babiiha 10)

By "imagination," James refers here not to the dramatization of the characters' consciousness (as seen in James's late novels), but to Hawthorne's use of the author-narrator as a vehicle of the imagination. As Terrence Martin says,

> Whereas James theorizes after the fact of creation

> [i.e., within the structure of consciousness of the characters], Hawthorne theorized as a prerequisite of creation...As Hawthorne saw it, his essential problem was to create not simply the fiction but the conditions of fiction; and it led him to confront, on a neutral ground, a kind of experience that James identifies in retrospect...as liberated or disencumbered. (46)

Martin is referring to James's definition, in the New York Prefaces, of romance as a form which tends to detach the consciousness of its characters from the represented range of reality shown in the story. For Hawthorne, consciousness was, in Martin's words, a kind of "haunted mind" which by its nature disengaged itself from the realm of communal experience. Hawthorne's romances were continually exposed to the danger of:

> ...finding the night of the haunted mind and the day of actuality mutually exclusive. The initial problem in making fiction became one of blending the imaginative and the actual....To say that disengaged experience came from the haunted mind is...to employ James's term to describe the exigencies of the creative situation as Hawthorne saw them. (47)

The point is that Hawthorne required a "massive" narrator -- one whose presence we are never, in reading his tales, wholly unaware of -- in order to dwarf the consciousness of his characters. Hawthorne demonstrates in his tales a tremendous distrust of individual psychology; only in such a way could he portray what James called "the deeper psychology" ("Hawthorne" 368) -- by which James means a type of experience not "liberated or

disencumbered," not purely "romantic." James's later style grew out of a rejection of such mistrust. He was possessed of a faith in our communal identities -- in the pervasiveness and far reachingness of the social and historical forms by which we "make" our identities -- that enabled him not to fear, as Hawthorne so nobly but also so neurotically did, that the inquiring mind would sever itself from others. For James, the plunge into oneself was a plunge into a communal depth, an immersion in appreciation of the world. Sensibility and discrimination, the engines of the imagination, could be cultivated only by the opening of self to experience; it was there they found their fuel. Consciousness was a means of breaking into "the daylight of actuality," not a cavernous corner in which one was confined. It was James's faith in the community of identity, coupled with the imperatives which the performance of his art imposed on him, that brought him to work and live through a radical new conception of identity. This conception constituted a more extreme rejection of the transcendental cogito than that of Hawthorne; it disposed of any notion of the self as fixed and unitary. Rather, the self was constituted by the activity of consciousness, an activity powered neither by its "own" source nor by a dialectical relation with the "external" world, but by the

vehicle of the linguistic and conceptual forms, the cultural and historical processes, in which it was embedded. The opening of consciousness was the illumination of experience; it "made" experience not by creating, but by "appreciating" such consciousness, by constituting the grounds of its possibility.

But what then of "the terrible sense of human abysses" that James attributed to Hawthorne (qtd. in Babilha 26) or the sense of "tragic fellowship" James spoke of in his Autobiography (415), or the "common doom" that James and Hawthorne supposedly shared? If such a positive value was to be given consciousness, then where in James was the evil with which Hawthorne branded the heart of man? As a means of answering these questions, consider James's early novel, Roderick Hudson (1876), which is partly based on Hawthorne's The Marble Faun (1860). As many critics have pointed out, the two characters who most attracted James's attention in Hawthorne's novel were Donatello and Hilda. These characters represent the opposite of Hawthorne's guilt-ridden, "haunted" type. Donatello, for example, is a blissfully immature young Italian who awakens to a tragic sense of life through the impulsive, virtually unconscious commission of a crime. As such, he bears a striking resemblance to the titular hero of Roderick Hudson, a young

and talented American artist who travels to Italy, undergoes a long and agonizing process of corruption through exposure to European civilization, and even-tually destroys himself. The themes of the two novels are similar: the fall from innocence and the need to suffer in order to live. But there is a crucial difference. As Robert Long puts it, [James's] use of the Fall is unlike

> Hawthorne's use of it in The Marble Faun, written in the Protestant tradition of the "fortunate fall," in which man falls only that he may rise. In James's novel the hero rises only to fall -- without redemption. (51; cf. Babiiha 217)

Hawthorne's tale is allegorical and meant to convey a justification of Donatello's suffering. As Miriam describes Donatello's experience toward the end of the novel, "Is he not beautiful?...He has travelled in a circle, as all things heavenly and earthly do, and now comes back to his original self, with an inestimable treasure of improvement won from an experience of pain" (491). James's protagonists, by contrast, do not hanker after redemption. Roderick's fate is a result of his exposure to "the unclean historic river" of culture and civilization (72). What is at stake is not an evil intrinsic to man (and therefore requiring metaphysical intervention), but simply the nature of that culture and civilization.

This point is also brought out in The Wings of the

Dove, in which Doctor Luke Strett says to Milly, "The world's before you." This line evokes the image of Adam and Eve at the end of Milton's Paradise Lost starting out from the garden of Eden to experience a fate which, although fallen, is fortunate. James's novel, by contrast, ends with the two lovers, Kate and Densher, condemned to separation, with nowhere to go.

James's tendency to associate evil with contingent historical processes can be seen even more clearly in James's "The Last of the Valerii" (1875). When an ancient statue of Juno is dug up from the grounds of Conte Valerio's estate, the Conte, who has been brought up as a Catholic, finds himself strangely susceptible to the pagan mysteries of the past. So affected is he by the power and beauty of the statue that he begins to worship and make sacrifices to it. The forces that drive him to such behavior are independent of his will. Speaking to his American, Protestant wife (who does not suffer from his susceptibilities), he says:

> "I'm an old Italian, and you must take me as you find me. There have been things seen and done here which leave strange influences behind! They don't touch you doubtless, who come of another race. But they touch me, often, in the whisper of the leaves and the odor of the moldy soil and the blank eyes of the old statues." (Madonna 231-32)

When the Conte's wife finally acknowledges fully the

power the past has over her husband, she returns the statue to the ground, thereby freeing him from Juno's control.

James's view of self as consciousness in process caused him to displace, in comparison to Hawthorne, the sources of evil from "the heart of man" to the social and historical processes on which consciousness feeds. As J.A. Ward says,

> James tends to concentrate on the good man's reaction to evil, rather than on the guilty man's obsession with his own sin....In James's fiction evil is not an active principle in the universe; there are no Chillingworths or Ethan Brands...there is no "evil according to nature" and no devotion to evil for its own sake. (Imagination 9-10)

The "true" sin is for James not something innate in man, but the closure of the self to the reality of pain and suffering --such closure being self-deception, the cutting off of awareness. In James's novels evil is treated not as "necessary" given the metaphysical nature of man, but necessary given our history. And since our identities, our "nature," have been formed out of that history, the possibility of escaping or avoiding evil is radically foreclosed, as James makes clear in his essay on Turgenev (French 51). There is not even "the comfort" of knowing that evil is theologically or metaphysically necessary -- as Nietzsche also stressed in the preface to The Birth of Tragedy (26, sec. 7).

On the other hand, evil in James's art is imaginatively

and psychologically necessary; the birth and growth of consciousness demand it. As in ancient Greek and Shakespearian tragedy, James weaves together a sense of tragic doom and ultimate affirmation. What we learn from James's portraits of such characters as Isabel Archer, Milly Theale, Lambert Strether, and Maggie Verver is that the birth of the self is the awakening to its obliteration; that the opening of consciousness is the awareness of doom; and that the expansion of consciousness is the intensification of that awareness. None of these characters is provided a "reason" for the intense suffering that her or his "fall from innocence" entails. Rather, James's concern is only to display the unfolding and expansion of consciousness that accompanies such suffering. The process is its own justification.

Now, the character of Roderick Hudson is certainly not a good example of this process at work. Phillip Weinstein remarked that "through Roderick, James is exploring the tenets of a 19th century romantic myth of creativity," as expressed by such poets as Wordsworth and Shelley (10-11). But James is doing this at some remove -- through the myopic point of view of another character, Rowland Mallet. In this sense, Rowland is similar to the narrator of The Aspern Papers, a novel which can be regarded as the

exploration (at still further remove than that of Roderick Hudson) of the 19th century romantic myth of creativity associated with the poet Shelley. In either case, the attitude expressed toward the representation of the artist could not be more different from Hawthorne's. Whereas the latter explicitly makes himself a character at the end of The Marble Faun in order to more conveniently state the moral of the novel, James's view that the "daylight of actuality" could be reached only through consciousness required that he refrain from any representation of the artist as artist and stay within the possibilities of experience dictated by the artistic imagination. The effort to represent the artist as artist could be only a faltering of faith, a betrayal of the trust that one would, indeed, come out "in the clear." In this sense, the portrait of Nick Dormer in The Tragic Muse (which is the nearest James comes in his major novels to trying to represent the artist as artist) shows James's faith at its most faltering. No wonder that the portrait falls flat and is, ironically, one of the least "aesthetic" of James's mature creations, as James himself admits in the preface:

> It strikes me, alas, that he [Nick Dormer] is not quite so interesting as he was fondly intended to be and this in spite of the multiplication, within the picture, of his pains and penalties; so that while I turn this slight anomaly over I come upon a reason...Any

> presentation of the artist _in_ _triumph_ must fall flat... (1118)

Gabriel Nash, by contrast, though not as I have observed a particularly credible "character," is intensely interesting. And the reason, I think, is that he reflects James's attitudes toward artistic representation much more fully than does the portrait of Nick Dormer. Indeed, James's juxtaposition of Nash with Dormer functions as a kind of repudiation of the very impulse that lay behind the creation of Dormer. The tales of the literary life that followed _The Tragic Muse_ ("The Real Thing," "The Death of the Lion," "The Lesson of the Master," "The Birthplace," "The Figure in the Carpet," "The Coxon Fund," "The Private Life," "The Next Time," "The Story In It," etc.) are all haunted by a benevolent presence, that of Gabriel Nash. It is the Lesson of Gabriel Nash learned by James which ensures these tales are not "about" artists or even art, but about what we can _know_ about art. They do, of course, deal with the artistic process, but never in so direct a way as does _The Tragic Muse_; they show us the artist from a defined, non-subjective, and usually ironic point of view -- that of critic, reader, journalist, aspiring artist, etc. -- and it is the _point of view_ which is the "subject" of the stories, not the object of that point of view. The

subject of the artist as represented object was to disappear from James's canvas forever.

(4)

Nonetheless, what we lose, after The Tragic Muse, in stated subject of "art," is more than made up for in enacted representation of the aesthetic sensibility. One of the rewards of James's increased trust in the processes of consciousness was precisely the avoidance of what Christof Wegelin has called "Hawthorne's failure to integrate the aesthetic background with the moral story" of The Marble Faun (24). The gap between the aesthetic (as revealed in plot and character) and the moral (as articulated by the narrator) could at best be bridged in Hawthorne's tales. For James, at least in his mature works, there could be no bridge because he foreclosed the possibility of a gap by identifying his narrators with his plots and characters. The moral was but a further widening, a further opening of an awareness that in its very nature was aesthetic. The Lesson of Gabriel Nash absorbed by James was his increased capacity to "let himself go," to trust the illuminating processes of consciousness, and to lift from his vision the metaphysical blindness induced by the effort to represent the artist as artist. This lesson ultimately resulted in

James's later style, a style depending on techniques in which the narrator's metaphorical discourse was not autonomous (epistemologically, morally, or aesthetically) but rather subject to the metonymical tragic structure of the novel.

James's treatment of the role of the artist in society was thus a means of working through and eventually solving the problem of how to represent that most basic component of the personality: the aesthetic. "The aesthetic" refers here to what Gabriel Nash calls "the faculty of appreciation...that special sense," which gives us the capacity to feel. "Feeling" for James has none of the subjective or purely "emotive" connotations that the word has taken on in our age of psychology. Rather, "to feel" is to participate with one's whole self, mind and emotion, in an experience; it is to use one's mental processes, one's ability to discriminate and distinguish, in order to intensify emotion and thereby project oneself that much more fully in the experience. For James, it is not just that the aesthetic sense makes possible the enjoyment of life; it is that the enjoyment of life is what makes life possible.

Such a basic human capacity is, of course, common to all people. Nonetheless, in order to be fully exploited, it

must be nourished, developed, and even "educated." The artist has not necessarily educated himself in this sense more than anyone else. However, because he uses what he feels self-consciously and for a specific purpose (i.e., as fuel for his representations), he provides a convenient device to refer to it. Indeed, the terms, "art," and "artistic" are far more often used by James to indicate this basic human capacity than to refer to the situation of the artist in society.

Here we see the importance of James's working through the problem of the artist to the achievement of his artistic aims. In all of James's tragedies, he presents us with a central character whose way of viewing the world has been too limited, too confined within narrow categories. He then takes us into this character via the narrator's metaphorical description and allows us to witness the painful but necessary struggle she or he undergoes in the process of coming to grips with the realities to which she has been blind. The indispensable precondition for James's portrayal of this process is that the character be endowed with an aesthetic sensibility; only by means of the enactment of such a sensibility can the character's consciousness be shown as active and open. It is no accident, for example, that the scene in which Strether in

The Ambassadors is shown as recognizing for the first time that Chad and Mme Vionnet are having an illicit affair is dramatized as in essence a moment of aesthetic contemplation; Chad and Mme Vionnet appear to Strether's consciousness as figures who had all day "been wanted in the picture" (307). Similarly, Milly's recognition of Kate and Densher in the National Gallery occurs in the midst of a moment of deep contemplation, though not of paintings (176-8). And Lady Emma, in "Maud-Evelyn" (1900), undergoes a certain measured enlightenment when Marmaduke "steps into" the book she is reading (32). The point is that it is only through the activation of the aesthetic sensibility that the exhibition of consciousness, and hence the tragic revelation of character, is made possible. Which is why James could say, in relation to his characters, that:

> We care, our curiosity and our sympathy care, comparatively little for what happens to the stupid, the coarse and the blind; care for it, and for the effects of it, at the most as helping to precipitate what happens to the more deeply wondering, to the really sentient....Their being finely aware -- as Hamlet and Lear, say, are finely aware -- makes absolutely the intensity of their adventure... ("Prefaces" 1088)

A character exists in James's fiction, has a consciousness that can be displayed, only to the extent he is possessed of aesthetic sensibility. The narrower the sensibility, the less he "exists." Charlotte's

consciousness at the end of The Golden Bowl, for example, though cut back, encaged, and virtually obliterated by Maggie's expanding, devouring spirit, can still appear to us; she is shown as clinging to the last remnant of what makes her human -- her aesthetic sense. Those characters in James's later works who lack all aesthetic sense, such as Mr. Gaw of The Ivory Tower (1917), are also virtually inhuman. Since consciousness is social, and since society is based, in part, on people's capacity to appreciate or feelingly discriminate about others, consciousness exists only to the extent it is aesthetic (see Rowe, Henry 139).

As Stephen Donadio has pointed out, James's view that the aesthetic sense is "the active sense of life" was also Nietzsche's (16). Indeed, Nietzsche's declaration in The Birth of Tragedy that "it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world is justified" (52, sec. 5) is enacted in James's works as "it is only by virtue of aesthetic appreciation that consciousness comes into being and is redeemed." I should emphasize that the close relation between consciousness and the aesthetic sensibility applies fully only to those works written after James had learned to narratively "let himself go" (as James himself puts it in his Notebooks) and dramatize the consciousness of his characters. In such works as Roderick

Hudson (1876), The American (1877), The Bostonians (1886), and The Princess Casamassima (1886), we often have the story told "from the point of view" of one or more characters, but the narrator is not yet free to engage in relatively free-wheeling metaphorical description. James is still too intent, at this point, on disguising the presence of his narrators (in a sense championed later by modernists and New Critics) rather than letting them "have their say." Only in Isabel's meditation scene in The Portrait of a Lady does James give himself a narratological and metaphoric freedom comparable to that of his late novels. It is no accident that this novel was also the only fully realized tragedy, with its affirmation of character in the face of the fragmenting forces of annihilation, that James wrote during his early period. It was as though the imperative presented by the tragic revelation of character compelled James to "feel" his way into such metaphoric narration. However, James lacked at that time the insights he was to gain later through his experience in the theater and through the writing of The Aspern Papers (1888), The Turn of the Screw (1898), and The Sacred Fount (1901). He was not, consequently, to repeat this type of performance until many years later.

Nonetheless, even in the earlier novels, a few of which

I will now briefly examine, James's tendency to anchor personality in the aesthetic sensibility is clearly in evidence. Indeed, virtually every character of major significance or interest in James's fiction is endowed with what is by ordinary standards a highly developed aesthetic sense -- with, that is, a capacity to make feeling discriminations.

The Europeans is typical of the way James uses the confrontation between Americans and Europeans, in his early works, to champion the value of the aesthetic. Although James, as we have seen, saw British society as anything but aesthetic, the confrontation is almost entirely at the expense of the Americans; the "Europeans" in this novel (really Europeanized Americans), Eugenia and her brother, Felix, are portrayed as having taste, dignity, joie de vivre, while the Americans are portrayed as having lots of -- money. The American girl, Gertrude Wentworth, whose innocence and capacity for experience make her a weak precursor of Milly in The Wings of the Dove and Maggie in The Golden Bowl, is certainly portrayed with some sympathy. Nonetheless, it is not the relationship of Gertrude and Felix but rather that of Eugenia and Robert Acton which form the logical center of this novel. And in that relationship, the narrator's sympathies, as Tony Tanner

points out (Henry James: The Writer 29), are overwhelmingly with Eugenia and against the moralistic and aesthetically insensitive American Robert Acton, who falls in love with Eugenia, then fails to propose to her, as she desperately wishes him to do, when he discovers that she has been lying to him. We are given a clear picture of Acton's character about two-thirds of the way through the novel when, musing privately on whether he is in love with Eugenia, he concludes:

> If this was love, love had been overrated. Love was a poetic impulse, and his own state of feeling in regard to the Baroness was largely characterized by...curiosity. It was true, as Acton with his gently cogitative habit observed to himself, that curiosity, pushed to a given point, might become a romantic passion....It puzzled and vexed him at times to feel that he was not more ardent. (114)

Acton then goes on to compare himself to "a citadel" surrounded by water -- a Jamesian symbol of repressed emotion -- that has generously "removed the guns from the ramparts" for the sake of Eugenia and who now looks upon the outcome of his affair with her as though it were "an algebraic problem" and a "remarkably interesting drama" that he is watching from a seat in the theatre (114-15).

Acton, in short, is a man detached from his own emotions. Though a man of the world who has traveled to China and who is an expert on certain kinds of objets

d'art, he is only a more sophisticated version of old Mr. Wentworth, one who is unable to allow himself to feel strongly (indeed, the closing words of the novel hint that Acton is even worse off than Wentworth in this respect). Acton is tied to his mother, whose state of health "required the restriction of emotion" (142) and who is a devotee of Emerson (one of the innumerable jibes at transcendentalism sprinkled throughout James's fiction). The nearest Acton comes to actually feeling is to become aware that he might be feeling. "He was in love with her now," Acton muses during one of his last meetings with Eugenia after the latter has, once again, offered herself to him, "he was conscious of that, or [the narrator adds sardonically] he thought he was..." (147-8) This feeling of love is then described as "the discomfort of a charm of which his intelligence was impatient" and not yet "liberated" from. (148) And in their penultimate meeting, Acton's attitude toward Eugenia is several times described in a manner similar, as we will see, to that of the narrator of The Sacred Fount: as a person performing "experiments" (170). Not long afterward, Eugenia departs and Acton marries -- as James puts it in the final words of the novel -- "a particularly nice young girl" (173).

Acton lacks what James described in a letter to a

friend: ...to live, you know -- to feel, to be

> ...conscious of one's possibilities; not to pass through life mechanically or insensibly....I don't consider that in Boston [the setting of The Europeans is just outside of Boston] there's any real sympathy with the artistic temperament; we tend to make everything a matter of right and wrong....This is why I've always been so much drawn to the French, who are so aesthetic, so sensuous, so entirely living. (qtd. in Cargill 304)

Ignoring for the moment the fact that James's view of the French was not always so positive, we can say that Eugenia is, by contrast with Robert Acton, "French" in this sense; she is not "a particularly nice young girl" -- and very much the better for it. Not, of course, that she is a wholly sympathetic character; besides having her lie, entirely out of self-interest, to Acton, the narrator frequently mocks her overweening desire -- and failure -- to "conquer America." Indeed, Eugenia's situation bears more than a passing resemblance to Mrs. Rance's (the name says all) in The Golden Bowl. Nonetheless, she possesses an honesty and openness about her own feelings that Acton lacks. Not only does she acknowledge to herself at a very early point that "she was positively in love" with Acton (84), but she several times expresses her own sense of vulnerability and weakness -- e.g., when she first meets the Wentworths and begs "pray take me in" (43); and in her plea to her brother Felix to see that "she is in trouble"

(133). Such emotional vulnerability is complemented by a healthy skepticism toward the value of reason -- a skepticism that Acton lacks. "One's reason is dismally flat," she says to her brother Felix late in the novel. "It's a bed with the mattress removed" (167).

A crucial passage comes shortly after Acton has described himself as a "citadel" surrounded by water and Eugenia realizes she is about to be rejected: "...she felt the annoyance of a rather wearied swimmer who, on nearing shore, to land, finds a smooth straight wall of rock when he had counted upon a clean firm beach" (129). Whatever Eugenia's manifold defects, she is at least <u>in</u> the water, in the flux of social, cultural, and aesthetic passions.

The capacity for aesthetic appreciation is made possible, in James's early works, by the individual being exposed to cultural and historical influences. Such influences are cultural in that only when a person is provided with a means to organize experience, a framework in which to see and react and think, can he develop the capacity to do these things with feeling and discrimination. And they are historical in that cultures are themselves the products of history, the products of a process in which patterns of the past are allowed to structure present experience. Only in an historically and

culturally rich environment can the individual "get outside himself" enough to see and develop what lies within him -- those feelings and instincts and inner urges upon which the aesthetic sense bases itself. That is why for James Americans tend to lack an aesthetic sense -- because they are not provided with a complete "picture," as James puts it in The American Scene (381), against which they may measure and weigh and compare their own selves. Americans, as James puts it in the New York Prefaces, give the appearance "of being almost incredibly unaware of life -- as the European order expressed life" (1198).

It should be pointed out, however, that James's early harshness toward Americans is tempered by his view that Americans are are mostly victims, not exploiters. They are victims of all that they have to do without -- the sense of having grown up without an organizing presence in their lives. This view comes out espe-cially in James's fictional treatment of children. In the United States, James never tires of telling us, children are the very center of culture; they are expected to act as its leaders. Such an expectation is perverse because it is impossible to lead before one is even formed; the worship of youth in America is just an expression of the poverty of its culture, of its lack of a foundation in history. Thus, in Daisy Miller,

What Maisie Knew, "The Pupil," The Turn of the Screw, The Awkward Age, and other works, James displays to us his compassion for children who are forced to take center stage before, so to speak, having learned to act. Such compassion, as Matthiessen noted (American 217), is based on a rejection of the romantic belief in the unspoiled innocence of children. Like Hawthorne's, James's interest was in the child's situation in the adult world rather than in the child's world as a separate realm (see Shine).

But however much James points up to us, in his early fiction, the lesson that the unaesthetic, unstructured life is no life at all, he is even more insistent in warning us against the dangers of allowing the aesthetic to rule life. Just as the artist serves his function best by adopting a relatively low position in society, so too the aesthetic as a component of personality can keep its integrity only by limiting itself and not attempting to "direct" the personality. The consequences of not heeding those limits are illustrated in James's portraits of Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle in The Portrait of a Lady (1881). Osmond is not, in my view, an altogether successful creation; he may have been what James was partly referring to when he called The Portrait of a Lady (as well as The American and The Princess Casamassima) "efforts so redolent of good

intentions baffled by a treacherous vehicle, an expertness too retarded" ("Prefaces" 1337). The portrait of Osmond suffers from the same defect that James pointed out in the preface to The American regarding the Bellegardes; he is too much the embodiment of a merely abstract idea of evil -- too one-dimensional, romanticized, and weakly rooted in experience. Again, James had not yet learned the lesson that to portray a character well the narrator must give himself over (through his metaphoric discourse) to the plot of the novel, must connect himself to his characters, not try to distance himself from them. If we compare Osmond and Madame Merle to their counterparts in The Wings of the Dove (Merton Densher and Kate Croy) or The Golden Bowl (the Prince and Charlotte Stant), the extent to which they fail to engage our sympathies becomes obvious. Yet such sympathy is vital to a proper understanding of these characters. For example, in the famous discussion between Isabel and Madame Merle that occurs in the first half of the novel, James uses the latter to mock the former's transcendentalism. He has Madame Merle adopt a metaphor which derives from Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, but is aimed principally at Emerson's defense of the self's autonomy, privacy, and ethereality:

> When you've lived as long as I you'll see that every

> human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There's no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our "self"? Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us -- and then flows back again. (175)

These words are similar to the description of Miriam in The Tragic Muse, which is made from Sherringham's moralistic perspective, yet is overlaid by a narrative voice dubious of the assumption that self-identity is essentially internal:

> ...so far from there being any question of her having the histrionic nature, she simply had it in such perfection that she was always acting....[she was] a woman whose only being was to "make believe"...whose identity resided in the continuity of her personations... (206)

James was later to embody, though in a far more positive way than imagined by Sherringham, such a concept of self in the character of Maggie Verver of The Golden Bowl. Madame Merle's words are a clear and convincing unmasking of the bad faith of Isabel's all too typically romantic idea that "I don't know whether I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me...." (175)

In her early, still deluded state, Isabel engages our sympathies by viewing the self to be without limits, but alienates us in the way she understands this to be true.

The self is without limits in the sense, as Madame Merle says, that it overflows and is fed by its sensuous experiences -- by the whole envelope of circumstances in which anyone exists. For Isabel, on the other hand, the self is "without limits" in the sense that it is a hidden pocket of infinity, an entity that is removed from and isolated within experience. As the novel progresses, Isabel "suffers into" a fuller concept of self. At this early stage, however, she denies the aesthetic basis of personality. Though she grasps that the self is a "standard" against which all expressions of the self are measured -- it is doubtful that Madame Merle sees this -- she does not understand that as a standard, it cannot itself be measured. (5) Isabel enunciates a view that would make herself her own standard of conduct -- the very ideal that Osmond cherishes when he declares one should "make one's self a work of art" or when he says "I am not conventional. I am convention itself" (265).

We have heard, of course, this kind of declaration before -- from the character of Gabriel Nash. Osmond is, indeed, a kind of evil-hearted Nash. The important difference between the two is that whereas Nash's character is intentionally made abstract and evanescent -- he is a kind of walking refutation of the very principle he

enunciates (the aesthetic basis of personality) -- the character of Osmond serves a role integral to the novel as a whole. The fact that he does so only weakly -- that he is a highly melodramatic character compared to, say, the Prince in The Golden Bowl -- obscures and complicates our picture of him. The character of the Prince is an organic part of the action; that Maggie's personality is shown as "overflowing" into his, that he is created in such a way as to be susceptible to such influences, shows us his function in the novel clearly. But in the case of Osmond, James's portrait actually undermines the overall effect that is sought. The reason so many readers have found difficulty accepting Isabel's decision at the end of the novel to return to Osmond -- have failed to understand the sense in which the decision is a tragic affirmation of herself -- is perhaps a consequence of such artistic failure. By overdoing Osmond's negation of the aesthetic, James weakens the structure of his novel as a whole. Nonetheless, this very "overdone" quality at least brings into sharp focus a crucial "lesson." The lesson is that the effort to make the aesthetic a standard which dictates to experience can only result in the complete negation of the aesthetic -- and, it follows, a nihilistic negation of experience itself. As Isabel comes to recognize late in the novel,

> ...he [Osmond] pointed out to her [Isabel] so much of the baseness and shabbiness of life, opened her eyes so wide to the stupidity, the depravity, the ignorance of mankind, that she had been properly impressed with the infinite vulgarity of things, and of the virtue of keeping one's self unspotted by it. But this base, ignoble world, it appeared, was after all what one was to live for; one was to keep it for ever in one's eye, in order not to enlighten or convert or redeem it, but to extract from it some recognition of one's own superiority. On the one hand it was despicable, but on the other, it afforded a standard. (360)

What makes Isabel's realization that Osmond scorns the social and sensuous world so powerful is that she recognizes the kinship of her former views with such arrogance. Indeed, when James has Osmond say to Madame Merle, "Society is all bad" (206), he is only carrying to its logical conclusion Isabel's notion that "nothing expresses me." To found the self on inner criteria, on purely private experience that cannot be adequately expressed, is to condemn what lies outside such a self; it is to deny the sensuous and social sources that feed the healthy personality.

The character of Osmond incarnates a life-negating aestheticism by requiring life to conform to an aesthetic standard. Such a standard could be rooted only in a disembodied self that has allowed an idea of beauty -- not the experience of beauty -- to rule over its functions. But to define beauty in such a way that one is forced to choose

between beauty and life is to misunderstand the function beauty has for life. It is to deny the aesthetic meaning of existence by extracting and isolating this meaning from existence. The aesthetic is a component of the self whose "reality" is conceptual, not empirical; to separate it from, or oppose it to, experience is to make it a form of experience and therefore misunderstand this conceptual status. James humorously makes this point in "Brooksmith" (1892), the story of a refined and extremely sensitive butler who "took an unfailing interest in the preservation of the fundamental difference; it was the thing he had most on his conscience" (In the Cage 88). After the death of his revered master, Brooksmith is unable to find anyone good enough to serve and cannot go on living in a world that so abysmally fails to measure up: "...the great and romantic fact was Brooksmith's final evasion of his fate...now I trust that, with characteristic deliberation, he is changing the plates of the immortal gods" (96).

But although beauty is not to be separated from or opposed to experience, James is insistent that a distinction be maintained. Social convention by itself cannot provide the fulcrum by which our aesthetic appreciation of life swings. James ironically conveys this idea by representing those people with a highly developed

sense of aesthetic conventions as the ugliest people. For example, in The Wings of the Dove, Densher regards the highly "developed" Aunt Maud as "unanimously ugly -- operatively, ominously so cruel" (63). Such ugliness is the result of equating convention with beauty, rather than seeing beauty as that which arises out of what one does with the conventional. In this sense, characters like Milly Theale of The Wings of the Dove, or Maggie Verver of The Golden Bowl, with all their social awkwardness and failure to measure up to conven-tional standards of beauty and grace, embody an attitude or way of looking at life that is for James truly aesthetic. It is no accident that all of these characters are Americans. If James looked to Europe for an environment in which the aesthetic basis of consciousness could be "appreciated," he looked to America for the most complete realization of such consciousness. It was not Americans' innocence per se that fostered such conscious-ness, but the capacity their innocence gave them to experience tragedy and thereby expand their consciousness. Americans, more than Europeans, were for James in a position to grapple with and ultimately overcome the limits of their consciousness.

NOTES

1. On the origin of Gabriel Nash as a character, see James, The Complete Notebooks 221.

2. Wittgenstein often referred to the assumption that it is the primary function of language to be referential ("referring" empirically, that is, to a private, internal dimension or to an external, public one) as a delusory "picture" of language. Wittgenstein felt that he had himself been "bewitched" (as he put it) by such a delusion while writing his first book, the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.

3. Mull (24). Daniel Fogel makes a similar point about James's early story, "A Day of Days" (143).

4. See, for example, James's "Letter to the Hon. Robert S. Rantoul: the Hawthorne Centennial, 1904" ("Hawthorne" 468-74).

5. Cf. Wittgenstein's similar perspective, outlined in Note 2 of the Introduction.

Chapter IV

The Value of Lying and the Faith of Governesses

In an early chapter of The Golden Bowl, the Prince, a young, impoverished Italian and soon to be adulterous husband of an American heiress, has a conversation with his friend, Mrs. Assingham, in which he tries to explain to her that, although possessed of charm and a highly sensuous, aesthetic sensibility, there is one quality he lacks:

> "I'm excellent [says the Prince], I really think, all round -- except that I'm stupid. I can do pretty well anything I see. But I've got to see it first..." She [Mrs. Assingham] might have been waiting to see what he would come to, but she spoke with a certain impatience. "What on earth are you talking about?" But he could perfectly say. "Of my real, honest fear of being 'off' some day, of being wrong, without knowing it. That's what I shall always trust you for -- to tell me when I am. No -- with you people [i.e., Americans and English, but especially Americans] it's a sense. We haven't got it -- not as you have..." "I should be interested," she presently remarked, "to see some sense you don't possess." Well, he produced one on the spot. "The moral, dear Mrs. Assingham. I mean, always, as you others consider it. I've of course something that in our poor dear backward old Rome sufficiently passes for it. But it's no more like yours than the tortuous stone staircase --half-ruined into the bargain! -- in some castle of our quattrocento is like the "lightning elevator" in one of Mr. Verver's fifteen-storey buildings. Your moral sense works by steam -- it sends you up like a rocket. Ours is slow and steep and unlighted, with so many of the steps missing that -- well, that it's as short, in almost any case, to turn round and come down again." "Trusting," Mrs. Assingham smiled, "to get up some other way?"

"Yes -- or not to have to get up at all..." (62)

In this passage, James is, of course, laughing at the over-simplified, "short-circuited" nature of modern, American morality. But he is also pointing up a genuine defect of character in the Prince -- the inability of his highly developed aesthetic sensibility to provide a basis for judgment. When the Prince says that "I can do pretty well with anything I see," he is affirming the aesthetic basis of personality; "seeing" signifies the sensuous appreciation of experience. It is a feature of such appreciation that the Prince himself realizes that his awareness is limited. It differs from that of Maggie Verver who, at this early stage in the novel, is "incredibly romantic" (62) and unaware of her limitations. When, late in the novel, the Prince calls Charlotte Stant, his former lover (who also has a highly developed aesthetic sensibility), "stupid" (565), it is to the above conversation that he refers. The Prince has "learned" what Charlotte has not: that when aesthetic taste is allowed to dictate to experience, rather than arise out of it, the result is a destructive egoism that can become solipsistic and nihilistic. It is what we don't see in the Prince, not what we see too much of, that constitutes his defect in character -- not the excess of an aesthetic sense, but the

lack of a moral one. Just as in the case of the aesthetic sense, the moral sense channels and gives form to the enjoyment of life only when it is properly exercised and not allowed to become its own standard. The moral sense, in its relation to the aesthetic, is, as the Prince implies, a kind of "intelligence." Or, as James puts it in the language of tragedy, the moral is "the reaction of thought in the face of the human comedy."

But a character who illustrates the lack of such intelligence even more clearly than the Prince is Mrs. Gereth of The Spoils of Poynton (1897), an English lady who is inordinately attached to the objects d'art and other possessions she has collected. It is in part her juxtaposition with heroine Fleda Vetch -- a character who abounds to excess in such intelligence -- that sharpens the picture for us, as James himself points out in his preface:

> A character she [Mrs. Gereth] too, absolutely, yet the very reverse of a free spirit...thanks to the "value" represented by Fleda, and the position to which the elder woman is confined by that irradiation, the latter is at the best a "false" character, floundering as she does in the dusk of disproportionate passion. She is a figure, oh definitely -- which is a very different matter; for you may be a figure with all the blinding, with all the hampering passion in life, and may have the grand air in what shall yet prove to the finer view...but a perfect rage of awkwardness. Mrs. Gereth was, obviously, with her pride and her pluck, of an admirable fine paste; but she was not intelligent, was only clever and therefore would have been no use to us at all as centre of our subject -- compared with Fleda,

> who was only intelligent, not distinctively able. (1148)

It is instructive that James here likens the value of Mrs. Gereth, in comparison with Fleda, to "paste." "Paste" is the title of a story published by James in 1900 and inspired directly by a story of Maupassant ("Prefaces" 1242) in which one character, Mrs. Guy, is represented, like Mrs. Gereth, as "not intelligent...only clever" and another, Charlotte, is represented (like Fleda) as "only intelligent, not distinctively able." In the story, Mrs. Guy obtains a necklace at one time thought to be paste but in fact real and of great value. James's point in the story, however, is that in a moral sense, the necklace is "paste," since Mrs. Guy has had to "sell herself" to get it. (1)

So too Mrs. Gereth "sells herself" by investing her self in <u>things</u> -- and therefore narrows and confines the range of herself. Mrs. Gereth "had no imagination about anybody's life save on the side she bumped against. Fleda was quite aware that she should otherwise have been a rare creature....Mrs. Gereth had really no perception of anybody's nature" (<u>Aspern</u> 225). Mrs. Gereth's passion for things is vanity for herself. She is in this sense the mirror image of her son's fiance, the detestable Mona

Brigstock, who has no real appreciation for Mrs. Gereth's possessions, yet under English law stands to obtain them upon her marriage to Mrs. Gereth's son. Mrs. Gereth's vanity is but a more sophisticated form of Mona's, who early in the story is portrayed as "dropping her eyes, as she walked, to catch the seen of her patent-leather shoes, which...she kicked foward a little -- it gave her an odd movement -- to help her see what she thought of them" (Aspern 145). Both Mona and Mrs. Gereth are contrasted with Fleda at the end of the tale, whose "possession" of the Spoils of Poynton is a spiritual one; "...her possession was as complete as that of either of the other whom it had filled only with bitterness" (316).

Mrs. Gereth, as well as Mrs. Guy in "Paste," are motivated by a "passion" that is, as always, the fount of self for James. But such passion is in their cases drained and finally cut off by the lack of any channels outside their own egos -- by the lack of moral imagination -- to flow through. Mrs. Gereth's lack of awareness is well characterized by Richard Hocks: "Mrs. Gereth has the classic intellectualist mentality: concepts for her are not things to come back into experience with; they stand stately and removed from 'mere' occurences and consequential process" (139). By the end of the novel, when

Mrs. Gereth has lost her possessions, she has consequently become almost lifeless: "No passion was left to her, and her forbearance only added to the force with which she represented the final vanity of everything" (Aspern 300).

The lesson taught by Mrs. Gereth's example is an aspect of the Lesson of Gabriel Nash. When art is made over into a sort of "Buddhistic contemplation," as Mrs. Gereth's infatuation with her things is described (231), and allowed to dictate to experience without any balancing moral sense drawn from experience, then the result can only be the extinction of feeling and passion. Mrs. Gereth's chastisement of Fleda for trying to act like a "saint in heaven" (Aspern 274) is in this sense very much like the Countess Gemini's advice to Isabel in The Portrait of a Lady when the former tells Isabel: "Don't try to be too good. Be a little easy and natural and nasty; feel a little wicked, for the comfort of it, once in your life" (455). Like Mrs. Gereth, the Countess Gemini is described with the aid of Eastern imagery that James habitually used to evoke emotional and moral constriction or even unawareness.

There is a sense, as we shall see shortly, in which the Countess Gemini's advice is certainly apt. However, the sense in which it is not apt is that both Fleda and Isabel (as well as the governess in The Turn of the Screw) are

engaged in an effort to express both the aesthetic and moral sides of themselves. Unlike Mrs. Gereth and the Countess Gemini, they do not diminish their feelings by divorcing them from their values. Nor do they fall prey to the delusion that one can take "happiness" as one's basis, as Roger Lawrence in James's early novel, Watch and Ward (1871), does when he tries to make Nora "happy that she might be good" (40). For James, to say that "the goal of life is happiness" is meaningless. Happiness cannot be taken as something pre-defined; rather, it is experience, aided by moral value, that shows us what happiness is.

This is what Merton Densher in The Wings of the Dove recognizes -- and what Kate Croy does not -- by virtue of the "awkwardness of his conscience" (284). Throughout much of the novel, Kate, with the increasingly reluctant assistance of Densher, schemes to take advantage of the terminal illness of a young American heiress (Milly Theale) in order to inherit her money and make her and Densher "happy." Kate, however, is not just a schemer; she is one of the more interesting and skillfully executed creations in James's fictional theatre. Early in the novel, for example, Kate is spoken of as embodying such a high standard of the aesthetic that she banishes the "talk" of other women to "the dull desert of the conventional."

Moreover, Kate is portrayed not just as possessing a highly developed aesthetic sense but as having a strong sense of her own integrity. She is capable of declaring (and of making us believe) that "I'm the most honest woman in the world..." (223) and "I'm a person, thank goodness, who can do what I don't like" (309). Nonetheless, by the end of the novel, Kate has suffered a breakdown in imagination. To the end, Kate wants Milly to conform to the social uses that she, Kate, wishes to make of her, clinging to the notion that Milly was deceived or wanted to be deceived. Thus, speaking to Densher about Milly (after Milly's death), Kate says:

> "She never wanted the truth...She wanted you. She would have taken from you what you could give her, and been glad of it even if she had known it false. You might have lied to her from pity, and she have seen you and felt you lie, and yet -- since it was all for tenderness -- she would have thanked you and blessed you and clung to you but the more." (361)

Kate's imaginative failure here is complete, for Milly not only knew and accepted what Kate so quaintly calls "the truth," but made a new and stronger sort of truth -- the living testa-ment, the superior force of which is Densher's altered emotional and conscious state. But how is it that Kate, being so clever and intelligent, should miss the significance of what Milly has done? The answer to this question is given through Densher, who late in the novel,

meditates:

> This awkwardness of his conscience, both in respect to his general plasticity, the fruit of his feeling plasticity, within limits, to be a mode of life like another -- certainly better than some, and particularly in respect such confusion as might reign about what he had really come for -- this inward ache was not wholly dispelled by the style, charming as that was, of Kate's poetic versions. Even the high wonder and delight of Kate couldn't set him right with himself when there was something quite distinct from these things that kept him wrong. (284-5)

Densher is here implicitly comparing Milly to Kate, and finding that the latter cannot match Milly in strength and completeness of character. Milly, like Isabel before and Maggie after, "suffers into truth" as she gains moral knowledge. Kate, by contrast, turns her back on suffering; she does not, for example, want to know anything about Milly's illness. The note of high integrity in Kate's personality, including even allusions to her in the beginning as a "princess" a la Milly, (2) therefore starts to lose its pitch and go off-key. Although a remarkable figure to our sensibilities throughout the entire novel (her story is, indeed, the closest James comes to enacting a "villain tragedy" in the tradition of Macbeth and Richard III), her presence is progressively blocked by that of Milly until, at the very end of the novel, Milly defines the very limits of Kate and Densher's horizons. Nonetheless, the metaphor of being "trapped inside a cage

by her own pride" is never applied to Kate, as it is to Charlotte Stant in The Golden Bowl; Kate goes wrong, but she is not tamed. (3)

But what exactly is the nature of this "wrong"? If James was a moralist, he was, like Nietzsche, a singularly impious one. For example, in What Maisie Knew (1897), a child is systematically and repeatedly abused by the adult world, yet the "moral" of the story is anything but a didactic one:

> Mrs. Wix [Maisie's nurse and loyal caretaker] looked dark...."Do you mean to say you've already forgotten what we found together?"
> Maisie dimly remembered. "My moral sense?"
> "Your moral sense. Haven't I, after all, brought it out?" She spoke as she had never spoken even in the schoolroom and the book in her hand.
> It brought back to the child's recollection how she sometimes couldn't repeat on Friday the sentence that had been glib on Wednesday, and she dealt all feebly and ruefully with the present tough passage. Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale stood there like visitors at an 'exam'. She had indeed an instant a whiff of the faint flower that Mrs. Wix pretended to have plucked and now with such a peremptory hand thrust at her nose. Then it left her, and, as if she were sinking with a slip from a foothold, her arms made a short jerk. What this jerk represented was the spasm within her of something still deeper than a moral sense. (273)

What Maisie Knew points up the dangers of letting the moral component of personality become merely a form of theoretical knowledge that dictates to experience rather than results from it. The aesthetic, consequently, becomes disembodied; personality is reduced to ego, to a merely

private self, and those transcendent sources of passion that constitute the living, breathing, open self, are repudiated. Such sources are, of course, logically prior to experience. Nonetheless, our knowledge, whether aesthetic, moral, or any other kind, about such sources is always a posteriori to experience. White-Mason, the hero of "Crapy Cornelia" (1910), exemplifies this point, being the sort of person "who, whether or no familiar with the need to make his conduct square with his conscience and taste, was never wholly exempt from that of making his taste and his conscience square with his conduct" (American Novels 830). Conversely, Laura Wing of A London Life (1889) has trouble making experience conform to what she thinks it ought to be: "It was not the first time that the just measure of things seemed to slip from her hands as she became conscious of possible or rather of very actual, differences of standard and usage" (100).

Other characters in which the baleful effects of moral knowledge are exhibited -- but exhibited in a mostly humorous and ironic way -- are Henrietta Stackpole of The Portrait of a Lady, who is possessed of a great sense of "duty" (85-6), but is totally incapable of grasping the deeper, more vibrant values that Isabel Archer in the end learns to live by; and the wonderful Fanny Assingham of The

Golden Bowl who, not too long after the conversation with the Prince quoted at the beginning of this chapter, declares to her husband: "...stupidity pushed to a certain point is, you know, immorality. Just so what is morality but high intelligence?" (101)

Mrs. Assingham's role in The Golden Bowl, like that of Henrietta's in The Portrait of a Lady, is to facilitate Maggie and Isabel's awakenings through actions that sometimes comically have effects opposite to what they, Henrietta and Fanny, intended. James's portraits of these "ficelles," as he refers to Henrietta in the New York Prefaces, are ironic. Fanny, for example, initially misunderstands every major character in the book: she fails to perceive the Prince's lack of a moral sense; she thinks Charlotte will marry to be "wise and right" (101); and, most egregiously of all, she judges that Maggie "wasn't born to know evil" (94; cf. Wilson, R.B.J. 181). Her declaration that "morality is high intelligence" is in fact comic. On the one hand, morality is certainly not "high intelligence" if such intelligence is equated with logic (cf. Fogel 110), as the morally unconscious Charlotte Stant does when she says to the Prince, in a formulation that "deconstructs" itself, "logic's everything. That, at least, is how I feel it" (116). On the other hand, morality is

high intelligence if "intelligence" is taken to mean an openness to and capacity to discern other people's feelings and values. But in that case, since Fanny is herself not "intelligent," it follows that she is immoral.

(2)

Nonetheless, Mrs. Assingham does possess at least one quality which James deems of high moral value: the ability to lie (cf. Posnock 156). Mrs. Assingham in fact exercises this ability frequently in The Golden Bowl, in her statements to Maggie concerning Charlotte and the Prince's involvement. These lies, like Kate's "proper lie" to Milly "for" Densher (224); or Fleda's lies in The Spoils of Poynton, including her "virtuous, 'heroic' lie" (Complete Notebooks 135); or Little Bilham's lie about Chad to Strether in The Ambassadors, or even Eugenia's lies in The Europeans, are not condemned and are to a certain extent viewed positively. They demonstrate the sense in which morality is, indeed, "intelligence." Nonetheless, although such lies have a positive value, it is one that is strictly limited. They differ, in this sense, from Maggie's artistic, creative, and above all more total form of lying: "The right, the right yes, it took this extraordinary form of her humbugging, as she had called it, to the end. It was

only a question of not by a hair's breadth deflecting into the truth" (498).

To understand the sense in which James gave lying a positive moral value, it is first necessary to understand the sense in which he gave the refusal to lie a negative value. The latter is most clearly demonstrated in "The Liar" (1888), in which James goes so far as to morally condemn those intolerant of lying. (4) Oliver Lyon, the hero of the story, has caught his former lover in a blatant deception and dreams of the day when he will expose her and she will confess all:

> Lyon was at once too discreet and too fond of his own intimate inductions...He even imagined the hour when, with burning face, she might ask <u>him</u> not to take the question up ....Oh, to hear that woman's voice in that deep abasement ....Then he should be almost consoled -- he would be magnanimous. (<u>Novels and Tales</u> XII, New York 347; 353-4)

In "The Liar," James demonstrates what Ora Segal calls "the extraordinary mixture of acuteness and bad faith, sensitivity and cruelty, genuine compassion and vindictiveness, which characterizes the workings of the self-deceived observer" (98). Or, as Walter Wright puts it, "The measure of his own evil is...his abysmal failure to see it" (<u>Madness</u> 98). Unlike earlier stories such as "Madame de Mauves" (1875) and "Lady Barbarina" (1884), in which the observer plays a limited role in the story, Lyon

himself becomes the story. James's ironic point is that it is Lyon, not his former lover and her husband, who is the real "liar"; his dishonesty is a form of self-deception that blinds him to the feelings of others.

But Lyon is only one of a long list of what I call ethical prudes -- those whose moral preoccupations are self-deceptive, are masks for their egoism and insensitivity to others. Adela Chart, for example, spends much of the story of "The Marriages" (1892) resenting and morally condemning her father for his proposed remarriage. In the end, she manages to wreck this marriage, as well as the life of her brother who, like her father, she believes she is very devoted to.

Earlier, this brother had confronted her as follows: "Can't you see that I'm in trouble? Where are your eyes, your senses, your sympathy, that you talk so much about? Haven't you seen these six months that I've a cursed worry in my life?" (Complete Tales XIII 56; cf. Eugenia's appeal to Felix in The Europeans, in which she says: "Can't you see that I'm in trouble?") But Adela inhabits a higher, more elevated realm, as James pointedly conveys through a mode of free, indirect discourse that is strikingly similar, as we shall see, to the "first person" narration of The Sacred Fount: "She had chosen and acted, and the

greatest could do no more than that. The grand thing was to see one's results, and what else was she doing? These results were in important and opulent lives; the stage was large on which she moved her figures" (54). Adela, like Lyon of The Liar, demonstrates an enormous lack of perception about her own behavior that James mocks.

Ethical prudery was an issue that obsessed James. Rowland Mallett of Roderick Hudson is "a man of moral passion" whose moralistic, self-serving attitude toward his friend grows increasingly tedious -- and has increasingly destructive effects -- as the novel progresses; Winterbourne of Daisy Miller and the narrator of "The Patagonia" seem blinded by their high-mindedness and are at least partially responsible for the deaths of the two heroines (see Complete Notebooks 44-6); and in The Reverberator (1888) James's abhorence of ethical prudery seems to outweigh his abhorrence even of journalism.

James's attitude toward such characters is echoed by Nietzsche in The Genealogy of Morals:

> Our educated people of today, our "good people" do not tell lies -- that is true; but that is not to their credit! A real lie, a geniuine, resolute, "honest" lie...would be something far too severe and potent for them: it would demand of them what one may not demand of them, that they should open their eyes to themselves, that they should know how to distinguish "true" and "false" in themselves. All they are capable of is a dishonest lie; whoever today accounts himself a

> "good man" is utterly incapable of confronting any matter except with dishonest mendaciousness... (573, Third Essay, sec. 19)

Or, as Nietzsche puts it in a formulation that surely would have delighted both Oscar Wilde (see "Decay") and James if they had known of it, such moralists are "dishonest hypocrites."

In this sense, Fanny Assingham, Kate Croy, Little Bilham, Fleda Vetch, and other of James's "liars," are honest hypocrites. James does not, in these characters, give a positive moral value to "lying in-itself." Rather, their lies are shown to be sensitive and intelligent responses to the exigencies of a given social and interpersonal dynamic. To grasp James's view of lying, and of moral value in general, it is necessary to shake oneself loose from the constricted categories through which philosophers, particularly modern philosophers, have induced us to view the problem. James was certainly no utilitarian; he is forever having his characters act against their own "practical" interests. But although he did not see experience as the source of moral value, neither did he feel that the latter could be separated from such value. To formulate a universal moral principle such as Kant's categorical imperative is to shield oneself from experience by setting up a sort of "ideal action" that is,

nonetheless, unlike any other action in that it is independent of all experience. (5) Moral value is nothing more and nothing less than what a person makes of his experience, and this is always an open question since experience is itself open. A person of integrity acts not "according to circumstances" but rather forms or molds the significance of those circumstances by being sensitive to the feelings, thoughts, and pre-established values that inhere in them. That is why James valued the capacity to lie: because it was a sign -- not, obviously, a guarantee -- of moral openness to the feelings and values of others.

It is useful to look at James's view of the value of lying from the context of the last chapter's discussion of the aesthetic basis of personality. Criticizing Baudelaire, James called the poet a "Hawthorne reversed" (an allusion to what James felt was Hawthorne's acute sensitivity to pain and suffering):

> [Baudelaire] strikes us on the whole as passionless...He knew evil not by experience, not as something within himself, but by contemplation and curiosity, as something outside of himself, by which his own intellectual agility was not in the least discomposed, rather indeed...flattered and stimulated... ("Baudelaire" 155)

Such criticism links Baudelaire with a subtle form of "dishonest hypocrisy"; it is an accusation that Baudelaire did not "open himself" to those "polluted" currents of

culture and history to feel and therefore portray them from within. Baudelaire's modernistic pessimism was to James a distancing of the self from experience, a failure to trust consciousness, live within it, and thereby "take the evil" that is a feature of social reality into oneself -- not in order to perpetuate such evil but to tragically redeem it. James's view of the positive value of lying was thus an extension of his conception of the aesthetic basis of personality. The moral basis of character, the taking-in of good and evil, represented a step "beyond" but at the same time a step wholly continuous with the aesthetic; it represented a more complete affirmation of character in the face of evil. Only by living through the experience of evil in oneself could character become fully formed.

But James did not, of course, come to such "conclusions" theoretically. Rather, he came to them through the process of learning to dramatize metaphorically the consciousness of his characters -- to stick more completely to the possibilities of experience in the act of executing his art. A brief contrast of Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady and Maggie Verver in The Golden Bowl shows what is involved here. As noted above, the character of Isabel is based partly on George Eliot's Gwendolen Harleth in her novel Daniel Deronda. In "Daniel Deronda: A

Conversation" (1876), James (in the person of "Constantius") characterized Gwendolen by saying that:

> ...her supreme perception of the fact that the world is whirling past her is in the disappointment not of a base but of an exalted passion. The very chance to embrace what the author is so fond of calling a "larger life" seems refused to her. She is punished for being narrow, and she is not allowed a chance to expand. (990)

But James did not, I think, at the time he wrote these words (five years before publication of The Portrait of a Lady), fully grasp why such a "larger life" had to be denied to Gwendolen -- why, that is, her fate could not be fully tragic. Jeannette King has written that "The form of tragedy is...essentially alien to George Eliot's realistic novel...her images of passive heroism are pathetic rather than tragic" (94). Alfred Kazin makes a similar point in his comparison of James and Edith Wharton when he says that: "Edith Wharton specialized in tales of victimization. To James the emotional problems of his characters were the representative expression of a larger world of speech, manners, and instinct..." (On Native 77) Eliot and Wharton's heros often tend to be pathetic for a reason common to all modern novels of realism: because the narrator is too god-like, too morally and epistemologically dominant, to allow the consciousness of the protagonist to expand. Or, to put this in another way, the narrator exerts

metonymic, not just metaphoric control over his story. It was, as I have already emphasized, one of the crucial features of James's late style to loosen the narrator's metonymic control while expanding what would allow the reader to "image" the protagonist's consciousness more fully: the narrator's metaphoric discourse.

In The Portrait of a Lady, James was intent on writing a tragedy; he wished to go beyond Eliot's portrayal of pathetic Gwendolen to enact a character that grows and expands in her confrontation with evil. And to show growth and expansion one must first, of course, show a consciousness that is relatively constricted. That is why, in the beginning, Isabel cannot see "the ghost" that haunts the Touchett mansion:

> "You must have suffered first, have suffered greatly, have gained some miserable knowledge. In that way your eyes are opened to it..." said Ralph.
> "I told you just now I'm very fond of knowledge," Isabel answered.
> "Yes, of happy knowledge -- of pleasant knowledge. But you haven't suffered, and you're not made to suffer. I hope you'll never see a ghost!'" (52)

By the end of the tale, Isabel does, of course, "see the ghost," but not before she manifests a quite remarkable and extravagant moral presumptiveness:

> Who was she, what was she, that she should hold herself superior?....Isabel found ground to remind herself from time to time that she must not be too proud, and nothing could be more sincere than her prayer to be

delivered from such a danger..." (102)

The initial chaacterization of Isabel is similar to that not not just of Gwendolen but of the dishonest hypocrites and moral prudes mentioned above. Early in the novel, James characterizes her as follows:

> She believed then that at bottom she had a different morality. Of course the morality of civilized persons has always much in common; but our young woman had a sense in her of values gone wrong or, as they said at the shops, marked down. She considered, with the presumption of youth, that a morality differing from her own must be inferior to it...(275)

James here is obviously setting up Isabel for "a fall" -- and tragic awakening. His success in doing so, I think, is largely dependent on his use of Ralph Touchett as a center of consciousness from which to view Isabel; that James as narrator probably identified with Ralph only facilitated the presentation of Isabel. Unfortunately, as the novel progressed and Ralph faded from the story, James ("baffled by a treacherous vehicle") did not possess the narrative "courage" he was to develop in his late style and present Isabel from an openly narrative standpoint. James's late perspective is reflected in his comments about Shakespeare's The Tempest: "...every inch of it is personal tone, or in other words brooding expression raised to the highest energy" (1213). In the New York Prefaces, James

viewed his own works -- at their best -- in the same light. But at the time of writing Portrait, James as narrator was apparently still under the illusion that Isabel could dramatize her own consciousness and consequently tried not to "intrude" too much -- with the result that we get far too little of Isabel's thoughts and feelings.

According to Ora Segal, on the other hand, who presents a New Critical argument,

> The fact that James dispenses...with the observer's interpretative commentary and does not supplement it with that of the authorial narrator is, I suggest, neither an indication of his own reservation about the moral rightness of Isabel's decision nor an attempt to mystify the reader. Rather, it is to be viewed as a strategy by means of which James emphasizes the growth of the heroine's tragic stature and her ultimate moral isolation. (54)

The point that I want to emphasize is that however successful or not one judges such a "strategy," it is a completely different strategy from that used in James's late novels, in which the narrator makes his presence manifest. In The Golden Bowl, for example, we are guided by the narrator onto "the stage" of Maggie's consciousness and made to witness (via metaphorical description) her learning and absorption of evil. And what this allows James to do is to show evil as initially (e.g., during the period of Maggie's deluded state) "latent and unconscious of itself...a power beyond will, beyond knowledge, beyond

identity" (Ward, Imagination 8). As Maggie then "suffers into truth," evil is made conscious, made a form of knowledge, and made to actually constitute in part that identity. That is why Maggie's process of suffering into truth entails the enormous "humbugging" quoted in the passage above, a humbugging that is a sort of willed deception on Maggie's part -- not just of others but of herself (and which therefore requires a strong narrative presence). By making evil fully conscious in herself-- a consciousness which neither the Prince nor Charlotte is able to bear -- Maggie creates the conditions of unconsciousness and forgetfulness necessary to the survival of the society in which she lives. By receiving evil into herself, she simultaneously shields it from others, accomplishing what Milly, in The Wings of Dove, does in a different way: the carving out of the conceptual horizons under which others live. As Ross Posnock puts it, "Maggie attains this stance of maximum responsibility, a perspective that embraces both her own vision and that of her three relatives: to see 'for' Amerigo, Charlotte, and Adam becomes her burden" (178).

Maggie's humbugging is for this reason very different from the lies of Mrs. Assingham, Kate Croy, Little Bilham, Fleda Vetch, and Rose Tramore; the latter lie to keep up

appearances, to do the "proper" and therefore preestablished, already "referenced" thing. But Maggie and Milly do not "keep up appearances"; they make them, forming the "illusions" and "necessary fictions" within which others live. Maggie and Milly are in this sense "artists" who produce something beyond what was referred to in the last chapter as "the justification of life as an aesthetic phenomenon." Maggie and Milly's fictions provide a moral affirmation of life in the face of tragedy; they act as moral creators. As Nietzsche wrote,

> A living thing can only be healthy, strong, and productive within a certain horizon; if it is incapable of drawing one round itself, or too selfish to lose its own view in another's, it will come to an untimely end....a thing can live only through a pious illusion. (Use 7, 42)

Such horizons, however necessary, are illusions:

> Just as little as a reader today reads all of the individual words (let alone syllables) on a page -- rather he picks about five words at random out of twenty and "guesses" at the meaning that probably belongs to these five words --just as little do we see a tree exactly and completely with reference to leaves, twigs, color, and form; it is so very much easier for us simply to improvise some approximation of a tree. Even in the midst of the strangest experiences we still do the same: we make up the major part of the experience and can scarcely be forced not to contemplate some event as its "inventors." All this means: basically and from time immemorial we are -- accustomed to lying. Or to put it more virtuously and hypocritically, in short, more pleasantly: one is much more of an artist than one knows. (Beyond 295, sec. 192)

Maggie and Milly are artists who "know" -- who see that "it is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance..." (Beyond 236, sec. 34) and that "The falseness of a judgment is...not necessarily an objection to a judgment...The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving...renouncing false judgments would mean renouncing life and a denial of life." Nietzsche here is using the terms, "falseness," "lying," and "illusions" in a somewhat uncritical way, much as Maggie's humbugging is characterized as complete falsity or lack of "truth." Obviously, if "everything is a falsehood," there can be no falsehood or truth, since the two terms are interdependent. What both Nietzsche and James mean is simply that there is no absolute basis for truth outside the human activities that establish them. Neither Nietzsche nor James is claiming himself to be "non-moral" or "amoral" (immorality is a different matter). On the contrary, as Nietzsche says, "there seems to be nothing more worth taking seriously" than "the problems of morality" (Genealogy Preface 457), a sentiment echoed by James ("Baudelaire" 157).

Both Nietzsche and James tried to show that all moralities are grounded in social, cultural, and historical experience. As such, there may be different kinds of

moralities depending on such experience. In chapters VII and VIII, we will see that the morality of James's tragic heroines and heroes, of his "moral creators," is a fundamentally different kind of morality than that followed by most of his other characters. Maggie and Milly make good -- though in a way Isabel couldn't have imagined -- on Isabel's belief "that at bottom she had a different morality."

(3)

For the moment, however, I would like to examine a character whose morality is not, in the final analysis, "different from other people's": the governess of The Turn of the Screw (1898). As James makes clear in the preface to this novel, the governess is a highly "romantic" character -- which is to say, in Jamesian terms, that her consciousness is presented in a relatively "unrelated," "disassociated" or autonomous state.

Such autonomy is dictated in part by the form in which the novel is written: what is commonly called "first person narration." I put this term in quotes because, as mostly French theorists have pointed out, it is strictly speaking tautological. All fiction is "narrated" and all narration, by definition, is "first person." The distinction between

"first person narration" and "third person narration," so widespread among Anglo-American critics, has sense only as a distinction between works in which the narrator is dramatized (i.e., is a character in the story he tells) and undramatized. I will therefore refer to James's The Turn of the Screw, The Aspern Papers, and The Sacred Fount as "narrator dramatized" novels.

To speak of "narrator dramatized" novels, however, is just another way of saying "novels in which the narrator dramatizes himself (or herself)." They might in this sense be likened to extended soliloquies. The stage, however, imposes objectivity on self-revelation: "the play," says James in the Prefaces, consents to the logic of but one way" (1134). The novel does just the opposite, "allowing a writer to run on...to carry this tendency to its furthest limits" ("Autobiography in Fiction" 246). In this sense, it is "the perfect paradise of the loose end" ("Prefaces" 1134). To make one's first person narrators ominiscient or even retrospective only increases this tendency. James accordingly insists that fictional autobiography requires the author to "put off his own personality" and to "assume that of another" (246). James's point is not that the author's personality and emotions should be concealed. Rather, the "first person" form should be avoided because

"the difficulty of projecting yourself as somebody else is never so great as when you retain the form of being yourself" ("Thackeray" 1294). Projecting oneself is a virtue or goal, not something to be avoided. Such projection allows the artist to achieve what James called intensity.

Intensity for James was a feature of the structure of relations in which action is presented. As he said in the preface to The American, the "greatest intensity may be arrived at evident-ly when the sacrifice of community, of 'related' sides of situations, has not been too rash" (1064). James is postulating here a "fine awareness" that sits at the center of such relations. But if such awareness is for any reason detached from the represented range of reality in which it exists, and the "cable is cut," then the character is "at large and unrelated," and a dangerous loss of intensity is effected (1064-65). With such loss of intensity comes also a loss of objectivity.

Narrator dramatized novels thus run the risk of loss of intensity and objectivity by being endowed with what James called "the double privilege of subject and object...the terrible fluidity of self-revelation...the darkest abyss of romance...foredoomed to looseness" (1315-16) -- with, in other words, what might be called a sort of narratological

romanticism. Even the notions of "implied author" and "unreliable narrator" miss the central epistemological issue that James himself placed so much emphasis on.

To understand the nature of this issue, it should be observed, first, that what the linguistically nonsensical term, "third-person narration" allows us to do is to detach the narrator from any concrete, socially and historically identifiable person and conceive of the narrator as a sort of unlocalized presence who pervades the text and whose "reality" may or may not be limited to the text. Such conceptual flexibility has proved especially useful to critics in dealing with the narrative complexities of modern fiction.

The notion of "implied author" enunciated by Wayne Booth and many others is a refinement of the basic idea of third person narrators, as well as an extension of the idea to first person narrators. Like third person narrators, the implied author is a sort of ethereal presence who permeates the structure of the novel. However, unlike third person narrators, he is defined more distinctly. In particular, he stands midway between and connects the narrator (embodied in the linguistic "I" of the text, but also identifiable in "third person" narrations as the "voice" behind the narrative, as opposed to the scenic, dramatic parts of the

text) and the real-life author. On the one hand, the implied author must be kept separate from the narrator so that he can maintain his ethereality and not be reduced to the "mere" linguistic "I." On the other hand, the implied author must be kept separate from the real-life author so that the "mysterious act of fictional creation" not be reduced to the mundane processes of a person writing, editing, revising, quarrelling with his publisher, worrying about whether his books will sell, or doubting their worth, all of which take place in a particular social and historical context.

Although distinct from either the narrator or real-life author, the implied author clearly partakes of both; he is truly an "author/narrator" -- a split personality who very often "exists" within two radically different dimensions at once. The notion of the implied author is also handy for dealing with those dramatized narrations that are called "unreliable." For how could we know that a given first person narrator was unreliable unless we had an implied author to provide clues and hidden messages that he was so? By contrast, as Wayne Booth maintains, reliable narrations often allow us to identify the implied author with the narrator, to collapse the distinction between the two. What Booth does not explain is why, if we need an implied author

to assure us that a given first person narrator is unreliable, we don't equally need one to assure us that he is reliable. As Susanne Kappeler says,

> It is a curious feature of frustration in the face of ambiguity, and especially ambiguity generated by an "unreliable" first person narrative, that the critic who recognizes the narrator's pretence, deceit or even lie, expects automatically to get hold of the truth this lie covers up. (301-2).

The notion of an "unreliable narrator," with its necessary epistemological anchor, "the implied author," only obfuscates what is going on in novels like The Turn of the Screw, The Aspern Papers, and The Sacred Fount. James's own terminology, in which he speaks of the narrator dramatized form as conferring on the narrator "the double privilege of subject and object," is far more illuminating (albeit more difficult conceptually). The narrator has "a double privilege" in that the reflector, or narrating present-tense subject, tries to dramatize as narrated past-tense object its own consciousness -- what James refers to, in the preface to Roderick Hudson, as "two quite distinct connotations" of the actions of the protagonists (1051). But the effort (as James's language, "the terrible fluidity of self-revelation....the darkest abyss of romance... foredooomed to looseness" implies), is self-defeating. The reflector can never get outside itself to witness and

describe its own process of reflecting -- it would be like a mirror trying to mirror its own mirroring. The "romantic," it will be recalled, is for James that which "we never can directly know" ("Prefaces" 1063) in that our own consciousness, our means of knowing, can never know itself. In this sense, all of James's dramatized narrators (including those of his tales of the literary life) are self-deceived -- deceived in that they strive for what it is impossible for them to achieve: an accurate or objective view of themselves. In so far as they strive for such a view -- and James's dramatized narrators almost always so strive -- they are trapped within a vicious hermeneutical circle, destined not to "develop" in character but only to repeat the patterns they exhibit from the outset. Because for James character or self "feeds" and develops by taking in experience that is external to it, a dramatized narrator cannot be shown as developing in character; all that can be shown is our gradual awakening to the limitations of such characters. Only if James had believed that the self was substantial and autonomous could he have felt that a "disassociated" or "unrelated" and a "full" or "tragically aware" consciousness were compatible. But The Turn of the Screw in fact exhibits their incompatibility.

(4)

The governess in The Turn of the Screw is an even more extreme portrait of romantic delusion than James's other romantic heroines such as Fleda Vetch of The Spoils of Poynton (1897) and the telegraphist of In the Cage (1898), not to mention the protagonists of James's four great tragedies. For example, the idealized lover of Turn (i.e., the wealthy uncle of the children the governess is taking care of) is far less accessible and far more detached than the idealized lovers of most, if not all, of James's other works. Though the uncle is always a felt presence in the mind and emotions of the governess, the latter has in fact met him only once and throughout the story he remains off-stage. This gives the governess' feelings for him a more imaginary quality than in the cases of the telegra-graphist and Fleda of Spoils. Secondly, the consequences of the governess' behavior are more harmful than those of the others; they lead to the death of a child, Miles.

Miles's death raises an issue that has been a source of debate among Jamesian critics for many years: Are the ghosts that appear in Turn "real" or are they projections of the governess' disordered state of mind? (see Slaughter) Around the answer to this question there has seemed to

hinge "the correct interpretation" of the tale. For if the ghosts are "real" -- if, that is, they appear as well to the children, Miles and Flora, when not in the governess' presence -- then the moral dilemna the governess thinks she is facing is also real and her efforts to "save" the children justified. If, on the other hand, the ghosts are but projections of an hysteric, as Edmund Wilson argued ("Ambiguity"), then Turn is the story not of moral, but only of a kind of mental perversion; what the governess judges to be the "evil" presences that lurk about the children are but symptoms of her own psychological ill-health.

That this debate raged so long, and was taken so seriously for so long by so many critics, is perhaps a sign of the philosophical naivete with which James has generally been approached. Since James gives us no way of determining whether the ghosts appear to the children, such a question (as well as any conjectures, hypotheses, or theories based on the question) are irrelevant at best. It is "the reality" of the ghosts for the governess and for the governess alone that James is interested in. That is why, in the New York Prefaces, James refers to his tale as a romance, as "a perfect example of an exercise of the imagination unassisted, unassociated -- playing the game,

making the score, in the phrase of our sporting day, off its own bat" (1183). As a narrator dramatized novel, it presents, as James puts it in terms similar to thoss which Wittgenstein used, "an annexed but independent world in which nothing is right save as we rightly imagine it" ("Prefaces" 1183-4).

Unlike The Spoils of Poynton (1897), which portrays a young lady of romantic inclination, the "romance" of Turn is built into the very form of the tale. Indeed, James explicitly says that the spirits which haunt the governess, Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, "are not 'ghosts' at all" (1187). He means by this contention to disassociate his spirits from any resemblance to "the recorded and attested 'ghosts'" (1186) of psychical research (which his brother, William, for example, was concerned with) -- to posit their "reality" entirely within the imagination of the governess, within "the subjective adventure" of the "action" that is presented (1186). James does not make the ghosts real (or unreal) for the children because that is not what his story is about.

As noted in the last chapter, James's fictional use of children is Hawthornesque; he was interested in the child's situation in the adult world rather than in the child's world as a separate realm. James was consequently

unconcerned with the idea of "the moral perversion" of innocents; rather, he was interested in the moral perversion of the governess. That the children's perception of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel is left in doubt is an extremely significant fact for our understanding of the tale. It makes the integrity of the governess' imagination the main crux of the story; we do not begin to feel the effect of this crux until we cease being concerned with the issue of "the reality" of the ghosts or spirits.

It is just such a concern that the two polar interpretations mentioned above manifest to an equal degree. In an effort to distinguish between what Leon Edel calls "the story as told, and the story to be deduced" ("Point of View" 234), both interpretations seek a "meaning" that lies outside the world or context which The Turn of the Screw presents. As a result, they miss the subject altogether. It is not that a proper description of The Turn of the Screw should limit itself to "the text." On the contrary, all critical description presupposes norms or possibilities of experience that the critic necessarily reacts, thinks, and writes by; James in fact asks us, virtually pleads with us, to make use of those norms by plunging us into the governess' imaginative adventure. It is the "interpretive," epistemologically naive method of

literary criticism, with its assumption that there is a fixed object somewhere to interpret, that inhibits a self-consciously critical approach. My contention is that the Jamesian critic must rid himself of the notion that the "subject" of literature is a pre-existing meaning that somehow sits in the text (or, alternatively, in the psychology and cultural environment of the author) waiting to be extracted. Rather, literary meaning moves and requires action on the part of the critic to keep up with, see, and describe. Just as the action of the story is the author's execution of it, so too its meaning is the reader's description of it. Both are ways of plotting -- enacting through description -- the imagination.

James's remarks in the preface to the novel that The Turn of the Screw is a "fairy tale pure and simple" (1183) are greatly qualified by his insistence that it is a fairy tale with a purpose -- one that springs "not from an artless and measure-less, but from a conscious and cultivated credulity...a piece ...of cold artistic calculation" that "returns upon itself" (1183-5). It is what I call a frustrated fairy tale, or a story in which the unreliability of the narrator is dramatized by the novel's juxtaposition of two incompatible forms: that of the realistic, linear mode of narration with which the

governess would like to gain our credibility, and the circular form of the fairy tale, in which a "happy" ending is presupposed. The governess would like us to see her role, in the fairy tale, as a conquering heroine bent on saving "the princess" (the souls of the children) from the dragons (the ghosts) that guard her. The fact that we are never certain, one way or another, whether to assign the governess the role of saviour or villain is what makes the novel a frustrated fairy tale.

By asserting that the form of his tale returns upon itself, James means that the two opposing forms negate -- or "deconstruct" -- each other and that the character of the governess remains static. She cannot, that is, dramatize her own development. The dramatized narrator form of the novel is thus crucial to any understanding of its meaning. It accounts for why James calls his tale an "amusette," "a piece of ingenuity pure and simple" (1184-5) -- because of the predominance in it of form over content.

But before discussing such predominance further, let us first establish, as I have already implied, that the governess' character is indeed a narrow, undeveloped one. Early in the story, she discusses the lie the boy, Miles, has told her with the simple but "good" housekeeper, Mrs. Grose:

> "His having lied and been impudent are, I confess, less engaging specimens than I had hoped to have from you of the outbreak in him of the little natural man. Still...they must do,for they make me feel more than ever that I must watch." (37)

The governess' attitude here is similar to that of Oliver Lyon in "The Liar." Not only does she self-righteously condemn the child for lying (rather than try to understand his emotions in so doing), but she regards such "specimens" much as Oliver Lyon regarded his "evidence": as partly justifying her own moral judgments. Her only regret is that the specimens aren't more damning. It does not occur to her to feel sympathy for and forgive the boy until she notices Mrs. Grose has done so: "It made me blush, the next minute, to see in my friend's face how much more unreservedly she had forgiven him than her anecdote struck me as pointing out to my own tenderness any way to do" (37).

As the story progresses, the governess retreats increasingly into a sort of romanticized moral self-glorification, speaking of her "dreadful boldness of mind" (36); comparing herself (it is hinted) to Amelia, Fielding's all-good, long-suffering heroine (40); and feeling, about the embarassment she has caused Miles, an "odd recognition of my superiority" and a "curious thrill of triumph" (46).

But what is even more striking than her insensitivity to the feelings of the children and her pride in herself is that both of these are motivated by a fear for herself. This fear is shown clearly when she speaks to Mrs. Grose of the possibility of not living up to the expectations that she believes her gentleman employer -- who is the children's uncle -- has of her:

> "You see me asking him for a visit?" No, with her eyes on my face she evidently couldn't. Instead of it even -- as a woman reads another -- she could see what I myself saw: his derision, his amusement, his contempt for the breakdown of my resignation at being left alone and for the fine machinery I had set in motion to attract his attention to my slighted charms. She didn't know -- no one knew -- how proud I had been to serve him and to stick to our terms; yet she none the less took the measure, I think of the warning I now gave. "If you should so lose your head as to appeal to him for me --" She was really frightened. "Yes, Miss?" "I would leave, on the spot, both him and you..." (50)

The governess' attitude is reminiscent of other characters such as Fleda Vetch of The Spoils of Poynton. (6) Like Fleda, the governess is absurdly preoccupied with any appearance her behavior might give of failing to conform to the highest principles of ethical conduct. Indeed, so preoccupied with the appearance of integrity is the governess that she acts in ways that are difficult not to view as unethical. I refer in particular to her not allowing communication between the children and their uncle

(who is the only guardian or semblance of a parent that the children have), and even refusing to post the letters they have written to him. (The latter act is thrown into an ugly and ironic light by a later incident in which Miles steals the governess' letter to the uncle; we are made to feel that Miles's action is far more understandable than the governess'.) It is in the same passage that the governess reveals she has not posted the children's letters that she speaks -- as present-tense narrator -- of "hating" the children, expressing surprise at herself that she did not hate them then, and implying that she regards them with bitterness now ("now" being at a time after Miles has died):

> It was exactly as if our young friends knew how almost more awkward than anything else that [the children's letters to their uncle] might be for me. There appears to me moreover as I look back no note in all this more extraordinary than the mere fact that, in spite of my tension and of their triumph, I never lost patience with them. Adorable they must in truth have been, I now feel, since I did n't in these days hate them! (54)

And a few pages later, in a conversation with Miles in which the latter appeals to the governess for information about what his uncle thinks about him, she tells Miles: "I don't think your uncle much cares" (57).

But why such ill-will, even cruelty, toward the children whom she otherwise pretends to love and cherish?

The answer, once again, is that she fears the children will make her look bad in the eyes of the uncle. Thus, the governess says about Flora, the little girl: "She'll make me out to him the lowest creature --" (75).

Throughout The Turn of the Screw, we are made to sympathize to some extent with the governess' moral concerns. After all, our interest in her, like our interest in other such romantic heroines as Fleda Vetch and the telegraphist of In the Cage, stems principally from her moral intensity. And certainly the ghosts that appear to her are evidence, if nothing else, of that. How James conveys that intensity can be seen in the following passage, which occurs early in the story:

> It was the first time, in a manner, that I had known space and air and freedom, all the music of summer and all the mystery of nature. And then there was consideration -- and consideration was sweet. Oh it was a trap -- not designed but deep -- to my imagination, to my delicacy, perhaps to my vanity; to whatever in me was most excitable. The best way to picture it all is to say that I was off my guard. They [the children] gave me so little trouble -- they were of a gentleness so extraordinary. I used to speculate -- but even this with a dim disconnectedness -- as to how the rough future (for all futures are rough) would handle them and might bruise them. They had the bloom of health and happiness; and yet, as if I had been in charge of a pair of little grandees, of princes of the blood, for whom everything, to be right, would have to be fenced about and ordered and arranged, the only form that in my fancy the after-years could take for them was that of a romantic, a really royal extension of the garden and the park. It may be of course above all that what suddenly broke into this gives the previous time a

> charm of stillness -- the hush in which something gathers or crouches. The change was actually like the spring of a beast. (14-15)

The "beast" here is the same beast that devours John Marcher of "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903) and that Spencer Brydon in "The Jolly Corner" faces and manages to hold at bay: the old Hawthorneque beast of pride and egoism (32) -- except that in all three of James's tales, the beast-image is a metaphorical, rather than allegorical figure of the protagonists' consciousness. James, like Hawthorne, draws on the imaginative resources of the reader (a product of the latter's social and cultural experience) to effect the imagination of evil. As Hawthorne puts it in The Marble Faun:

> Let the canvas glow as it may, you must look with the eye of faith, or its highest excellence escapes you. There is always the necessity of helping out the painter's art with your own resources of sensibility and imagination. (33)

Or as James says in the preface to The Turn of the Screw:

> Only make the reader's general vision of evil intense enough, I said to myself -- that already is a charming job -- and his own experience, his own imagination, his own sympathy (with the children) and horror (of their false friends) will supply him quite sufficiently with all the particulars. Make him think the evil, make him think it for himself, and you are released from weak specifications." (1188)

As he was to do increasingly in his later novels, James

uses us, his readers, to create the imaginations of his characters; he draws on our fund of an inherited sense of evil much as Hawthorne does in The House of Seven Gables. But of course James can draw on our imagination of evil only because he shares it in common with us. This is why, despite the governess' constricted personality, James is able to portray her so vividly -- to make his readers, as the history of the criticism of this novel shows, liable to the governess' own delusions.

Nonetheless, there is a crucial difference between the use of the beast-image in The Turn of the Screw and its use in such later works as "The Beast in the Jungle," "The Jolly Corner," "Broken Wings" (1903) -- in the latter, "the beast" is referred to as "perversity of pride" (In the Cage 281) -- and of course The Golden Bowl, The Wings of the Dove, and The Ambassadors. (7) The three stories all lead up to a single revelatory moment in which the character sees or has forced on him a truth that changes his life. But in The Turn of the Screw, the revelation is lacking; the governess remains blind. Nonetheless, James gives us the chance that he did not give the governess. The "truth" that John Marcher, Spencer Brydon, and Stuart Straith face is that the evil, the beast, is within themselves. The governess, by contrast, externalizes it, tries desperately

to keep it distant from herself; it is an indication of her unwillingness and cowardice to face the evil in herself that she is so preoccupied with trying to "prove" the reality of the ghosts. The point is not that the moral dilemna of the children is being foisted onto the children by the governess or that the ghosts aren't "real" (though we must be critical about the meaning we give to this word); the point is that the governess does not take the evil that is "out there" within herself. She fails, as Maggie Verver and Milly Theale succeed, to make herself fully conscious.

One sees, then, why James did not want his tale to be thought of as a "ghost story." Whereas conventional ghost stories make the question of the possible objective existence of the ghosts of paramount interest to the reader, sometimes confirming this existence, sometimes leaving it in doubt, and sometimes steering a course mid-way, James goes out of his way not to arouse such a concern in the reader but rather projects it -- the concern -- into the <u>character</u> of the governess. For it is really the governess' obsession with "proving" the existence of the ghosts that betrays the weakness of her character and, by implication, the error of viewing morality as a form of knowledge or intelligence that has its center not in

experience but in a disembodied self. The governess wishes to prove the existence of the ghosts in order to prove herself "right." During the scene with Flora at the lake, in which the ghost of Miss Jessel appears, the governess declares: "I remember, strangely, as the first feeling now produced in me, my thrill of joy at having brought on a proof. She [the ghost of Miss Jessel] was there, so I was justified..." (71)

The governess' preoccupation with "proof" can be contrasted with the attitude of Maggie in The Golden Bowl (as expressed by Fanny), when she realizes that her husband is unfaithful:

> "It isn't a question of belief, or of proof, absent or present; it's inevitably, with her, a question of natural perception, of insurmountable feeling...So far from wanting proof...she wants disproof, as against herself..." (416; cf. "Prefaces" 1334, 1258; Wings 243; "Flaubert" 297": Portrait 264)

Similarly, Isabel is characterized quite justly by the Countess Gemini in "succeeding in not knowing" about Osmond and Madame Merle (451). And in The Ambassadors, a critique of "explanation" similar to that in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations (8), is given: "[Strether] held that nothing ever was in fact -- for any one else -- explained. One went through the vain motions, but it was mostly a waste of life. A personal relation was a relation

only so long as people either perfectly understood or, better still, didn't care if they didn't" (92).

On the other hand, it is one of the governess' main characteristics not just that she takes pride in and wishes constantly to justify herself, but that she does so by virtue of her superior knowledge and mental powers. From her exaltation early in the story at her knowing about the children's past ("'I know, I know, I know!' My exaltation grew"); to her boast of her "dreadful boldness of mind" (36); to her assertion to Miles toward the end "'I know everything'" (86); to, finally, her effort to force a "proof" of the existence of the ghosts, an effort that only proves fatal to the child ("'I was...determined to have all my proof'" (88)), the governess' approach to experience is a theoretical, quasi-scientific one.

Such preoccupation with "proof," and the moral cowardice that prompts it, serves as the means by which the character of the governess is made narrow and static; it is a means that is effected within the range of her imagination, yet manages to undermine the integrity of that imagination. One need not therefore resort to such ethereal and extremely vague notions as "implied author" and "unreliable narrator" to recognize that the governess is self-deluded; one need only take note of the very concrete,

linguistically grounded tension between the governess as present-tense narrator and the governess as past-tense narrator. That generations of critics have reenacted the governess' blindness to herself by being so obsessed with the "reality" of the ghosts testifies to the skill with which James has disguised or deflected attention away from such tension. As James himself said,

> I need scarcely add after this that it is ...an amusette to catch those not easily caught...I recall for instance a reproach made me by a reader capable evidently, for the time, of some attention, but not quite capable of enough, who complained that I had n't sufficiently 'characterised' my young woman engaged in her labyrinth; had n't endowed her with signs and marks, features and humours, had n't in a word invited her to deal with her own mystery as well as with that of Peter Quint, Miss Jessel and the hapless children. I remember well, whatever the absurdity of its now coming back to me, my reply to that criticism -- under which one's artistic, one's ironic heart shook for the instant almost to breaking. ("Prefaces" 1184-5)

The reason James's "artistic, ironic heart shook" is that the story of the governess dealing with the ghosts and the children <u>was</u> the story of her dealing -- or rather not dealing -- "with her own mystery." What we see, in short, is that James had ghosts "appear" in his tale for a purpose which, I would warrant, ghosts have never so appeared in a "real" ghost story: to point up the delusion implied by our desire to know whether there is a "reality" behind their appearance.

That the governess is, in the end, denied the "proof" she so intensely wants of the objective existence of the ghosts, is an absolutely necessary condition for accomplishing that purpose. The story must, on a formal level, "return upon itself" if the governess' subjective adventure is to be effectively negated. And to negate the governess' adventure is to negate the governess' form of morality -- to show that morality does not and cannot have its basis in any form of opposites such as good versus evil or self versus nature. One might recall here the governess' derogatory remark, quoted earlier, about "the little natural man" in Miles. And in the following passage, she sets herself against "Nature" by solipsistically trying to contain within herself the "true" Nature:

> Here at present I feel afresh -- for I had felt it again and again -- how my equilibrium depended on the success of my rigid will, the will to shut my eyes as tight as possible to the truth that what I had to deal with was, revoltingly, against nature. I could only get on at all by taking "nature" into my confidence and my account, by treating my monstrous ordeal as a push in a direction unusual, of course, and unpleasant, but demanding after all, for a fair front, only another turn of the screw of ordinary virtue. No attempt, none the less, could well require more tact than just this attempt to supply, one's self, <u>all</u> the nature.... [would not it be] preposterous with a child so endowed [Miles], to forego the help one might wrest from absolute intelligence? What had his intelligence been given him for but to save him? Might n't one, to reach his mind, risk the stretch of a stiff arm across his character? (80-1)

The governess' belief in the substantiality of her self, and the accompanying idea that morality is grounded in such a self, are negated by her own acts of consciousness. The Turn of the Screw is a deconstructionist's dream. But it is also more than that. For James looks ahead in this tale to tragic affirmation. He shows us through the form of his tale -- by his presentation of the governess' world "from inside," as Nietzsche puts it (Beyond 238, sec. 36) -- that the governess' "self" is neither more nor less than the activity of the imagination she displays to us. Similarly, moral value is posited in the absence of an ontological basis for it. In The Turn of the Screw, James points to a different kind of morality, the morality of what Nietzsche calls good and bad, the morality of Maggie Verver and Milly Theale. He turns his back on the morality of the intentional self, of what Nietzsche calls (although I am not aware of any evidence to suggest Nietzsche and James had read one another) the morality of opposites, of good and evil, of "the faith of governesses":

> ...there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances; and if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and clumsiness of some philosophers, one wanted to abolish the "apparent world" altogether -- well, supposing you could do that, at least nothing would be left of your "truth" either. Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of "true" and "false?" Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and,

> as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance -- different "values," to use the language of painters? Why couldn't the world that concerns us -- be a fiction? And if somebody asked, "but to a fiction there surely belongs an author?" -- couldn't one answer simply: why? Doesn't this "belongs" perhaps belong to the fiction, too? [Wittgenstein, incidentally, makes the same point in numerous works of his late period.] Is it not permitted to be a bit ironical about the subject no less than the predicate and object? Shouldn't philosophers be permitted to rise above faith in grammar? All due respect for governesses -- but hasn't the time come for philosophy to renounce the faith of governesses? (Beyond 237, sec. 36)

NOTES

1. James even leaves us wondering at the end of the story how far this "selling" may have gone, with Charlotte "asking herself what sort of a bargain Mrs. Guy had driven and whether the marvel of the recognition in Bond Strettt had been a veracious account of the matter. Hadn't she perhaps in truth dealt with Arthur directly? It came bace to Charlotte almost luridly that she had had his address" (Complete Tales X 337).

2. Such allusions are, admittedly, somewhat ironic, since they consist of Kate's father, the detestable Lionel Croy, offering Kate a "coach and four" (29) and later, of a metaphorical description of Kate and Densher sitting in a "coach and four" at a circus while Mrs. Lowder, Kate's aunt, "drives round" them (54).

3. It is true that Kate compares herself to a "trembling kid," awaiting slaughter, and Aunt Maud's apartments to "the cage" (37). But in the first place, Aunt Maud is herself spoken of as being a "lionness" inside a cage (37). In the second place, in so far as Kate is "in the cage," it is not the cage of her pride (or not described explicitly as such, as with Charlotte), but the more literal cage of poverty.

4. Wayne Booth, in The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961), was the first major critic to apply such a reading, in which the narrator was viewed as "unreliable," to James's story. From this reader's perspective, Booth's reading seems unexceptionable and extremely obvious; it is at most a proper starting point for getting a handle on James's story. Yet I must remind myself that for 70 years, Booth's interpretation was exceptional. Moreover, many critics today still view the narrators of such stories as "The Real Thing" as "reliable."

5. For an overview of Kant's moral absolutism, see McDonald, Normative 116-19.

6. The governess' attitude is strikingly similar to Fleda Vetch's attitude toward her lover, Owen Gereth: "There was something in her that would make it a shame to her forever to have owed her happiness to an interference. It would seem intolerably vulgar to her to have 'ousted' the daughter of the Brigstocks [Fleda's rival for Owen]; and merely to have abstained even wouldn't assure her that she had been straight. Nothing was really straight but to justify her little pensioned presence by her use; and now, won over as she was to heroism, she could see her use only as some high and delicate deed. She couldn't do anything at all, in short, unless she could do it with a kind of pride" (Aspern 201-2). The parallel between the governess and Fleda on the one hand and the telegraphist of In the Cage (particularly the scene where the latter meets her half-imaginary lover in the park) is equally striking.

7. Beast imagery is of course extremely prominent in The Golden Bowl and The Wings of the Dove. But it can also be found in The Ambassadors. To cite only one example: "there was something in the great world covertly tigerish, which came to him across the lawn and in the charming air as a waft from the jungle" (133). Strether in general may be regarded as a more sensitive, more enlightened John Marcher of "The Beast in the Jungle."

8. See Note two of the Introduction.

Chapter V

Frustrated Fairy Tales: Epistemology and Nihilism

In his Essays on Radical Empiricism, William James wrote:

> The individualized self, which I believe to be the only thing properly called self, is a part of the content of the world experience. The world experienced (otherwise called the "field of consciousness") comes at all times with our body as its centre, centre of vision, centre of action, centre of interest. Where the body is is "here"; when the body acts is "now"; what the body touches is "this"; all other things are "there" and "then" and "that"...The word "I"...is primarily a noun of position, just like "this" and "here." Activities attached to "this" position have prerogative emphasis, and, if activities have feelings, must be felt in a peculiar way. The word "my" designates the kind of emphasis. I see no inconsistency whatever in defending, on the one hand, "my" activities as unique and opposed to those of outer nature, and, on the other hand, in affirming, after introspection, that they consist in movements in the head. (Essays 170-1)

In the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein attributed what he believed was the confusion of such reasoning to the practice and discourse of professional philosophers:

> Here we have a case of introspection, not unlike that from which William James got the idea that the "self" consisted mainly of "peculiar motions in the head and between the head and throat." And James's introspection shewed, not the meaning of the word "self" (so far as it means something like "person," "human being," "he himself," "I myself") nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word "self" to himself and tries to analyse its meaning..."I" is not the name of a person, nor "here"

> of a place, and "this" is not a name. But they are connected with names. Names are explained by means of them. (124-5, sec. 413; cf. 123, sec. 410)

Wittgenstein's point here is similar to the one implied by Henry James's metaphor of consciousness and sorrow as a wave (see Introduction, p. 10-11). Words like "I" have a conceptual status, not an empirical one; their usage cannot be equated with a "field of consciousness" linked to the body. Rather, "I" is like the form of the wave; the particular person denoted by "he" or "she" is the material that makes up the wave. The analogy with transverse waves propagated in water is thus close. In such waves, the disturbance or form of the water which we signify by the term, "wave," is what advances, not the individual particles of water themselves (see any elementary textbook of classical physics). Like the form by which a wave propagates itself, the "I" cannot be pointed to as "movements in the head"; for what one "points to" (i.e., tries to define ostensively) is at most only the material of the wave, the "he" or "she" of identity. "I" gives us our standard or norm of identity; as a standard, its role is not referential. It does not function as an object, substance or indeed anything that can be measured --anymore than the standard measure of "one foot" can be said to be one foot long. (1) As Wittgenstein says in the

Investigations,

> When I say "I am in pain," I do not point to a person who is in pain, since in a certain sense I have no idea who is. And this can be given a justification. For the main point is: I did not say that such and such a person was in pain, but "I am...." Now in saying this I don't name any person. Just as I don't name anyone when I groan with pain. Though someone else sees who is in pain from the groaning.
>
> What does it mean to know who is in pain? It means, for example, to know which man in this room is in pain: for instance, that it is the one who is sitting over there, or the one who is standing in that corner, the tall one over there with the fair hair, and so on. -- What am I getting at? At the fact that there is a great variety of criteria for personal "identity."
>
> Now which of them determines my saying that "I" am in pain? None. (122, sec. 404)

The use of the "I" grounds the criteria for personal identity; it is itself ungrounded. Wittgenstein's dissolution of the self as center or metaphysical substance is similar to Derrida's in that neither tries to replace the metaphysical notion of self with another. Rather, both try to show that the metaphysical formulation undermines itself. Derrida does this by deconstructing texts, Wittgenstein by drawing our attention to the fact that the way we use language is at odds with the picture or model we (as philosophers or literary critics) hold in our minds of language.

This can be seen clearly in Wittgenstein's critique of the notion of a "private language." (2) Private language is

characterized by Wittgenstein as a language whose individual words "refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language" ("Philosophical" 89, sec. 243). The notion of private language is thus at odds with Wittgenstein general conception of language. In the Philosophical Investigations, for example, he says that the reason he links "language" with "game" is to emphasize that the former is always used as part of a non-linguistic social activity or form of life (Lebensform). By a private language, Wittgenstein means not a language that has been derived from or is in some way based on a public language and just happens to be used by an isolated individual; he means a language not so derived, one that cannot be understood by another because the objects to which its words refer are sensed only by the individual involved. In his critique of private language, Wittgenstein is not attacking a use, or even a possible use of language (as many interpreters of Wittgenstein have failed to understand); he is attacking an unuseable picture or model of language.

The central issue addressed by the private language game argument is: Does there exist an empirical check for

our use of language? Do our words gain their meaning, their significance, simply by their reference to sensations, perceptions, and sense-data -- to a type of experience or evidence that (in the Humean sense) appears "before the mind's eye"? Wittgenstein's answer is that an empirical criterion of meaning is naive, since "the facts" do not speak for themselves but presuppose (a la Kant) a conceptual or logical framework. It is not our sensations alone that give the language we use, or could possibly use, meaning. Rather, the meanings of words are normative, grounded in a Lebensform, or system of practices and activities. The notion of a private language entails the principle that the self is logically independent of the Other. But the same concept of self applies to both; sensations and reflections ("I feel...I think...") presuppose the same logical basis (but not, of course, the same empirical or subjective basis). Hence, the very idea of one self "at war" with other selves (as Hobbes would have it) has no clear sense, for the two enemies get their "supplies" -- owe their existence to -- the same source.

Wittgenstein's critique of the notion of a private language is, in part, an effort to get us to stop objectifying the "I." For in the modern sensibility, the "I" becomes an object in the way that we normally treat the

"he" as an object -- as a person or thing we refer to. We even think that to preserve the integrity of the "I" we must treat it as an object (albeit an internal one). The communal system of practices and activities (upon which the "I" is grounded) comes to be conceived of in opposition to the "I" -- as an object defending itself against a collection of other objects. As we will see, this is essentially the diagnosis that Henry James and Nietzsche make of the disease of modern civilization.

The reason that Wittgenstein refers in the Philosophical Investigations to William James so often -- compared to other philosophers -- is, I think, that he feared that his notion of meaning as use would be confused with the former's pragmatism. Pragmatism, as enunciated by William James, maintains (among other things) that the truth of a statement consists in its use. Such a contention has as little to do with Wittgenstein's perspective as it does with Charles Pierce's -- who went to incredible lengths to disassociate himself from William James. It is true that William James's pragmatism drew people's attention to experience and action, as Wittgenstein also wanted to do; but it did so in a way that Wittgenstein regarded as thoroughly "muddled." The notion that the truth of a statement consists in its use upholds the very empirical

criterion of meaning -- and the substantive concept of self that is its foun-dation -- that was one of Wittgenstein's main concerns, in his later philosophy, to dissolve. For Wittgenstein, it is not the truth, but the meaning of a statement that consists in its use -- and what is "meaningful," far from being necessarily true, must have the capacity to be false if it is not to be judged tautological. Wittgenstein's philosophy is conceptual and "experiential" in a social, cultural and historical sense -- which is to say, in a non-epistemological sense. William James's philosophy, by contrast, is empirical and subjective; its foundation is epistemological.

A similar relation between Henry and William James obtains. It is true that both tended to view "experience" as given within the field of consciousness; but Henry did not ground that field in the mental or inner experience of the individual, as William did. Rather, he felt that the field of individual experience is presupposed, made possible, by the geography of public experience, by the social and historical forms that William, as rugged American individualist, tended to scorn. William did not like Henry's later novels for an important reason; he did not understand the decentered, theatrical form of self they gave expression to. (3) As for Henry, the language of

philosophy was alien to him and he had no interest in learning it. Yet, for all that, many of Henry's formulations are far more sophisticated, speaking in a purely philosophical sense, than those of William. Compare, for example, Henry's definition of "the real" (discussed in Chapter I) as "the things we cannot possibly not know" ("Prefaces" 1063) with William's notion of "the real":

> The best definition I know is that which the pragmatist rule gives: "Anything is real of which we find ourselves obliged to take account in any way." Concepts are thus as real as percepts, for we cannot live a moment without taking acount of them. But the "eternal" kind of being which they enjoy is inferior to the temporal kind, because it is so static and schematic and lacks so many characters which temporal reality possesses....A concept...means always the same thing, white always white, a circle always a circle. (Some Problems 101-2)

William's world is a bifurcated one, in which concepts are treated as a special type of "thing," possessing the qualities of eternity and Humean "self-sameness" -- a notion which Wittgenstein ridiculed (Philosophical 84, sec. 215-16). He fails utterly to grasp what Henry's definition of the real so acutely pinpoints: that our concepts are temporal, historically and culturally contingent ranges of possibility within which empirical experience presents itself. This is not the place for a detailed comparison of William and Henry's "philosophical" perspectives, but it is

nonetheless worth observing that one of the few critics to perceive clearly the intellectual gulf that existed between William and Henry was also a philosopher: Eliseo Vivas. "Henry," Vivas said, "repudiates the anti-intellectualism which underlies his brother's vision of the world, and which opposes life to thought, real living to theorizing, action to contemplation" (17).

Through his fiction and literary criticism, Henry was able to break through a conceptual block that William remained trapped behind. Modern epistemology has often taken it for granted that, whatever the final status of our knowledge, be it objective, subjective or something in-between, its sources or origin are in the centered self. (4) It is the latter assumption, and not any epistemological conclusions drawn on the basis of it, that separates William from Henry, as well as from Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, and Derrida. To say that "the truth of a statement consists in its use" was for Henry superficial. As he remarks in The Sense of the Past, "use" is in this sense a "great ambiguous question-begging term" (146); a similar point is made in The Ivory Tower (1917) (American Novels 880). To the extent Henry's work has philosophical import -- to the extent we can either liken or contrast the two writers -- it differs not so much from William's

"conclusions" as from the assumptions behind those conclusions. Henry wasn't a "better" philosopher than William because he wasn't a philosopher at all. But his critical insights have theoretical ramifications which in my view go beyond in certain aspects the more strictly philosophical formulations of William.

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This contention is borne out increasingly in James's novels beginning with The Sacred Fount (1901). As John Carlos Rowe says, "...those symbols that provide the titles for James's later novels...from The Sacred Fount to the unfinished Ivory Tower...repudiate the idea of an essential center....The Jamesian center is a creative activity..." (44, 156) In the remainder of this chapter, I will briefly sketch James's development up to and including The Sacred Fount, a development that is characterized not just by his progressive repudiation of "an essential center" but by his disavowal of self-knowledge. Neither the disavowal nor the repudiation should be seen as a form of skepticism. Rather, they are James's way of deflating the balloon of modern man's hubris. Just as we saw James attack aesthetic and moral hubris in the form of such characters as Gabriel Nash, Gilbert Osmond, and the governess of The Turn of the

Screw, in this chapter we will examine a number of characters who embody such hubris in a purer, more theoretical form.

One such character is the telegraphist of In the Cage (1898). This is the story of a young woman who becomes infatuated with one of her upper-class clients, romanticizes him, and begins to look down on the far from romantic grocer who is courting her. Like the governess, the telegraphist is something of a repressed personality who shuns "the real" in favor of her romanticized vision of it. Unlike the governess, however, the telegraphist returns to the real before it is too late.

Like both Fleda and the governess, the telegraphist is a romantic; as Tony Tanner says in Henry James: The Writer and His Work, she is "'in the cage', the cage of her isolated imagination" (91). Her romanticism exceeds even that of the other two heroines:

> ...as she made out that the features [of her upper class customers] she thus scanned and associated were totally unaware of it, that they glowed only with the colour of quite other and not at all guessable thoughts, this directly added to their splendour, gave the girl the sharpest impression she had yet received of the uplifted, the unattainable plains of heaven, and yet at the same time caused her to thrill with a sense of the high company she did somehow keep. (211)

James employs here the technique of alternating "pictures" and "scenes" to dramatize consciousness, a

technique that began in its mature form with The Spoils of Poynton. (5) Nonetheless, his desire to emphasize the telegraphist's deluded condition and set her up for a fall, requires the assertion of a strong narrative presence alternating with brief sections of free indirect discourse:

> ...when she was most conscious of her vanity and the pitifulness of her little flutters and manoeuvres, then the consolation and the redemption were most sure to glow before her in some just discernible sign. He [her imagined lover] did like her!....Her folly had gone to the point of half-believing that the other party to the affair must sometimes mention in Eaton Square the extraordinary little person at the place from which he so often wired. (210, 211)

The sentence, "He did like her," is free indirect style, since it is meant to express the feelings and thoughts of the telegraphist (see next chapter), but this short passage is surrounded by narrative intrusions that render the telegraphist's mind from an external, unsympathetic point of view signalled by such evaluative terms as "vanity," "pitifulness," and "folly." The telegraphist's "folly," her delusiveness, is her too great reliance on cognition. For example, confronted with the real lover of the gentleman she fantasizes about, the telegraphist exclaims to herself (in quoted interior monologue): "'How little she knows, how little she knows!'" (211) and "How much I know -- how much I know!" (212). Or, during her meeting in the park with the gentleman, she says

to him: "...all I get out of it is the harmless pleasure of knowing. I know, I know, I know...'" (227)

Where the tale differs sharply from Turn is in the wisdom the telegraphist gains of herself in the course of having her illusions burst:

> [She saw] many things, the things of the past year, fall together and connect themselves, undergo the happy relegation that transforms melancholy and misery, passion and effort into experience and knowledge....what our heroine saw and felt for in the whole business was the vivid reflexion of her own dreams and delusions and her own return to reality. (230, 260-1)

The telegraphist's affirmation of herself in the face of her recognition that "Reality...could only be ugliness and obscurity" (261) makes her a genuinely tragic hero, if not nearly as strong as Isabel, Milly, Maggie, or Strether.

In In the Cage, James embodies a preoccupation not primarily aesthetic or moral but rather an "irrepressible and insatiable...extravagant and immoral, interest in personal character and in the 'nature' of a mind" ("Prefaces" 1168) -- yet another example of the Jamesian narrator's involvement with the protagonist and the author's tendency to describe the situation of each in similar terms. The dilemna of Fleda Vetch of The Spoils of Poynton is couched mostly in ethical terms (she is never in doubt about what "she knows"). The governess of Turn is

haunted by a sense not just that her moral judgment may be in error, but that she is on the wrong track in her very perceptions (i.e., her obsession with "proving" that the ghosts are real). But by the time we get to the telegraphist of In the Cage, we are yet another dimension removed; the telegraphist doesn't really know for a long time if anything of what she thinks about her adored object -- her imagined lover -- is true or real. In the end, her knowledge of the gentleman who comes to her "cage" to send telegrams, though borne out by the second-hand report of a friend, turns out to be empty. Whereas Fleda almost marries her lover and the governess has a socially authenticated, business "relationship" with her employer, the adored object of In the Cage gains hardly more substance in the telegraphist's life than that of a shadow. The progression is thus a movement away from the real. It is true that the telegraphist has a meeting with her imaginary lover in the park, but with the exception of this one brush with reality, she operates in a world of strange signs and accidents to which she must affix all the meaning, to paraphrase Wittgenstein, or in "that annexed but independent world in which nothing is right save as we rightly imagine it," as James says of the romance and/or fairy tale form ("Prefaces" 1185). In The Aspern Papers

(1888) and The Sacred Fount (1901), the two novels which I will discuss next, James further sharpens his examination of the epistemological dilemna of the modern subject.

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The Aspern Papers is the story of an American editor's efforts to obtain the personal papers of an early 19th-century romantic poet from the poet's former mistress and her niece. The poet, modeled after Shelley, is called Jeffrey Aspern. The former mistress, who is extremely aged and intensely perceptive, is named Juliana Bordereau. The niece, Tina Bordereau, bears more than a passing resemblance to Catherine Sloper of Washington Square; she is solemn and sincere, neither very pretty nor very young, and apt to put herself in humiliating positions from which, nonetheless, she emerges with her spirit triumphant. The story is set in Venice and evokes -- though in a savagely ironic light -- "the palpable, imaginable visitable past" of the romantic era ("Prefaces" 1177).

Like The Turn of the Screw, The Aspern Papers is a frustrated fairy tale narrated in the first person by an obsessed observer whose name we never learn. The "princess" to be rescued in this case, however, is not a moral but an epistemological object -- not the spiritual salvation of

two children but the Aspern papers, which represent for the narrator "esoteric knowledge...this was the idea with which my editorial heart used to thrill" (Aspern 51). Similarly, the "dragons" are not ghosts but the impenetrability of the past, represented above all by Juliana. During the narrator's first meeting with the old lady, she seems at first to be a window to the past:

> They come back to me now almost with the palpitation they caused, the successive feelings that accompanied my consciousness that as the door of the room closed behind me I was really face to face with the Juliana of some of Aspern's most exquisite and most renowned lyrics....as she sat there before me my heart beat as fast as if the miracle of resurrection had taken place for my benefit. Her presence seemed somehow to contain his, and I felt nearer to him at that first moment of seeing her than I ever had been before... (36)

At once, however, the blinds are drawn:

> Then came a check, with the perception that we were not really face to face, inasmuch as she had over her eyes a horrible green shade which for her, served almost as a mask ....it increased the presumption that there was a ghastly death's-head lurking behind it. The divine Juliana as a grinning skull....Then it came to me that she was tremendously old -- so old that death might take her at any moment, before I had time to get what I wanted from her. (36)

In Reading and Writing in Henry James, Susanne Kappeler maintains that in The Aspern Papers it is "the narrator himself who has a vested interest in presenting his story in the true form of a folktale" (18). This contention, which associates the narrator's delusiveness with the fairy

tale form, is a little misleading in that it distracts attention from the central epistemological issue. The narrator's most basic interest is that he be believed; that his account of "what happened" be regarded not just as truthful but as undistorted by his own point of view. Now, this interest is shared by most undramatized narrators in "realistic novels"; even if the author-narrator not be taken as "omniscient," our reading of the story depends on our trust that we are getting a faithful account of it. James draws our attention to the similarity of the two cases by making his narrator an experiencing rather than a reminiscing self; the tale contains a minimum of retrospective analysis. But this is, in a sense, what the "third person" author-narrator does as well when he lets the events of his realistic novel unfold "as they happened." He does not, that is, tell us the end of his tale before he gets to it; we are to be "held in suspense" until that time.

However, the forms of the folktale, the tragedy, or any traditional, relatively formulaic story are different. In a fairy tale, for example, we know from the start that there will be a "happy ending"; our suspense, if any, is directed at how, not if, this will occur. When James makes The Aspern Papers into something of a fairy tale, therefore, he

is undermining, from the very moment he introduces such a form, the first person narrator's account. The two forms are, indeed, largely incompatible. Granted, once the alien form of the fairy tale is introduced, it is in the interest of the narrator to keep the roles properly assigned. Moreover, the fact that as the story progresses, the narrator emerges less as conquering hero than as villain undermines increasingly his trustworthiness or epistemological reliability. But even if the narrator were to emerge as "hero," the credibility of his account would be -- if more subtly -- undercut; we could "accept" such a parallel in a supposedly veracious realistic story only to the extent the parallel was disguised. This is, indeed, exactly what we saw in the case of The Turn of the Screw; we really don't know for sure whether the governess is to be identified as heroine or villain, yet we may nonetheless be sure (or so I argued) that she cannot be trusted. The governess' quest for "proof" is the means by which the epistemological unreliability intrinsic to her realistic, metonymic mode of narration becomes also a moral unreliability. To have identified the governess as villain or hero would have simplified and undercut the dramatization of her lack of moral integrity.

In The Aspern Papers, by contrast, James's

epistemological concerns are in the forefront. He is attacking the basis of the realistic novel as seen in the works of Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant, and many other writers: the presumption, the epistemological naivete, that it is possible to separate the "story" from the point of view from which it is told. (6) He therefore makes no bones about presenting the narrator as something of a villain. But it is essential, if James is to parody effectively the assumptions of the realistic novel, that he stick to that form and not let it be overwhelmed by that of the fairy tale. That he does stick to such a form is shown by the tale's ending, where the gap between experiencing self and reminiscing self is bridged and the very moment of experience that is narrated (i.e., the narrator's despair at the loss of the Papers) coincides with the moment of narration. The motif of the fairy tale, by contrast, is the means by which James has the narrator unconsciously betray himself; it brings us to see that the Misses Bordereau are not "dragons" but victims.

This comes out not just in such comically dramatic passages as the one where Juliana discovers him on the verge of rifling through her desk and calls him a "publishing scoundrel," but in the characterization of his relations with the niece, Tina. According to the

narrator's assignment of roles in the fairy tale, Tina should be cast as one of the dragons -- albeit a more mild-mannered one than Juliana -- who block his access to the princess (i.e., the Papers). In fact, we are left in no doubt that she is the "real" princess, as in the following description that occurs after she has been humiliated by the narrator, who has refused her offer to marry her:

> Poor Miss Tina's sense of her failure had produced a rare alteration in her, but I had been too full of stratagems and spoils to think of that. Now I took it in; I can scarcely tell how it startled me. She stood in the middle of the room with a face of mildness bent upon me, and her look of for-giveness, of absolution, made her angelic. It beautified her; she was younger; she was not a ridiculous old woman. (89)

The narrator's reverie (though not ours) comes to an end when Tina reports to him what she did to the Papers: "I burnt them last night, one by one, in the kitchen...It took a long time -- there were so many" (124). The narrator's despair on hearing these words is a comic version of the frustration the governess feels in Turn in her more noble quest to save the children. What makes The Aspern Papers much more comic, and straightfoward, than Turn is that its hero is not merely deceived, but a deceiver deceived. Unlike Bernard Longueville of Confidence (1879), the Aspern narrator fails to realize that "a great many things had been taking place in his clever mind without his clever

mind suspecting them" (1173).

The closing words of Aspern in the New York edition -- "I can scarcely bear my loss -- I mean of the precious papers" -- emphasize the extent to which the narrator clings to the false value of the Papers even while dimly recognizing Tina's infinitely superior one. On the one hand, this false value is the narrator's misapprehension of one's relation to the past. The narrator's notion of history is empirical, not conceptual. He believes that he can reach back into time and experience the past "just as it happened"; that is why he is obsessed with obtaining the Papers -- because they represent to him just such an empirical past. Juliana's "'I don't compare -- I don't compare [the past and the present]'" (70) implies a deeper understanding of history, a recognition that the past can be approached or truly appreciated only by the quality and intensity of experience in the present. This is the same point James was to make, in the passage in The American Scene concerning the home that served as the basis for Hawthorne's The House of the Seven Gables. The narrator's delusory quest for The Papers is a delusion about the nature of history.

Wayne Booth, in his discussion of the novelette in The Rhetoric of Fiction misses this point when he opposes "two

neatly distinct subjects" (355) -- the narrator's "purloining of the Aspern Papers" and what Booth characterizes as James's effort, enunciated in The Art of the Novel (as R.P. Blackmur called the New York Prefaces), to capture "the romance" of the past. Like so many critics, before and since, Booth identifies as James's aim what was in fact the object of his ridicule (however good-natured). What James actually says in the Prefaces is not that he wishes to evoke a romantic notion of the past but that "I saw it [the idea of The Aspern Papers] somehow at first blush as romantic -- for the use, of course I mean, I should certainly have had to make of it..." [emphasis mine] (1175). In The Aspern Papers and elsewhere, James is not intent on embodying a romantic conception of the past; he is intent on making use of it for essentially nonromantic purposes. What those purposes are is spelled out clearly a few pages later in the passage beginning with "I delight in a palpable imaginable visitable past" (1177), the import of which is that the past becomes "visitable" only to the extent we "realistically" put ourselves in relation to it, and that we put ourselves in relation to it only to the extent we ground ourselves in the present -- to the extent we "live" the past through the present. The romantic notion of the past, by contrast, denies the present in its

effort to precipitate a plunge into a wholly other, unrelated reality -- the very plunge, incidentally, which Ralph Pendrel of The Sense of the Past takes. In The Aspern Papers, James repeatedly mocks the bad faith of such romanticization, as in the following passage where the narrator unintentionally impugns his hero's character:

> These [love affairs of Aspern] had been almost always difficult and dangerous. Half the women of his time, to speak liberally, had flung themselves at his head, and out of this pernicious fashion many complications, some of them grave, had not failed to arise. (24) [In the New York edition, James substitutes:] and while the fury raged -- the more that it was very catching -- accidents, some of them grave, had not failed to occur.

But the narrator's romanticization of the past is only one aspect of "the false value" he attaches to The Papers. Earlier, we saw that James pointed up, through his portrait of Gabriel Nash, the bad faith involved in artistic self-representation. Aspern, as well as many of the tales of the literary life that were to follow, are portraits of such bad faith in action. The quest of the Aspern narrator for the Papers is a quest to capture the spirit of the poet Jeffrey Aspern -- or, in artistic terms, "to represent" him. But the narrator is, by virtue of the fact that he is the author of the tale, an "artist." His tendency to compare himself with Aspern, as well as his equally pronounced tendency to deny he is a "poet" (24, 58), bring

to light the vicarious nature of his and, more generally, the critic's task. The effort to represent the artist is the effort to deny that one is an artist in the very act of being one.

Many of James's tales of the literary life, told in the dramatized narrator form, enact this process of self-negation. The typical pattern of these tales is to portray a relationship between an elderly Master or man of genius and his admiring observer. The former is usually good-natured, amiable, and somewhat aloof. The latter is usually a young disciple or critic, at once idealistic and aggressive, whose admiration of the Master takes the form of trying in some way to "capture" and objectify what cannot be objectified: the meaning of the Master's work, the spirit of the Master as artist. In this way, his admiration becomes the very instrument of his failure. Most of the tales are frustrated fairy tales, in which the narrator's effort to separate himself metonymically from what he is seeking (a separation implicit in his realistic mode of narration) dictates that he never find it and even in some cases necessitates his playing the role (in our eyes) of villain to his princess.

The latter outcome can be seen -- though in more disguised form than in Aspern -- in "The Author of

Beltraffio" (1885) and "The Death of the Lion" (1894-5). In the former, the narrator's quest for the Master results, partly due to the narrator's interference, in the death of the Master's child. In "The Death of the Lion," the narrator manages to prevent the Master's access to one of the few readers -- a sincere, intelligent, and pretty young woman -- who would have done him good, then marries the woman after the Master's death.

In other tales of the literary life, the narrator's role is less destructive than self-deceived. In "The Figure in the Carpet" (1896), the narrator objectifies the meaning of his Master's works only to find, like the narrator of Aspern, that he can never "lay his hands" on such meaning. In "The Private Life" (1893), the narrator becomes so embroiled in a theory about the Master that he fails to grasp the reality of the social situation he is a part of (i.e., that Blanche Adney is having an affair with Lord Mellifont). In "John Delavoy" (1900), the narrator "triumphs," but only because his real "object" is other than an artistic one:

> The oddity was that, as the case stood, he [an editor] had seen she would "do" [the young lady whom the narrator eventually marries]. I too had seen it, but then I was a critic: these remarks will sadly have miscarried if they fail to show the reader how much of one. (Figure 414)

Other tales expose the illusion that art is the representation of an "object" logically separate from the self of the artist. In "The Real Thing" (1893), the narrator finds that he lacks the imagination -- that he is not a good enough artist -- to make use of the splendid "subject" that is dropped into his lap. The point here is that only the action of the artist as artist "makes" the good subject -- there is no "object" apart from that process of making. In "The Lesson of the Master" (1892) which, significantly, is in undramatized narrator form, the "lesson" is an essentially positive one. The young artist is not so much "deceived" as lacking faith in himself; his blindness is his doubt that he is doing "the right thing" by making his art his life. It is thus the the young artist, not "the Master" in the story, who is the real Master.

That it is mostly in the third person or undramatized narrator tales of the literary life that James gives a positive view of the artist by presenting him obliquely is no coincidence. The first person, narrator dramatized tales, in common with Turn and Aspern, are by necessity tales of self-deception. Indeed, they can be viewed as ways of James "looking at himself" -- or any author writing in the metonymic, realistic mode. Such tales "return upon

themselves" and are self-negating. The "subject" represented by the realistic author (which he treats as an "object" separate from himself) is analogous to the Papers and the ghosts which the Aspern narrator and the governess treat as separate from themselves. Similarly, the futile effort to tell one's tale realistically -- to keep one's point of view "out of it" -- is analogous to the undramatized narrator's omniscience. To the extent the author denies his point of view, he only that much more effectively blocks presentation of his story -- since his point of view is inseparable from the story. To the extent, on the other hand, the author presents (unwittingly or not) his point of view, he negates it; artistic self-representation always results in negation for the fundamental reason that consciousness cannot dramatize itself (see below). James's use of the frustrated fairy tale to undermine the narrator's realistic mode of telling "dramatizes" this impossibility of self-dramatization by splitting off the narrator's consciousness from the events that unfold. But this effort of self-dramatization of consciousness is what lies -- in concealed form -- at the heart of all realistic modes of narration; the technique employed in tales of realism such as those of Flaubert and Maupassant is a bad faith, usually unconscious effort to

perform such self-dramatization. What James intentionally does to his dramatized narrators, the novelists of realism unintentionally do to themselves.

(5)

But why can't consciousness dramatize itself? James's most complete answer to this question is found in The Sacred Fount (1901). The Sacred Fount is told in the first person by an observer whose name, physical appearance, occupation, and family background are never revealed. The story is concerned exclusively with the narrator's experiences and thoughts during a weekend spent at a country house called Newmarch. On the train ride down, the narrator meets his friends, Gilbert Long and Grace Brissenden, who are also on the way to the house party. He is impressed by Long's intelligence and sociability, which seem to him much greater than in the past. He is also impressed by Mrs. Brissenden's youthful appearance, which seems to belie what he guesses is her actual age. Later on, after arriving at Newmarch, the narrator sees Guy Brissenden, who is not yet thirty but looks "a hundred" (228). These observations provide the narrator with the main data upon which he elaborates his "theory" -- the theory of the sacred fount.

According to this theory, love relationships involve a process of vampirism in which one party drains the other of his or her inner resources -- "the power not one's self...that made for passion" (17). The result is debilitation on one side, rejuvenation on the other. The case of Mr. and Mrs. Brissenden is an example of physical vampirism, Mrs. Brissenden being the vampire and "poor Briss" (as he is called even by his wife) the victim. The "remarkable phenomenon" of Gilbert Long, however, points to an analogous case of spiritual vampirism; the difficulty for the narrator is to find Long's victim. This victim should be the spiritual counterpart of "poor Briss": one who is intellectually and emotionally depleted. The narrator observes that May Server, a formerly clever woman who seems to have lost her facility for conversation, fits this description and concludes that she is Long's victim (i.e., is or has been his mistress). Throughout the novel, the theory is variously confirmed and disconfirmed by others at the house party in ways that are extraordinarily ambiguous due to the self-interested motives of those involved. The observer becomes obsessed with his theory to the point where he speaks of it as his "private madness" (162).

For nearly a half century after The Sacred Fount was

published, the "subject" of the novel was regarded as that of spiritual vampirism. Over the last few decades, however, there has been a growing recognition that such a view makes a coherent account of the novel impossible since it assumes that the narrator is a reliable observer whose theory may be interpreted as either true or false by the reader. The critical consensus today, accordingly, one that I am wholly in agreement with, is that the true "subject" of the novel is the epistemological dilemma of the narrator. As Joseph Wiesenfarth wrote in 1963,

> Most readers have approached the novel by attempting to find out the truth about the Brissendens, Lady John, Gilbert Long, and May Server. Nothing could be more precisely wrong than this tack, which is inevitably taken in vain. It is impossible to determine the truth about these relationships; moreover, if the reader were able to determine it, the novel would be a failure. (20) [emphasis mine]

This conclusion is, I think, correct, though it should be supplemented by the analysis of critics like Jean Blackall. In her Jamesian Ambiguity and The Sacred Fount, Blackall proposed that it is not Gilbert Long, but "the narrator himself" who "is the arch-vampire" feeding off May Server (21) and that therefore the novel may be read as a sort of high comedy of a man desperately seeking -- and failing to find -- himself. This point of view is supported by the comments of the painter Ford Obert, the only

possibly reliable witness in the novel, who comes close to telling the narrator, only to be ignored and misunderstood by the latter, that he (the narrator) is the man whom May Server loves. (7)

By comparing the novel with "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903) and "Broken Wings" (1903), Blackall also suggests indirectly that the narrator loves May Server, but is too blind to his own feelings to recognize this fact (169-72; cf. Sacred 95). Finally, Blackall contends that it is Mrs. Brissenden who is having an affair with Gilbert Long (61) and that the narrator's conversations with Mrs. Brissenden about "whom the lady may be" take on a comic aspect (71, 80, 255) -- one, I would add, that is comparable to the situation of the narrator in "The Private Life."

Nonetheless, Blackall goes too far when she suggests that the narrator, toward the end of the story, recognizes his delusion (68). This suggestion is not only at odds with indications in the text (274), but trivializes and obscures the epistemological dilemma of the narrator. James, I believe, did not wish the reader to arrive at "the truth" about the narrator in a manner analogous to that which the narrator tries to confirm his theory (i.e., by hypothesis and interpretation) -- anymore than he wished the reader to take on the governess's efforts to prove the existence of

the ghosts. Rather, his purpose is to show us, by exhibiting the consciousness of the narrator, that "the truth" cannnot be arrived at in such a manner. James does not, therefore, wish us "to see through the narrator" (12) to some sort of fact or proof or truth that exists "on the other side" of the narrator's mind; he wishes, rather, to keep us within that mind and reveal to us, through example, so to speak, its falsity. Wiesenfarth's contention that "the novel would be a failure" if we could get hold of such truth is very much to the point.

The Sacred Fount, then, is a frustrated fairy tale along the lines of Turn and Aspern, except that the juxtaposition of the two incompatible forms by which the narrator's self-delusion is generated is far more extreme than in either of the first two cases. On the one hand, the realistic, metonymic mode of narration is taken almost to the limit; the narrator recounts what he immediately experiences, with virtually no retrospection. This is made possible by the fact that "what is narrated" are thoughts and conversations, not events; we are presented with those "experiences" that Hume analyzed as the logical source of all knowledge -- "what appears before the mind's eye." (8)

On the other hand, the form of the fairy tale that is imposed on this flow of experience takes on a bizarre

dimension. Though the narrator compares his story to that of Cinderella (260) and the denouement occurs after the clock strikes midnight (196, 200); though the narrator frequently speaks of his experiences as akin to those of "the days of fairy tales and of the childish imagination of the impossible" (128); his "princess" is a strange one indeed. She is not, to begin with, May Server:

> There was no point at which my assurance could, by the scientific method, judge itself complete enough not to regard feeling as an interference and, in consequence, as a possible check. If it had to go I knew well who went with it, but I wasn't there to save them [the two "victims" of the narrator's theory, May Server and "poor Briss"]. I was there to save my priceless pearl of an inquiry and to harden, to that end, my heart....The question of her [May Server's] happiness was essentially subordinate..." (296, 230; cf. 249)

The narrator puts his theory above any mere human beings and is determined, at any cost, to save it. That is why he so often speaks of it in terms that evoke the image of a fairy tale -- as a "perfect palace of thought" (311) and "a great glittering crystal palace" (205). The narrator's one true passion is thought -- or rather his own thought -- and his use of the terms, "logic" and "logically" (38, 138, 79, 145, 174) is obsessive. The narrator's worship of "esoteric knowledge" thus goes far beyond that of the narrator of Aspern. The "object" he seeks to save is nothing so "crude" as the Papers or the

children; rather it is an internal object -- "the priceless pearl of an inquiry." It is that inquiry, the narrator's theory, which must be regarded as his true "princess."

All of which may seem to stretch the fairy tale motif a bit, for how can something that belongs exclusively to oneself be the object of a quest to save it? In fact, The Sacred Fount, far from failing to fit the form of the frustrated fairy tale, is its prototype. Both the governess's quest to save the souls of the children and the Aspern narrator's efforts to obtain the Papers were attempts to cut themselves off from reality by taking refuge in their own isolated consciousness. From the security of that consciousness they felt safe to idealize and externalize a part of themselves -- their "princesses" -- such that they could make raids, send out strike forces from their embattled consciousnesses, to rescue her. The point is that only by closing their consciousness off to reality could they establish the terms by which they would engage with it. The Fount narrator is only more consistent; he makes his princess an object of his consciousness, an internal object, and thereby obviates the need even to rescue it (much as Maud Blessingbourne makes her "theory" a princess in "The Story In It," (Better 188)); all he need do is stand guard and protect it. In Fount, James thus

makes explicit what was implicit in the other tales; he collapses the motif of the fairy tale within the realistic mode of narration. At the end of Fount, we are left neither with a definite sense that the narrator is a villain (pace Blackall), as in Aspern, nor with an uncertainty about whether he may be villain or hero, as in Turn; we are left only with the sense of the total unreality of his quest -- the sense, as the narrator puts it in the closing words of the novel, that he is "nowhere" (319). But this unreality is the result of nothing more than taking the realistic mode of narration to its furthest extreme -- the extreme not just of a consciousness cut off from reality but one that tries to constitute itself as reality.

The Sacred Fount thus plays a role in James's works similar to that which Wittgenstein's private language argument plays in his philosophy. The latter is designed to dissolve the notion of the autonomous, centered self by taking it to its logical extreme. That notion, it will be recalled, is of a self which (either in Cartesian or Humean fashion) can constitute for itself its own existence by taking as "real" that which appears immediately and directly before the mind's eye. Language is then seen as ultimately based on the private "naming" of such internal objects. It is these notions of "experience" being

ultimately private experience and of "language" being ultimately private language based on private experience which constitute the Fount narrator's whole way of thinking. Thus, he speaks repeatedly of his "private triumph...The beauty perhaps was only for me -- the beauty of having been right" (128). Or, echoing Gabriel Nash, he declares, "names are only a convenience" (298). His dealings with others are characterized by an effort to camoflauge purposely the meaning of his statements (232, 235, 261) or to dictate to others his own exclusive terms (258, 276, 291). For example, during his last conversation with Mrs. Brissenden, he says to himself, "I wanted her perplexity...to result both from her knowing and her not knowing sufficiently what I meant" (254). It does not occur to him that if only he understood "the meaning" then there could be -- as Wittgenstein maintained -- no meaning; that if it is only he who is "right" then no one can be right; that because language is normative and meaning communal, a "private norm" or a "private meaning" is a contradiction in terms. When Grace Brissenden, referring to what the narrator has just called "my fact," tells him, "If it's yours it's nobody else's" (271), she "puts him" in that place he has taken such trouble to make for himself -- nowhere. The narrator's theory, his collection of private

facts, hypotheses, interpretations, and explanations, are analogous to Wittgenstein's "beetle":

> Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle." No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. -- Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. -- But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for the box might even be empty. (Philosophical 100, sec. 293)

The content of the narrator's theory is like what James said of the content of the governess' ghosts: its "values are positively all blanks" ("Prefaces" 1188).

But the parallel between the Fount narrator and Wittgenstein's attack on the possibility of private language goes further. In a number of works, Wittgenstein extends the general line of thinking found in his attack to embrace the topic of solipsism. For Wittgenstein, the case of the solipsist is instructive because the latter does in a more extreme and consistent way what the private language defender does. When the solipsist says, "All experience is unreal except my experience," he affixes that which we call the self to a particular body or mental state (his own) and detaches it from all others. But the phrase, "my experience," as used this way, lacks sense. For in a world

where there is only one person to which the terms, "I" and "mine," can legitimately be applied, there can be no use for these terms at all. To the extent that the solipsist denies that others are the owners or possessors of their experiences, he also denies that he himself is the owner or possessor of his experiences. To regard experience as private is to ground it empirically within the mental processes and states of the individual. Whereas the defender of private languages maintains that there exists some substratum of experience he can call exclusively his own, the solipsist, more consistently, declares that there is only one real kind of experience. In many passages of Fount, the narrator approaches just this level of consistency:

> I struck myself as knowing again the joy of the intellectual mastery of things unnameable, that joy of determining, almost of creating results, which I have already mentioned as an exhilaration attached to some of my plunges of insight. (214)

Or again, when he meets May Server in the woods: "It was exactly as if she had been there by the operation of my intelligence..." (129) It is, indeed, not so much "thought" that the narrator esteems as his own thought. This is implicit in his use of the phrase, "the exclusive king with his Wagner opera" (296) which, as Jean Blackall has shown in her definitive analysis, refers to the reputation of

Ludwig II, the Wagner-lover and "meglomaniac ruler.... romantic fairy tale hero...who built fairy palaces" (Blackall 112, 106). Like the narrator of Fount, Ludwig II regarded himself as a great artist, staged lavish theatrical productions exclusively for his own benefit, and -- at least according to the tradition James was drawing on -- was thoroughly mad. One can easily imagine Ludwig having spoken the following words that James puts in the mouth of the Fount narrator: "I alone was magnificently and absurdly aware -- everyone else was benightedly out of it" (177).

This tendency toward solipsism is, however, constrained. On the one hand, the narrator is shown doubting not just his theory, but his own sanity (278); "things in the real," he says with comic disappointment toward the end of the novel, "had a way of not balancing" (182). On the other hand, James spells out lucidly, in the words of Lady John, what marks his failure of "consistency": "'You can't be a providence and not be a bore. A real providence knows; whereas you...have to find out -- and to find out even by asking 'the likes of me'" (176).

The narrator's consciousness, though verging at times on the solipsistic, remains divided; it is divided in that it retains an at least dim sense of reality in its retreat

from reality. Moreover, such divided consciousness is a feature of the initial hubris of James's tragic, affirmative heroines and heroes. For example, in What Maisie Knew, it is said of the child:

> So the sharpened sense of spectatorship was the child's main support, the long habit, from the first, of seeing herself in discussion and finding in the fury of it -- she had a glimpse of the game of football -- sort of compensation for the doom of a peculiar passivity. It gave her often an odd air of being present at her history in as separate a manner as if she could only get at experience by flattening her nose against a pane of glass. (95-6)

Similarly, Strether of The Ambassadors: "...he was burdened, poor Strether -- it had better be confessed at the outset -- with the oddity of a double consciousness" (18).

Some critics have judged that James regarded such an attribute of double consciousness in a positive sense -- the assumption being that James, like many thinkers, viewed consciousness as an intrinsic "state" of being rather than a form of doing. In fact, as I have tried to emphasize, James challenged the very philosophical preconceptions that gave rise to such a view. Consciousness for James was not a "state" opposed to external reality; it was, rather, an intricate web of relations in constant flux -- a unified system of diverse and perpetual tensions, not a polarity to be dialectically resolved. "Understanding" is not grounded

in certain structures of the mind; it does not consist in the interpretation or explanation of "data" external to the mind. Though we do of course interpret, hypothesize, and explain, we do so only within bounds, within the conceptual limits that give value and meaning to language. The relational web within which these activities take place has itself no absolute foundation, neither in a center of consciousness nor in an external reality; it is a web that cannot itself be conceptually justified.

Interestingly, the Fount narrator essentially grasps this point when he says, "Vast, truly, was the world of observation, that we could both glean in it so actively without crossing each other's steps" (185). Nonetheless, the Fount narrator conducts himself in a way that is diametrically opposed to the import of this statement; unlike Strether, he does nothing else but try to explain personal relations. His view is that understanding is all explanation and interpretation: "I was just conscious, vaguely, of being on the track of a law, a law that would fit, would strike me as governing the delicate phenomena" (23). The Fount narrator's method of understanding is a method characteristic of scientific investigation. James is not criticizing such a method in itself; he is only saying that it must operate within constraints (as any good

science operates), must recognize that its individual interpretations and explanations rest on a sea of assumption that is bottomless, that cannot be itself explained or interpreted.

But it is just such lack of constraint that characterizes the Fount narrator's method of investigation: the latter is consequently not the prototype of the artist, as many critics have claimed, but its antithesis. That James made Ford Obert, the only possibly reliable character in the novel, a painter was probably intended to hint at this fact. If James characterized himself as possessed of a double consciousness, his works of art enact the process by which he made himself whole -- just as his tragedies enact the same process in their heros. The narrator of The Sacred Fount, by contrast, would like to see himself as a god, a creator ex nihilo (a conception of the artist, we saw in chapter I, that James explicitly opposed). As such, he lacks that trust or willingness to "live within" consciousnesss, to give himself up to that web of relations which constitutes reality. This lack of trust derives ultimately from his belief in self-knowledge. In The Ambassadors, Strether asks himself at one point, "But what am I to myself?" (138) The answer he arrives at by the novel's end is similar to that which Nietzsche gave:

> We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge....we do not comprehend ourselves, we have to misunderstand ourselves, for us the law "Each is furthest from himself" applies to all eternity -- we are not "men of knowledge" with respect to ourselves. (Genealogy, Preface 451)

Consciousness is an activity and can no more "grasp" itself than can an external action. The effort to do so is like a person staring at himself in a mirror trying to see what lies behind the mirror; or like a person desperately turning the dials of a vast electrical apparatus whose current has been shut off; or like a wild beast clawing at the bars of a cage he can neither see nor feel.

Though the Fount narrator embodies, in extreme form, the hubris with which James endows his tragic heroes during their stage of self-delusion, something more than mere hubris is at work in this novel -- something that James perhaps needed to work through in himself. As Laurence Holland wrote, The Sacred Fount "brings into a painfully sharp focus, indeed brings to a crisis for James's imagination, the powers and limitations of the imagination which had engrossed him in the decades since The Portrait of a Lady" (222). That crisis, I suggest, is the crisis engendered by pushing the dualism of self and world implicit in the notion of an autonomous, self-dramatizing imagination to its ultimate limit; it is the crisis of what

Nietzsche called nihilism. That nihilism, not solipsism, is the logical result of the narrator's quest for "truth" is articulated by the narrator when, referring to Grace Brissenden's "conclusion" that, among other things, the narrator was "crazy," he says to her: "Was this 'something' your conclusion, then and there, that there's nothing in anything?" (286)

Nihilism, for Nietzsche, is the simultaneous adherence to two mutually incompatible ideals. On the one hand, modern man had cut himself off from the social and sensory world -- the world of form and appearance -- not, as with Christianity, by positing an otherworld of static being behind the world of becoming, but by internalizing such an otherworld within the autonomous self. The latter, being essentially private in nature, experiences the presence of the public world as a threat to its existence, as a limit to its free and full "expression." Its only way of meeting such a public world, the world of sensory and social becoming, is by trying to "master" it through explanation and interpretation; the autonomous self "fixes" such a world by gaining knowledge of it and thereby assimilating it to consciousness. Such an internalized form of being signifies, for Nietzsche, the loss of the self's capacity to define itself in positive terms. Identity is constituted

by continuous acts of negation aimed at the world of mere appearance, causing man to retreat, spider-like, within the boundless web of his own consciousness.

On the other hand, there is an impulse which, for Nietzsche, lies deep in the heart of all people; this is the need to affirm oneself morally -- a need far greater than that of mere survival. But moral affirmation can come only within the world of becoming that the detached imagination repudiates; the acts of negation by which the autonomous self is constituted are therefore at the same time violations of that self's moral integrity. The ideals of truth and goodness have become opposed. Modern man's being is structured around goals which, by the dictates of his own conscience, he must condemn. His life process is malignant, subsisting on the injuries it does to itself as it progressively widens the circle of its guilt.

It is just such adherence to two mutually incompatible ideals that characterizes the Fount narrator. I said above that the narrator's real "princess" is an internalized one of theoretical knowledge. In fact, the narrator clearly identifies his princess in this way only toward the end of the novel. Prior to that time, he consistently manifests a strong feeling for, as well as an equally strong desire to protect, May Server. Indeed, nothing is so strong, in The

Sacred Fount, as the narrator's moral preoccupations; it is these that provide the fuel for his theory which, as initially formulated, casts May Server in the role of beleagured princess and himself in the role of conquering hero. The problem -- the problem of nihilism in general -- is that he can't "affirm" himself morally without denying the basis of his own identity. May Server, as an actual human being who is part of that extra-conscious world of social forms, exists in a realm that the narrator sees as threatening to himself. He can come to terms with or master that realm only by "explaining" it (as Grace Brissenden repeatedly points out to him). He is therefore driven to repudiate May Server by the need to protect himself. At the same time, he is clearly stricken by the immorality of his behavior; his paralysis in the face of Grace Brissenden's more superficial (and non-nihilistic) immorality is generated by his recognition that he has himself undermined any moral basis by which he might oppose her. He can do "good" only by negating himself.

James's ultimate frustrated fairy tale, The Sacred Fount, is thus a dramatization of nihilism. His juxtaposition of two in-compatible forms, realistic narration and the fairy tale, is the narrator's aderence to two mutually incompatible ideals, the ideal of truth with

its locus in the detached imagination of the narrator, and the ideal of goodness, with its locus in the external world of social forms. James's writing of The Sacred Fount can be seen as his way of showing artistically that the self cannot dramatize itself but can only dramatize its own self-destruction. No wonder he declared that "I mortally loathe" the book! (qtd. in Blackall 145) One senses that he shared not a little, through his writing of The Sacred Fount, the guilt and self-loathing of his narrator. But unlike the latter, James was to draw a positive lesson from his experience: that "the self" was not opposed to the world of becoming -- the world of social and natural forms -- but was constituted in and through it. And such a conception of the self necessitated giving up the realistic mode of narration (as he had already started to do long before The Sacred Fount) and grounding his novels in a very different form. The latter was to be a form which, like the fairy tale, undermined the autonomous imagination, but did so in a more thorough-going way -- not by frustrating the expression of such imagination, but by dismissing its ontological basis at the very outset. It was the form not of the frustrated fairy tale, but of the fairy tale in reverse: tragedy.

NOTES

1. See Note two of the Introduction.

2. For some of Wittgenstein's numerous and extremely elegant arguments against the possibility of a private language, see Philosophical Investigations, secs. 243, 275, 279, 293-6, 401; Zettel, secs. 87, 545, 549, 554-57, 560, 567, 595, 599; Lee 99; Blue and Brown 4-5, 12, 45, 49-50, 52-3, 61, 67; Colour, secs. 57, 83; Aesthetics 69; Philosophische Grammatik 48, 50, 100, 106, 180; "Notes for Lectures on 'Private Experience'" 271-320.

3. Leon Edel and many others have quoted James's letters to William expressing enthusiasm for his philosophy of pragmatism. I do not think that such remarks should be taken too seriously. First, Henry badly wanted to like his brother's books. Secondly, he repeatedly characterized himself as philosophically naive, a characterization which allowed him to ignore what bored him: philosophical terminology, especially of the German sort. It also allowed him to make covert attacks, most notably in the New York Prefaces, on the epistemological naivete of philosophers like his brother. Thirdly, Henry could justify his praise of William's "pragmatism" as sincere because it addressed itself only to the more superficial aspects of William's views.

4. See McDonald, Normative 46-7, 53-4, 74-5, 103-6.

5. Pictures, as Joseph Wiesenfarth defines them, are largely nondialogue structures which are "never so much a description of an action or a situation as ... a description to which a value is attached because of the relation of the description to, or its meaning for, a character in the tale" (27). For example, the description toward the end of chapter IV of Fleda's conversation with Owen puts us directly into Fleda's mind; very often, it is impossible to distinguish between "what happened" and Fleda's view of what happened.

A "scene," on the other hand, is "a structural unit composed mostly of dialogue...[whose function] is to make perceptible...both inward and outward aspects of an action taking place in a setting" (28). For example, immediately after the description of Fleda's conversation with Owen takes place, a short "scene" occurs in which Mrs. Gereth

announces her "position" to Fleda. Though it is often said that "pictures" prepare for "scenes," it would be more accurate to say that in The Spoils of Poynton, most of the scenes are embedded in the continuous series of pictures that constitute "the stage" of Fleda's consciousness. Indeed, the main point to keep in mind in likening James's later novels to stage dramas is that although he can in a manner imitate the "flow" of dialogue, movement and scenery that occurs in a stage drama, he must be continuously creating the stage in which such flow takes place. And he must do this with a "material" that stage dramas do not, of course, have available to them: the expression and description of thought and feeling through a combination of metaphorical psycho-narration and focalized narrations of the characters (see Chapter VI for a discussion of these terms).

6. James's critique of such epistemological naivete is best approached by looking at what he both liked and disliked about Balzac's style. Among the many reasons James gives, in his 1905 essay, "The Lesson of Balzac," for his love of the French author's works, two stand out. First, Balzac was absolutely and single-mindedly devoted to letting his subjects unfold themselves without trying to impose a judgment, moral or otherwise, on them. As James said, "The English writer wants to make sure, first of all, of your moral judgment; the French is willing, while it waits a little, to risk, for the sake of his subject and its interest, your spiritual salvation" (Future of the Novel 117).

Closely connected to this devotion to subject was Balzac's portrayal of character and consciousness as embedded in circumstance. As James put it, "the fusion of all the elements of the picture, under [Balzac's] hand, is complete -- of what people are with what they do, of what they do with what they are, of the action with the agents, of the medium with the action, of all the parts of the drama with each other" (Future 120). This belief that "an account of what befalls us is an account of our circumstances" (120) was fundamental to James's perspective and forms the basis of his later tragedies. Even in as early a novel as Roderick Hudson, it was James's prime concern "to keep it [Rowland's consciousness] connected, connected intimately, with the general human exposure, and thereby bedimmmed and befooled and bewildered, anxious, restless, fallible, and yet to endow it with... intelligence" ("Prefaces" 1050). It was Roderick's tragic

potentiality, his "large capacity for ruin" (1047) that mainly interested James and such interest presupposed one of James's central artistic principles: the intense involvement of the author with his characters such that "the only detachment is the detachment of aversion" (1046).

Nonetheless, there is a strong reservation that James has about Balzac, one that comes out in the midst of his praise of the latter: "It is not the image of life that he expresses, so much as life itself..." (Future 104). By blurring the distinction between fiction and reality, Balzac deprived his works of the full power which fiction, as fiction, could have. By trying "to emulate the great natural scientists Buffon and Saint-Hilaire by writing the natural history of French society of his day," as William Stowe says (12), Balzac made himself "not in his magnificence totally an artist...the artist of the Comedie Humaine is half smothered by the historian" (Selected Literary Criticism 193-4). This smothering reveals itself in Balzac's relative failure to paint the psychology of his characters in rich and deep tones -- his failure to recognize that if a story is to be fully told, it must reveal something about the psychology of the characters in the story.

Now, this is essentially the same criticism James makes of Flaubert and Maupassant: "M. Flaubert's theory as a novelist, briefly expressed, is to begin on the outside. Human life; we may imagine his saying, is before all things a spectacle, an occupation and entertainment for the eyes" (French Poets 201). It is this theory that accounts for the fact that Flaubert's novel, Emma Bovary, is "the most told of anecdotes" (Selected Literary 219) This is damning criticism of a novel that James recognized to be, in its own way, a kind of perfection; what he meant was that Emma's consciousness, by being presented so totally from the outside, is not shown as connected with the world around her. Her consciousness is, as it were, identified and placed in -- not shown as flowing from -- that world. But to show consciousness from within, James believed, the author must unite to a certain extent with that consciousness -- exactly what Flaubert signified his refusal to do, when he said, "The artist must be present in his work like God in Creation, invisible and almighty, everywhere felt but nowhere seen" (Quoted in Selected Literary 138). For James, by contrast, the relation between artist and creation was not that of deistic god and completed world, but of tool and product; the artist used himself as material to exert a force in the world. As James

said, "I get down into the arena and do my best to live and breathe and rub shoulders and converse with the persons engaged in the struggle that provides for the others in the circling tiers the entertainment of the great game" ("Prefaces" 1323). Both authors saw art as something of a "spectacle"; the difference is that James insisted on the need to participate in it.

Although James sought, like Flaubert, to reduce the role of the narrator (although for James only in his metonymic capacity), he did so for opposite reasons: not to keep himself out of his tales (or make himself god-like) but to put himself more fully in, to increase the range of his metaphoric discourse. Indeed, James rejects the type of "realism" on which Flaubert founded his art: "Realism seems to us with 'Madame Bovary' to have said its last word. We doubt whether the same process will ever produce anything better" (French Poets 202). For James, the presence of the artist in his works was inevitable; it was only a question of how critically self-conscious he was to make himself of this fact. As James said of Maupaussant, he "is remarkably objective and impersonal, but he would go too far if he were to entertain the belief that he has kept himself out of his books" (Selected Literary 96). Just as Balzac was "himself a figure more extraordinary than any he drew" (Future 105), so too Maupassant and Flaubert do not for James avoid showing themselves in their creations; they only fail to maintain full artistic control over the process. The tightness of form of some of their works is achieved at the cost of making that form, in James's view, inadequate.

If, for James, the artist is to represent reality, he cannot leave out a vital part ofthat reality: consciousness. And if the artist is to portray consciousness, he must make use of his own. But all of this rests on the assumption, alien to the French writers mentioned above, that consciousness is an authrentic mode of being -- a form of action -- and not a derivative state that merely substitutes vicariously for "the real thing." James did not champion passivity and detachment in themselves, as many critics have maintained, but only to the extent they led to a more complete engagement with the world. As Stephen Donadio puts it,

> For James...the more comprehensive and objective vision is achieved...through the most profound commitment to one's own distinctive subjectivity: the "full measure of truth" residing in a particular experience, far from

> revealing itself to detached and disinterested observation, can only be achieved through a profoundly interested relation, an intense form of "appreciation" which may be either pleasurable or painful but which is in any case available only to that person for whom the experience may be seen to count the most (135).

Or, as Posnock more succintly says, "'the true point of view' is point of view" (181). Posnock, who also provides insightful critiques of Frederic Jameson's (223-4) and Philip Sicker's (210) misunderstandings on this score, likens James's perspectivism to that of Ortega y Gasset:

> Ortega's point is that the individual's perceptions of time and space are "forms of the real" rather than a "deformation imposed by the subject upon reality"...because "perspective is the order and the form reality takes for him who contemplates it" (173).

7. Sacred (234). However, coming from Obert, this would identify the narrator less as vampire than as victim -- an identification supported further by the association of the narrator with "poor Briss." In either case, however, the narrator is himself the solution to the puzzle he is trying to solve.

8. See McDonald, Normative 37-43.

Chapter VI

James's Late Narrative Style: Another Look at the First Paragraph of The Ambassadors

In preceding chapters, I have focused, in my readings of The Aspern Papers, The Turn of the Screw, and The Sacred Fount, on James's critique of empirical and romantic epistemology, a critique that is largely deconstructive, skeptical, and subjective. Nonetheless, it is a central aspect of the overall argument of this work that James's development of novelistic tragedy, in such works as The Wings of the Dove, The Ambassadors, and The Golden Bowl, entailed a rejection, or at least a transcendence, of such skepticism and subjectivism. Through works like Turn and Sacred, James learned, as he put it, "to let himself go," to give himself over to a highly metaphoric and personal discourse. But to develop his late novelistic tragedies, he needed to do something more -- to control such narration, to place it within a metonymic (and specifically tragic) framework that would allow him to achieve that "disciplined freedom" which he, and Nietzsche, associated with the artistic process.

In this chapter, I will discuss briefly the narratological components of James's development of novelistic tragedy. (1) Put simply, my thesis is that the

dominant mode of Turn and Sacred is metaphorical; in Wings and Golden, he checked his own propensity toward uncontrolled metaphorical narration (as seen in his Autobiography, for example) by placing it under a canopy of plot development that is predominantly metonymic. (For the senses in which I use the terms, "metaphor," and "metonymy," see Chapter I, pp. 43-53.) Turn and Sacred are, as I have said, deconstructionists' dream-texts. They enact, and simultaneously critique, a sort of metaphoric infinite regress -- a regress which James describes in the "Prefaces" as an infinite train of associations generated by the artist's endeavor. Where such a regress leaves us, like the narrator of Fount, is "nowhere." Ambassadors, Wings, and Golden, certainly, allow for a an expansive elaboration of the metaphorical description of consciousness (most notably in the second half of Bowl). However, these tragedies impose on such elaboration a metonymic structure (similar to the tripartite structure of much Greek and Shakespearian tragedy) that brings to a halt or at least contains the infinite regress. (2) In other words, James's use in his late tragedies of metonymy or a conventional plot structure, acts as a sort of narratological anchor or stopping place much in the manner that Wittgenstein used an ethics of action to contain what

he believed would otherwise be a self-negating and regressive epistemology. As Wittgenstein said in On Certainty: "...our language game is only possible if one trusts something (I did not say 'can trust something')" (sec. 509). Narratologically, a stable plot structure serves a role analogous to "trust" and "faith" in philosophy; the narrator and the reader must accept, must "put themselves within," a pre-given, metonymic framework of action. The kind of rationalistic quest for justification undertaken by the narrators of Turn and Sacred is halted. As Wittgenstein said in an often quoted passage in the Philosophical Investigations: "If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'" (sec. 217).

As discussed in the Introduction, a principal reason that critics since the forties have associated James with Emersonian and Coleridgean romanticism has been their perception that James's late style was an effort to "show" rather than to "tell" -- to dramatize rather than describe -- the internal processes of his characters. According to this view, James during his late period was concerned mainly with representing consciousness and subjectivity rather than with portraying human actions in a social,

cultural, and political context. Such a concern entailed the extension or heightening of the subjectivism which is implicit in conventional fictional techniques.

By contrast, I believe that James's development of a narrative mode of tragedy during his late period entailed the undermining of conventional novelistic discourse (see Note 2). One of the main vehicles by which James accomplished this was his borrowing from pre-novelistic genres, including not just tragedy but the traditional fairy tale, to create a highly stable plot structure or histoire. Such structure functioned not only to contain and delimit the authorial consciousness embodied in narrative discourse, but also to give it a controlled and disciplined freedom to expansively pursue its own elaborate and continuous train of associations -- or, as James put it in the New York Prefaces, to "exhibit" those "relations...of certain figures and things" which "really, universally... stop nowhere" except in so far as the artist "draws, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so" (1041).

Jamesian tragic structure thus allows for the "closure" of what D.A. Miller in Narrative and Its Discontents describes as "the production of narrative -- what we have called the narratable -- a logic of insufficiency,

disequilibrium, and deferral" (265). Yet the closure effected by Jamesian tragedy is somewhat arbitrary and even artificial (an "appearance" produced by the artist's "geometry") that bears little evidence of what Miller says is the "desire" of "traditional novelists" for "worlds of greater stability and wholeness than such a [narratable] logic can intrinsically provide" (265). At least as James uses it, tragic form is destabilizing and relatively "open." Perhaps the most notorious example of James's relative indifference to organic closure is his comments on the ending of The Portrait of a Lady (the most tragic of James's early novels), an ending that has not failed to "discontent" readers from James's time to the present, but about which James wrote:

> The obvious criticism of course will be that it [The Portrait of a Lady] is not finished....The whole of anything is never told; you can only take what groups together. What I have done has that unity....It is complete in itself --and the rest may be taken up or not, later. (Complete Notebooks 15)

To say that the tragic structure of James's late novels is metonymic is to say that comparisons between different elements are temporally mediated and set within a developing plot structure. Such structure serves as the foundation on which his highly metaphoric narrative discourse, where the relation between different elements is

not temporally mediated or associated with plot, is established. That discourse is the principal means by which the minds of James's characters' are rendered. The relationhip between these two elements, metonymic tragic structure and metaphoric narrative discourse, is not constant throughout the novel but shifts due to the progressive expansion of the discourse. As the novel unfolds, the direction of this shift, a direction that can be observed most clearly in The Golden Bowl, is toward a reversal of the initial relationship between the two elements. The metaphoric discourse that renders consciousness becomes increasingly the foundation of the metonymic story line or structure. Such reversal is at odds not only with the metonymic/metaphoric relation of the traditional novel, but goes beyond the relatively prominent role given to metaphor in much 20th-century fiction. Moreover, the reversal is a crucial element of the kind of tragedy James's late novels effect. It allows the character and mind of the protagonist to merge with or overwhelm the structure of the novel that initially framed such character and mind. Character becomes fate.

Earlier, I maintained that James could be cast accurately neither as a 19th-century Victorian writer nor a 20th-century modernist. His narrators resemble the

ethereal, all-seeing but invisible narrative deities of Flaubert's novels and Joyce's Ulysses as little as they do the Dickensian narrators declaiming self referentially upon the stage of their own creations. The narrative presence in James's late works, although extremely pronounced and prone to revel in a sense of its own expansiveness, is nonetheless contained and delimited by means of a combination of narrative techniques.

Underlying critics' misapprehensions about James's late style are two principal critical problems. The first is the inadequacy with which critics have applied the principles of narratology to late Jamesian discourse. Even innovative theorists like Gerard Genette and Dorrit Cohn persist in characterizing James's late works (especially The Ambassadors and What Maisie Knew) as prototypes of the point of view novel employing free, indirect style (for a discussion of this term, as well as "interior monologue," "external focalization," and "psycho-narration," see Note 1). Such characterizations have gained widespread currency only because James's late style has not been subjected adequately to careful, detailed analysis aided by formal principles of narrative discourse. I believe, as Genette maintained about Proust's techniques, that James's late discourse ultimately resists classification within

conventional categories, but that such analysis is valuable nonetheless because it at least shows what James's narrative is not -- shows, among other things, that it is not dominated by the technique of free, indirect style.

The second critical problem concerns the application of the theory of metaphor and metonymy to James's late style. I agree with the dominant view that James's development from early to late entailed a progress from metonymic to metaphoric modes. However, I think that the often repeated contention that James's metaphoric techniques anticipate those of modernist symbolism rests on a confusion about the kind of metaphor James employs and the relation such metaphor bears in James's late novels to metonymy. James used metaphor not to represent isolated subjectivities, or to find "objective correlatives" for them, or to capture emotion and thought by means of imagist and symbolist techniques. Rather, he used metaphor to represent an evolving interpersonal, social, and tragic consciousness which, far from consisting of an essential "inwardness," is constructed using the materials of a shared cultural milieu, including its manners and mores. The meanings of such metaphors as "the golden bowl" and "the wings of the dove," for example, fluctuate with changes in the social and interpersonal nexus of relationships represented in the

novels and denote not an element of a character's consciousness (much less an overarching "meaning" applied to the action of the novel), but an evolving community of consciousness that takes different forms in and is indeed transferred between different characters. Such a conception of consciousness, comparable to those of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, leads James, as I have already indicated, to invert over the course of the novel the relation between metaphor and metonymy seen in the traditional novel, as well as to a lesser extent the relation between metaphor and metonymy of many modernist works, in which the metaphors arise from a base of realistic metonymy. The realism is characteristically external in the traditional novel and psychological in modernist works; James's metonymic base is neither, but borrows from dramatic techniques to produce a relatively conventional form.

Closely connected to the problem of the relation between metaphor and metonymy in James's novels is that of the relation between narrating and narrated time. Realistic metonymy is characterized by its conformity to an image of "real" time that drives narrating and narrated time in the direction of an ideal unity, an ideal that is perhaps most closely approached in interior monologue or "stream of consciousness." What interior monologue assumes is that the

mind can dramatize itself, that the instant of experiencing can coincide with the instant of narrating. Such coincidence is what interior monologue ideally seems to do and it is the quest for such self-dramatization, along with the rise of point of view techniques by which this quest has largely proceeded, that have been basic factors in the development of the novel (see Note 2). Indeed, James's critique of artistic self-dramatization in The Sacred Fount was both a critique of the form of the novel and a crucial stage in the development of his late style.

(2)

To see this, let us first consider the contention of traditional Jamesians, discussed briefly in Chapter I, that James's development from early to late is characterized by an increasing adoption of point of view techniques and a corresponding effacement of the narrator or author. This view posits an essential continuity between James's early and late styles that is manifested in the widespread tendency either to discuss James's works without regard to their period or to view the late novels as the product of a continuous development from the early ones. (3) James, I agree, does "develop" from early to late, but the development entails more a decisive departure from, rather

than a continuous evolution out of, the early style.

To show this concretely, I will compare the opening para-graph of Roderick Hudson (1876) with that of The Ambassadors (1903). Roderick Hudson was James's first novel (with the exception of Watch and Ward [1871], which James later failed to acknowledge). The Ambassadors is a product of James's mature late period and is cited very commonly as a paradigm of the "point of view" novel.

Although it employs a traditional, omniscient, information-giving narrator in the first third of the first sentence, the opening paragraph of Roderick Hudson generally presents the "unreliable" viewpoint of Rowland Mallett, as indeed does the whole novel. In particular, it contains several classical instances of free indirect discourse or what Dorrit Cohn calls "narrated monologue." The latter is a "double-voiced technique which is grammatically third person, past-tense (rendering the perspective of an external narrator), but psychologically and emotionally first person, present tense in that we feel ourselves within the character's mind, receiving his or her thoughts and impression directly as they unfold at the very instant they occur (in a manner comparable to interior monologue or "stream of consciousness"). In the passage below, the free indirect discourse or narrated monologue is

framed by a relatively traditional narration of the characters' thoughts and feelings, which Cohn calls "psycho-narration" (see Note 1). The passage describes Rowland Mallet's thoughts and feelings at a time just before he is to sail for Europe and during a visit to Cecilia, whom he had eight years ago wooed, been rejected by, but had continued to see:

> Rowland remembered that for him she was all smiles, and suspected that he ministered not a little to her sense of the irony of things. And in truth, with his means, his leisure and his opportunities, what had he done? He had a lively suspicion of his uselessness. Cecilia meanwhile cut out her own dresses, and was personally giving her little girl the education of a princess. [italics added]

The italicized sentence is the point of view technique, free indirect style or narrated monologue. Like much narrated monologue, such as that of Joyce and Woolf, it is introduced by psycho-narration that serves as a vehicle to approach the protagonist's mind (Rowland, not Roderick Hudson, being the true protagonist -- as James himself indicates in the New York Prefaces [1049]). Moreover, the sentence following the narrated monologue ("He had a lively suspicion of his uselessness"), although psycho-narration, exhibits that language and thought "contagion" commonly found in psycho-narration framing narrated monologue; it describes Rowland's view of himself by using a word,

"uselessness," that is consonant with the language of the sentence in narrated monologue and conflicts in its harshness with the subdued language of the narrator elsewhere in the paragraph (see below). The last sentence of the passage quoted above is a form of what Genette calls "external focalization." My use of the term differs from Genette's in that for me external focalization not only renders what the character sensorily perceives, but also the character's view of others' general behavior and mental states. At least in part, it becomes the vehicle for the metonymic, sequential rendering of plot. "Jamesian external focalization," as I will call James's particular use of the technique, is widely used in his late works, where the character's view of others' mental states is rendered in much detail. The present instance is not nearly so detailed or "mental"; still, the portrayal is not just of what Rowland sensorily observes, but how he generally characterizes Cecilia's behavior. The phrase, "the education of a princess," draws attention to the fact that we are receiving Rowland's view -- the exaggerated language, once again, conflicts with that of the narrator -- more than the narrator's.

The next passage I will cite contains the paragraph's only instance of openly intrusive narration. It begins by

rendering Rowland's reaction to having been rejected as lover by Cecilia:

> He then and there, for himself, accepted the prospect of bachelorhood. The truth was that, as it will be part of the entertainment of this narrative to exhibit, Rowland Mallet had an uncomfortably sensitive conscience, and that, in spite of the seeming paradox, his visits to Cecilia were rare because she and her misfortunes were often uppermost in it. [italics added]

The italicized sentence is again free indirect discourse or narrated monologue, giving us a double-voiced narration that simultaneously renders the perspectives of the character and the external narrator. The rest of the passage illustrates what I called above the "subdued" language of the narrator; the narrator is clearly being ironic, even sarcastic, yet he conveys this feeling by means of a moderate tone and gentle language. The fact that this narrative intrusion is introduced by narrated monologue is significant. The juxtaposition of the two highlights not only the narrator's detachment from Rowland's hypocritical point of view, but the narrowness of that point of view -- what James would call a lack of imagination characteristic of New England puritanical morality. As we will see, James's use of such a type of character as protagonist conflicts sharply with the later practice of his major novels. Nonetheless, as the novel

progresses, the irony and sarcasm fade into the background and many readers report feeling a basic sympathy with Rowland, seeing and evaluating the events of the novel from his point of view. One is even reminded, by the characterization of Rowland having an "uncomfortably sensitive conscience," of "poor Strether" being burdened with "the oddity of a double consciousness," as the hero of The Ambassadors is described, once again by an openly intrusive narrator, in the second paragraph of that novel.

In certain ways, the opening paragraph of The Ambassadors gives an even fuller presentation of the hero's subjectivity. Whereas the first words of Roderick Hudson ("Rowland Mallet had made the arrangements to sail for Europe on the fifth of September...") are non-figural, describing Rowland's actions in a way that makes no effort to give Rowland's point of view concerning them, the first two sentences of The Ambassadors offer something quite different:

> Strether's first question, when he reached the hotel, was about his friend; yet on his learning that Waymarsh was apparently not to arrive till evening he was not wholly disconcerted. A telegram from him bespeaking a room "only if not noisy," reply paid, was produced for the enquirer at the office, so that the understanding they should meet at Chester rather than Liverpool remained to that extent sound.

Notice how the narrator, by opening with "Strether's

first question," then indicating what that question was only by giving the answer Strether receives, puts us immediately into Strether's point of view. This point of view, however, is oriented purely toward the external -- toward the fact that "Waymarsh was apparently not to arrive till evening." The first psychological datum we receive about Strether, "he was not wholly disconcerted" (the "on his learning" which precedes this is not psychological but refers to Strether's having heard the answer to his question), abruptly shifts the point of view to the narrator, who simply describes Strether's reaction externally, leaving us to ponder why he was not "wholly disconcerted." The first half of the second sentence shifts back to Strether's point of view, but once again it is a point of view oriented toward the external and giving us no information about what Strether is feeling or thinking. Indeed, neither of these renderings of point of view is even "external focalization," for the narrator simply tells us and does not show us what Strether heard ("on his learning") and read ("A telegram...was produced for the enquirer [i.e., Strether] at the office"). Yet the construction of the sentences is obviously designed to push such narrative "telling" into the background and focus our attention on the content of what Strether hears and reads;

the technique might be thought of therefore as a sort of "faked" external focalization.

The second half of the second sentence ("the understanding they should meet...remained to that extent sound") is an example of what I call "Jamesian external focalization"; it renders in dramatic form what Strether concludes, on the basis of the evidence of the telegram ("to that extent"), Waymarsh is thinking. The act of drawing a conclusion is, in most cases, a mental act, but in the passage James gives us no psychological determinants or qualities of consciousness that produce Strether's conclusion; his mental act is wholly referable to the information given in the telegram he has read and therefore does not put us "inside" Strether's consciousness but rather "inside" Waymarsh's consciousness as viewed by Strether. For example, the quoted phrase of Waymarsh, "only if not noisy," evokes for us a picture of Waymarsh's fussiness; we view this picture as though we were Strether viewing it, but the view does not reflect back upon Strether himself. Or does it?

The issue here is certainly a knotty one: To what extent does the dramatization of a mental act directed outward tell us something about the character's inner mental state? Consider a simple "real life" example of a

stranger telling us that someone has just tried to murder him. To what extent does his description allow us to draw conclusions about his mental state? The answer is: only to the extent we receive other views or accounts of the murder attempt. If we know, for example, that there was no such attempt, then we might conclude that the person is paranoid. If we know that there was such an attempt but that it occurred under very different circumstances than those which the person described, then we will receive other impressions about the person's mental state. But if we have only his view, then that view will tell us nothing necessarily about him. Now, in the above passage, we are not given any other view of Waymarsh except Strether's; and this is indeed a characteris-tic feature of late Jamesian external focalization, the most extreme case being Maggie Verver's external focalizations of her father, Charlotte, and the Prince in the second half of The Golden Bowl. By contrast, Jamesian external focalization through Rowland in the first passage "reflects back" on Rowland by virtue of the independent account of him given by the narrator. There may be exceptions, of course, but in general late Jamesian external focalization does not -- by itself, at any rate --dramatize the inner state of the character.

What, then, does? The third sentence of the paragraph

reads as follows:

> The same secret principle, however, that had prompted Strether not absolutely to desire Waymarsh's presence at the dock, that had led him thus to postpone for a few hours his enjoyment of it, now operated to make him feel he could still wait without disappointment.

This sentence would be straightfoward psycho-narration (i.e., discourse from the point of view of an external narrator) if it were not for the puzzling phrase, "the same secret principle," whose reference and meaning is elucidated only in the fifth sentence, which begins: "The principle I have just mentioned as operating had been, with the most newly disembarked of the two men [i.e., Strether], wholly instinctive..." Here we have a narrative intrusion that is, apparently, far more narratively manipulative than that which we observed in Roderick Hudson. For not only is the "secret principle" identified as narrative, a way of describing Strether's mental state, but it takes shape or "operates" in Strether only as an instinct -- that is, outside the range of Strether's consciousness. Since the remainder of the fifth sentence and the final sixth sentence continue to follow up and comment on the ramifications of this secret principle or instinct in Strether, we must conclude that only in the external focalization with which the first two sentences are mainly concerned do we get Strether's "point of view." Elsewhere

we have the narrative rendering -- not the self-dramatization of -- Strether's mind. No wonder, then, that, unlike the first paragraph of Roderick Hudson, there are no real narrated monologues in this paragraph; Strether's consciousness is never allowed to "perform," or speak for itself, without instantly being engulfed in narrative discourse.

Against this, it might be argued, first, that the delay in specifying the narrative source of the phrase, "the same secret principle," is analogous to the delay in revealing the narrative presence in the second sentence where the content of the telegram is described before we are told that it "was produced for the enquirer at the office..." So that if I am willing to regard the first case as a sort of "faked" external focalization that genuinely produces Strether's point of view, why shouldn't I regard the second case as a sort of "faked" internal focalization or narrated monologue that genuinely produces Strether's point of view?

This argument can be answered simply by observing that although we have every reason to assume -- before, that is, the narrative presence is made explicit -- that the description of the telegram is unmediated external focalization, we have no reason to assume even at first that "the same secret principle" is narrated monologue

issuing from Strether's mind. Not only is it not introduced or framed by psycho-narration, but the sentence itself in which the phrase occurs is at the furthest extreme from any dramatization of Strether's on-going thoughts, being filled with a large number of inquit phrases (e.g., "he believed," "he thought") characteristic of psycho-narration. As we will see later, what James's use of the phrase, two sentences before it is defined, testifies to is simply the enormous liberties he habitually took with the narrative voice in his late period.

Another, more important argument against my interpretation of the narrative techniques used in the paragraph is as follows. Even if I disagree that "the same secret principle" is meant to be <u>experienced</u> as free indirect discourse or narrated monologue by virtue of its delayed explication, may not it, as psycho-narration, serve as a frame to introduce narrated monologues such as those of the fourth sentence and the second half of the fifth?

This argument can be answered only by looking in detail at the sentences referred to. I therefore quote the rest of the passage starting from sentence three:

> The same secret principle, however, that had prompted Strether not absolutely to desire Waymarsh's presence at the dock, that had led him thus to postpone for a few hours his enjoyment of it, now operated to make him feel he could still wait without disappointment. They

> would dine together at the worst, and, with all respect to dear old Waymarsh --if not even, for that matter, to himself -- there was little fear that in the sequel they shouldn't see enough of each other. The principle I have just mentioned as operating had been, with the most newly embarked of the two men, wholly instinctive -- the fruit of a sharp sense that, delightful as it would be to find himself looking, after so much separation, into his comrade's face, his business would be a trifle bungled should he simply arrange for this countenance to present itself to the nearing steamer as the first "note," of Europe. Mixed with everything was the apprehension, already, on Strether's part, that it would, at best, throughout, prove the note of Europe in quite a sufficient degree.

To what extent are these passages narrated monologues that portray Stether's mind "in action"? It seems to me that one who would be inclined to regard them as such would make the following points. Despite the formality of the language, the passages show Strether communing with himself, drawing up "pictures" in his mind of what is about to happen to him that dramatize his attitudes and feelings through the "touches" or coloring he gives to such pictures, as well as through his juxtaposition of different pictures of the same projected event. For example, in the translation of the second half of the fifth sentence, Strether conjures up an image of himself "looking, after so much separation, into his comrade's face" that he contrasts with the image of Waymarsh's "countenance" presenting itself "to the nearing steamer as the first 'note' of Europe."

The first image is described as "delightful," but such delight is then undercut by the redescription of Strether's "comrade's face" as a more impersonal "countenance" presenting itself to a still more impersonal "steamer" (the steamer being a metaphoric image of Strether) -- the latter image dismaying him in that it shows that his "business would be a trifle bungled." Are we not clearly "inside" Strether's mind following the various paths it takes?

These passages can be compared a "classic" instance of free indirect discourse or narrated monologue in James Joyce's The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (as usual, I have italicized the relevant passages):

> He knelt in the silent gloom and raised his eyes to the white crucifix suspended above him. God could see that he was sorry. He would tell all his sins. His confession would be long, long. Everybody in the chapel would know then what a sinner he had been. Let them know. It was true. But God had promised to forgive him if he was sorry. He was sorry. He clasped his hands and raised them towards the white form, praying with his darkened eyes, praying with all his trembling body, swaying his head to and fro like a lost creature, praying with whimpering lips. (143)

One notices immediately that not only is the language less "formal" and complex, but that it is far more directly expressive of emotion. Although Stephen, like Strether, conjures up a projected future image of himself ("Everybody in the chapel would know then what a sinner he had been"), that image is not juxtaposed against any other; rather,

Stephen wholly and impulsively, almost hysterically, identifies with it. Strether, by contrast, separates himself from his conjurations; that happens not just in sentence five but in sentence six as well. "At the worst" instead of "at the least" signals that there may be something grudging in Strether's image of himself dining with Waymarsh; so too does his "little fear that in the sequel they shouldn't see enough of each other" instead of "little fear that in the sequel they shouldn't see each other" or something even stronger like "little fear that they wouldn't be able to indulge themselves abundantly in the pleasure of one another's company." Most peculiar is the idea of paying "respect to dear old Waymarsh -- if not even, for that matter, to himself..." Surely a person must be radically self-divided in order to be described as paying respect to himself! He could more simply have been described, for example, as meaning to follow his own inclinations and not subject himself to tiresome dinners.

But does not this merely show that Strether, as James puts it in the second paragraph, "was burdened...with the oddity of a double consciousness" and that it is the working of this double consciousness that is being self-dramatized? Let us look at part of a soliloquy of Hamlet, in which he contemplates killing the king, his

uncle Claudius (4):

> "Now might I do it pat, now 'a is a-praying,
> And now I'll do't. And so 'a goes to heaven
> And so am I revenged. That would be scanned.
> A villain kills my father, and for that
> I, his sole son, do this same villain send
> To heaven.
> Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
> 'A took my father grossly, full of bread,
> With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
> And how his audit stands, who knows save heaven?
> But in our circumstance and course of thought,
> 'Tis heavy with him; and am I then revenged,
> To take him in the purging of his soul,
> When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
> No.
> Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid bent."
> (III.iii.73-88)

It seems to me that the passages from The Ambassadors resemble the form of this soliloquy far more closely than they do that of interior monologue or even narrated monologue. Like Strether, Hamlet conjures up an image of himself, along with the consequences of his projected future act, and separates himself from them. The language is ratiocinative and speculative ("That would be scanned"), setting up various hypotheses about his projected act and evaluating in a detached manner its capacity to realize his aims or give him satisfaction. Moreover, these speculations in both cases result in a decision that has concrete consequences in the external world; Hamlet does not kill his uncle and Strether does not insist on seeing Waymarsh right away. By contrast, Stephen's "meditation" -- it would

be more accurate to call it an outburst of feeling and thought -- accomplishes nothing concrete, for he is already in the confession box; his outburst at most confirms his previously made decision to confess. But this is not even what the passage draws our attention to. It draws our attention to how Stephen feels and what he thinks, to what is "going on" within him while engaged in an external act. It defines without ambiguity the nature of Stephen's consciousness.

Hamlet and Strether's meditations, on the other hand, point up the doubleness of their consciousness, but they express only half of such consciousness, the half that is imaged, reasoned about, and finally rejected. For each, there is an unimaged and undefined self -- a "second-stage" consciousness -- that stands behind and pronounces upon the other half of his self; we never "see" directly the former self. Rather, it is inferred from the judgments it renders. That self is the "I" which commands, in Hamlet's case, "Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid bent." "Sword" here is an image of Hamlet's commanded self; the commanding self wants it to be of "more horrid bent," but we do not necessarily conclude from this that the commanding self is defined by its capacity to commit horrid acts, for there are too many other possibilities suggested. Coleridge, for

example, thought that Hamlet didn't really mean what he said in this soliloquy -- that his reasoning was just a way of giving an excuse to himself for not killing Claudius because, for some deeper reason, he didn't really "want" to. Hamlet's "true" feelings and thoughts (supposing there are such things) remain to a large degree a mystery -- a fact that has had not a little to do with the fascination the character of Hamlet has exercised over the last 400 years.

I don't claim that Strether is as fascinating as Hamlet, but I do think he is similar to him in at least in one respect. The similarity is that the consciousness of each is in part unimaged and unexpressed, at least directly. In Strether's case, the unimaged self is he who pays "respect" to his other half, or who mocks the other half's "delight" with Waymarsh by describing the latter (Waymarsh) as a "countenance" and the former (the imaged "other half" of Strether) as "the nearing steamer," rendering ironically the other half's willingness to dine and see Waymarsh by such formulations as "at the worst" and "they shouldn't see <u>enough</u> of each other." While Stephen Dedalus's discourse is metonymic, unfolding successively from his mind, the discourses of Hamlet and Strether are at least partly metaphoric, with a narrating self projecting

onto the narrated self an image representing the latter's consciousness.

In other words, Strether separates himself from himself in a manner analogous to that of first person narration, in which an undefined, narrating self is juxtaposed against an imaged, experiencing self. As I have indicated, it was exactly that gulf which the technique of interior monologue was designed to close, for the gulf always left a part of the self, the more internalized, judging, describing part, undramatized. Interior monologue aims to make the internalized part of the self the focus and subject of "the action," to bring the "real self," so to speak, onto the stage, and not allow it to be represented only by the external, social roles it plays. In the Jamesian translations above, as in the Hamlet soliloquy, by contrast, what is dramatized is mainly the role-playing self.

In the first paragraph of The Ambassadors, the narrator is by no means fully "merging" with Strether -- as he ideally does in extended interior monologue (i.e., autonomous monologue) or as he partly does in narrated monologue -- but merging with that part of the character who stands behind himself, analyzing, describing, or mocking. The temptation, nonetheless, to speak of such

partial merging is very great with most of James's later heros, including Strether, because the narrator clearly sympathizes with them. Indeed, they contrast sharply with the character of Rowland Mallet whom, as we saw, was possessed of limited imagination. James's later heros are just the opposite; they have all the imagination in the world and it is for just this reason that the narrator describes their thoughts and feelings in such intricacy and complexity of detail. But the descriptions are nonetheless in a distinctively narrative voice -- the same voice heard in virtually all of James's later writings.

In the paragraph we are considering, there may seem to be two examples, "dear old Waymarsh" in sentence four, and the quoted "'note' of Europe" in sentence five (which also appears in unquoted form in sentence six), to contradict this judgment. Is not "with all respect to dear old Waymarsh" a "verbatim quotation of Strether's mind," as Ian Watt has said ("First" 475-6)? With most other writers, one would be inclined to answer in the affirmative, but in James's case, it is hard not to remember that the phrase, "dear old," as well as others like it (e.g., "Poor Strether"), are found in many of James's works, often in what is a straightfowardly narrative context. The same is true of "note" applied to localities; the narrator of <u>The</u>

Golden Bowl, for example, uses it in the first paragraph of that novel. The issue is an important one, because it points to how much James was willing to personalize the narrative voice in his late period -- to "let myself go," as James described himself needing to do in his Notebooks toward the beginning of his late period (114). Such "letting go" required James to structure his works so that they could incorporate a wide ranging, freely associative, and spontaneously self-generating narrative discourse. Indeed, the complexity and intricacy of the sentence structure in James's late works is in large part attributable to such freedom of narrative discourse. As James wrote in his Notebooks at a time when his late style was in the process of being formed: "To live in the world of creation -- to get into it and stay in it -- to frequent and haunt it -- to think intently and fruitfully...this is the only thing" (62). James speaks here of letting oneself "live in the world of creation," not of making that world a model of his mental outflow; the distinction, as we will see later, emphasizes the extent to which the narrator, effusive as he is, nonetheless places himself under a structure that contains and delimits the expression of consciousness. The structure is specifically "tragic" because for James it was tragedy that could accomplish such

containment and delimitation most effectively.

In summary, this examination of the first paragraphs of Roderick Hudson and The Ambassadors disputes the usual account given of James's narrative techniques in two ways. First, it shows that the development from early to late styles, represen-ted by Roderick Hudson and The Ambassadors, respectively, was not a gradual evolution in which certain basic tendencies present in the beginning were more fully realized. Rather, it indicates that the development from early to late entailed a decisive break with the techniques of the earlier period. Secondly, the comparison between Roderick Hudson and The Ambassadors shows that in so far as the dominant Jamesian tradition has acknowledged a contrast in narrative technique between the early and late periods, this tradition has greatly distorted the nature of the contrast. James's development from early to late is characterized not by a displacement of narrative presence in favor of the characters' self-dramatization of their own consciousness, but just the opposite: an increase in narrative presence and a diminishment of subjective autonomy on the part of the characters.

But if this is true, then how is it that Ian Watt, in his celebrated essay, "The First Paragraph of The

Ambassadors," could claim that "we and the narrator are inside Strether's mind" (480) and that the novel, including the first paragraph, is "the mental drama of the hero's consciousness, which, of course, is not told but shown: scenically dramatized"? (481) Passing by this rather nervous "of course," on which the weight of a mighty dogma presses down, (5) we might ask further: Did not James himself speak of his characters as "reflectors" or "central consciousnesses" through which the narratives are focalized? Yes, and that is just the point which has caused confusion, for James separated two techniques that many critics have tended to blur.

On the one hand, James increasingly used his protagonists to focalize the narration of the story, including its plot and metonymically narrated series of external events, as well as to focalize our view of the mental states of other characters (both of which functions James assigned to his "reflectors" and which I have lumped together under the rubric, "Jamesian external focalization"). For example, in The Wings of the Dove, Milly's behavior and state of mind just prior to her death, as well as her death itself, are recounted mostly from Densher's point of view. Similarly, the change that takes place in Charlotte during the second half of The Golden

Bowl, and which is so vital to the novel's plot and denouement, is "told" almost entirely through Maggie Verver's Jamesian external focalizations. Indeed, Maggie's "reflecting" capacity approaches an ultimate limit in the way we see through her eyes not just external events, not just intense and highly elaborate presentations of the subjec-tive states of others, including Charlotte, the Prince, and her father, but also direct thought quotations of these others as imagined by Maggie and represented in the form of quoted mono-logues. These "performances" occur only on the stage of Maggie's consciousness and render an "objective" view of them impossible.

But at the same time James channeled the traditionally metonymic function of "telling the story" into his characters, especially his protagonists, he did not allow those protagonists to focalize our view of their own minds -- a function which narrated monologue and interior monologue fulfill, or at least aim to fulfill. Rather, the description of the protagonists' minds was reserved mostly for the narrator, who employed complex forms of psycho-narration to dramatize consciousness.

I suggest that such forms were crucial toJames's late tragedies, for in order to undermine or subvert the initial idealism, arrogance, and innocence of the protagonist, a

point of view "outside" the protagonist's consciousness had to be adopted. That James combined his elaborate and largely metaphorical psycho-narration of his characters with equally elaborate metonymic focalizations rendered from the point of view of hte characters is what constitutes the distinctiveness, complexity, difficulty, and beauty of his late style.

In a sense, James made his narrator perform the same function, in relation to the protagonist, that he made his protagonist, in relation to other characters, perform. The sensitivity which characters like Milly Theale and Maggie Verver exhibit toward the mental states of other characters is the same kind of sensitivity the narrator exhibits toward his protagonists -- a sensitivity that produces the tidal wave of consciousness and surging narrative discourse applied to them. What is at once conservative and radical about James's late style is that it channels traditionally narrative functions into the protagonist, or other characters, while channeling the function of representing the consciousness of the protagonist, as well as in many instances that of other characters, into the narrator. What this does is to make the narrator a highly subjective, personalized, and interested observer. As Stephen Donadio says,

> For James...the more comprehensive and objective vision is achieved...through the most profound commitment to one's own distinctive subjectivity: the "full measure of truth" residing in a particular experience, far from revealing itself to detached and disinterested observation, can only be achieved through a profoundly interested relation, an intense form of "appreciation." (284)

NOTES

1. Crucial to understanding the narratological components of Jamesian tragedy are four basic terms. The first is what Gerard Genette, in Narrative Discourse, calls "external focalization." It refers to the rendering of external events -- what is seen, heard, felt, or even tasted -- from "the point of view" of a character (I will speak here only of "third person" narration or texts in which the narrator is not dramatized). Rather than an omniscient narrator simply describing the circumstances or situation in which a character or group of characters appear, the situation is presented to the reader only in so far as it is sensuously perceived by a given character. External focalization thus channels what in traditional novels is a narrative function into a dramatized and delimited center of perception. The center is delimited because a character cannot "see" all that an omniscient narrator can and it is dramatized because the character himself plays a role in the story. Those writers, from Ernest Hemingway to Flannery O'Connor, who have made extensive use of the technique, have typically been concerned to "show" or dramatically render their story rather than "tell" it from an unlocalized and objective standpoint. Moreover, these writers have often minimized explicit references to the thoughts and feelings of their characters because such references usually require the external description or "telling" of such thoughts and feelings.

It is precisely the latter function which "psycho-narration," as Dorrit Cohn terms it in his Transparent Minds, entails. Psycho-narration is external description of a character's mind from a narrative point of view and is characterized by such "inquit" phrases as "he believed, he felt, he thought." The distinctive feature of psycho-narration is that although it is employed to

represent the thoughts and feelings of characters, it does not do so from the subjective standpoint of the characters' consciousness, as two of the other techniques (narrated monologue and interior monologue) I will describe in a moment do. Rather, it narrates those thoughts and feelings from a standpoint outside them, much as events and physical circumstances are narrated by the omniscient narrator from a standpoint outside those events and circumstances.

Yet, it is by virtue of such externality that psycho-narration gains its immense power and range. More than any other figural technique, psycho-narration is capable of describing the full breadth of a character's mind, both conscious and unconscious. For example, using psycho-narration, a narrator can tell us that "He did not know that..." or "He did not feel that...". In this way, the reader can be far better informed about the character's state of mind than the character himself. No doubt because of its power and range, few modern writers of fiction have succeeded in avoiding completely the use of psycho-narration (many instances, for example, can be found even in such an innovative work as Ulysses). Nonetheless, modern writers, concerned as much as possible to dramatize their characters, minimize use of the technique. Psycho-narration is, indeed, the pre-eminent technique of "telling." By virtue of its practice of peering into characters' minds from an external, narrative point of view, it draws attention to itself -- or more exactly, to the narrative presence -- far more than does the narration of what is occurring in the physical environment of the character. After all, the latter type of narration could in many cases be performed by anyone who was present in the environment; psycho-narration requires the presence of a less "realistic" observer.

"Unquoted interior monologue" (referred to from now on simply as "interior monologue") is the logical opposite of psycho-narration; indeed, there is debate whether it constitutes a form of "narration" at all. Written in the first person, present tense, and characterized in general by incomplete, disconnected phrases, it is an attempt to present the thoughts and feelings of a character "realistically," as they spontaneously flow out of or unfold from the character's mind. Developed first by Dujardin, its classic instance is still found in Ulysses, where it takes two forms: the interior monologues of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom that appear embedded in an overarching narrative context; and the "stream of consciousness" autonomous monologue of Molly Bloom at the

end of the novel (at least in Joyce, as I will show below, there is no reason to make an essential distinction between the two forms, and I will refer to both as "interior monologue").

Interior monologue has often been regarded as a means of accessing a pre-verbal, primitive substratum of perception and emotion that finds its nonfictional formulation in the theories of Freud, Bergson, and William James. In this sense, interior monologue is a conduit to the unconscious, a pathway to the subliminal. It seems to open up a deeper, perhaps more sacred reality than external description can give: the "true" reality of the self.

Commentators like Dorrit Cohn, by contrast, strongly object to this characterization of interior monologue. They point out that Freud, Bergson, and William James to greater or lesser extents distinguished the inner self from language; Freud's unconscious, Bergson's "pure" thought, James's "mind stuff" are all in essence nonlinguistic. But interior monologue, Cohn claims, is by definition linguistic. For Cohn, it is psycho-narration, far more than interior monologue, that allows for the rendering of the unconscious. This is because interior monologue, like external focalization, is limited to the character's point of view. Joyce, for example, draws attention to such limitation not just by embedding Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom's expressions of thoughts and feelings within a larger narrative context but by placing Molly's autonomous monologue at the end of Ulysses, where it can be read and understood within the context of the novel as a whole.

Consideration of this issue in terms of nonJoycean interior monologue (e.g., Faulkner's) would take us far beyond the limited purposes here. Suffice it to say that I agree with Cohn that psycho-narration gives a far broader or "horizontal" rendering of the inner self than does interior monologue. It is no accident that the novel, Ulysses, which did the most to introduce and perfect the technique of interior monologue, employs a narrator who is not merely detached and authoritarian, but (as some critics have said) is virtually solipsistic in his use of a vast body of extra-textual references and allusions crucial to the story and largely external to the minds of the characters (for example, the use of Homer's The Odyssesy as a model; the exemplification of the dominant narrative styles of English literature over the last millenium in the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter; the extensive background on Judaism; the recourse to medical and scientific

information, etc.).

My point is that the presentation of the inner self gains its power, interest, and intensity precisely by being juxtaposed against a portrait of a world external to and encompassing that self. So that although Cohn is correct to say that interior monologue restricts our horizontal view of the inner self, he does not take into account sufficiently what motivates such authorial imposed restriction: that the reader will at the same time receive a much fuller vertical presentation of the inner depths of the self. Joycean interior monologue uses language to dramatize the pre-linguistic core of self; that is why such monologues necessarily distort, by the use of disconnected phrases and other means, more familiar and "normal" uses of language. It is also why interior monologue is unquoted (quoted forms are quite traditional) -- because quotation signals linguistic expression, not that more "fundamental" and privatized reality of the inner self that linguistic expression supposedly masks.

The fourth term I will discuss is "narrated monologue." This term is Cohn's coinage and is roughly equivalent to what the French call style indirect libre (free, indirect style) and the Germans erlebte Rede. (I prefer Cohn's term because it suggests the "doubleness" of the technique; see below.) Narrated monologue is found in works as early as those of Jane Austen, although it has not been widely identified and examined by critics until recent decades. Functionally, narrated monologue falls midway between psycho-narration and interior monologue. Although its linguistic form is that of psycho-narration (third person, past tense), what it expresses is that spontaneous unfolding of consciousness characteristic of first person, present tense interior monologue. That is why narrated monologue is often called "doubled-voiced"; it seems to merge the voices of the narrator and his character -- to merge, that is, the linguistic "he" or "she" with an implicit "I," as well as the grammatical past tense with an implicit present tense. Indeed, the test often used by theorists to identify narrated monologue is whether it can be transformed easily into interior monologue. Like interior monologue, narrated monologue uses language and forms of expressions such as exclamations, repetitions, and colloquialisms that distinguish it from the language and forms of expression of the omniscient narrator or psycho-narrator. Below is a passage from Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man illustrating the technique. It begins just after Stephen Dedalus has entered

the confession box:

> He knelt in the silent gloom and raised his eyes to the white crucifix suspended above him. God could see that he was sorry. He would tell all his sins. His confession would be long, long. Everybody in the chapel would know then what a sinner he had been. Let them know. It was true. But God had promised to forgive him if he was sorry. He was sorry. He clasped his hands and raised them towards the white form, praying with his darkened eyes, praying with all his trembling body, swaying his head to and fro like a lost creature, praying with whimpering lips. (143)

The emphasized part of the passage is narrated monologue. To confirm this, see how easily it can be "translated" into interior monologue, which is first person, present tense:

> God can see that I am sorry. I will tell all my sins. My confession will be long, long. Everybody in the chapel will know then what a sinner I am. Let them know. It is true. But God has promised to forgive me if I am sorry. I am sorry.

Such translation makes explicit what is implicit in most narrated monologues: the sense that we are "inside" the character's mind witnessing a sort of "read-out" of his thoughts and feelings as they occur at the very moment he thinks or feels them. Of course, not all "translations" of narrated monologue yield the present tense (even the above translation deviates slightly in this way). For that matter, not all interior monologues are written wholly in the present tense. Molly Bloom's, for example, contains many memories in the past tense. But in most cases, as Cohn affirms, the present tense dominates to such an extent that one's sense of witnessing an on-going series of mental events is not dispelled.

Still another similarity between narrated monologue and interior monologue is that each is "framed" by a narrative context or voice. In the above passage, it is difficult to tell whether the narrator is taking an ironic or sympathetic view of Stephen -- a difficulty that characterizes the novel generally and about which there has been much critical debate. But in many other instances of narrated monologue, the narrator's attitude is unconcealed. When the narrator is ironic or even sarcastic, the chances

are greater that the reader will regard the character as shallow. When the narrator is sympathetic, it is likely that the reader will attribute "depth" to the character. But in most cases the revelation or dramatization of the character's consciousness takes place within a narrative frame against which we "read" that consciousness.

In psycho-narration, on the other hand, there is no sharp boundary between the narrative presence and the mind of the character. A psycho-narrator may, of course, narrate his character's thoughts and feelings sympathetically or ironically. But it is nonetheless much more difficult than in interior monologue and narrated monologue to distinguish the narrative irony or sympathy from the character's mind "in itself." The latter lacks any autonomy or "existence" independent of the narrative point of view.

2. Such containment strikes at the heart of techniques and assumptions crucial to the novel. In Chapter I, I noted that such development is often characterized by two features: an increasing adoption of point of view techniques and a corresponding effacement of the narrator or author. What this means, in terms of the techniques of narrative discourse described above, is that omniscient narration and psycho-narration have increasingly given way to external focalization, narrated monologue, and interior monologue. There has been an effort to allow characters to dramatize themselves, especially their own thoughts and feelings, rather than be described by an external narrator. This characterization of the development of modern fiction is deceptive, however, in its simplistic assumption that point of view techniques automatically entail the effacement of the narrator or author. Certainly it is true that there has been a virtual disappearance of the Dickensian type of narrator, who is at once omniscient and unconcealed. But does his replacement by the more invisible deities of Flaubert's novels or Joyce's Ulysses, along with the creation of characters capable of dramatizing their own minds, really constitute a fundamental change in the status of the narrative consciousness?

To answer this question, we need to gain some idea of the nature of self and consciousness presupposed by the novel. Only in this way can we understand why the modern novel has increas-ingly taken on itself the task of "allowing" its characters to dramatize their own minds. Before comparing the narrative techniques described in section two to those used in Jamesian fiction, then, I will sketch a simplified philosophical and historical model of

the conception of self and consciousness implicit in the novel.

The best way to gain perspective on the novel is to compare it to pre-novelistic genres. Fiction, unlike poetry and drama, is a form whose structure, as it has evolved over the last 200 years or so in the English language, necessarily rests on a foundation of "telling." No matter how deeply immersed we become as readers in "the story," we always assume that there is someone telling the story and this assumption affects the way we read or hear it. Fiction, in other words, is -- in some sense of the words, "author" and "narrator" -- authorial/narrative discourse. This author/narrator is a sort of hybrid consisting of parts half "real" (or "authorial") and half "unreal" (or "narratively" embedded in the story). Our capacity to project ourselves, fancifully or otherwise, into the world of fiction depends on our acceptance of the author's dual role, which in turn depends on a tremendous faith in the powers of the authorial/narrative consciousness to create out of itself --like Athena from the head of Zeus -- an imaginary but in a special sense very "real" world. What is "real" about this world is that it is a product of the author/narrator's consciousness, an unfolding of that consciousness rather than just a retelling or "interpretation" of a traditional tale that all the listeners know to a greater or lesser extent beforehand (as in, for example, epic poetry, traditional folk literature, and Shakespeare's plays, all but two of which derive from historical or fictionalized sources). Indeed, one might say that the novel is a disguised dramatization of the author's own consciousness; what it tells and how it tells are governed or centered in the author's mind. As Lukacs says,

> The novel tells of the adventure of interiority....[It] raises an individual to the infinite heights of one who must create an entire world through his experience...heights which no epic individual, not even Dante's, could reach, because the epic individual owed his significance to the grace accorded him, not to his pure individuality. (89; 83)

The bifurcation intrinsic to the fictional author/narrator or "implied author" explains why the process of reading fiction, unlike that of listening to poetry or watching and listening to drama, is an essentially private experience. The ineffaceable presence of a teller at least partly separate from the tale makes

reading a process in which one consciousness "speaks" to another. In the traditional novel, such speaking is mediated partly by the story, partly by the narrator's first person discourse; in the modern novel, the techniques of interior monologue and narrated monologue allow the characters at times to speak more "directly" to the reader.

We could, of course, imagine that the "I" of lyric and epic poetry was a sort of author/narrator "telling" about himself and others (and since the development of the novel, as Bakhtin notes, other genres including poetry have tended to take on this "telling" function of the novel). But in most cases, the poetic "I," as David Lodge in The Modes of Modern Writing points out (90), becomes submerged in the conventions of his poem and loses the qualities of autonomy and essentialism characteristic of a true author/narrator -- that is, the qualities of a separate identity existing apart from what is told. The identity of the classical epic poet, for example, is exhausted by his conventionalized role as a voice of God or the gods. As Lukacs says, "The epic hero is, strictly speaking, never an individual ...one of the essential characteristics of the epic is the fact that its theme is not a personal destiny but the destiny of a community" (66).

Conversely, we could imagine that a character in a play speaks from an authorial viewpoint and thus resembles an "author/narrator." But once again, such a character, in order to be a character -- at least in pre-Romantic drama -- necessarily submits himself to the dramatic form in which and only in which he "exists." In fiction alone do we experience the presence of a "self" who is logically prior to artistic convention and form, who is able to manipulate and control, parody and subvert, such convention and form rather than be manipulated and controlled by them. Hence, theorists like Bakhtin and Lukacs have made much of the novel's ability to undermine and contravene traditional literary forms. Such forms are in the novel subject to a "free consciousness" (or linguistic "homelessness") that can create out of itself a sort of anti-form satirizing or parodying the original one. In this sense, the novel is not a literary genre at all, but an anti-genre.

But to say this is, I think, to go too far. The significance of the authorial/narrative consciousness that makes possible the novel lies not merely in its ability to subvert traditional literary forms but in the immense status it grants human subjectivity. This subjectivity is, to adopt the terminology of Kant's Second Critique, The Critique of Practical Reason, an "objective subjectivity"

(see McDonald, Normative 43, 51, 53, 116-18, 122, 149). It is an internalized space of thought and emotion that is in one sense imaginary because it is separate from the external world that is the subject of science. In another sense, however, it is more "real" than the external world because it is an epistemological center (in the First Critique) and a moral center (in the Second Critique) which gives, or confers meaning on, the external world. The latter view is promulgated not just by Kant but is implicit in Hume's writings as well. It is these two thinkers who, more than any other, formulated the philosophical model of self upon which the novel was established. In The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche proposed that Socrates was, in a philosophical sense, "the first novelist." Bakhtin, in The Dialogic Imagination, made a similar suggestion.

Albeit in different ways, both Hume and Kant treated the self as autonomous and private. Moral and epistemological issues were divorced from religious and cultural tradition -- the mere "stage" on which the self performed -- and referred back to the self's more real, off-stage existence. Such "existentiality," however, took radically different forms in the two thinkers. For Kant, it was a "structure of consciousness" (the synthetic a priori) built into the nature of the human mind that determined the categories through which we view reality. Such enhancement of the powers of the mind, pushed to greater extremes by later idealists including Coleridge and Emerson, is called Kant's "Copernican Revolution."

For Hume, the mind played a more passive, but no less powerful role in determining the nature of reality. It had the ability to judge for itself -- and entirely by itself, without reference to tradition or social beliefs -- whether a given "idea" (e.g., God, the external world, causality, the self) corresponded to a "clear and distinct" impression in the mind. If it so corresponded, the idea was real; if not, unreal. Hume and Kant thus laid the foundations of a modern faith that transferred the powers formerly invested in a transcendent God to the internalized and autonomous self, thereby creating the conditions necessary for the birth of the modern novel. "The novel," as Lukacs says, "is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God" (88).

Kant and Hume ushered in an era of what Jonathan Dollimore, in Radical Tragedy, calls "humanist essentialism" that displaced the former era of "Christian essentialism." Hamlet, the most introverted of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, whose worldview is still dictated by Christian essentialism however much he feels

that essentialism being subverted by forces both outside and within him, would have been horrified by the modern view of the self, for he clung tenuously from beginning to end to a public conception of identity rooted in a social and moral order transcendently grounded. Still more horrified would have been Aristotle, who would probably have been incapable of appreciating modern novels because he would not have thought that anything particularly interesting or significant could come out of a consciousness that failed to transcend its subjectivity and saturate itself in more general categories of being. Aristotle would have viewed such a consciousness as remaining trapped in its own particularity, in its own empirical existence, in its own finiteness -- in, finally, what was for Aristotle and the ancient Greeks, its own nothingness.

That nothingness, the modern self, is the genetic foundation, the seed out of which the novel as a genre has been "generated." Unlike traditional, pre-Romantic genres, which are based on artificial conventions and forms, the structure of the novel is organic. Its organicity is reflected not just in the story and protagonist's evolutionary development but in the kernel of authorial consciousness from which the telling of the story grows. The novel is the only form that posits as an ideal the proportionality of narrating or representing time to narrated or represented time. Of course, narrating time, like "reading time," is impossible to measure externally in any significant sense. This is because it has a subjective basis within the narrator or reader's mind. But such subjectivity is the source of the temporal flow of the story or narrated time. And narrated time corresponds to or represents "real" time. Which means that narrating time is possessed of that Kantian "objective subjectivity" which gives it a basis separate from or external to "clock" time yet dictates that such a basis be the structure or form presupposed by clock time -- that it be the means by which we conceptualize the <u>category</u> of clock time. Narrated and narrating time are ideally proportional, in sum, because narrated time mirrors reality through the succession of events constituting the story, and narrating time forms the subjective basis by which that mirroring is made possible. Narrating time guides or even produces the temporal flow of the story, a flow that is supposed to produce the illusion of being "real." As Lukacs says,

> Time brings order into the chaos of men's lives and

gives it the semblance of a spontaneously flowering, organic entity...only the novel, the literary form of the transcendent homelessness of the idea, includes real time -- Bergson's duree -- among its constituitive principles. (125; 121)

More concretely, chapter divisions, which are a component of narrating time, often signify breaks in the story, which is the vehicle of narrated time. Disproportions between narrating and narrated time, such as summary and foreshortening, are usually employed to bridge over discontinuities in narrated time and to reestablish the illusion that narrated time represents "real" time. Once this task is accomplished, narrating and narrated time can again follow along the same "groove." (Prolepsis and analepsis, as discussed by Gerard Genette and others, are too complicated to deal with here. Suffice it to say that their status as deviations or "jumps" only emphasizes the fact that fictional temporality is structured around a genetic norm.)

By contrast, Shakespearian drama fixes representing time according to no intrinsic, organic standard within an authorial consciousness (the time is fixed only by the length of time the audience is willing to sit through the play), then arbitrarily and even carelessly speeds up and slows down represented time as occasion and need dictate. Even the neoclassical prescription for tragedy, as David Lodge points out (81-2), while fixing the boundaries of represented time, allows free play within those boundaries. As is widely acknowledged, Shakespearian time is not a continuum modeled on the clock; events may be separated or jumbled together with little attempt to put them into realistic sequence -- as in the scene in Othello depicting the arrival of the characters at Cyprus or the series of scenes showing Othello's jealousy leapfrogging, in its intensity, over any realistically conceivable temporal sequence. By contrast, it is significant that The Tempest, the most "novelistic" of Shakespeare's plays -- novelistic in that Prospero "authorially" directs everything that happens in it -- focuses our attention to an unusual degree on the temporal succession of events.

The proportionality between narrating and narrated time achieves its most complete fulfillment in the interior monologue, where the two are not merely proportional, but seemingly equivalent. What this means is that in interior monologue, the narration or act of telling merges with the narrated or what is told; the telling is not about

something external to itself but is the unfolding or self-dramatization of the narrator/protagonist's mind through the temporal record, or "story," which that mind produces.

But interior monologue is not a form uncharacteristic of the novel in general. On the contrary, the novel is at bottom a disguised interior monologue -- or rather, it is useful to regard it as such. It is useful because it shows that the novel is a mode of dramatizing the narrator's mind, of dramatizing it _through_ the unfolding story of the protagonist. It is precisely for that reason that the novel has always striven to be more "realistic" than other genres ruled by convention; because the index of reality, the epistemological and moral center by which we are able to judge what is true or false, right or wrong, is, as Hume and Kant maintained, the inner self or mind. As Lodge says, contrasting poetry and prose, the unfolding of events in prose "is almost completely under the writer's semantic control -- it is not subject to arbitrary and complex phonological requirements as in verse" (90). Only the inner self can "see through" the delusive belief systems imposed by society, religion, and history and present reality "as it is," which is at the same time reality as the individual consciousness perceives it.

Using interior monologue as a model to view the novel as a genre also illuminates why so many theorists have maintained, I think rightly, that traditional novelistic discourse is metony-mic in structure. As I have noted, metonymy is a mode of joining or identifying with one another two figures by means of association, contiguity, or, more subjectively, influence. According to theorists, modern novels such as those of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Joseph Conrad, etc., are far more metaphoric than the traditional 19th century novel. This is undoubtedly true. Joyce's _Ulysses_, for example, is structured in part by the metaphoric relation between the adventures of a 20th century Irishman and those of the Homeric epic hero; obviously no metonymic contiguity between the two is possible. Yet it is quite another matter to claim that the structure of _Ulysses_ as a whole is metaphoric (the way, for example, T.S. Eliot's _The Wasteland_ is). For the novel is, after all, the story of the day in the life of Leopold Bloom, a story that unfolds in a chronological sequence far more precise and strict than that of Homer's _The Odyssey_ which, like most heroic epics (theorists aver), is metonymic. Moreover, it is generally agreed that the way of thinking revealed in Molly and Bloom's interior mono-logues

is associative and metonymic. In the case of Stephen, however, just the opposite is thought to be true. According to David Lodge, Stephen's interior monologues "tend toward the metaphoric...pole" ("Language" 485). To illustrate this contention, he quotes a passage from "Proteus," in which Stephen is looking at Mrs. McCabe, a midwife. Here is a portion of that passage: "Gaze. Belly without blemish, bulging big, a buckler of taut vellum, no, whiteheaped corn, orient and immortal, standing from everlasting to everlasting."

Lodge justly points out that the images here are metaphoric: Mrs. McCabe's belly is described metaphorically as "a buckler of taut vellum," then as "whiteheaped corn." But then Lodge goes on to say: "The significant thing is not merely the presence of specific metaphors...but the fact that interior monologue proceeds by perceived similarities and substitutions. The perception of an analogy...leads Stephen's thoughts..." (485) The language Lodge uses here to argue that the interior monologue is metaphoric undermines itself; "proceeds" and "leads Stephen mind" suggest a continuous, associative, and metonymic process underlying the substitution of one metaphor for another. The images, that is, are metaphors in so far as they are detached from the context of the interior monologue. If we had encountered them in a non-narrative form such as poetry, for example, their relation to one another would very probably be assessed independently of any space/time continuum. But here the temporal part of that continuum is not only present but emphasized: "a buckler of taut vellum, no, whiteheaped corn." The "no" indicates that something in Stephen's mind has led him to associate Mrs. McCabe's belly first with one image, then, by a further mental process, with another image (and possibly a close reading of Stephen's other interior monologues in Ulysses would reveal the psychological source of such a shift). Stephen's interior monologues, then, are not metaphoric, but rather metonymic in structure; the metaphors arise out of a metonymic foundation. In fairness to Lodge, I should point out that he says something close to this in his book, The Modes of Modern Writing (1977). My argument applies most fully to his essay, "The Language of Modernist Fiction: Metaphor and Metonymy," which was published before 1976. In the book, Lodge states: "Joyce can afford...metaphoric flights because the metonymic base of his work is so secure" (140) -- a contention that is very close to my own. I have chosen to argue against Lodge's position in his earlier essay, a position he may

have in fact abandoned, only as a means of stressing issues I feel are important -- not because I wish to attack Lodge, to whom I am in general greatly indebted.

My point in any case is not that the metaphors of Stephen's interior monologues are linked externally, that the image of Mrs. McCabe's belly evokes naturally the images of "a buckler of taut vellum" or "whiteheaped corn" -- for then they would not be metaphors. Rather, my point is that they are linked by the qualities of Stephen's consciousness, which projects onto the different images a psychologically temporal association with one another.

But a far better example of how the metonymic unrolling of thought undergirds even the most metaphorical of images is provided by a passage found toward the end of Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse (1927). The passage comes at the point when the adult James Ramsay is finally approaching the Lighthouse that he had longed to go to as a child:

> He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?
>
> No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other was the Lighthouse too. (495)

The emphasized sentences are narrated monologue introduced by narrative description. As with Stephen's interior monologue above, Woolf uses the word "no" as a device to convey the time-mediated transition of James's mind from one thought or image to another, a transition that is further emphasized by the paragraphing. Moreover, like Stephen's interior monologue, the metonymic unfolding of James's mind is used to create two images (the Lighthouse James perceived when a child and the Lighthouse he perceives now) whose relation to one another is metaphoric; "nothing was simply one thing" could hardly express better the nature of metaphor. But what is so powerful, to me, about this example of narrated monologue is that the time-mediated metonymic association Woolf dramatizes by taking us inside James's mind recapitulates the time-mediated metonymic association that the narrative structure of To the Lighthouse has created as a whole. Through that structure, we have watched over time (the represented time of the novel from beginning to end) how

James progresses from one image of the Lighthouse to another; now, in the narrated monologue, we see this progression reenacted on a psychological time scale within James's mind.

Another benefit of using interior monologue as a model of the novel as genre is that it helps explain the unresolved tension, or dualism, characteristic of many 19th-century novels concerned in one manner or another with social reform. The dualism can take the form of character versus plot, free will versus determinism, family versus society, the private versus the public, value versus fact, etc. In most cases, primacy is given to the former term within the dualism. In the British industrial novel, for example (as Katherine Gallagher points out), the family or realm of "value" is posited as a paradigm by which the industrial workplace or realm of "fact" is to be restructured or reformed. In American fiction, the dichotomy or dualism often takes the more rigid form of individual versus society, in which the reform or restructuring of society is implicit -- or nonexistent (e.g., Huckleberry Finn). But in both cases, the moral authority or primacy given to the former term of the dualism derives from the basic form of the novel, as well as from the historical and social conditions that created such a form. As Lodge says, "Writing...that emphasizes the uniqueness of individuals...will tend to operate mainly along the axis of combination or contiguity" (Modes 132) -- i.e., be metonymic.

The novel is a form structured by the effort of the author/narrator to portray his own unfolding consciousness through the story of his protagonist. In other words, the dualistic structure of the novel is a product of oppositions similar to those which Hume and Kant formulated. They were created initially to endow the social, external, or public realm with a meaning, epistemological and moral, issuing from the self or consciousness. But the effort to conjoin the two opposing spheres only had the effect of separating them further. This was because, taking again the case of novels of social reform: (1) the source of meaning, truth, and value must have an independent basis in the self or family in order to serve as a model to reform society: and (2) the impetus to reform is based on the assumption that social institutions exert control over the individual which is harmful. The reformation of society thus entails giving power to the social environment that reduces or subverts the autonomy of the self and creates the need for an increasing

internalization of self that removes that self psychologically and morally ever further from the social environment (i.e., privatizes it) and thus makes it vulnerable and subject to the public authority of society. Such a destructive, self-negating progression is sketched by Katherine Gallagher in her portrayal of the evolution of British fiction from the industrial novel of the 1830s and 1840s to George Eliot's Felix Holt, the Radical (1866). It is a progression in which the self is threatened by its own efforts to reform the society which oppresses it and thereby undergoes progressive internalization or, at the extreme, an "emptying out," as Gallagher puts it (265).

Such a split between individual and society in novels of social reform has its counterpart in the split between character and plot basic to the form of the novel. The rise of "point of view" techniques can be viewed as "reform" measures that strive to free the character (and the narrative mind) from the dominance of plot, which is seen as that element of fiction which "blocks" or constrains the free and dramatized expression of self. And just as in novels of social reform, the narrative reformation of the form of the novel negates itself; techniques like narrated monologue and interior monologue portray characters as subjective entities and thereby create a gap between the characters and the "objective" structure of the novel as a whole, endowing the latter with increasingly dominant characteristics. It is no accident that the two authors who perhaps did most to introduce point of view techniques into the novel -- Joyce and Flaubert -- developed fictional forms that achieve a tightness and intricacy of structure that is far more authoritarian than that seen in virtually all other novels of the 19th century. James often decries such authoritarianism in "Poor Flaubert" ("Flaubert" 297, 302, 306), characterizing the man as having an "agitated and limited life" (298) and his works as "sterile," "unhumorous," "impersonal," breathing the unhealthy air of "pure aesthetics" and "renunciation," and showing "the artist not only disinterested, but absolutely dishumanized" (297-308).

The history of the novel may be viewed in part as the history of the frustration of the narrative mind's effort to unfold itself -- or, from a deconstructive perspective, to realize its "intentions." Eighteenth-century novels such as Clarissa and Robinson Crusoe use as their protagonists a dramatized first person narrator who might at first sight seem to be a counterpart to the modern interior monologist. But these novels employed past tense narration and there

was consequently always a split within the narrator or "I." On the one hand, there was the experiencing, narrated "I"; on the other, there was the narrating "I" through whose eyes the experiencing self was presented. The narrating self thus always stood between the reader and the narrated self, blocking the direct presentation of the latter's mind, his point of view, and the story that unfolded around him, each of which was considered to be a component of the real subject of the novel.

The convention of the omnisicient narrator overcame this split within the narrative "I" by using a narrator who was largely undramatized and by creating instead a protagonist different from the narrator. But now another split was created: that between the protagonist who, like the narrated "I" of Clarissa and Robinson Crusoe, was the real subject of the novel, and the narrator who, like the narrating "I" of Clarissa and Robinson Crusoe, served both to present and block the direct view of the protagonist. In both cases, such obstruction put not only a wedge between the protagonist and the reader but a wedge between the protagonist and the narrative mind. The latter sought to dramatize itself through the story of its protagonist; but the very means it employed to tell the story frustrated such self-dramatization.

Point of view techniques like external focalization and narrated monologue were intended to resolve this situation. However, they could only mitigate the frustration, for, as we have seen, their employment entailed the use of narrative frames which blocked or biased our view of the subject -- of what we "really" were supposed to see. Only with the rise of a completely unframed autonomous monologue, modernists seemed to conclude, could the fictional narrator's frustration be put to an end. As was argued in the last chapter, however, such a conclusion is, from a Jamesian perspective, delusory.

3. As in so many other ways, Laurence Holland is the outstanding exception, referring to James's late style in The Expense of Vision as "newly constituted" (e.g., xi, 225).

4. I have chosen this soliloquy because it is more self-referential than others. For example, the "To be or not to be" soliloquy contains no direct self-references except for the last line prompted by Ophelia's entrance, while the "O that this too too sullied flesh" soliloquy refers to Hamlet directly only in the first few lines and in the last.

5. Perhaps needless to say, my criticism of Watt is prompted in part by the great respect I feel for him and for the value of his work, including "The First Paragraph of the Ambassadors." In that essay, Watt does in fact speak of the doubleness of the narrative voice.

Chapter VII

Beyond Good and Evil: The Pathos of Distance

The Wings of the Dove is the story of a woman named Milly Theale who is young, intelligent, and extravagantly rich. Her sole and fatal difficulty is that she has been placed, by way of some awful, unnamed disease, under a sentence of premature death. The gulf that separates her from the rest of the characters in the book, and by implication humanity in general, is therefore immense. Not only has she everything everyone else has not, but she has not that one thing everyone else does have -- a reasonable assurance of a reasonable remainder of life.

That Wings is really "the story of Milly Theale" is, of course, a debatable point. In the first place, we "see" Milly mostly from the perspective of other characters in the novel; there is little direct narrative description of her. Indeed, one of the more important scenes in the work, Milly's final meeting with Merton Densher, occurs "off-stage," and is conveyed to us only through Densher's memory of the event. Secondly, as F.R. Leavis pointed out long ago, the strongest character of the novel is probably not Milly but her "rival," Kate Croy. Kate, as I emphasized in Chapter IV, is one of James's greatest artistic

successes and certainly the most effective, imaginative, and interesting villain in his canon. James himself implies in his preface to the novel that Milly is to a certain extent overshadowed by Kate; the great amount of attention devoted to Kate and her relationship with Densher weakens the structural integrity of the novel as a whole.

Yet in this very admission of James can be found support for my view that Milly is, indeed, the central character of the work. That Milly's consiousness and character are presented mostly from the secondary points of view of other characters is absolutely necessary to the overall tragic structure of the work. That structure, in order to be "tragic" in a Jamesian sense, disallows the sentimentilization and romanticization that would have inevitably resulted from the "direct" presentation of a character who is, after all, not only sublimely innocent (at least initially) but doomed to die. So that although I will focus to a large extent on Milly in the first part of this chapter, it should be kept in mind that Milly cannot be fully understood as a Jamesian tragic figure without consideration of Kate; the relation between the two corresponds to what we will see is a Nietzschean tragic dialectic of master and slave moralities (the relation between Maggie Verver and Charlotte Stant in The Golden

Bowl corresponds to a similar dialectic, as will be discussed in Chapter VIII). Finally, it should be remembered that Milly, as tragic hero, is displaced altogether by Merton Densher in the later sections of the work. From the standpoint of structure -- that structure which, as I argued in the preceding and other chapters, acts as a metonymic check on the narrator's elaborately metaphoric description -- Milly is not all that important "in herself." She is important, that is, in the way her role in the novel configures, and acts in tension with, the roles of Kate and Densher, as well as those of the other characters.

Still, Milly is the logical starting place for my discussion of the novel, if only because her situation is the tragic situation par excellence. On the one hand, her fate is an extremely common one: death through disease. That Milly will die in the course of the novel is made clear to us in the very first chapter in which she is introduced, when Susan Stringham, James's "ficelle" and Milly's older friend, comes upon her sitting on a rock in the mountains and fears for a moment that she is about to commit suicide: "She [Milly] wouldn't have committed suicide; she knew herself unmistakably reserved for some more complicated passage..." (88)

On the other hand, though we are left in no suspense that Milly will die, we are intended to feel that the way she dies will be intensely interesting: "...she [Mrs. Stringham] saw that...the future was not to exist for her princess [Milly] in the form of any sharp or simple release from the human predicament...It would be a question of taking full in the face the whole assault of life..." (88)

In the opening to the preface of the novel, James emphasizes both the inevitability of Milly's tragic fate and the affirmation of life that she is to draw from it:

> The idea, reduced to its essence, is that of a young person conscious of a great capacity for life, but early stricken and doomed, condemned to die under short respite, while also enamoured of the world; aware moreover of the condemnation and passionately desiring to "put in" before extinction as many of the finer vibrations as possible, and so achieve, however briefly and brokenly, the sense of having lived. (1287)

Many critics have emphasized the parallels between Milly Theale and James's friend in his youth, Minnie Temple. Indeed, James himself made no effort to disguise such parallels in his Autobiography (544). However, James's portrait of Milly, although feelingly sketched, contains little sentimentality. On the contrary, Milly bears some resemblance to the comic, almost cruelly drawn Mrs. Brash of "The Beldonald Holbein" (published a year after The Wings of the Dove) who, like Milly, turns her face to the

wall in the end (Better 48).

In any case, The Wings of Dove is designed as a whole not to evoke pity for Milly but to unveil progressively the affirmation that lies at the heart of Milly's tragedy. Its structure is that of three "solid blocks of wrought material" (1294), as James says in the Prefaces, which recall the tripartite structure of many plays and mimic the progression found in classical tragedy from innocence (or ignorance and delusion); to the gaining of knowledge; to the achievement of an expanded, consciously cultivated innocence and awareness. The first block or "Act," consisting of Books First and Second, presents the love affair of Kate Croy and Merton Densher. The function of this love affair, from the standpoint of the novel as a whole, is both to intensify Milly's tragedy and to provide the vehicle of her affirmation. It is not until later that we learn of Milly's love for Densher (indeed, Milly isn't introduced until the second Act) and of Kate's plan to keep Milly in ignorance of her [Kate's] engagement to Densher so that Milly will leave her money to Densher after she dies. Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognize that the purpose of the first Act is preparatory and that the relationship between Kate and Densher is subsidiary to the central "action" of the novel: Milly's subjective adventure, an

adventure that is at once internal and external. James, in fact, characterizes the first Act in just such a fashion: "...what they [Kate and Densher] have most to tell us is that...they are laying a trap for the great innocence [i.e., Milly's] to come" ("Prefaces" 1300). James even goes so far as to speak of Milly, in the first Act, as "superficially so absent" (1293).

These remarks show, I think, that traditional interpreters of the novel such as F.O. Matthiessen and Dorothea Krook were correct to characterize its central theme as Milly's revelation of character (effected in large part through the spiritual transformation of Densher). The other characters are the "successive windows" through which we "watch" Milly, as James says ("Prefaces" 1303) -- though such "windows" have a great deal of interest in their own right. That some critics have admired the portrait of Kate Croy is not, however, surprising (Sears 61-98). What Kate has to do, in the way of carrying out her "trap" is not merely to get Densher to court Milly, the last thing in the world he wants to do; not merely to anticipate the motives and interests of others so that, without knowing it, they will help Densher do what he doesn't want to do; but accomplish all this while leaving the impression that she, Kate, is herself disinterested and "out of it." Kate's

exercise of self-control is accordingly great. Early in the book she declares to Densher: "I shall love you as I shall never in my life love anyone else" (74) and much later, when Densher asks her how, if she really loves him, she could "like" to push him into the arms of another woman (i.e., Milly), she replies that she doesn't like it but that she is "a person, thank goodness, who can do what I don't like" (309). However, that Kate is possessed of so many admirable qualities -- that there is such nobility in her villainy and that she is described in the first part as being, like Milly, both like a "princess" and like a sacrifical victim (1) -- only heightens the effect of Milly's ultimate triumph over her.

The tripartite tragic form of the novel dominates its structure. This structure relegates Kate and Densher's behavior (as opposed to their function as reflectors, as devices to focuse our view of Milly) to an auxiliary role -- to the role of "what happens." Thus, the closing words of the novel, Kate's pronouncement to Densher that "We shall never be again as we were" (403) signify that a great deal has happened to the couple in the way of irreversible external events. To Milly, by contrast, nothing in the way of external action happens: she simply dies, as expected. This makes Milly's role in the novel far more important

than Kate's and Densher's, for in Jamesian tragedy, it is important not what (metonymically) happens, but how (metaphorically) it happens; the less there is of the former, the more pregnant with possibility is the latter. In The Wings of the Dove and his other late tragedies, James renounces in the manner of Greek tragedy the element of suspense attaching to the unfolding of external events. It is not, of course, that we know the details of everything "that will happen." Rather, it is that our interest in such happenings (such as Kate's machinations) is dependent on the extent to which they reveal or become a vehicle for the protagonist's revelation of character. That James could have regarded Milly as "superficially so absent" in Book I -- as in some sense "present" to us before we have been introduced to her -- betrays a very different conception of the novel than we are used to, one in which the realistic, metonymic unfolding of plot is relegated to a secondary (but not unimportant) role. It is a conception in which the reader must take for granted what will happen in order to open his consciousness more fully to how it will happen.

"Act II" of The Wings of the Dove, comprising Books Third through Seventh, develops this "how" by showing Milly's entrance into the "trap" which Kate and Densher in

Act I have "all unconsciously and with the best faith in the world" (1300) set for her. Earlier in the preface, James had characterized "the abysmal trap" Milly was to fall into (1291) without reference to Kate and Densher -- as being:

> ...the soul of drama...which is the portrayal, as we know, of a catastrophe determined in spite of oppositions. My young woman would herself be the opposition -- to the catastrophe announced by the associated Fates, powers conspiring to a sinister end and, with their command of *means, finally achieving it... (1289)

It is also in Act II that we receive the most sustained and direct presentation of Milly's consciousness, a presentation that amplifies for us the extent to which Milly -- independently of Kate's machinations -- thrusts herself into the trap through her own open-ended capacity for experience:

> ...her complaint was in fact but the excess of the joy of life, and everything did then fit. She couldn't stop for the joy, but she could go on for it....By the time the candles were lighted for supper and the short, white curtains were drawn, Milly had reappeared, and the little scenic room had then all its romance. That charm moreover was far from broken by the words in which she, without further loss of time satisfied her patient mate [Susan Stringham]. "I want to go straight to London." (92)

And once in London:

> She thrilled, she consciously flushed, and all to turn pale again, with the certitude -- it had never been so present --that she should find herself completely involved: the very air of the place, the pitch of the

> occasion, had for her both so sharp a ring and so deep an undertone. The smallest things, the faces, the hands, the jewels of the women, the sound of words, especially of names, across the table, the shape of the forks, the arrangement of the flowers, the attitude of the servants, the walls of the room, were all touches in a picture and denotements in a play; and they marked for her moreover her alertness of vision. She had never, she might well believe, been in such a state of vibration... (99)

Milly is virtually bereft of that mixture of arrogance and ignorance which characterizes Isabel of The Portrait of a Lady and (to a lesser extent) Maggie of The Golden Bowl in their early, deluded states. That is because in the latter two cases arrogance is part of the vehicle by which the tragic fates of the heroines are enacted; it is in a sense part of the donnee of having a heroine who is young, beautiful, and rich. But in the tale of a young woman doomed to die prematurely, the aspect of arrogance is out of place. Milly's sentence of premature death makes it necessary to present her, in comparison to Maggie, in a more indirect fashion.

Milly's final triumph, which occurs in "Act III," Book Eighth through Book Tenth -- when the trap closes around her, she discovers it, and wills her money to Densher and Kate anyway -- is accordingly presented mostly when she is off-stage. Through such indirection, James makes the triumph that much more powerful. In Act I, James had

portrayed Kate and Densher as sharing a "community of vision" in which a "practical fusion of consciousness" had occurred ("Prefaces" 1297). In Act III, as Kate persuades an increasingly unwilling Densher to actively court the dying woman (partly by agreeing to sleep with him), the "community" begins to fall apart and we see Densher's consciousness disengage from Kate's and become dominated by Milly's. We "see" Milly, in other words, mainly by the imprint she leaves on Densher's consciousness; Densher is, as John P. O'Neill puts it, "the essential context for the glorification of Milly Theale" (128). Densher recalls himself in his last meeting with Milly shortly prior to her death:

> He saw a young man far off and in a relation inconceivable, saw him hushed, passive, staying his breath, but half understanding, yet dimly conscious of something immense and holding himself painfully together not to lose it. The young man at these moments so seen was too distant and too strange for the right identity: and yet, outside, afterwards, it was his own face Densher had known. He had known then at the same time what the young man had been conscious of, and he was to measure after that, day by day, how little he had lost. (369)

As most readers of the novel agree, Densher falls in love with Milly's memory (Kate herself recognizes this fact in the final scene), and simultaneously undergoes a tragic awakening. In the following passage, we witness Densher's emergence out of his deluded state:

> He had not only never been near the facts of her [Milly's] condition -- which had been such a blessing for him; he had not only, with all the world hovered outside an impenetrable ring fence, within which there reigned a kind of expensive vagueness, made up of smiles and silences and beautiful fictions and priceless arrangements, all strained to breaking; but he had also, with everyone else, as he now felt, actively fostered suppressions which were in the direct interest of everyone's good manner, everyone's pity, everyone's really quite generous ideal. It was a conspiracy of silence, as the cliche went, to which no one had made an exception, the great smudge of morality across the picture, the shadow of pain and horror, finding in no quarter a surface of spirit or of speech that consented to reflect it. "The mere aesthetic instinct of mankind" -- our young man had more than once, in the connection, said to himself; letting the rest of the proposition drop, but touching again thus sufficiently on the outrage even to taste involved in one's having to <u>see</u>. So then it had been -- a general conscious fool's paradise, from which the specified had been chased like a dangerous animal....The facts of physical suffering, of incurable pain, of the chance grimly narrowed, had been made, at a stroke, intense, and this was to be the way he was now to feel them. (347)

Densher undergoes a transformation in which he awakens to his own capacity for and implication in acts of evil. The primary significance of this transformation in the novel is the ability it gives Densher to act as a reflector of Milly; we "enter" Densher's mind only to read out of it metaphoric descriptions of the two young women. In his consciousness are enacted the contrasting values of Kate and Milly. The contrast consists of Milly's openness to pain and suffering, Kate's closure to them; Milly's sacrifice of her whole self, Kate's mostly sexual one;

Milly's expansion of self and identity and Kate's narrowing of herself to the point where she seems to "lose her identity" (132).

It is also in Densher's consciousness that Milly's final victory over Kate is culminated, that the former completes her tragic progression from innocence and ignorance through knowledge of evil to a cultivated, expanded innocence. Our final identification with Milly is effected mostly through our identification with Densher. In this sense, the view given of Milly is quite as much "within" the action of the novel as our view of Maggie in The Golden Bowl. In neither case is it filtered through a narrator-author who has one foot in the real and the other in the fictional world.

As in all Jamesian tragedy, the essential vehicle for the revelation of the protagonist's character does not lie in the heroine herself but in the novel's framework of action. What we are presented with in James's later tragic novels is not so much the unfolding of the protagonist's consciousness as a sort of canopy of consciousness or framework within which both reader and author may place themselves. Consciousness, as James taught himself in The Sacred Fount, cannot dramatize itself; if it could, the goal of identifying the reader and the author initially

with the protagonist would be more or less feasible. Consciousness, given an independent ontological foundation, would be able to play epistemological god; "what is known" would be that sequence of undetermined events which "appear before the mind's eye" -- the realistic, metonymical mode of narration taken to its logical extreme as seen in The Sacred Fount.

James's later tragic novels reject such assumptions. Consciousness can be dramatized only within a framework that is "created" neither by author nor reader but is handed down to both in the form of historically evolving, mythic categories of experience that have no ontological foundation other than that which they themselves make. The form of such categories is given by that of tragedy, with its conventionally tripartite structure. Such structure is often held together by a titular symbol (e.g., the wings of the dove, the golden bowl, the ivory tower) that unites the characters and themes of the tale. As noted before, though Hawthorne was undoubtedly a primary influence on James in this respect, the latter's use of such symbols is far more dynamic than that of Hawthorne; their meaning evolves with the tragic progression of the novel and the accompanying development of the central character (see Babiiha 113, 126). In The Wings of the Dove, for example, the titular

symbol changes from innocence, delicacy, vulnerability, and concealed anguish to triumph, transcendence, and a renewed, expansive innocence. Early in the novel, Kate names Milly "a dove":

> With which she [Milly] felt herself ever so delicately, so considerately, embraced; not with familiarity or as a liberty taken, but almost ceremonially and in the manner of an accolade; partly as if, though a dove who could perch on a finger, one were also a princess with whom forms were to be observed....That was what was the matter with her. She was a dove. (171)

By the end of the novel, however, the dove image has taken on a different significance:

> Milly was indeed a dove [muses Densher]; this was the figure, though it most applied to her spirit. But he knew in a moment that Kate just now, for reasons hidden from him, was exceptionally under the impression of that element of wealth in her which was power, which was great power, and which was dove-like only so far as one remembered that doves have wings and wondrous flights, have them as well as tender tints and soft sounds. It even came to Densher dimly that such wings could in a given case -- had, in fact, in the case in which he was concerned, spread themselves for protection. Hadn't they, for that matter lately taken an inordinate reach, and weren't Kate and Mrs. Lowder, weren't Susan Sheperd and he, wasn't he in particular, nestling under them to a great increase of immediate ease? (304)

In the closing scene of the novel, Kate says: "'I used to call her, in my stupidity -- for want of anything better -- a dove. Well she stretched out her wings, and it was to that they reached. They cover us'" (403).

Both of these images of the dove can be found in the

Old Testament. The association of the dove with vulnerability and innocence, with anguish and terror (as well as with the escape from the latter) is found in Psalm 55:

> My heart is in
> anguish within me,
> the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
> Fear and trembling come upon me
> and horror overwhelms me.
> And I say; "O that I had wings like a dove!
> I would fly away and be at rest;
> yea, I would wander afar,
> I would lodge in the wilderness...

The association of the dove with triumph and protectiveness occurs in Psalms 68 and 61:

> The kings of the armies, they flee, they flee! The women at home divide the spoil, though they stay among the sheepfolds -- the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with green gold....Lead thou me to the rock that is higher than I; for thou art my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. Let me dwell in thy tent for ever! Oh to be safe under the shelter of thy wings.

That James's imagery has biblical resonances reinforces its mythic character. Such resonances also point up the reliance of his imagery on a tragic structure that is at once transcendent and immanent, at once Hawthornesque and dynamically evolving with the consciousness of the central character. To put this in another way, James's framework of exceptional people undergoing tragic fates -- a framework that typically operates on a non-realistic, conventional

time-scheme -- is not so much created as adapted. James in a sense inherits this framework, places himself (and the reader) under it; and remolds and reshapes it from within, giving it new dimensions and boundaries. The "time" that operates in James's later works is an "aesthetic time," in Georges Poulet's words (351). However, it is an aesthetic time grounded not in the transcendental self of phenomenology, but in historically and culturally rooted categories of experience. Just as we saw, in Turn, James making use of the reader's imagination to help create the represented range of reality of the novel, withholding any strictly referential characterization of that reality, so too the most crucial scene of The Wings of the Dove is related to us, in only the barest outline, from Densher's point of view. Yet that "scene" is not only central to the novel; it is one of the more effective. The point is that we don't have to be told what happens; we "know" by virtue of the our imaginative capacities and the extremely skillful way James prods and activates them. James's later tragedies rely on a common, inherited fund of the imagination. To "follow" these tragedies, we must accordingly draw from that fund.

The distinctive feature of James's late works is the extent to which they place reader, narrator, and characters

under a canopy of consciousness within which their awareness operates. James's abandonment of an epistemological center in the self necessitated the displacement of story from a locus in consciousness to a relatively predetermined framework of action encompassing consciousness. What marks the difference between narrator-mediated novels of realism and Jamesian tragedies is the extent to which the story fails to be under the "control" of the narrator: the extent to which it unfolds by a dynamic that is outside the range of any epistemological center. It follows that we, as readers, must "let ourselves go" in a manner analogous to the way the author has; we must loosen our grip on the subjective control of our own consciousness so as to get an increasingly better view of that of the protagonist. Although we do not "identify with" the protagonist at the beginning of the novel, we get closer and closer to her or him as the novel progresses. Indeed, the framework of action that structures the novel is the vehicle by which the expansion of consciousness of the protagonist is dramatized. The novel ends only when such expansion has become complete -- when it has been shown to usurp the entire represented range of reality of the novel; when the canopy of consciousness that constitutes the horizons of

the tale have been absorbed by the consciousness of the protagonist. The end point of the tragic novel is thus the starting point of the narrator-mediated novel of realism. We are made, in the former, to live through and participate in the creation of everything the latter takes for granted: consciousness in process of being formed. And this project of showing consciousness in the making entails the embodiment, in the tragic heroines and heroes, of a different kind of morality than that of the other characters in the book. Such tragic heroes are what I referred to, in chapter IV, as "moral creators."

(2)

A philosophical model for this different kind of morality can be found in the works of Nietzsche. In Beyond Good and Evil, The Genealogy of Morals, and many other works, Nietzsche formulated and developed his thesis that, among "the many subtler and coarser moralities which have so far been prevalent on earth, or still are prevalent," there are "two basic types" of moralities and "one basic difference" (Beyond 394, sec. 260). The first type he called master morality, the morality of good and bad, the creator morality, or the morality of relative differences.

The second he called slave morality, the morality of good and evil, the morality of ressentiment, or the morality of absolute differences. Although "The two opposing values 'good and bad', 'good and evil' have been engaged in a fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years" (Genealogy 488, First Essay, sec. 16), nonetheless "in all the higher and more mixed cultures there also appear attempts at mediation between these two moralities...at times they occur directly alongside each other -- even in the same human being, within a single soul" (Beyond 394, sec. 260).

As Walter Kaufmann has pointed out, Nietzsche viewed all modern moralities as mixtures and accorded the highest potential value to such mixtures (Basic 394). Nietzsche's attack on German nationalism, for example, is an attack on a kind of morality (the morality of good and evil) that is not enough "mixed." As Nietzsche said, "today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a 'higher nature', a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense, and a genuine battleground of these opposed values" (Genealogy 488, First Essay, sec. 16). My purpose here is to show that James embodied in his tragic novels just such a mixture.

The crucial or "one basic" difference between the two

kinds of moralities is in their concepts of "good." In the morality of good and bad, which has historically originated among the ruling class, the concept of "good" is equated with what a good or noble person "does." The concept of "bad" is then defined as relative to such "good"; it is what a good person does not do. This is essentially the kind of morality James spoke of in the preface to The Turn of the Screw: "There is for such a case no eligible absolute of the wrong; it remains relative to fifty other elements..." (1188). Neither for James nor Nietzsche is the morality itself "relative"; it is rather the relation of "bad" to "good" that is relative. In Nietzsche's words,

> ...the opposition of "good" and "bad" means approximately the same as "noble" and "contemptible..."noble," "aristocratic" in the social sense, is the basic concept from which "good' in the sense of 'with aristocratic soul'...developed: a development which always runs parallel with that other in which "common," "plebeian," "low" are finally transformed into the concept "bad"....the pathos of nobility and distance...the feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a "below" -- that is the origin of the antithesis of "good" and "bad." (Genealogy 463-4; First Essay, sec. 3; cf. 462, sec. 2)

The morality of good and evil, by contrast, is a morality of opposite and absolute values, in which the concept of "good" is not defined positively, as what a good person "does," but as the negation or opposite of "evil,": "While every noble morality develops from a triumphant

affirmation of itself," the morality of good and evil is founded on a negation and "says No to what is 'outside,' what is 'different', what is 'not itself'; and this No is its creative deed" (Genealogy 472, First Essay, sec. 10). The morality of good and bad is a morality founded on action, on the deeds of good men, in which "being active...[is] necessarily a part of happiness" (474). The morality of good and evil, by contrast, is founded on passivity and negation. "This inversion of the value-positing eye -- this need to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself -- is of the essence of ressentiment." The morality of ressentiment "always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all -- its action is fundamentally reaction" (472-3). Such a reactive morality is also "a morality of utility" grounded in a superficial conception of the moral economy of the self:

> Whether it be hedonism or pessimism, utilitarianism or eudaemonism -- all these ways of thinking that measure the value of things in accordance with pleasure and pain, which are mere epiphenomena and wholly secondary, are ways of thinking that stay in the foreground and naivetes on which everyone conscious of creative powers and an artistic conscience will look down not without derisision, nor without pity. (473; cf. 397, 343)

Although Nietzsche sometimes associated the morality of good and evil with nihilism (of the sort

discussed at the end of Chapter V), I wish here to emphasize its less extreme, less "logically consistent" implication: that dualistic metaphysics which posits an inner soul or self in opposition to the external world. The moralist of good and evil "needs to believe in a neutral independent 'subject'....The fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is the faith in opposite values" (Genealogy 482, sec. 13; Beyond 200, sec. 2). This faith dicates that the external world be viewed not just as the source of evil -- of pain, suffering, and death -- but of falsehood as well. Conversely, that inner, passive state of self or soul is the source not just of goodness -- of happiness and "freedom from suffering" -- but of truth as well. Truth is the opposite of falsehood as good is the opposite of evil. Moreover, both goodness and truth are defined negatively, as opposed to the evil and error of the empirical world of social and natural forms, the world of "becoming." This negativity makes the morality of ressentiment a morality of intelligence, of knowledge in an abstract, theoretical, and scientific sense à la Iago:

> While the noble man lives in trust and openness with himself...the man of ressentiment is neither upright nor naive nor honest and straightfoward with himself. His soul squints....he understands how to keep silent, how not to forget, how to wait, how to be provisionally self-deprecating and humble. A race of such men of ressentiment is bound eventually to become cleverer

> than any noble race; it will also honor cleverness to a far greater degree...(Genealogy 474, sec. 10)

It is the negative character of the morality of good and evil that makes it an absolute and universal morality. Since happiness and freedom are not forms of action and do not need to be "earned," since they signify only a passive state of being that is opposed to suffering, they are accessible to all; one needs only to draw on those inner resources of self that are given by virtue of one's existence.

The morality of good and bad, by contrast, views goodness, truth, and freedom not as potentialities accessible to all but as actualities realized only by those -- few or many -- who perform them. As such, it is an anti-metaphysical morality:

> ...popular morality...separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was free to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed -- the deed is everything. (Genealogy 481, sec. 13)

It follows that consciousness "is not in any decisive sense the opposite of what is instinctive" (Beyond 201, sec. 3). Rather, consciousness is, in a Jamesian sense, an activity -- the act "of the value positing eye" (Genealogy 472, sec. 10). It is the medium by which "the self" is

formed and expressed, not something controlled or manipulated by a preexisting self: "...a thought comes when 'it' wishes, and not when 'I' wish, so that it is a falsification of the facts of the case to say that the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think'" (Beyond 214, sec. 17).

Since there is no neutral substratum that may serve as the basis for consciousness, truth and goodness are not founded on anything; they are established by deed. The morality of good and bad necessarily "falsifies" what it deems bad (Genealogy 473, sec. 10). However, it does this not by making the latter an absolute or "evil" but by seeing it as the negation, the shadow of the deed by which "truth" is established. Falsehood is not the opposite of truth; nor is suffering the opposite of happiness. Both falsehood and suffering are posited in and through the same value-affirming acts by which truth and happiness are posited; the former are the shadows of those acts and exist only in reference to them -- exist not as opposites but as what are relatively different. Here we see the basis for Nietzsche and James's tragic affirmation of the value of lying and suffering. The latter are resources for new forms of truth and goodness. Only by means of the capacity to lie and suffer do truth and goodness come into being; only by

retaining the sense of a relative difference between truth and falsehood, or happiness and suffering, is it possible to establish new forms of truth and happiness to serve humanity -- to take "the lie" that resides in appearance, the fateful doom upon which the celebration of life is founded, and transform them, through deed, into new forms of life, new forms of truth and goodness. This is exactly what James's tragic heroines, including Milly and Maggie, do when they embrace the illusion that resides in a social form and make it a truth for others to live under. Essential to Milly and Maggie's embrace of illusion is the ability to forget and forgive:

> To be incapable of taking one's enemies, one's accidents, even one's misdeeds seriously for very long -- that is the sign of strong, full natures in whom there is an excess of the power to form, to mold, to recuperate and to forget.... here alone genuine "love of one's enemies" is possible. (Genealogy 475)

The morality of good and bad, as Nietzsche says, is a "creator morality" -- a morality of the artist in which new values and new truths are established through the deeds of individuals and incarnated into the conceptual horizons of society, horizons that constitute its range of consciousness, the extent of its appreciation and appropriation of life.

But if the morality of good and bad is a creator

morality, a morality of the creative individual, then the morality of good and evil is a social morality, the means by which the values posited in creative deeds are made "serviceable" for others. In order to be made serviceable, however, they must be detached from their locus within the world of becoming; they must be seen not as forms of action, but as fixed entities that subsist independently of any form of action. The positing of good and evil and truth and falsehood as opposites, as separate substances posited within a dualism of self and world, assures this independence. It allows the acts of creative individuals to be imitated even as they are inverted and distorted; to be passed along from generation to generation and thereby constitute history. This history then becomes the ground on which any new, value-creating act arises. In sum, the two moralities, the morality of good and bad and the morality of good and evil, are not so much opposed as interdependent; the morality of good and bad establishes the categories that define social morality. That is why Nietzsche said: "Beyond Good and Evil -- At least this does not mean 'Beyond Good and Bad'" (Genealogy 491, sec. 17).

This statement shows, I feel, that Nietzsche did not countenance any form of "amorality." Like James, he plainly stated that the belief that one could rise above -- or

below --all moral categories, was naive and "childish," as I have already noted; his "Overman" is anything but "amoral." On the contrary, the central presupposition of his analysis of "slave" and "master" moralities is that no one can escape being shaped and molded by some form of morality. The choice is not between morality and amorality, but between different kinds of morality, it being a characteristic of many forms of morality that they regard each other as "immoral."

(3)

It is the tension of two complementary moralities that forms the dynamic of The Wings of the Dove:

> It was positively [we are told, after Milly's second visit to the doctor in London] an excitement that carried her on: she went foward under the sense of an impulse received. She was borne up for the hour, and now she knew why she had wanted to come by herself. No one in the world could have sufficiently entered into her state; no tie would have been close enough to enable a companion to walk beside her without some disparity. She literally felt, in this first flash, that her only company must be the human race at large, present all round her, but inspiringly impersonal. (152)

Milly's sense that she is in presence of "the human race at large," yet close to no one in particular mirrors that of the artist (this "sense" is transferred eventually to Densher who is more literally an artist).

What Milly "creates," however, is not an artistic product but a new and enlarged awareness of her own pain, suffering, and impending death, an awareness reflected in her contention, directed to Susan Stringham that, far from lacking the power to live, she fears that she lacks the "power to resist the bliss of what I have!" (91) On the one hand, Milly feels herself to be in "the box" of humanity:

> Their box, their great common anxiety, what was it, in this grim breathing-space, but the practical question of life? They could live if they would...she saw them all about her, on seats, digesting the information, feeling it altered, assimilated, recognising it again as something, in a slightly different shape, familiar enough, the blessed old truth that they would live if they could. All she thus shared with them made her wish to sit in their company... (153)

It is the things, however, that Milly does not share in common with the rest of humanity that James is mainly concerned to point our attention to. As she is described from the viewpoint of Susan Stringham, early in the novel, after she has stopped to rest during a walk up a mountain: "She was looking down on the kingdoms of earth...Was she choosing among them, or did she want them all?" (87) Milly is, by virtue of her wealth, her beauty, her position, "the potential heiress of all ages" (79): "When Milly smiled it was public event, when she didn't, it was a chapter in history" (84); "...the charm of the creature was positively

in the creature's greatness" (81). Like Nietzsche's ideal of the artistic personality, she operates in a constant state of overflow, under the morality of surplus value: "'I give and give and give,'" she says to Lord Mark, in a passage to which I have already referred, "there you are; stick to me close as you like, and see if I don't. Only I can't listen or receive or accept...'" (274) Her capacity for giving is a product of the existence in her of "a sense closed to the general question of difficulty, which she got rid of, furthermore, not in the least as one had seen many charming persons do, by merely passing it on to others. She kept it completely at a distance: it never entered the circle..." (85) She is, in sum, "a sight for the gods" (241).

Throughout The Wings of the Dove, our dominant image of Milly is as a lonely and distant figure, far "above" us in the range of emotion, from agony to joy, which she harbors. Though Kate worships Milly's power (113), she recognizes that "Mildred Theale was not, after all, a person to change places, to change even chances with" (114). As for Densher, he speaks of Milly as "divine in her trust, or at any rate inscrutable in her mercy" (316). From whatever point of view she is looked at, Milly's character seems to be a sort of celebration of solitude, awful in its intensity. Shortly

after her arrival in Venice, where she is to die, the narrator says:

> [She enjoyed] the sweet taste of solitude, caught again and cherished for the hour; always a need of her nature, moreover, when things spoke to her with penetration. It was mostly in stillness that they spoke to her best; amid voices she lost the sense. Voices had surrounded her for weeks, and she had tried to listen, had cultivated them and had answered back... (2)

Milly's communion of solitude is one that both attracts and repels -- attracts by its mysteriousness and repels by the violent emotion that seems to sit seated within such mystery. Though pity is a word that has no application to her case as she (and Densher at the end) see it, her situation has certainly a great deal of pathos, the pathos of what Nietzsche called "distance":

> With the strength of his spiritual eye and insight grows distance and, as it were, the space around man: his world becomes more profound; ever new stars, ever new riddles and images become visible for him....Without that pathos of distance...that other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown up either -- the craving for an ever new widening of distances within the soul itself, the development of ever higher, rarer, more remote, further-stretching, more comprehensive states... (Beyond 258, sec. 57; 391, sec. 257)

But if the pathos of distance which separates Milly from others makes her, like some ancient Greek hero, a "sight for the gods," she is not detached enough to be a god -- or at least not a modern one. Her eagerness "to get

into the current" (98) of London social society is "shamelessly human" (115). Whatever heights of history she rises to, she still remains subject to the gravitational forces of the earth. Her greatness is relative: "She exceeded, escaped measure, was surprising only because they [i.e., the rest of humanity] were so far from great" (83). It is not indeed Milly's detachment from humanity that distinguishes her but her more intense involvement with it. Her involvement is her detachment -- an oxymoronic epigram which might be said to express my view of the basic meaning of her character, the point of her story. For Milly, as for no one else, there does not exist the possibility of escaping life -- of attaining, in her flight, an "escape velocity." She is destined by her fate to take "full in the face the whole assault of life" (88), to both suffer and profit from her fate immeasurably. However "pure" the light she gives off, her feelings in fact fill the entire spectrum. She vibrates at frequencies composed of equal complements of agony and ecstasy. That is why she is able to "overflow herself" so completely into others -- into Kate (144, 158), Densher (140, 157-8), Susan Stringham (156, 240), Mrs. Lowder (164-5), even Lord Mark (103) -- to see herself from their points of view as well as to see others from the points of view of others.

But what is such a capacity if not that of the artist as James conceives him or her -- the artist as dramatist of consciousness? Those who have looked for James's conception of the artist in The Sacred Fount, The Aspern Papers, the tales of the literary life, or in almost any of those numerous characters identified as "artists," have looked in the wrong places; his conception of the artist is most fully revealed in his portraits of tragic heroines and heros, including especially this one, Milly Theale, and her "adjunct," Merton Densher. The manner in which Milly's superabundance of spirit is described is similar to that in which Nietzsche describes his moral creators, which is in turn similar to the way James speaks of Shakespeare, whose power of expression

> ...was the greatest ever laid upon man....It is for Shakespeare's power of constituitive speech quite as if he had swum into our ken with it from another planet gathering it up there, in its wealth as something antecedent to the occasion and the need, and if possible quite in excess of them; something that was to make of our poor world a great flat table for receiving the glitter and clink of outpoured treasure. ("Shakespeare" 1211)

James does not believe, as I emphasized earlier, that the artist as artist could be represented; presented in that way, as a member of society, the artist generally ranks very low. For example, the two writers in The Wings of the Dove, Densher and Susan Stringham, emerge as

somewhat febrile, the former through his "weakness...for life" (48), at least initially, the latter through her at times ridiculous (though endearing) romanticism when compared to "the real thing" (78), the embodied "poetry" (124) of Milly. Since James was an artist, and since consciousness cannot dramatize itself, he could not "represent" the artist but only "show" him or her through the those acts, especially artistic acts, in which he could most completely put himself: his portraits of tragic heros.

Such heros are not "artists" per se, but they embody everything James feels was characteristic of and esssential to artists at their best: the excess and overflow which make oxymorons the most appropriate terms to describe them. Jamesian tragic heros are "ordinary, extraordinary" human beings who, like the Nietzschean creator, are at once too human and too godly for life to be anything but intensely problematic.

It is the intensity, depth, and passion with which Milly makes of her sentence of premature death an opportunity to live that marks her out as different -- the degree to which she is able to leave behind "the personal question" (174) of her fate. This is what is at issue in the famous scene where Milly stands before the Bronzino painting of a young woman and declares: "'I shall never be

better than this'" (137). John O'Neill has described this scene well:

> Literally, what happens here is that Milly Theale looks at a painting of a beautiful and rich young woman, whose life and wealth have been caught in art after her death. Milly thinks of her own life. She thinks through the obvious reference to her own illness, and thereby arrives at a kind of joy, partly aesthetic, partly mystical, over a fact of experience which, in its particular application to individual men, is most feared. (29)

That the narrator has taken on this expanded awareness in the very process of creating the character of Milly -- that he has left behind his own "personal question" in the process of executing great art -- is shown by the tenor of James's remarks in the preface. Thus, he speaks of Milly's situation as an opportunity, as "one of those chances for good taste, possibly even for the play of the very best in the world, that are not only always to be invoked and cultivated, but that are absolutely to be jumped at" (1287-8).

What enables Milly -- and the narrator through Milly -- to see her condition as an opportunity is her sense of the fortune at the heart of her misfortune, her acquired capacity to taste "at one and the same time of what she had lost and what had been given her" (152). What she had lost was "the small old sense of safety"; what she had gained was "the beauty of the idea of a great adventure, a big dim

experiment or struggle in which she might, more responsibly than ever before, take a hand..." (152) Milly's sentence of death is not to be seen, primarily, as a "metaphor of the human condition." Rather, it is to be seen as what an exceptional human being can make of this most common of eventualities. Indeed, it is not Milly's death that James is concerned with. It is her life that interests him:

> ...the poet essentially can't be concerned with the act of dying. Let him deal with the sickest of the sick, it is still by the act of living that they appeal to him, and appeal the more as the conditions plot against them and prescribe the battle. ("Prefaces" 1288)

James reflects here the same "creator morality" that he has his narrator embody in Milly. Crucial to this morality is that death be seen not as the opposite of life, but rather that "The sense of the state of the dead is but part of the sense of the state of the living" (1249). This awareness that pain, suffering, and death are the absence, the relative lack of joy, passion, and life, is a crucial feature of the awakening undergone by most of James's tragic heroines and heroes. (3) They include Isabel Archer of The Portrait of a Lady (477), Maisie of What Maisie Knew (228), George Stransom of The Altar of the Dead (In the Cage 107; 114; 120; 128; 130; 132), the telegraphist of In the Cage (206), and Spencer Brydon of "The Jolly Corner" (In the Cage 346), and Ralph Pendrel of The Sense of the

Past (48).

What each of these character is tempted to do -- but by the end refrains from doing -- is to over-value death and accede to that "reactive" morality of opposites that posits death, like evil, as primary, and life, like the slave moralist's notion of "good," as the opposite of death. In terms of Jamesian tragic structure, such over-valuation of death is assigned to the relatively early deluded state of mind of the protagonist. In The Wings of the Dove, however, such delusion is associated less with Milly's early state of consciousness than with the attitudes and behavior of other characters in the novel, among whom the central one is certainly Kate Croy. Nonetheless, Milly's character develops over the course of the novel, and this development is crucial to her "creator morality." For example, immediately after her second visit to the doctor, in which her suspicions that her condition is indeed serious are confirmed, her state of mind is described as follows:

> ...nobody in the world knew where she was. It was the first time in her life that this had happened; somebody, everybody appeared to have known before, at every instant of it, where she was; so that she was now suddenly able to put it to herself that that hadn't been a life. (154)

A little before this, she had declared to Susan Stringham: "Since I've lived all these years as if I were

dead, I shall die, no doubt, as if I were alive..." (127)

Milly's knowledge of her impending death has pushed her, at a relatively early stage of the novel compared to James's other tragedies, into a heightened appreciation of life. This is not, of course, the only tragic revelation Milly is to undergo; the second, and perhaps more devastating one comes at the end of the novel when Lord Mark informs her that Kate and Densher are engaged. Yet we do not "see" Milly after this second revelation and there is in any case very little change throughout The Wings of the Dove of the dominant image of Milly as a lonely and distant figure. What does change is her degree of control, over both herself and others. Her social relations are marked, during the first half of novel, mostly by her sense of helplessness:

> ...she was still in a current determined, through her indifference, timidity, bravery, generosity -- she scarce could say which -- by others; that not she but the current acted, and that somebody else, always, was the keeper of the lock of the dam. (166)

Milly, unlike such early tragic heroines as Daisy Miller, who are also innocent and vulnerable and who also take enormous social plunges, undergoes a far-reaching expansion of her social sensibilities. As Laurence Holland has pointed out, Milly progresses from a young American

girl with "no manner at all" to a true "princess" capable of sustaining grand social performances in her rented palace in Venice (30). For example, early in the novel it is said that Milly "had no manner at all -- which was possibly, from a point of view, a fault: she was at any rate far away on the edge of it, and you hadn't, as might be said, in order to get at her nature, to traverse, by whatever avenue, any piece of her property" (125).

Only a few pages later, however, Milly begins to develop a different awareness:

> She struck herself as aware, aware as she had never been, of really not having had from the beginning anything firm....That sense of loosely rattling had been no process at all; and it was ridiculously true that her thus sitting there to see her life put into the scales represented her first approach to the taste of orderly living. (146)

In order to become "the heiress of all ages," Milly must transcend her own "queer little history" (146), together with that "community of collapse" (175) that characterizes Americans in Europe, and "take in" the history of mankind. This she proceeds to do from her rented palace in Venice, where she insists "that her palace --with all its romance and art and history --had set up round her a whirlwind of suggestion that never dropped for an hour. It wasn't, therefore, within such walls, confinement, it was the freedom of all the centuries" (280).

Not only does Milly succeed in mastering "the particular bland stare that appeared...to mark civilization at its highest" (136), but, more importantly, she begins to gain the manner of deception. In the preface to the novel, James speaks of Milly's "illusion" (1289) in much the same manner Strether espouses a philosophy of illusion to Little Bilham in The Ambassadors. Densher too is identified with "the make-believe of freedom" (345, 372). Indeed, James links himself to Milly by speaking, in the preface, of his own consciously cultivated "illusion" in writing the novel (1294, 1314; cf. 1339).

After her second visit to the doctor, when Milly realizes that Kate does not really want to know "the truth," she lies about the gravity of her illness: "Almost before she knew it she was answering, and answering, beautifully, with no consciousness of fraud, only as with a sudden flare of the famous 'will-power' she had heard about, read about...'Oh, it's all right'" (158).

The association of will-power with Milly's first real lie is important, for her deception is not aimed, primarily, at protecting Kate or others, but rather at helping herself. It is essential that Milly make the illusion of her good health "real" -- real in precisely the sense she does make it for Densher. But to do that she

needs what her American heritage has denied her: the artifices of civilization, the web of manners and forms linked to a deep and abiding history, the whole tissue of lies and deceptions that enables one to make reality out of appearance, truth out of falsity. As Densher says to Milly,

> "When I talk of 'life'"...."I think I mean more than anything else the beautiful show of it, in its freshness, made by young persons of your age. So go on as you are. I see more and more how you are. You can't...better it.
> She took it from him with a great show of peace." (256)

Milly's "peace" stems from the fact that Densher has given her the toe-hold she needs to begin to "work" her truth -- that truth in which, as Milly has earlier phrased it in a mental conversation with Densher:

> She was never, never -- did he understand? -- to be one of the afflicted for him; and the manner in which he understood it...constituted...a start for intimacy. When things like that could pass, people had in truth to be equally conscious of a relation. It soon made one, at all events, when it didn't find one made. (226)

Milly "makes" her relation out of the fraud of her good health. And this fraud is carried through to the end and made the firmest of truths. Milly's greatest lie is perhaps the one she tells to Lord Mark when the latter informs her that Kate and Densher are engaged; this information deeply shocks Milly and precipitates her death. Yet she still manages not just to convince Lord Mark that his information is incorrect, thereby protecting Kate and Densher from

exposure to Aunt Maud, but she refuses to extract a confession of deceit from Densher. And she does all these things not so much "for others" as "for herself," because she knows that the illusion she has made real depends on them. When Kate first names her "dove," she reacts to this information by thinking "That was what was the matter with her. She was a dove" (171). But then she begins to study the part of dove, self-consciously taking on the role of innocent, all-trusting American girl. And what constitutes Milly's final affirmation of life over death is not her abandoment of the role but her carrying it out so well she transforms it, transforms the significance of the image of dove from sacrificial to triumphant and overpowering. By playing the role of innocent American girl in such a self-conscious, Europeanized way, she becomes not less innocent and American, but more so (302). The transformation she effects in the meaning of the image of the dove enables her to transcend the web of ressentiment that threatens to entangle her; she affirms her life and her passion and denies her death.

Milly's lies thus differ intrinsically from the "proper" lies told by Kate (224) and others such as Susie Stringham (241, 249). Milly lies in order to believe, in order to build truth. The social development she undergoes

from helplessness to self-control is not a negation of the early "absolute trust" (142) she places in others, but its enhancement. The truth that Milly builds is based on a model of knowledge very different from the model of interpretation and explanation we have examined in previous chapters, one that puts "life" above "learning" (173). Truth and falsity are for Milly not "outside" herself, to be confirmed or disconfirmed through "tests," but rather that which are established by force of character operating in a social environment. Milly's ability to establish such truth depends on her not knowing about certain things (241, 243), not for the sake of avoiding "reality," but in order to help her better create it. Densher's "presentiment" -- one similar to that which Fanny has about Maggie in The Golden Bowl -- that "the understanding of everyone else would fail and this deep little person's alone survive" (290) turns out to be true for precisely the reason that Milly succeeds in making what she "understands." Milly's tragic revelation, her gains in knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, constitute not a "loss of innocence" but its cultivated enhancement.

(4)

Kate's lies, by contrast, are grounded in a negation.

She lies not to cultivate innocence, but to sustain a pre-existing social form which she does not really believe in and which she wishes to manipulate for the benefit of her own self-interest. Her moral economy is one of fair exchange -- and she is constantly justifying her treatment of Milly on the basis of such fairness. Kate's effort throughout the novel is to make of Milly's death a social use (170-1, 177). This effort links her not just to Aunt Maud, about whom it is said, after Milly's death, that "She had had her own vision of these [Milly's] possibilities, and her own social use for them" (369; see also 161), and (in a very different way) to Susie Stringham (299-300), but also, more importantly, to Kate's own family. It is Lionel Croy, Kate's impoverished father, who embodies in extreme form the morality of <u>ressentiment</u>; he is a man who gazes out from the narrow confines of his own egoism and sees in the world, in all that is "not himself," only something to be gained <u>for</u> himself. That is why, "No relation with him could be so short or so superficial as not to be somehow to your hurt" (23). His "lies" are aimed not at building a more encompassing truth, like those of Milly and Maggie, but at protecting his own narrow interests, interests that are founded only on a negation, on the fact that "there was no truth in him" (23). His attitude toward his own illness

(which he has exploited and probably manufactured altogether to gain pity) is the antithesis of Milly's; it breathes "upon the tragic consciousness in such a way that after a moment nothing of it was left" (23).

Lionel Croy, introduced to us in the first chapter, establishes the conceptual framework through which all the characters in the book -- with the exception of Densher at the end -- view Milly. Kate, for example, does not just bear "something in common" (45) with her family -- with their "state of the spirit that perhaps marked most sharply how poor you might become when you minded so much the absence of wealth," (39) as Kate herself implies in a comment to Densher (57). She also, like her father, sees the world as something to be manipulated for the sake of her own advantage (177). Kate, who is "the least bit brutal" (117), cannot, like Milly, "put herself" into others but only into Densher: "'I exist in you,'" she says to Densher. "'Not in others'" (220). Milly, by contrast, does not deny herself to anyone, yet still ultimately "exists in" Densher more than Kate. The very different kinds of "freedom" that the two women embody bring out the essentially different basis of their moralities. Milly's concept of freedom is that expressed by The Ambassadors' Lambert Strether in his famous speech in Gloriani's garden;

it is a "freedom" based on amor fati, on the acceptance of necessity, on the taking-into-oneself of all that is good and bad -- including pain, suffering, death; joy, passion, and life -- and making them an aspect of oneself. In Nietzsche's words (in a passage I have already cited), artists, to whom Milly, as I have emphasized, is comparable, know "only too well that precisely when they no longer do anything 'voluntarily' but do everything of necessity, their feeling of freedom, subtlety, full power, of creative placing, disposing, and forming reaches its peak -- in short, that necessity and 'freedom of the will' then become one in them" (Beyond 330, sec. 213). The artist grasps that his submission to form is the source of his power.

Kate's ideal of freedom, by contrast, is a form of delusion, the same delusion embraced by such characters as Sir Claude in What Maisie Knew (275);, Isabel at the beginning, especially during her conversation with Madame Merle, and Caspar Goodwood at the end (Portrait 488-9); and Charlotte in The Golden Bowl (e.g., "her greater freedom" (219) and "extraordinary freedom" (343)). (It should be noted that Isabel and Goodwood, unlike James's later tragic protagonists, repudiate role-playing: Isabel by her "want of play of mind" (74) and Goodwood by his tenacity and

single-mindedness [487]). It is a "freedom" that pits self against world and therefore achieves freedom by negation, by the overcoming of barriers, social or natural, that are external to the self. Kate at one point tells Densher, "'You'll in the natural course have money [after inheriting it from Milly]. We shall in the natural course be free'" (308). And at the end of the novel, after Milly has in fact willed her money to Densher, Kate says to him: "'Your liberty is...in every way complete'" (401). But by this time Densher can no longer embrace Kate's negative ideal and sees her "achievement" as a loss, not as a gain in freedom. It is a loss because Kate, in the process of her machinations, has narrowed herself by increasing the number of external barriers to the full expression of herself. Her "unconsciousness," loss of "identity" (132) and lack of imagination regarding both Milly and Densher -- all of which are emphasized by the increasing phenomenalism and sense of detachment with which she is described -- have been both the means by which she has obtained the money and the vehicle by which she has rendered herself unable to make full use of it. For that use depended on the passion she shared with Densher, which in turn depended on the possibilities of life Densher saw in her. And Kate's self-diminishment, coupled with Milly's self-enhancement, have

made Kate appear small in Densher's eyes (303, 304). The point is not that Kate has acted "immorally." On the contrary, her morality is one of fair exchange -- temporarily "giving" Densher to Milly in order to "get" the latter's money after she dies -- and Kate prides herself on the good conscience with which she invests such an exchange:

> It may be declared for Kate, at all events, that her sincerity about her friend [i.e., Milly], through this time, was deep, her compassionate imagination strong; and that these things gave her a virtue, a good conscience, a credibility for herself... (262)

Kate has not acted immorally, but by a different, and inferior kind of morality, the same kind as that of her father -- one that "reacts from...life" (56) rather than embracing and taking it into oneself. Kate brings social morality, the morality of ressentiment, to its highest form, but she still remains trapped within it. Her attitude toward illness is marked by the same avoidance and denial that lies at the heart of her father's self-pity. This is shown not just by her treatment of Milly after the latter's visits to the doctor (143-5) but by her declaration to Densher:

> "From illness I keep away...I'm a brute about illness. I hate it. It's well for you, my dear...that you're as strong as the sea."
> "Thank you!" Densher laughed. "It's rather good then for yourself that you're as strong as the sea."

> She looked at him now a moment as for the selfish gladness of their young immunities....Yet it was as if this very consciousness threw them back the next moment into pity for the poor girl [i.e., Milly]... (215-16)

What is said of Lord Mark when confronted with Milly's fate is only true to a lesser extent of Kate: "...this would be his first encounter with a judgment formed in the sinister light of tragedy...he was not good for what she [Milly] would have called her reality" (272). Like Lord Mark, Kate cannot take "full in the face the whole assault of life...the offensive real" (272). But this is true not just of Kate and Lord Mark but also, in different ways, of all the characters in the book with the exception of Densher at the end. Their incapacity to face the reality of pain and suffering is the source of "the pity" which Kate (216), Densher (216), Mrs. Lowder (79), and Susie Stringham (79, 120, 240) view Milly. Milly pierces through the hypocrisy of such pity -- an hypocrisy that is certainly not mean-spirited in Susan Stringham's case -- when she replies to the latter's declaration "'I'd die <u>for</u> you'" with "'Thanks awfully'! Then stay here for me'" (127). Pity, as distinguished from kindness, is the effort to distance oneself from what is unpleasant or simply too powerful to be taken, as Milly takes it, "full in the face." It thus bears a generic relation to the detached

observation and vicarious mode of living we have examined in previous chapters. Susan Stringham in fact manifests the latter qualities in her role as journalist and writer:

> She had almost the sense of tracking her young friend as if at a given moment to pounce....she felt her attention secretive...and her observation scientific. She struck herself as hovering like a spy, applying tests, laying traps, concealing signs. (83)

Susan Stringham does not, in fact, "pounce," the proof of which is that the "sustaining sense" of Milly "as literary material...quite dropped from her" (111; see also 78). Densher, too, has compared Milly "to a 'new book', an uncut volume of the highest, the rarest quality" (306) yet abandons any pretense of literary effort while in Venice during the final onset of Milly's illness. Nonetheless, both Susan and Densher are thrust into the same "predicament" (262) as Kate, not to mention the predicaments of Mrs. Lowder and Lord Mark (who certainly do "pounce"). When Mrs. Lowder declares that "'One lives for others...If I were living for myself I shouldn't at all mind..." (251; see also 161), she defines the essential difference between the two different forms of morality that Milly and the rest of the characters in the book embody. Whereas Mrs. Lowder "lives for others" in order to live for herself (which makes her declaration hypocritical or self-deluded or both), Milly lives for herself in order to live

for others. The "predicament" that all the characters in the book find themselves in is generated by the two opposed moralities. Kate is honest and unhypocritical enough to recognize that what she does "for" Milly is really for herself; but her concept of honesty is dictated by the same categories of thought and experience as Mrs. Lowder's, categories that define "the self" as a negation of what is "not oneself" and therefore self-expression as the use and manipulation of others for oneself. Milly, by contrast, does not view her self as opposed to others but rather as constituted positively by experience and action, experience and action that inevitably overflow the borders of the egoistic personality and encircle others; that is why she does "for others" only to the extent she does "for herself."

The predicament the other characters in the book are in is that they lack the force of self and personality that can meet Milly's overflow on its own terms -- by sending out a current to slow and possibly reverse her flow. They can meet her only by negating her, by transforming what is a fully positive and passionate expression of self into a sacrifice for themselves. Kate's naming of Milly as "dove"; or Mrs. Lowder's image of Milly as a "noble young victim of the scaffold, in the French revolution" (369); or

Densher's early view of Milly as "a Christian maiden, in the arena, mildly, caressingly, martyred" (209); or "the air of a commemmorative banquet" (206) that a dinner for Milly, while still alive, takes on -- all these give formal expression to such negation. Milly's outpouring of self, her breaking down of the egoistic barriers of the autonomous personality, can be met only reactively, much as one scrambles to pick up money raining down from the sky, rather than looking up to wonder about its source. What Milly gives can be taken by others only as the much smaller thing of what they gain. "'You weren't born simply to torment us,'" says Lord Mark to Milly, "'you were born to make us happy'" (274).

Whatever one wishes -- or does not wish -- to make of the parallel between Milly and Christ, it needs to be understood that Milly seeks, primarily, to make herself happy, not others (whether this makes her more or less like Christ depends on one's view of Christ; in Nietzsche's view, it would have made her more Christ-like and less "Christian," as Nietzsche makes clear in The Twilight of the Idols). My point is not to deny that Milly is made use of, is sacrificed, but that such sacrifice inverts the meaning of what she does; focusing on the sacrificial nature of Milly's deed implies that the value of her life

is in her death. Death is precisely what Milly has not affirmed -- what she has met only with "unapproachable terror" (369), and which she sees as a "fate" to which she must make a "counter-move" (263). The willing of her money to Densher is not, from Milly's point of view, an act of sacrifice, but an expression of passion -- a passion that is like a "treasure," but "not the treasure of a shy, abject affection...it was rather a principle of pride relatively bold and hard" (262). In a sense, Susan Stringham is more Christ-like than Milly since "Susie positively wanted to suffer for her [Milly]" (253), whereas Milly shows no such signs of self-sacrificial longings.

Only Densher, among the characters in the book, grasps the affirmative, "egoistic" nature of what Milly has done -- though even he is able to understand only after Milly has died. His refusal to accept Milly's money is his refusal to affirm her death -- to make of her a "sacrifice." By contrast, Kate, until the bitter end, urges just such an "interpretation" of Milly, though she alters her metaphor of the dove somewhat: "'I used to call her, in my stupidity -- for want of anything better -- a dove. Well she stretched out her wings and it was to that they reach. They cover us" (403). It may be thought that the description late in the novel of Kate and Densher's guilt,

of their "need to bury in the dark blindness of each other's arms the knowledge of each other that they couldn't undo" (396), link them with Adam and Eve, as well as, by implication, link Milly with Christ. But Adam and Eve's fall, as we get it in Milton's Paradise Lost and countless other texts, was a "fortunate fall" -- and such a concept, as I argued in Chapter III, plays no role in Jamesian tragedy. In particular, the fall in The Wings of the Dove is not fortunate because, first, it separates, and does not unite, Densher and Kate; because secondly, Kate exhibits no sign of that remorse which is the precondition, in Christian theology, of any fall being fortunate; and because thirdly, we are not given much reason to believe that Densher's "fortune" (I don't mean, of course, the money left to him) has brought him anything but suffering and frustration.

It should also be recalled that Kate's words, quoted above, are spoken at a time when she is realizing fully for the first time that Densher no longer loves her, that he is in love with Milly's memory. But even so, Kate, while recognizing the extent of Milly's power and "reach," still sees her as a sacrifice, a value to be made use of; Kate's tribute is therefore "a tribute positively to power, power the source of which was the last thing Kate treated as a

mystery" (113). Milly's "wings" may "cover" her, but this only makes it easier for her to concentrate on picking up Milly's money.

For Densher, Milly's wings "cover" in a different sense; his resentment of and deceit toward Kate in the closing chapters are marks of his resistance to her effort to make Milly a sacrifice. His awareness has undergone a violent expansion and he lives now haunted by the still reverberating shock of an anguished and joyful revelation of her character, of the broadening of the frontiers of the imagination that she has effected in him. It is Milly's life, not her death, that has taken shape within him and what was once true for Milly is now true for him as well. As a youthful Nietzsche said, "What have you up to now truly loved, what has drawn your soul upward, mastered it and blessed it too?....for your true self does not lie deeply concealed within you but immeasurably high above you, or at least above what you usually take for your ego."

In his essay, "Is There a Life After Death?", James wonders:

> [How there can be a life after death] for those for whom there has been so little of one before? -- unless indeed it be pronounced conceivable that the possibility may vary from man to man, from human case to human case, and that the quantity or quality of our practices of consciousness may have something to say to it [i.e., the question]. [The possibility of life after

> death] depends, in other words, on the weight or the force or the interest...on what life has predominantly said to us. And there are those -- take them for the the constant and vast majority -- to whom it in the way of intelligible suggestion says nothing. (201; 203)

Life, through Milly, has "said" much to Densher; it is the life before, not after, death with which The Wings of the Dove is concerned.

NOTES

1. See Note 2 of Chapter IV.

2. Wings 260. Milly's "voices" might fruitfully be compared with the sounds Maggie Verver, in the beginning of the second half of The Golden Bowl, hears coming from inside her pagoda. Both signify the start of awakenings for the two tragic heroines.

3. The strict opposition between life and death is a feature of what Nietzsche called the morality of opposites (good versus evil), of an essentialistic morality. The relative opposition between life and death is a feature of Nietzsche's morality of good and bad. (See also McDonald, Normative 27, 29, 95, 179-88, 204, 205, etc.) James's tragic protagonists embrace the latter and reject the former.

For example, Ralph Touchett says to Isabel at the end of The Portrait of a Lady: "'There's nothing makes us feel so much alive as to see others die. That's the sensation of life -- that sense that we remain....Dear Isabel, life is better; for in life there's love. Death is good -- but there's no love'" (477).

Similarly, in What Maisie Knew the awareness of death is characterized as the recognition of a "lapse of a sequence" of life:

> She knew his [Sir Claude's] dressing bag now -- oh with the fondest knowledge! -- and there was an instant during which its not being there was a stroke of the

> worst news. She was yet to learn what it could be to recognize in some lapse of a sequence the proof of an extinction, and therefore remained unaware that this momentary pang was the foretaste of the experience of death. (228)

It is in The Altar of the Dead, however, that James most lucidly portrays the differing attitudes toward life and death that characterize social and creator moralities. Aging George Stransom, the hero of the story, has obtained permission to light candles in a Catholic church and thus create an "altar" for his dead, which include his beloved, Mary Antrim, and all his former friends except one -- Acton Hague, an estranged friend who did him a great wrong. Stransom is portrayed as a figure whose ressentiment of Hague has poisoned his life and transformed him into a grimly egoistic personality whose horizons of consciousness are constricted. Thus, speaking to the black-robed lady whom he has met in his church (and who, it turns out later, is mourning Acton Hague), he says:

> "The chapel will never be full till a candle is set up before which all the others will pale. It will be the tallest candle of all."
> Her mild wonder rested on him. "What candle do you mean?" "I mean, dear lady, my own." (In the Cage 114)

Later, referring to Acton Hague, he says:

> "He's one of the world's, if you like -- he's one of yours. But he's not one of mine. Mine are only the Dead who died possessed of me. They're mine in death because they were mine in life." (120)

From such a perspective, death is a positive force and life a "malady" that succumbs to "the treatment of time" (In the Cage 107). Stransom's over-valuation of the dead in comparison to the living drives away his new friend. It is with her absence, however, that he begins to awaken to the narrowness of his own soul (in a manner not dissimilar to that of John Marcher at the end of "The Beast in the Jungle"):

> All the lights had gone out -- all his Dead had died again....he understood that it was essentially in his own soul they were unable to breathe. The candles might mechanically burn, but each of them had lost its lustre.

> The church had become a void; it was his presence, her presence, their common presence, that had made the indispensable medium. If anything was wrong everything was -- her silence spoiled the tune." (In the Cage 128)

With this recognition that he has "killed" his dead comes their rescue. It is a rescue effected by his awareness of the superior force of life, of the fact that "souls are saved" only within life:

> He wandered in the fields of light; he passed among the tall tapers, from tier to tier, from fire to fire, from name to name, from the white intensity of one clear emblem, of one saved soul, to another. It was in the quiet sense of having saved his souls that his deep strange instinct rejoiced. This was no dim theological rescue, no boon of a contingent world; they were saved better than faith or works could save them, saved for the warm world they had shrunk from dying to, for actuality, for continuity, for the certainty of human remembrance....There was a strange confusion in the thought, for he felt the day to be near when he too should be one of the Others. What in this event would the Others matter to him, since they only matter to the living? (129; 130)

With that recognition Stransom surmounts his own egoism and opens up his spirit to a larger, more encompassing morality in which death is relative to life, not vice-versa. He sees that life is prior to death, that our awareness of death is testament to the power of life, the power of "the passion immortal":

> The whole altar flared -- dazzling and blinding; but the source of the vast radiance burned clearer than the rest, gathering itself into form, and the form was human beauty and human charity, was the far-off face of Mary Antrim. She smiled at him from the glory of heaven -- she brought the glory down with her to take him. He bowed his head in submission and at the same moment another wave rolled over him. Was it the quickening of joy to pain? In the midst of his joy at any rate he felt his buried face grow hot as with some communicated knowledge that had the force of a reproach. It suddenly made him contrast that very rapture with the bliss he had refused to another. This breath of the passion immortal was all that other had asked; the descent of

Mary Antrim opened his spirit with a great compunctious throb for the descent of Acton Hague... (132)

Chapter VIII

The Redemption of the Past: Into the Heart of Consciousness

The Golden Bowl is James's most fully tragic work. Unlike The Wings of the Dove, which reveals Milly's drama by a series of indirections effected by external focalizations of other characters, as well as The Ambassadors, in which the narrator often strays from his description of Strether to descriptions of other characters, The Golden Bowl enacts a narratologically progressive and carefully measured revelation of the protagonist's character and consciousness, beginning with external focalizations in which the narrator is relatively detached from Maggie and proceeding to intensely intimate and metaphorical descriptions of her. (A good example of such description is the one that begins the Maggie section, in which Maggie's consciousness is likened to a pagoda and in which the narrator is openly obtrusive.)

The first half of the novel sets the stage for the unfolding of Maggie Verver by means of a series of reflectors (the Prince, Fanny Assingham, Adam Verver, and Charlotte Stant), then, during the second half, guides us deeper into the heart of her consciousness. Whereas in The

Wings of the Dove we "see" Milly mostly in the transformation she effects in Densher's consciousness -- as well as, more generally, in the ravaged social and moral landscape she leaves behind -- in The Golden Bowl we are participating witnesses to Maggie's acts of destruction and creation.

The structure of the novel is classical in its symmetry and simplicity. Like the heros of Sophocles and Aeschylus's tragedies (as I have indicated previously), Maggie progresses from delusion and arrogance through knowledge of evil to enlightment and cultivated innocence. There is, however, an aspect of The Golden Bowl which gives it a thoroughly nonclassical "feel." Whereas both The Golden Bowl and classical tragedy show the emergence and formation of character, the former does so principally by means of the emergence and formation of consciousness. Such emphasis gives the novel a greater quietness, but not necessarily less depth of feeling than that of stage drama. "The greatest events," said Nietzsche in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, "they are not our loudest but our stillest hours. Not around the inventors of new noise, but around the inventors of new values does the world revolve; it revolves inaudibly" (243). James's tragic heroines, if not "inventors" of new values, are an "attestation" of them, as

he wrote in the preface to The Portrait of a Lady (1078). In a letter written to Edith Wharton toward the end of his life, James said that we must "go through the movements of life...of the immediate and apparent life," recognizing "the deeper and darker and unapparent, in which things really happen to us...live it all through, every inch of it...but live it ever so quietly; and...waitingly" (qtd. in Leyburn 171).

Jamesian tragedy, like much classical drama, affirms character by overcoming unmeaning, by making meaning. But whereas the ancient tragedian's access to mythic structure guaranteed that his audience would respond to such affirmation, Henry James had no such guarantee. As both James and Nietzsche maintained, underlying the development of modern civilization, and especially romanticism, was a nihilism far more thorough-going, far more deeply embedded in the structure of society, and far more unknowing of itself than any which had possessed previous cultures. James's burden was accordingly not just to affirm life in the face of its meaninglessness and irrationality, but to create the conditions by which this affirmation could be attempted. Such creation involved a remaking of the form of consciousness through a remaking of the form of the novel -- to show consciousness as dictated not by psychological

imperatives but by social and especially historical forces. Only by establishing the historical basis of consciousness could James create the conditions necessary for affirmation; only through history could the self-defeating, self-negating structures of modern life be redeemed. Maggie Verver's consciousness is accordingly a sort of controlled surge, replenishing itself with the past as it feeds the future; it is the cup of the present filled with the the past spilling over into the future.

To treat consciousness in a truly historical manner -- and not simply value the past for the sake of the past, as so-called "historicism" does -- James had to affirm modern consciousness, to show that within it there were the seeds of a healthier future. James had, in other words, to make -- to "act out" artistically -- modern social existence using the very tool that had undermined it: modern man's deification of the powers of consciousness. The "quietness" of Jamesian tragedy reflects not a lack of intensity or subdued passion but a commitment to make or work out such intensity and passion within the "game" of modern life -- that is, using the rules of a conception of self subjectively constituted and centered, detached, and autonomous. But such "rules" were in James works only a starting point and are quickly left behind. James's

tragedies, especially The Golden Bowl, spell out a lesson that is the exact antithesis of Shelley's intention, as described by H.N. Fairchild, in Prometheus Unbound: "the mind of man is liberated from its dark delusions solely by the mind of man" (qtd. in Abrams 302). Though James, like Nietzsche, embraced romanticism, he embraced it only to overcome it, to force from it a retraction of its nihilism.

Of the two sources generally recognized for the symbolic motifs used in the golden bowl, Ecclesiastes and William Blake's "Thel's Motto," it is the former that dominates the mood of the novel, as R.B.J. Wilson has pointed out (284). Blake's poem asks the question, "Can Wisdom be put in a silver rod? Or Love in a golden bowl?" (Blake 162) and draws attention to the infinitude of man's knowledge and passions. But though the golden bowl in the novel is "cracked" and though Maggie's cup is "filled to the brim" and constantly in danger of "overflowing" (512), these symbols are used in such a way as to emphasize their adequacy; Maggie restores the bowl and manages to prevent passion from becoming a negative force. It is rather man's finiteness, and his tragic acceptance of that finiteness, which is stressed. In the words of Chapter XII of Ecclesiastes:

Remember also your Creator in the days of youth, before

> the evil days come, and the years draw nigh....terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails; because man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets; before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken.....Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

Far more than in Ecclesiastes, however, finitude in The Golden Bowl is open-ended; it carries the capacity to give rise to ever new determinations; it is a "necessity" grounded in a free, ever expanding partiality. (1) Nonetheless, in James's novel as in Ecclesiastes, there is the tragic recognition of "the close connexion of bliss and bale, of the things that help with the things that hurt" ("Prefaces" 1158); of "innocence in the guilt and of guilt in the innocence"; of what is terrible... in the heart of man" (Golden 566). In a passage that occurs late in the novel, Maggie's transcendence of her initial romanticism is graphically spelled out:

> Her earlier vision of a state of bliss made insecure by the very intensity of her bliss -- this had dropped from her; she had ceased to see, as she lost herself, the pair of operatic, of high Wagnerian lovers (she found, deep within her, these comparisons) interlocked in their wood of enchantment, a green glade as romantic as one's dream of an old German forest. The picture was veiled, on the contrary, with the dimness of trouble; behind which she felt, indistinguishable, the procession of forms that had lost, all so pitifully, their precious confidence. (519)

The reference to Wagner has a similar meaning to the one we saw in chapter V, where the narrator of The Sacred

Fount was compared to "the exclusive king with his Wagner opera" (296). In both cases, romanticism signifies delusion and destructive egoism. The intial romanticism of James's tragic heros thus plays a role similar to that of the hubris of classical tragic heros. It is both the instrument of their downfall and the vehicle of their transfiguration. But whereas Greek and Shakespearean tragic heroes are cruelly subjected to the forces of evil and duplicity, in The Golden Bowl, we are witnesses to the intimate intrusion, the delicate invasion, of such forces into Maggie's consciousness: the sensitive, slow-motion onslaught of evil and duplicity upon Maggie's character. What we witness is Maggie opening herself up to such forces, taking them into herself and using them to weave the fabric of a new truth, a new good. She imposes herself on fate as she lets herself be sacrificed to it. She commits herself, as James did (or imagined himself dong) to the redemption of modern consciousness.

The Golden Bowl is the story of a seemingly disastrous marriage between Maggie Verver ("the Princess") and a young Italian named Amerigo ("the Prince"). Maggie is the daughter of an extremely wealthy American businessman and widower, Adam Verver. Her marriage creates a strain in the

intimate relations of father and daughter which the two attempt to remedy by having Adam marry a young and sophisticated American woman named Charlotte Stant, who is a friend of Maggie's. Unknown to the latter, Charlotte had an affair with the Prince and is still deeply in love with him at the time of her marriage to Adam Verver. Two years after the second marriage, this affair is renewed, thanks in part to the devotion Maggie and Adam have for one another and their consequent neglect of their spouses. Maggie discovers the affair, determines to "get back" her husband and succeeds. The novel ends with Adam and Charlotte's departure for America, leaving Maggie and the Prince in England, where the story has mostly taken place.

James's point in naming the Prince after Amerigo Vespucci, the "true" discoverer of America, is clear; he wishes to show that American culture and consciousness can come to fruition only when the latter have absorbed their European foundations. America can fully realize itself only by simultaneously submitting itself to and conquering Europe -- as Maggie does to her Italian prince. That Maggie remains in England at the end of the novel -- that America is, indeed, consistently characterized as a cultural wasteland -- shows that in James's view America's simultaneous surrender to and victory over Europe awaits

fulfillment.

In his preface to the novel, James speaks as though there are two centers of consciousness in the novel: the Prince's in the first half and Maggie's in the second. Although some critics have tended to accept this characterization (Krook Ordeal, 236), others have recognized it to be over simplified at best, and misleading at worst (Ward Search, 203). The Prince's is not the only "point of view" presented in the first half of the novel but is superseded in various places by those of Adam, Charlotte, Maggie, and Fanny Assingham -- the latter functioning as a sort of choric commentator, both involved in and detached from the central action. It may be that such apparent "disparity" in James's plan of the novel can be accounted for, as James himself tries to do, by claiming that Adam, Charlotte, and Fanny are presented not so much from the Prince's point of view, but rather "in the Prince's interest, so to speak -- by which I mean of course in the interest of his being himself handed over to us" ("Prefaces" 1325). But even if this is so, it is crucial to understand that the Prince is "handed over to us" ultimately in Maggie's "interest"; it is the latter who dominates not just the second half, but the entire structure of the book. This struc-ture is, in a sense,

Maggie's character. She "is" what happens to her, which in turn is the social relations in which she is embedded. Her "position" on the stage is defined or has meaning only in relation to the positions of the other characters.

For example, in the first few pages of the book, there is a conversation between the Prince and Maggie prior to their marriage, in which we are given a strong sense of how different the Prince and Maggie are. The former comes from an old, aristocratic family with very little money and a great deal of history. The latter is naive, romantic, and unconsciously arrogant; "her imagination" is "closed" to "Evil" (310). It is the juxtaposition of their opposing characteristics that brings to light and defines the personalities of Maggie and the Prince. Thus, when the Prince tries to explain that there is a side of him she knows nothing about and mentions to her the not very happy history of which he is a part, Maggie exclaims, in a passage I have already referred to: ""Oh, I'm not afraid of history!'" (47) A little later, the Prince becomes more blunt, asking "You do believe I'm not a hypocrite? You recognise that I don't lie or dissemble or deceive?" (51) -- only to receive a response which makes clear that for Maggie "duplicity," not to mention "love" (51), is simply not a reality and therefore not to be talked about. The

Prince, for his part, cannot understand such lack of understanding, such romanticism; "The state of mind of his friends...had resemblances to a great white curtain" similar to that in Edgar Allan Poe's story of Gordon Pym (56). Later on, his view is described with even sharper irony:

> He felt at moments as if there were never anything to do for them [Maggie and her father] that was worthy -- to call worthy -- of the personal relation; never any charming charge to take of any confidence deeply reposed. He might vulgarly have put it that one had never to plot or to lie for them; he might humorously have put it that one had never, as by the higher conformity, to lie in wait with the dagger or to prepare, insidiously, the cup. (261)

For the reader, the Prince's words to Maggie seem ominous; it is not just that they foreshadow the evil deeds to come, but they establish the Prince as a person who knows himself to be capable of such deeds. Maggie, by contrast, is blind to the sense of the Prince's words. She believes at bottom that she knows everything important there is to know about Amerigo when in fact, as Amerigo says, she knows "nothing" (47). This arrogance compounded with ignorance puts Maggie in the same category as Isabel Archer in her deluded state; both are, in words from The Golden Bowl, "incredibly romantic" (48). Indeed, Maggie and her father are characterized repeatedly as romantic (for example, Adam is likened to Keats' Cortez (139)). The

characterization connotes, as usual with James, both positive and negative qualities. On the one hand, Maggie's romanticism endows her with an interest such that, as James says about George Eliot's Gwendolen Harleth, "tragedy can have a hold upon her" ("Eliot" 989). But her romanticism is also a liability in that it dims her perceptions, constricts her consciousness within a mental and emotional range much narrower than the Prince's. Thus, late in the first half of the novel, the Prince muses on:

> ...the extraordinary substitute for perception that presided, in the bosom of his wife, at so contented a view of his conduct and course -- a state of mind that was positively like a vicarious good conscience....They [Maggie and her father] knew...absolutely nothing on earth worth speaking of -- whether beautifully or cynically... (274)

Such language, similar in its harshness to that used by Charlotte (GB, 184), seems justified by what might be called the bad conscience of Maggie's innocence, her all too American prudishness. For it is not just "duplicity" that Maggie can't talk about, but also "love" (51); her lack of awareness about the former diminishes her capacity for the latter. Maggie, in other words, is in the first chapter much "less" of a person than Amerigo and we know that only by seeing her on the same stage with Amerigo, by seeing her in a relation with him that diminishes her stature and increases his.

But the feature of the novel that most firmly defines not just Maggie and the Prince but all the characters in the novel through their relations with one another is of course the symbol of the golden bowl. Early in the novel there is a scene in which Charlotte has a conversation with a Jewish vendor about an impressive and elegant "golden bowl" he is trying to sell her. Charlotte suspects there might be something wrong with the bowl but doesn't know what it is. Meanwhile, the Prince waits for her outside the shop; he had glanced at the bowl, determined that there was a crack in it, and stormed away. Of the three potential buyers of the bowl (Charlotte, the Prince, and Maggie), only he at once spots its defect; the two Americans, Charlotte and Maggie, need to have it pointed out to them. For Charlotte, the bowl represents her ideal of happiness with the Prince (she wished to give it as a present to him).

For Maggie (who much later, by accident, purchases the bowl and confirms through her purchase her suspicions that Charlotte and the Prince are having an affair), the bowl represents her very different ideal of happiness --though one that is also "with" the Prince. As she says to Fanny Assingham, "I want ...the bowl with all the happiness in it. The bowl without the crack" (475). Maggie and

Charlotte are thus initially linked by their respective innocences (much as Milly and Kate are initially linked by being described as princesses) and contrasted with the Prince, whose "touchstone of taste," acquired through the rich cultural and historical tradition from which he comes, has given him an instinctive feeling for evil -- of the deformity that lies behind the most beautiful of appearances. Of the four most important characters, only Adam does not see the bowl; though he is a connoisseur of objects d'art, it is not clear whether even Adam would have recognized the crack, since he is said early on in the novel to be unconcerned with distinguishing between genuine and fake works of art (144). What is more significant, however, is simply the fact he doesn't see the bowl; his role in the story, as we shall see, is in the end his role for Maggie, and that fact makes his knowledge or lack of knowledge irrelevant. The symbol of the golden bowl thus governs the novel by uniting and defining the roles of the four major characters; it is a dynamic, evolving symbol whose "meaning" is not given but established. And the person who in the end imposes her meaning on the symbol -- as we saw Milly doing for the symbol of the dove -- is Maggie.

In the beginning, however, just the opposite is the

case. Though Charlotte doesn't spot the flaw in the bowl, she at least senses that there is something wrong with it. Maggie, by contrast, happily purchases the bowl and discovers its defect only through the confession of the Jewish vendor. As she says to the Prince shortly after discovering "the flaw" in the bowl: "'I did believe in it, you see -- must have believed in it somehow instinctively; for I took it as soon as I saw it'" (459).

It is not Maggie's belief in her ideal that is at fault. On the contrary, it is by clinging to such belief that she is, in the end, able to make her ideal real. Rather, it is her assumption that happiness can be achieved "without penalties," as the Prince muses in the same passage, cited above, in which Maggie and her father are spoken of as having "a romantic disposition" (48). At times, Maggie's naivete becomes comic to the point of being ridiculous, as when she characterizes Charlotte as having "above all a great conscience" (168).

Nonetheless, even in the early conversation between Charlotte and the vendor, we get a hint of the great gulf that is to form between Charlotte and Maggie. Charlotte asks the latter "what's the matter" with the bowl and he replies:

"...if it's something you can't find out, isn't it

> as good as if it were nothing?"
> "I probably should find out as soon as I had paid for it."
> "Not," her host lucidly insisted, "if you hadn't paid enough." (120)

Charlotte's unwillingness to "pay" enough -- in human pain and suffering -- ultimately determines her doom, just as Maggie's learned willingness to pay is her salvation. Such "paying," however, is not in exchange for something else; like Milly's giving, it is the product of that "sublime economy" through which the self continuously regenerates itself in the act of giving. In Maggie's case, it gives her the knowledge with which she can remedy "the crack" in the golden bowl and restore, in transfigured form, her ideal. Charlotte, by contrast, believes in the false ideal of freedom by which one need "pay" only in proportion to what one is given. Such an ideal is grounded in a self that does not overflow but remains territorially confined:

> Her point [which she is about to make to Fanny Assingham] was before her; it was sharp, bright, true; above all it was her own. She had reached it quite by herself; no one...had given her aid. To make it now with force for Fanny Assingham's benefit would see her further, in the direction in which the light had dawned...The direction was that of her greater freedom -- which was all in the world she had in mind. (219; see also 243)

Charlotte then goes on to spell out to Mrs. Assingham the negative basis of her "freedom" -- the fact that it

results from what her husband does not ask of her (234). Her freedom, in other words, is what she "gets" from having made "the deal" of marrying Mr. Verver; she justifies herself by the logic of a fair exchange, by the logic of a self passively acquiring and dispensing items of value.

It was just such a delusion of "freedom," as we saw in the last chapter, that motivated Kate's machinations -- the delusion that freedom is something granted by virtue of the autonomy of the self, rather than something established in and through the self's social nature. Like Kate, but more so, Charlotte is unable to "put herself" into others, to open herself up so as to see and feel what others are seeing and feeling. This incapacity is manifested most strongly in her relation with Maggie. As she says to the Prince: "I understand my husband perhaps...I don't understand your wife...I can't put myself into Maggie's skin --I can't, as I say. It's not my fit -- I shouldn't be able, as I see it, to breathe in it" (259).

Like Kate, Charlotte operates by a concept of knowledge that deprives her of full imaginative understanding: "...logic's everything....It's the last folly ever to care, in an anxious way, the least particle more than one is absolutely forced" (116; 207). It is Charlotte's diminished capacity to feel that fixes her, in an image also applied

to Fleda Vetch in The Spoils of Poynton, "as fast as a pin stuck, up to its head, in a cushion." (2) In the end, it is only through negation that Charlotte can preserve her freedom: "Pride...had become the mantle caught up for protection and perversity; she flung it round her as a denial of any loss of freedom" (541). Charlotte's freedom is a caged one. "Imprisoned" within a "circle" of "reasons" (398), she can affirm herself only by clinging to an "integrity" that progressively narrows the horizons of her consciousness. That consciousness is like "the home of eternal unrest, of pacings, beatings, shakings, all so vain, into which the baffled consciousness helplessly resolved itself. The cage was the deluded condition..." (484; see also 490, 521, 559).

The image of the cage had earlier been applied to Maggie, in her deluded condition (355). Confined within a narrow and delusive romanticism at the beginning of the book, Maggie frees herself progressively by opening herself up to the feelings of those around her, by having "some imagination of the states of others -- of what they may feel deprived of" (503), as she says late in the novel. Freedom for Maggie is gained through a process of sublime self-investment; it is a concept of freedom based on the acceptance of, not the escape or the demanding of

compensation from, "the facts" of the situation. For example, when Maggie discovers the Prince and Charlotte's adultery, she does not expect "compensation" for the wrong done to her. On the contrary, she refuses to try to "make" something of it and ignores both the moral and epistemological loss to herself that such an ugly fact represents. "'It won't be for me to speak,'" says Maggie of any possible recrimination addressed to her husband. "'It will be for me to listen'" (439). By Maggie's (and James's) logic, "To work loss is to get loss," as Patricia McKee says (Heroic 9), and Maggie accordingly leaves loss alone. Unlike Charlotte, who equates "knowledge" with a limited range of awarenesss that enables her to manipulate others, Maggie, like Strether, wants neither "explanations" (474) nor the sort of "proof" ordinarily thought to constitute knowledge (416, 445, 536). Freedom was what was created, not granted; earned, not given (578-9); and taking the form of a "fiction" or "figured bravery" (375). It was a form of action that one was "condemned to" by one's "responsibility" (453). Maggie makes her payments by experiencing "the disagreeable" (310-11), by opening her eyes to and meeting face to face Evil, "the horror of the thing hideously behind" (489), and by sacrifical acts in which she takes on the sins of "the scapegoat of old"

(487).

Her development is thus inversely proportional to Charlotte's. As Charlotte becomes increasingly objectified and phenomenal, Maggie's vision becomes increasingly encompassing until, for much of the latter part of the novel, all that we know of what Charlotte thinks, sees, and does is what Maggie <u>believes</u> her to think, see, and do. (e.g., 526, 530). But Maggie accomplishes such domination of Charlotte by, in a sense, sub-mitting to her. Thus, Maggie arranges for Charlotte's departure to America by allowing Charlotte to justify that departure on the logic of her economy of fair exchange; Charlotte "gives back" the Prince to Maggie but at the same time "takes away" Maggie's father -- whom Charlotte does not really want but is allowed to pretend she wants (542-4): "...the great thing was to...produce in her [Charlotte] the sense of highly choosing" (539).

The contrast between the two women is not a contrast between selfishness and selflessness. Though what Maggie does she does "for love" -- as she declares to Fanny Assingham (506), in a much discussed passage -- and though she conceives of herself as a "scapegoat," taking on the sins of others, there is no lack of "egoism" in Maggie (425). The contrast is not between selfishness and

selflessness, but between two opposed conceptions of self. In this sense, the relation between Maggie and Charlotte is similar to that between Milly and Kate in The Wings of the Dove. Charlotte and Kate's morality is a utilitarian and social morality, one of ressentiment and negation, of pity, as Charlotte makes clear in an early passage (111-12). Maggie and Milly's morality is a creator morality, one which affirms rather than negates (487) and which is always on the verge of -- though never quite in fact -- overflowing the boundaries of the empirical self, becoming a norm or standard that dominates others. Thus, Maggie operates with an "infinite sense of intention" (331) but is nevertheless able to hold herself as "a glass filled to the brim, as to which she had recorded a vow that no drop should overflow" (531). Indeed, there are several passages in The Golden Bowl that apply equally well to Milly and Maggie, as when Maggie senses the strenuous efforts of the Prince and Charlotte not to appear to be "working harm" (369), or when Fanny Assingham says to her husband, "The way it comes to me is that she [Maggie] will -- she'll triumph," (309), or when Maggie toward the end of the novel is compared to a victim of the French Revolution (561) -- in just the way Milly was compared by Aunt Maud after Milly's death (369).

Nonetheless, the differences between the two characters are more striking than the similarities. First, Milly's morality of excess takes the form mainly of giving; like Strether at the end of The Ambassadors, giving is her "only logic. Not, out of the whole affair, to have got anything for myself" (344). Maggie, by contrast, is repeatedly spoken of as "taking." Though what she takes is very often a burden of others -- as in the famous "scapegoat" passage -- and therefore indistinguishable from giving in Milly's sense, still the very fact that the word "take" is used is significant. It emphasizes the extent to which all Jamesian tragedy, but most clearly The Golden Bowl, is non-renunciatory (cf. Portrait 466). What Maggie ultimately "takes" (the Prince away from Charlotte), she keeps.

Moreover, if we compare Wings and Golden, not only is Kate of Wings a stronger, more interesting figure than Charlotte, but we see Maggie acquiring some of the qualities that were characteristic of Kate and absent in Charlotte. For example, Maggie's plans to get back her husband are referred to as (like Kate's) "infernal" (399) and she seems in general far more willing and able than Milly to manipulate the forces of evil around her. Hence, Charlotte is pictured as in "pain" and in "torment" (563). Also, the Prince plays a far different role in The Golden

Bowl from Densher in The Wings of the Dove. Whereas Densher becomes, by the end of the novel, a sort of center (a moving center) for the glorification of Milly Theale, the Prince only becomes progressively more dominated by Maggie. Indeed, the opening scene of the novel (discussed above) wherein the Prince is juxtaposed with Maggie, very much to the former's benefit, is completely inverted at the end of the novel, when the Prince says to Maggie "I see nothing but you" (580). Similarly, the Prince's words to Maggie, "Everything's terrible, cara -- in the heart of man" (566), express the two-fold lesson he has learned from Maggie. On the one hand, "Everything's terrible" reflects the deepening of the Prince's tragic sense wrought by this heiress of all ages, his recognition that, in Nietzsche's words:

> Almost everything we call "higher culture" is based on the spiritualization of cruelty, on its becoming more profound ....What constitutes the painful voluptuousness of tragedy is cruelty; what seems agreeable in so-called tragic pity... receives its sweetness solely from the admixture of cruelty. (Beyond 348, sec. 229)

Or, as James has Hyacinth say in The Princess Casamassima:

> The monuments and treasures of art, the great palaces and properties, the conquests of learning and taste, the general fabric of civilisation as we know it, based, if you will, upon all the despotism, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies and the

> rapacities of the past, but thanks to which, all the same, the world is less impracticable and life more tolerable... (379-81)

On the other hand, the words, "-- in the heart of man," qualify this harsh lesson in a manner that Nietzsche, perhaps, did not fully appreciate. In one sense, the words refer to gender and thus signify the Prince's acceptance of Maggie's superior range of understanding. Women, in James's tragedies, are superior to men; they are able to suffer more and to "live" more. In another sense, however, the words are not gender specific and signify the Prince's acknowledgement of the limitations of his own understanding -- an acknowledgement essential to the tragic affirmation and shared, as we will see, by Maggie herself. The effect of Maggie's "lesson" is in any case to create an "intimacy" between herself and the Prince that is like a "steel hoop" compared to the mere "artless passion" of other marriages (423).

But how is such a transformation effected? How is it that Maggie is able to accomplish, in her life, what only occurs, in The Wings of the Dove, after Milly's death? One way of answering these questions is simply to say that Maggie is a better, a bigger, and a more complete liar than Milly; and certainly such an answer is at least partly in

accord with the structures of the two novels. The number of times Maggie is referred to as lying or "humbugging" or being a "hypocrite" is extraordinary (379, 383, 385, 416-17, 423, 469, 498, 520, 543, et al.). Like Milly's, the duplicity which Maggie learns is a creative one: it is a type of lying different from that of the other characters in the book -- for example, that of Fanny Assingham -- in that it does not simply preserve appearances but "makes" them. Nonetheless, Maggie goes far beyond Milly in the consistency of application of her learned duplicity. Early in Part II, near the beginning of her awakening, Maggie's consciousness is described as split:

> She had seen herself at last, in the picture she was studying, suddenly jump from the coach; whereupon, frankly, with the wonder of the sight, her eyes opened wider and her heart stood still for a moment. She looked at the person so acting as if this person were somebody else, waiting with intensity to see what would follow. The person had taken a decision... (342)

From that point on, the descriptions of Maggie as "actress" begin to mount; "Maggie went, she went -- she felt herself going; she reminded herself of an actress who had been studying a part and rehearsing it, but who suddenly, on the stage, before the footlights, had begun to improvise, to speak lines not in the text" (348). That Maggie's acting involves improvisation is significant, for it shows even at this relatively early stage her capacity

to "lose herself" in her part, much as James spoke of Shakespeare, Balzac, and himself as "losing" themselves in their roles as artists ("Shakespeare" 1215-16; "Balzac" 36, 127). Indeed, many of the later references to Maggie as actress show us a consciousness that sees itself not so much as acting and performing, but as one that, for brief periods of time, does not act and perform (416, 485); the reference point of Maggie's personality is gradually inverted and her "real" self becomes her stage presence. By the end of the novel, it is Charlotte that is described as the actress, the trapeze artist balancing herself on the rope of a double consciousness, while Maggie is the mere spectator at the circus (533-4). Maggie, in other words, manages to throw herself so completely into appearance, into those "forms" that are "two-thirds of conduct" (314), that appearance becomes reality, that the disparity between the two is bridged:

> Her grasp of appearances was thus out of proportion to her view of causes; but it came to her then and there that if she could only get the facts of appearance straight, only jam them down into their place, the reasons lurking behind them, kept uncertain, for the eyes, by their wavering and shifting, wouldn't perhaps be able to help showing. (361)

Maggie "becomes what she is" in the same sense that Nanda Brookenham of The Awkward Age is not "different" from what she "appears": "One's just what one is -- isn't one? I

don't mean so much...in one's character or temper -- for they have, haven't they? to be what's called 'properly controlled' -- as in one's mind and what one sees and feels and the sort of thing one notices.'" That is why Maggie -- like James himself in writing The Tragic Muse ("Prefaces" 1106) -- has "nothing 'inward'" to talk about either with her father (376) or with the Prince, as Laurence Holland notes: "Maggie and the Prince can sustain, even in private, the illusion of an undisturbed marriage..." (297) Though Maggie is still tempted, late in the novel, "to cry out the truth" and unmask to public view the "reality" of Charlotte and the Prince's affair (487), in the final analysis, such truth becomes lie, such reality false appearance; the new truth, the new reality that Maggie has made prevents her from carrying out this unmasking:

> ...if the beauty of appearances had been so consistently preserved, it was only the golden bowl as Maggie herself knew it that had been broken. The breakage stood not for any wrought discomposure among the triumphant three -- it stood merely for the dire deformity of her attitude toward them. (491)

What was formerly perceived as "the truth" is now a dire deformity -- "monstrous" (487) and a "beast" leaping "at her throat" (488); the crack in the golden bowl has been made into a lie. As for Maggie herself, she is now a representation caught within her own consciously willed

misrepresentations. She is the determined product of her own determining acts.

(2)

We saw above how Maggie's initial "innocence with a bad conscience" impelled her to treat "duplicity, like 'love'" (51) as something only to joke about -- or what James called, in The American Scene, "the general American habit of indirectness, of positive primness, of allusion to those matters that are sometimes collectively spoken of as 'the great facts of life'" (46). It is because "vice requires forms not less than virtue, or perhaps more so" and because "forms, up and down" the United States, "were exactly what one waited in vain for" (47; see also 103) that Maggie Verver's incapacity for duplicity is, initially, so great.

On the one hand, such incapacity is a specifically American lack that is contrasted with the richness of the Prince's Italian traditions. On the other hand, it is not just "American" but modern and "scientific." Thus, the Prince sees his impending marriage with Maggie as an alliance with "science, for what was science but the absence of prejudice backed by the presence of money?" (52) That Maggie is able to overcome her "dishonest hypocrisy" and build a new archetype of the self is a result not so

much of her ability to transcend her American culture as, more generally, to transcend those elements of modernism which America symbolizes. Chief among such elements is the disvaluation of the past (reflected in Maggie's initial dismissal of the Prince's past) and its concomitant reduction of history to a series of events. As John Carlos Rowe says in Henry Adams and Henry James, "The process of consciousness that replaces any essential self suggests equally radical changes in our conception of historical sequence" (136). I have stressed in previous chapters how James's adoption of the tragic form entailed the repudiation, in his later novels, of the element of suspense attaching to the unfolding of external events seen in the novel of metonymic realism. In The Golden Bowl, such repudiation is carried to an extreme by its explicit foreshadow-ing, in early chapters, of most of the events (such as they are) of the novel. Both thematically and narratologically, then, The Golden Bowl is a form of commentary on our notions of history.

History, James said in The American Scene, "is never, in any rich sense, the immediate crudity of what 'happens,' but the much finer complexity of what we read into it and think of in connection with it" (182). James, like Nietzsche, believed that:

> [we] need history, but quite differently from the jaded idlers in the garden of knowledge....We would serve history only so far as it serves life; but to value its study beyond a certain point multilates and degrades life....Knowledge, taken in excess without hunger, even contrary to desire, has no more effect of transforming the external life, and remains hidden in a chaotic inner world that modern man has a curious pride in calling his "real personality." He has the substance, he says, and only wants the form; but this is quite an unreal opposition in a living thing. Our modern culture is for that reason not a living one, because it cannot be understood without that opposition. (Use 3, 23)

For James as for Nietzsche, the past is of value not in itself but for its ability to build a future, to constitute the present and give it meaning and significance. As James says of White-Mason, the hero of "Crapy Cornelia" (1910):

> The high pitch of interest, to his taste, was the pitch of history, the pitch of acquired and earned suggestion, the pitch of association, in a word; so that he lived by preference, incontestably, if not in a rich gloom, which would have been beyond his means and spirits, at least amid objects and images that confessed to the tone of time. (American Novels 823)

It is modernity's tendency to cover the past, as James puts it, again, in "Crapy Cornelia," like a "disfeatured, overpapered wall" (832) -- that James objects to. Of New York's skyscrapers, he says in The American Scene:

> The richness might have its poverties still and the larger complexity its crudities; but, all the same, to look back was to seem to have been present at an extraordinary general process, that of the ceaseless relegation of the previous (on the part of the whole visible order) to one of the wane categories of misery....Crowned not only with no history, but with no credible possibility of time for history, and consecrated by no uses save the commerical at any cost,

> they [the tall buildings of New York] are simply the most piercing notes in that concert of the expensively provisional into which your supreme sense of New York resolves itself. (53; 77)

The primary mechanism by which modernity obliterates the past -- and hence also the future -- is thus the money culture (see American Scene 64). The U.S. "business face" is so looming and so arrogant that it substitutes the slow and tiresome process of "building on the past" with a sort of reflexive, neurotic effort to "purchase" the future (American Scene 183-4). James puts his finger on the pulse of what really makes American society, then and now, tick:

> What prevails, what sets the tune, is the American scale of gain, more magnificent than any other, and the fact that the whole assumption, the whole theory of life, is that of the individual's participation in it, that of his being more or less punctually and more or less effectually 'squared'. To make so much money that you won't, that you don't 'mind' anything -- that is absolutely, I think, the main American formula. Thus your making no money -- or so little that it passes there for none -- and being thereby distinctly reduced to minding, amounts to your being reduced to the knowledge that America is no place for you. (237)

But such a way of life is not characteristic merely of America. It reflects values of a new order, the modern order or, as James says in "Crapy Cornelia," "the music of the future":

> This was clearly going to be the music of the future -- that if people were but rich enough and furnished enough and fed enough, exercised and sanitated and manicured and generally advised and advertised and made "knowing" enough, avertis enough...(American Novels 429)

Such passages, and there are many of them in James's late works, do much to undermine the conventional view of him as snobbish and effete.

During the period in which James wrote The Europeans, his jabs at the poverty of American culture -- in the form, for example, of his portrait of old Mr. Wentworth (or, somewhat later, that of Mr. Dosson in The Reverberator) -- were light blows: ironic, teasing, on the whole good-natured. But by the time we get to the late and unfinished The Ivory Tower (1917), his mood has turned black. Mr. Gaw of this novel is properly regarded as a descendant of old Mr. Wentworth in The Europeans, except that the former's "puritanism" is rooted not in morality and religion but in capitalism; he is an incarnation of greed. And unlike James's portrait of Wentworth, his treatment of Gaw allows us no aesthetically redeeming handle by which we may make contact with him. He is a desert unto himself, surrounded only by the desolation of his own ego. He strikes us as virtually inhuman (American Novels 868-9).

American society, in James's view, is to a large extent founded on the assumption that there need be no order, structure, tradition in society: "There are no 'kinds' of people; there are simply people, very very few, and all of one kind...(American Scene 45). Lacking "types" or "kinds"

-- what James called in "Prefaces," "the life of literature" (1043, 1047) -- the basis by which the aesthetic value of life might be affirmed is also lacking. But the aesthetic value of life is ultimately, for James, as I note in Chapter III, the substratum of moral and epistemological value. American culture thus has a body, but no face:

> ...it is most, doubtless, the aesthetic appetite in you [Americans] -- long richly fed elsewhere -- that goes unassuaged; it is your sense of the comprehensive picture as a comprehensive picture that winces, for recognition of loss, like a touched nerve. What is the picture, collectively seen...but the portrait, more or less elaborated, of a multitudinous People, of social and political order? -- so that the effect is, for all the world, as if, with the body and limbs, the hands and feet and the coat and trousers, all the accessories of the figure showily painted, the neat white oval of the face were innocent of the brush. (American Scene 381)

As we saw in Chapter III, James felt that the capacity for aesthetic appreciation is made possible by the individual opening himself to currents that are at once cultural and historical. They are cultural in that only when a person is provided with a means to organize experience, a framework in which to see and react and think, can he develop the capacity to do these things with feeling and discrimination. And they are historical in that cultures are themselves the product of history, the product of a process in which patterns of the past are allowed to

structure present experience. It is not just art but consciousness itself that draws on a "power of passion" linked to the historical past. For only in an historically and culturally rich environment can the individual "get outside himself" enough to see and develop what lies within him -- those feelings and instincts and inner urges upon which consciousness and the aesthetic sense arise. That is why Americans tend to lack an aesthetic sense -- because they are not provided with a complete "picture" against which they may measure and weigh and compare their own selves. There is, in this sense, a direct line of descent from old Mr. Wentworth of The Europeans (or, going even further back, from the goodnatured Newman of The American) to the dry and shrivelled Mr. Gaw of The Ivory Tower; all are the products of a culture which, declaring itself without need of "manner" and "form," are able to adopt only one manner, one form, that so narrows their aesthetic sensibility, and therefore also their range of consciousness, that they are rendered dull and uncomprehending in the face of other cultures, a point which James brings out in The Ivory Tower (American Novels 1012).

Since the personality is constituted by social forces, the absence of "forms" in society manifests itself in individuals as egotism. As James puts it in his portrait of

Mrs. Worthingham in "Crapy Cornelia": "There she was again with the innocent egotism, the gilded and overflowing anarchism, really of her doubtless quite unwitting but nonetheless rabid modern note...not a grain of provision was left by it to mere manners" (American Novels 829). And what lies at the bottom of modernism's rabid egotism, the "music of the future," is the equation of the self with the individual, autonomous consciousness:

> ...the deluge of people, the insane movement for movement, the ruin of thought, of life, the negation of work, of literature, the swelling, roaring crowds, the "where are you going?" the age of Mrs. Jack, the figure of Mrs. Jack, the American, the nightmare -- the individual consciousness --the mad, ghastly climax or denouement...The Americans are looming up -- dim, vast, portentous -- in their millions --like gathering waves -- the barbarians of the Roman Empire. (Complete Notebooks 126; see also 120)

Nor does James, like Nietzsche, hesitate to associate such music -- at least in the privacy of his Notebooks-- with "the devouring publicity of life, the extinction of all sense between public and private...the sinking of manners, in so many ways, which the democratization of the world brings with it" (40).

It is as an effort to supplant the ultimate nihilism of individual consciousness produced by (or perhaps the product of) extreme democratization, with a self constituted in and through historical forms, that James's

preoccupation with time and tradition is best understood. Since for James as for Nietzsche, "the power, the art, of forgetting and of drawing a limited horizon round oneself" (Use 17) is essential to life, we must repress those elements of the past that are unhealthy for the future. Forgetfulness, on both an individual and cultural level, is vital to the formation of tradition. (3) Indeed, we continually choose from the past that which we sense is most life-giving and nourishing to our future growth. We gain a past a posteriori -- by evaluating it from the perspective of the future that awaits us. In Nietzsche's words,

> To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all "it was" into a "thus I willed it" -- that alone should I call redemption. Will -- that is the name of the liberator and joy-bringer...."The Will is a creator." All "it was" is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident -- until the creative will says to it, "But thus I willed it." Until the creative will says to it, "But thus I will it, thus I shall will it." But has the will yet spoken thus? And when will that happen? Has the will been unharnessed yet from his own folly? Has the will yet become his own redeemer and joy-bringer? Has he unlearned the spirit of revenge and all gnashing of teeth? And who taught him reconciliation with time and something higher than reconciliation? For that will which is the will to power must will something higher than any reconciliation; but how shall this be brought about? Who could teach him also to will backwards? (Thus Spoke 251, 253)

(3)

It is just such "willing backwards," such "forgetfulness," such "unknowing," which lies at the basis of Maggie Verver's tragic affirmation. (4) "I know nothing," Maggie says to Fanny, referring to her father (536; cf. Milly in Wings 128, Isabel in Portrait 451, and Strether in Ambassadors 92). The "action" of The Golden Bowl revolves to a large extent around what Maggie, as creative dramatist, allows herself to know and not know, to happen and not happen. Maggie, as Nietzsche counseled, gains the the capacity to draw an horizon around herself and will the limitation of her own consciousness.

"'There are many things', said Mrs. Assingham, 'that we shall never know.'

Maggie took it in with a long reflection. 'Never'" (445)

But that is not to say that there aren't many things that Maggie knows that Fanny Assingham doesn't. In chapter IV, I noted that most of Fanny's initial pronouncements about Charlotte and Maggie turn out to be exactly opposite to what actually occurs (see 97, 100, 168, etc.). And though Fanny becomes increasingly reliable as the book progresses, the extent of her consciousness, the range of her understanding -- about, notably, the Prince -- never

extends to Maggie herself: "Maggie lived, inwardly, in a consciousness that she could but partly open even to so good a friend [i.e., Fanny], and her own visitation of the fuller expanse of which was, for that matter, still going on" (476-7).

It is therefore futile to use Fanny Assingham to try to figure out the extent of what Adam, Maggie's father, "knows," a question that has occupied many critics of the novel. In part I, Fanny speaks of Adam as deluded (319); then, in part II, reverses herself, only to throw doubt at once on her reversal, only in turn to doubt that reversal. The issue at hand is whether or not Adam knows of Charlotte and the Prince's affair and therefore whether he has consciously or unconsciously aided Maggie in her efforts to dissolve the affair:

> "Well, he <u>is</u>....That is he may be, for all I know, too inconceivably great. But that's not an idea. It represents only my weak necessity of feeling that he's beyond me --which isn't an idea either. You see he <u>may</u> be stupid too....Yet on the other hand...he <u>may</u> be sublime: sublimer even than Maggie herself. He may in fact have already been. But we shall never know." (418)

In chapters seven and eight of the first half of the novel, Adam is portrayed -- in a manner similar to that which James portrays the comic figure of uncle Henry in his <u>Autobiography</u> (83-89) -- as a timid and good-natured,

positively doddering solipsist (Golden 129-30): one who has so lost the capacity for passion that he can at best play at "depravity," pretend that he is selfish, not actually be so. It is, of course, Adam's immense wealth and the tremendous impact such wealth has on all the characters of the novel that prompts readers to take him more seriously than such a characterization would tend, by itself, to make them do. The problem with taking Adam "more seriously," however, is that after the first half of the novel we "see" him mostly from a point of view that is defined, in no uncertain terms, as extremely "biased": Maggie's. And even if we were to take Maggie's view of Adam as "objective" -- whatever that would mean -- the matter would still not be resolved. For Maggie's "interpretation" of how much her father knows itself wavers, though in a manner less erratic than Fanny Assingham's (361-3, 509-10), while Adam's final comment on the matter is exasperating (and comic) to any reader intent on resolving "the ambiguity": "'You see,' he says to Maggie, 'how right I was. Right, I mean, to do it for you.'" Just what Adam has "done" is exactly what is at issue.

Nonetheless, one misses a crucial point of the novel to view it as "ambiguous" in this regard. Late in the book, during the scene in which Charlotte gets up from the card

table to confront Maggie, the latter recognizes that "the full significance [of one's view of a 'scene']...could be no more, after all, than a matter of interpretation, differing always for a different interpreter" (493). Later, the Prince muses on Maggie and Adam's behavior: "...that personage [Adam] and she, Maggie, had so shuffled away every link between consequence and cause, that the intention remained, like some famous poetic line in a dead language, subject to varieties of interpretation" (563). But still later, after Adam and Charlotte have departed for America, and the Prince and Maggie face each other in their hard-fought "freedom": "It meant something for the Princess that her husband had...got their son out of the way, not bringing him back to his mother; but everything now, as she vaguely moved about, struck her as meaning so much that the unheard chorus swelled" (578).

These three passages point to a view of "meaning" and "interpretation" similar to that of Wittgenstein in the Philosophical Investigations and On Certainty. The latter's point in the following (much-discussed) passage, which constitutes a radical critique of modern epistemology, is that meaning does not depend on interpretation:

> ...any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpreta-tions by themselves do not determine

> meaning....there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases....it is our acting which lies at the bottom of the language game. (19)

Meaning, for the self-deluded narrators of The Sacred Fount and The Turn of the Screw, was the "correct" interpretation of what happened. But Maggie Verver rejects the quest for that kind of knowledge in favor of a knowledge that is revealed in and through action: a knowledge or "consciousness" the "visitation of the fuller expanse of which was, for that matter, still going on" (476-7). It is in the wrought character and consciousness of Maggie that her "knowledge" is exhibited. Such character and consciousness not only subsume those of Charlotte and the Prince, as we have already seen, but that of her father as well, only in a different way. Crucial to Maggie's tragic awakening is that she accept her limitations as a finite person; it is the heart of her finitude -- the only solid ground she has under her feet after her discovery of her husband's affair with her best friend -- that she is the deeply devoted daughter of this bland American millionaire, this "perfect little father" (513). James demonstrates her acceptance of her finitude, her recognition of her inability, common to all mortal beings, to understand "all," by having her cling to the

pious illusion of her father's wisdom and transcendent knowledge -- the illusion that there are "so many things her father knew that she even yet didn't" (554) -- an illusion that has its counterpart, religously, in the patriarachical God, and narratively, in the omniscient, metonymically grounded author/narrator. It is, indeed, Maggie's ability to sustain that illusion in herself, to cultivate adherence to it (which she does in part by having "nothing 'inward' really to talk about" with him [376]) that makes the deeds she performs possible. I say "illusion" here; but I don't mean to imply that there is a "truth" behind such illusion. I mean rather that there is an horizon of consciousness that Maggie draws around herself and that consequently we, as readers, are also placed within. It is part of our ability to understand The Golden Bowl that we not ask for "truth" -- not even in the form of positing an ambiguity (for what is ambiguous is linguistically referenced and therefore given an epistemological status). Nor should we assume "James" or the narrator "knows" something we don't. As Patricia McKee says: "James himself does not figure out Adam Verver either" (Heroic 305). But the reason is that there is nothing to figure out. The Sacred Fount and The Turn of the Screw are ambiguous; that is their point and therefore

also their linguistic reference. The Golden Bowl, however, is unambiguous in a primary sense, in the sense that Timothy Reiss claims is common to tragedy in general: "...tragedy does not represent the social and legal order -- it shows what is necessary for it to exist....During the process of an individual tragedy its order contains, for this very reason, a profound ambiguity: but it is an ambiguity of 'referent' not of the order itself" (30).

When critics label The Golden Bowl (or any of James's other tragedies) "ambiguous," they give expression to their sense that it lacks such referential meaning. But it is the purpose of Jamesian tragedy not to "reflect" reality but to make meaning, to establish the concepts that give our actions reference; and in order to accomplish that purpose, it is essential that "reference," within the unfolding of the tragic action itself, be withheld. In The Golden Bowl, Maggie "sees for" the Prince, Charlotte, Fanny Assingham, her father; "sees for" in the sense that the range of her awareness expands and fills up the canopy of consciousness that James has created for her. At the precise moment when Maggie's consciousness merges with that of the totality of the novel -- when the Prince looks up at her and says "I see nothing but you" -- the narrator puts the finishing touches on the creation of his artist's self. He merges

with her, "glorifying himself" (as Nietzsche would say) through her.

To speak of such a fusion between narrator (or author) and character is not, however, to give reference to either, but only to shift the problem of reference to a wider social and historical domain. The "self" that James expresses is his "made" or created self, not (necessarily) the self to which the facts of his biography have reference. It is we, his readers, that must give reference -- if such is to be given -- to the consciousness enacted in James's tragedies, not James himself. "Why mine [my consciousness] yields an interest," James says in his famous letter to Henry Adams, "I don't know that I can tell you..." (Portable 671). The fusion effected between Henry James and Maggie Verver is not an "actual" one but only the limit toward which The Golden Bowl progresses yet never reaches -- like the differential in calculus. The artistic action that James performs in creating Maggie Verver becomes complete only when it becomes an action that fully expresses himself; and it becomes that only when it is "completed" by the readers, when it gains as "reference" a form of life, a culture and society, that takes for granted the value and "interest" of such consciousness. Reference is what naturally attaches to any work of art written and

received as a form of action. The extent to which we regard James's tragedies as intrinsically ambiguous is the extent to which we do not so receive them, the extent to which we cannot "place" them within our present day cultural horizons. And though such "placing" can never be absolute, can never ground itself, it is nonetheless vital to the process of what we call writing and reading literature. For example, we effect such placing, create the sort of interest and value James talked about, when we observe, as many critics have done, that there are striking similarities between the histrionic modes of presentation in The Golden Bowl and such works as The American Scene and the Autobiography. If James makes Maggie, in The Golden Bowl, into a creative dramatist who determines for herself what is known and not known, what happens and doesn't happen, so James, in The American Scene and the Autobiography, projects himself as character into the subject he describes, often speaking of himself in the third person.

But there is a unity of Henry James and Maggie Verver -- a way of "placing" them -- that goes beyond these affiliations. I emphasized above how harshly James speaks, in The American Scene, of those "values of a new order" (382) he sees reflected in American life and in modernism

in general. It is of equal importance to note the extent to which James identifies himself with such values in the very act of his interrogation of them. Just as Maggie is able to make good on her early declaration to the Prince, "I'm not afraid of history" (47) and affirm "the historic value" (336) of her actions, a value that characters like the Prince cannot "escape" from even if they tried (48), so too James, reeling from the shock of World War I -- "no term of comparison borrowed from the past would so much as begin to fit it" (Within 14) -- is able to muster the forces within to put that event into perspective, to act as "historian," as the narrator of even The Golden Bowl calls himself (52, et al.), notwithstanding James's indictment of Balzac and others for being overly historical (see Note 16 of Introduction). It is significant that Maggie envisions herself at an isolated "post" in the wilderness as an "Indian squaw" (549) and that James (in The American Scene) envisions himself "one of those painted savages" in America (463). Both take on modernism's negation of history ("History is a nightmare...") in the form of a role "outside" of history in order to affirm that history, in order to redeem history as a form of eternity. What is involved in both cases is a sacrifice (a tragic sacrifice) of the temporal and the empirical -- those aspects of the

unrestrained "individual consciousness" -- for the sake of creating the values that will serve as norms for the future. James's acts of identification with America in The American Scene are efforts to redeem what he sees as the meaninglessness and irrationality of the "new order" by placing them in relation to values of the past, even as he admits his ignorance of just what that relation may be: "Of what order we must wait to see" (382). Speaking of the southern United States, he says:

> It was like a myriad pictures of the Nile.... a sort of prepared but unconscious and inexperienced Italy, the primitive plate, in perfect condition, but with the impression of History all yet to be made. (462)

When James speaks here of America "with the impression of History all yet to be made," he is speaking of that same Nietzschean "time" that "does not run backwards": an unredeemed, unwilled time that is not historical because it has not assumed a form of eternity. James was well aware of modernism's unrestrained individual consciousness and its capacity to "will backwards" in a destructive way -- to "undo everything, everything that was ours, in the most horrible retroactive way" (Letters Edel, 219). He consequently sought to undo that undoing through his deeds of words. It was in language that James saw the crucial battle being fought. Like Thucydides, James believed that

in times of decline, "The meaning of words no longer had the same relation to things, but was changed by them as they thought proper...Frantic energy was held to be the true quality of a man" (Book III, paragraph 81). Or in James's words: "The war has used up words; they have weakened, they have deteriorated like motor car tires....we are now confronted with a depreciation of all our terms...with a loss of expression through increase of limpness, that may well make us wonder what ghosts will be left to walk" (qtd. in Tanner James: Writer, 99-100).

This loss of meaning in words is a loss of life:

> All life...comes back to the question of our speech, the medium through which we communicate with each other; for all life comes back to the question of our relations with each other. These relations are made possible, are registered, are verily constituted, by our speech...The more it [our speech] suggests and expresses the more we live by it -- the more it promotes and enhances life. ("Question" 199-210)

James's late style was ultimately a response to what he perceived as the extremity of the crisis of modern culture. It was a way not just of meeting the "American" call to create a new form of literature, but a way of meeting the call to create a literature that would have the power to continue "making life" even in modern times. Of course, by persisting in the use of a language that was at once archaic and ultra-modern, a language for which, on the one

hand, supporting life forms had "dropped out," and for which, on the other hand, life forms had not yet been created, James underwent the risk that he would not be heard at all. But he felt that the only possible response to such risk was to continue "speaking." In so far as he continued to speak, he continued to live, and in so far as he continued to live, he continued to affirm. Such affirmation was as different from facile optimism as it was from the pessimism that Henry Adams and so many other disillusioned contemporaries of James embraced. It was a tragic affirmation, one expressed most vibrantly and powerfully in the last pages of The American Scene. Speaking of the American railroad, "the general pretension of the Pullman, the great monotonous rumble of which seems forever to say to you: 'See what I'm making of all this -- see what I'm making, what I'm making,'" James answers:

> "I see what you are not making, oh, what you are ever so vividly not; and how can I help it if I am subject to that lucidity?....If I were one of the painted savages you have dispossessed, or even some tough reactionary trying to emulate him, what you are making would doubtless impress me more than what you are leaving unmade; for in that case it wouldn't be to you I should be looking in any degree for beauty or for charm. Beauty and charm would be for me in the solitude you have ravaged, and I should owe you my grudge for every disfigurement and every violence, for every wound with which you have caused the face of the land to bleed. No, since I accept your ravage, what strikes me is the long list of the arrears of your undone; and so constantly, right and left, that your

> pretended message of civilization is but a colossal recipe for the creation of arrears, and of such as can but remain forever out of hand. (463)

James's protest is not an effort to distance himself from the destructiveness of modern life, but a taking-on of its burden in much the manner that Maggie Verver takes on the evil that is revealed to her. Similarly, the danger he warns of is not that "the new order" whose values are presently "blanks" will be out of relation to the past, but that the sense of debt will pile up so high as to imprison the present -- to make the historical past a sort of freezing transitoriness that stands poised like an ax over the future. Like Maggie Verver gathering up the broken pieces of the golden bowl, James through his "speaking" stoops to pick up and make whole the pieces of a modern consciousness lying in ruin. He declares, as he did in his letter to Henry Adams:

> Of course we are lone survivors, of course the past that was our lives is at the bottom of an abyss -- if the abyss has any bottom; of course, too, there's no use talking unless one particularly wants to. But the purpose, almost, of my printed divagations was to show you that one can, strange to say, still want to -- or at least can behave as if one did....It all takes doing -- and I do. I believe I shall do yet again -- it is still an act of life...Behold me therefore so behaving -- (Portable 671)

For James as for Maggie, it is behaving (or acting) -- feeling and thinking being, for James, forms of behaving --

that really "counted." For it is only by means of actions, literary or otherwise, that the pessimism, skepticism, and sense of frustration which James saw ushering in the modern era (and which were embodied to an extreme degree in his friend, Henry Adams) could be combatted effectively. "Frustration," as James says in "The Middle Years," is "only life...it's what passes." What does not pass is the passion, beauty, and glory of life as captured in tragic art.

I think that this is essentially what Nietzsche was trying to convey through his concept of Eternal Recurrence. The concept restores to life the eternalizing capacity which romantic aesthetics had claimed for art. But as numerous commentators on Nietzsche have argued, (5) Eternal Recurrence is not cyclical. It does not posit a self-contained element that disappears and returns; there is no distinction between what a person is and what a person does. Rather, character is fate, ripeness all. Eternity subsists in the continually recurring acts that affirm character and consciousness in the face of annihilation. These acts constitute art and art is nothing more than life at its most intense, at its most fully acted, felt, and thought. Eternal Recurrence thus posits an eternity without underlying reality, ungrounded in

certainty or even sanity. As James has his artist-hero say in "The Middle Years," in a passage which I have already quoted in the Introduction: "A second chance --that's the delusion. There never was to be but one. We work in the dark -- we do what we can -- we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art."

NOTES

1. See McKee, Heroic Commitment and "Making Do."

2. Golden 220. Gabriel Pearson puts his finger on the crucial issue when he says: "But if in The Spoils of Poynton we are to account failure the only true success, then Maggie's success ought to count as a failure" (332). The point being, of course, that Fleda's failure isn't a success.

3. In a letter written to a friend during the first year of the 20th century, James says:

> "The port from which I set out was, I think, that of the essential loneliness of my life -- and it seems to be the port also, in sooth, to which my course again finally directs itself! This loneliness (since I mention it) -- what is it still but the deepest thing about one? Deeper about me, at any rate, than anything else; deeper than my 'genius', deeper than my discipline, deeper than my pride, deeper above all, than the the deep counterminings of art."

When James refers to an experience of the self (i.e., loneliness) that is "deeper" than our ordinary identity, he draws a contrast between two aspects of the self. On the one hand, there is the self that can be defined within limits or circumscribed within boundaries. It includes not

just one's profession, social role, and natural endowment, but one's entire life experience. On the other hand, there is a "deeper" self that not only lies beyond but is prior to such attributes. This deeper self "lies beyond" not in the sense of being opposed to or even different from one's ordinary personality -- not in the sense of being a sort of neoplatonic Oneness in which all individual souls merge -- but in the sense of enveloping and surrounding, with its constant presence, such a personality. It is the "standard of measure" of the self and as such cannot itself be measured. Neither can it be embodied nor realized; rather, it shows itself through its embodiment or realization. The state of aloneness which James is talking about is one in which all those contrivances, all those signs and accompaniments of everyday existence, which we use to not feel alone are no longer present. One's identity is no longer distinguishable from any other identity; personality has been distilled down to its source, which is also the source of all other personalities. In "The Great Good Place," James characterizes this state as follows:

"There was no personal publicity, much less any personal reference. Those things were in the world -- in what he had left; there was no vulgarity here of credit or fame. The real exquisite was to be without the complication of an identity..." (In the Cage 304).

At the same time, this letting go of one's egoistic identity is a regaining of self. As one of the characters in the story puts it: "`I don't speak of the putting off of one's self; I speak only -- if one has a self worth sixpence -- of the getting it back'" (In the Cage 297).

The deeper self, in sum, is not an "identity" opposed to other identities. It is the sea or conceptual source of identity: "The world...had never seemed so large; it seemed to open out, all round her, to take the form of a mighty sea, where she floated in fathomless waters. She had wanted help, and here was help; it had come in a rushing torrent...the confusion, the noise of waters...were in her...swimming head" (Portrait 489).

These words are from the ending of The Portrait of a Lady and are typical of the way James uses the image of the sea to show the conflicting forces at work in the individual's struggle to achieve self-identity. In the case of Isabel's struggle, the sea points up how fragile is the intellectual and moral basis of identity; though Isabel has been portrayed throughout the novel as a young woman very much impressed by the extent of her own knowledge and virtue, she now feels her ego to be like a piece of cork

bobbing up and down on an immense sea. This threatening aspect of the sea can be seen not just in The Portrait of a Lady, where Isabel is shocked into an abiding recognition of her own finiteness as a person, but in "The Great Good Place," where "the wild waters" (In the Cage 299) nearly engulf George Dane early in the story, and The Turn of the Screw, where the narrator almost suffers "shipwreck" -- and later on pays a penalty for clinging to the "mast" of her ego.

But James also uses the image of the sea to give a more affirmative effect -- to build identity rather than simply threaten ego. It is crucial to understand that the two effects are indissolubly linked. In the passage cited above, for example, Isabel's recognition of her frailty as an intellectual and moral being is the vehicle by which she is put in touch with her own deeper, more universal, and above all more passionate nature -- a nature or "power of passion" which she has throughout most of the novel managed to deny. James symbolizes this denial -- not just in The Portrait of a Lady, but in The Wings of the Dove, The Golden Bowl, and many other works -- by the image of the desert. The desert is in these works consistently associated with emotional and spiritual poverty, with the drying up of one's capacities to suffer, love, and interact creatively with others. Thus, in The Sacred Fount, James uses the image of the desert and dryness to complement his imaging of the sea as a life-giving, transcendent "power of passion":

"What was actually before me was the positive pride of life and expansion...not the arid channel forsaken by the stream, but the full-fed river sweeping to the sea...These things...the way other people could feel about each other, the power not one's self, in the given instance, that made for passion -- were of course at best the mystery of mysteries; still, there were cases in which fancy, sounding the depths or the shallows, could at least drop the lead" (17).

Such a power of passion, as imaged not just by the sea, but by "rivers," "currents," and "streams," is a knowing, not a blind passion. When Ralph Pendrel of The Sense of the Past "remounts the stream of time" and makes his "plunges" and "dives" into his historical past, he gains a true, if troubled insight into himself (Sense 48). Similarly, Milly Theale of The Wings of the Dove quits "the blue gulf of comparative ignorance and reaches her view of the troubled sea" (Wings 265).

On one level, this knowledge consists simply in the

loss of innocence attendant on the discovery that evil lurks, like "a snake in the garden" of society (Wings 188). On a deeper level, the knowledge gained is an awareness that there is no way one can keep oneself free from such evil since the self is constituted by social forces. James brings out the social nature of the self in his frequent reference to social "currents" that run through the consciousness of his protagonists. These currents, in the words of the narrrator of The Sacred Fount quoted above, are the ways people "could feel about each other, the power not one's self, in the given instance, that made for passion." The currents are sometimes clean and revitalizing (as in The Sacred Fount), and sometimes "unclean" and polluting (as in Roderick Hudson, RH, 72); ignorance and cruelty, quite as much as knowledge and virtue, make up the foundations of society and civilization. In all cases, however, opening one's consciousness to such social currents is essential to the experiencing of passion and the building of identity:

"Character is developed to visible finenesss only by friction and discipline on a large scale, only by having to reckon with a complexity of forces...No kind of person...is a very good kind...when its education has not been made to some extent by contact with other kinds, and, to that degree, by a certain relation with them" (American Scene 427).

James wished to break down the barriers or differences that we normally imagine to exist between "self" and "self" by showing that the self cannot be grounded in any facet of its "own" conscious activities. For James, the self and its conscious activities are grounded in experience, which he defined as "our apprehension and measure of what happens to us as social creatures" ("Prefaces" 1091); self-consciousness is a logical and constantly changing construct of a freeflowing social medium. "Everyone," as George Dane says in "The Great Good Place," is "a little someone else" (In the Cage 313).

The difficulty of James's later style obtains not from an effort to represent the isolated consciousness of his characters but, on the contrary, to show consciousness as itself fed by the twists and turns of the social currents in which it flows. The development of James's later style from the portrayal of Isabel in the famous meditation scene in The Portrait of a Lady, in which Isabel is represented as "stopping in the middle of the room" while undergoing a tragic awakening (358) to Maggie in The Golden Bowl, in which "the awakening" permeates the entire range of her

represented behavior, shows us just how vital was James's style to his mature conception of self and identity. Isabel remains, at least until her awakening, a person trapped within the confines of her own subjective experience. But in The Golden Bowl, James quite extraordinarily manages to convey to us a self (in the person of Maggie) that is not "territorially" confined, that waxes and wanes, asserts and withdraws, with the whole of the social environment portrayed and yet, for all that, remains a very human, very vulnerable and dependent person.

None of which is meant to imply that for James society had an ultimate status in defining the boundaries of identity. Rather, social experience was only the means by which personality took shape. James's point of view was exactly opposite to that of many 20th century writers; man did not become "natural" by breaking free of social forms but by expressing himself creatively and imaginatively through them. To live unimaginatively and uncreatively was to live unnaturally. This linking of the natural and social worlds is made explicit in many of James's writings. In The American Scene, for example, he characterizes early 20th century American culture as a "money world" in which "manners" have declined and social forms have become impoverished and flattened out -- a world inimical to the expression of intense human feeling. Indeed, James compares the difference between the modern American and the more traditional culture as "the difference between the deep sea of the older sphere of spiritual passion and the shallow tide in which inhabiting particles float perforce near the surface" (AS, 382). To live in an impoverished social environment is for James to cut oneself off not just from the "social streams" and "historical rivers" of civilization but from that "unlimited source" which feeds those streams and rivers. James characterizes that source in his essay, "Is There a Life After Death?" as follows:

> "[consciousness shines] as from emersion in the fountain of being. Into that Fountain, to depths immeasurable, our spirit dips -- to the effect of feeling itself, qua imagination and aspiration, all scented with universal sources. What is that but an adventure of our personality...?" (228)

James is careful, in this essay, to put himself at the opposite "extreme" from "orthodox theology" (230). The depths James refers to are the source or basis of our ordinary, everyday experience; they are a feature inseparable from such experience, not a different type of experience. Indeed, he conceives of "the depths

immeasurable" from which our consciousness draws not metaphysically -- not as a sort of "place" in a different world -- but conceptually. What I mean by "conceptual" is brought out by comparing James's notion of self or consciousness as an "illimitable power...[that] propagates itself from wave to wave" (Portable 645) to the physicist's notion of a transverse wave propagating itself in the ocean. In both cases, what is propagated -- the form of the wave, the concept of self -- is "conceptual." What is not propagated --the molecules of water, this or that particular person -- is "empirical." Like the physicist, James makes a critical distinction between what is propagated and the material through which it is propagated. Though there may be distinct concepts of self or "forms" of wave, each concept or form will vary not from person to person, for that type of variation will show differences between individuals that may be only empirical or subjective, that may be accidental and without significance in themselves. Rather, each concept or form will vary from type of person to type of person, and such variation in type will be socially, culturally, and historically rooted. Though James was far from ignoring "the person" behind the type, he felt that it was the artist's recognition and use of types that enables him to describe and represent the self:

"'Kinds' are the very life of literature, and truth and strength come from the complete recognition of them, from abounding to the utmost in their respective senses and sinking deep into their consistency ["Prefaces" 1131]...the fictive hero successfully appeals to us only as an eminent instance, as eminent as we like, of our own conscious kind [1047]...art is nothing if not exemplary" (1341). James humorously makes the same point in "The Real Thing" by having his self-deluded painter-narrator declare "the thing in the world I most hated was the danger of being ridden by a type" (Portable 119).

It is by being exemplary that literature is able to present its logic -- its story: "The moving accident, the rare conjunction, whatever it be, doesn't make the story..." ("Prefaces" 1260). Rather, all stories are intrinsically normative: "...here prodigies, when they come straight, come with an effect imperilled; they keep all their character, on the other hand, by looming through some other history -- the indispensable history of somebody's normal relation to something...intrinsic values they have none [1259]...the confusion of kinds is the inelegance of letters and the stultification of values..." (1131).

James thus set his concept of the self in opposition to a modern view that may be characterized, in philosophical terms, as both subjectivist and empirical. The modern view is subjectivist in that the self is its own ultimate and can never be seen or indeed directly experienced in any way by others. It is empirical in that the self, although entirely private, somehow guarantees knowledge about itself. The modern concept of self, in sum, posits identity as a kind of hidden pocket of infinity -- an undefinable entity with a very definable location.

For James, by contrast, such a notion of self is the product of a failure to distinguish between our experiences as conscious beings (the material of the wave) and the concept of self (the form of the wave, or "depths immeasureable") that makes possible such experiences. Such a distinction is to be contrasted with any empirical, egoistic differences between individuals -- differences that James seeks to dissolve by unmasking their lack of an epistemological or moral basis. The strength of our identity as individuals is constituted not by such empirical differences (however much we may give them the stamp of subjectivity), but by the quality and intensity of our participation as empirical beings in a concept of self which governs all (and which especially creative beings, like Maggie Verver and Milly Theale, help to shape). Here we see the reason James could regard art as a model or paradigm for our notions of "action," "conduct," and "use": because it helped to establish the conceptions of self that give meaning and force to our activities (and in this sense, art is normative or value-creating). Nonetheless, our only access to such "depths immeasurable" is through our everyday experiences of 'self', through empirical, subjective experience; just as a water wave cannot propagate itself except through the material of water. To grasp such experience as a means and not as an ultimate was to base one's perceptions on what James called a "direct impression or perception of life."

4. To learn what one remembers is a form of willing backwards, of affirming "eternity" in the temporal. Speaking of the Concord River in The American Scene, James says:

> **All the commemorative objects, the stone markings, the burial-place of the three English soldiers, the animated image of the young belted American yeoman by Mr. Daniel French, the intimately associated element in**

> the presence, not far off, of the old manse, interesting theme of Hawthorne's pen, speak to the spirit, no doubt, in one of the subtlest tones of which official history is capable, and yet somehow leave the exquisite melancholy of everything unuttered. It lies too deep, as it always so lies where the ground has borne the weight of the short, simple act, intense and unconscious, that was to determine the event, determine the future in the way we call immortally. (261-2)

To know the past is to know, in a logical sense, the future. The past, present, and future are a whole cloth that is continuously woven; what is eternal are the weaves, the forms and patterns of temporality. These forms are like rules read out of the data of experience, the logic which permeates the constant flux of all expression. Eternity is carried along through history; we must submit to it. Revelation -- the gaining of real knowledge and insight -- is thus a form of remembering, not of discovering (James, Sense 67). It is a seeing, in the manner of Spencer Brydon of "The Jolly Corner," of the possibilities eternally there: "The concave crystal held, as it were, this mystical other world, and the indescribably fine murmur of its rim was the sight there, the scarce audible pathetic wail to his strained ear, of all the old baffled forsworn possibilities" (In the Cage 328-9). Gray Fiedler in The Ivory Tower also gets a glimpse of his possibilities, which he experiences as a "sinking into the infinite...he had come...to indulge, by God's help, in appreciations, comparison, observa-vations, reflections and other luxuries, that were to minister, fond old prejudice aiding, to life at the high pitch, the pitch, as who should say, of immortality?" (American Novels 929; 988)

Very often, James conveys his sense of the "conceptual" --of the simultaneously transcendent and immanent -- nature of the self through his use of the image of the sea. The sea can be violent, calm, undifferentiated. It can be envisioned as a sort of source from which the self draws its "power of passion." Or it can serve as a symbol of the destructive forces which act to dissolve or at least threaten the basis of the egoistic self. In all cases, there is a link between two types of distinctions: the distinction between the empirical and conceptual aspects of identity -- how an individual acts and what grounds the nature of individuality -- and the distinction between eternity and temporality. James's late novel, The Sense of the Past (1917), is in large part a study of the ways in

which these two types of distinctions are linked. Here, however, I will mention only James's treatment of the same issue in his story, "The Great Good Place" (1900), where the self is explicitly conceived to be a form of the eternal. As George Dane, the writer protagonist, is described after he has "left" his ordinary existence and arrived at the great good place:

> There were times when he looked up from his book to lose himself in the mere tone of the picture that never failed at any moment or at any angle. The picture was always there, yet was made up of things common enough. It was in the way an open window in a broad recess let in the pleasant morning; in the way the dry air pricked into faint freshness the gilt of old bindings; in the way an empty chair beside a table unlittered showed a volume just laid down; in the way a happy Brother -- as detached as one's self and with his innocent back presented -- lingered before a shelf with the slow sound of turned pages. It was part of the whole impression that, by some extraordinary law, one's vision seemed less from the facts than the facts from one's vision; that the elements were determined at the moment by the moment's need or the moment's sympathy....The conditions settle...they determine us....It wasn't they who made the conditions, it was the conditions that made them. These conditions found themselves accepted, clearly, with an appreciation, with a rapture, it was rather to be called, that proceeded, as the very air that pervaded them and the force that sustained, from their quiet and noble assurance. (In the Cage 303; 306; 308)

It is not that George Dane has "lost his identity," but rather that he has gotten in closer touch with its sources: "I don't speak of the putting off of one's self; I speak only -- if one has a self worth sixpence -- of the getting it back" (297). For James, this sort of depth of communication, this ego-less existence in which individuals do not even recognize the egoistic differences that separate them, is going on at all times, and doing so necessarily; it forms the backdrop of all human relations. The great good place is therefore not a place "in" time; it is a way of expressing what our concept of the self is, what enables one individual to be different from another -- an ability "common" to all. That is why, in the fully illuminated state, there cannot be "I know" but only

"knowing":

"...'I may perfectly, you know,' the Brother pursued, 'have seen you before. I may even have known you well. We don't know.'

They looked at each other again serenely enough, and at last Dane said: 'No, we don't know'" (297).

5. Gilles Deleuze, Martin Heidegger, and Tracy Strong.

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