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HENRY JAMES

AND THE IMPOSSIBLE AND IRRESISTIBLE ROMANCE

by
Elizabeth Avery Schultz

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By Elizabeth Avery Schultz

Henry James' major characters reflect the traditional, socially oriented romance hero, the isolated and anguished nineteenth-century romantic hero, and persistently the anti-romance hero. In a 1904 essay on Hawthorne, James made a significant distinction between the artificial romance and the real romance. The former relies upon a predictable list of props, distant places and distant times, and exaggerated sentiments; the latter explores the relationship between the past and the present, the living and the dead, the good and the evil. In Coleridgian terms, the former is the product of the fancy or of a romance-oriented imagination, the latter of the synthesizing imagination. "The beautiful circuit and subterfuge" of James' characters' thoughts and desires are thus often conditioned by their reading of artificial romance while James himself is writing real romance.

The conventions of artificial romance are rampant in James' work in the seventies, but even then he recognized the human proclivity for examining the world through spectacles tinted by artificial romance. In exposing the romance-oriented imaginations of the characters in these works,

however, James was unable to bring them to recognize the connections in themselves between past and present, living and dead, good and evil, for he himself was yet producing artificial romance.

As a result of his affiliation with the French naturalists in the eighties, James became opposed to the general tradition of the romance; his opposition is apparent in his creation of characters whose fancies attempt egocentrically to mold others into idealistic patterns. Not only do the machinations of these characters cause others to suffer, but they also cause their progenitors to be misinterpreted and/or unwittingly to destroy their own lives. James' increasing appreciation of the real romances of Robert Louis Stevenson and Hawthorne, however, is reflected in the spate of ghost-stories which he wrote in the nineties. The ghost, a device exploited by the artificial romance, James uses as a test for his romance-oriented characters. By converting ghosts into Doppelgänger figures--the antithesis of their egocentric vision of their own beneficence--the characters of James' ghost-stories divide humanity into good and evil abstractions.

James' culminating experiment with the convention of the supernatural comes in The Sense of the Past. Siphoning off his material in "The Jolly Corner" and The Ambassadors, he never completed this story of a twentieth-century man whose romance-oriented imagination allows him to exchange places with his double in the nineteenth century. As Ralph Pendrel

was meant eventually to accept the present, Lambert Strether does come to accept Massachusetts as well as Paris and to see evil--the egocentric desire to manipulate according to a romantically idealistic scheme--as an integral part of human nature. In attaining this realization, Strether learns to appreciate suffering and to exercise compassion; he thus becomes "a man of imagination" rather than of fancy. In his portrayal of Strether, James not only creates a latter-day Don Quixote, but he also demonstrates his hero's growth away from the characteristics of the Redcrosse Knight toward those of the Ancient Mariner. Although Strether always acts in a social context like the hero of traditional romance, like the nineteenth-century romantic hero, he is always painfully alone, and at the conclusion of the novel, his vision of evil and good, of suffering and compassion is his alone.

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CHAPTER I

ROMANCE, ANTI-ROMANCE, ROMANTICISM, AND HENRY JAMES

In twentieth-century criticism, Henry James has been both condemned and condoned as a romance-writer, a writer of fairy-tales, melodrama, and allegory. It is remarkable, however, that in this barrage of criticism James' own comments on the nature of romance in general and on the romance in his own works in particular are seldom invoked, especially since throughout his long career as a critic--in his early essays in The Nation, The Galaxy, and The Atlantic Monthly as well as in the prefaces for his New York edition, written much later, "at the height of his age"[1]--James consciously recognized the romance as a valid part of the tradition of prose fiction. What James recognized as the tradition and what other critics have seen fit to call the tradition only partially overlap, however. Thus in spite of the fact that James conscientiously identified certain of his works as romances, his critics have often vigorously labeled his work in general as

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[1]R. P. Blackmur, "Introduction," The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. vii. Hereafter cited in the text as AN.

romance-like. Believing the strain of romance to be deep in James' work, I hope, in the present chapter, first, to ascertain how his fiction is related to the historical tradition of the romance, which will require a brief description of his knowledge of the tradition and of the tradition itself, and second, to determine the exact nature of his concept of the romance and how this concept may be applied to his fiction. The subsequent chapters of this essay will attempt to suggest how in James' hands the romance, which appeared flamboyantly in his early works and ironically in several of his middle works, becomes increasingly in the later works a decisive means by which the author shows his hero questing for a knowledge of himself as an individual and in relation to his society.

James' knowledge of the romance tradition does not appear extensive; there is no question, however, but that he was familiar with fairy-tales or that he enjoyed them immensely. We have his own accounts of beloved legends and tales from his letters, from A Small Boy and Others, from his critical biography of Hawthorne, and from his criticism of William Morris' "The Life and Death of Jason" and "An Earthly Paradise." Asked in 1907 for an account of his favorite fairy-tale, he had difficulty at first in selecting one--"so beguiling and absorbing to me were all such flowers of nursery legend"--but he settles upon "Hop o' my Thumb," which he remembers as conveying

> . . . a very dreadful and romantic image of a strange far-off world in which the enchanting heroism of the

> small boy, smaller than one's self, who had in that crisis gained immortality, gave one's fond fancy the most attaching of possible companions.[2]

In his study of Hawthorne, James gives further testimony to his childhood and adult pleasure in the world where heroes existed triumphant and good:

> Hawthorne's stories [in The Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales] are the old Greek myths, made more vivid to the childish imagination by their infusion of details which both deepen and explain their marvels. . . . They seem at that period [the age of childhood] enchanting, and the ideal of many American children is to lie upon the carpet and lose themselves in The Wonder Book. It is in its pages that they first make acquaintance of the heroes and heroines of the antique mythology and something of the nursery fairy-tale quality of interest which Hawthorne imparts to them remains always.[3]

James' reference to Hawthorne's familiarity with The Faerie Queene and Pilgrim's Progress would also seem evidence of his own knowledge of the romances of Spenser and Bunyan.[4]

From the metaphors in his criticism and his letters, it is evident that James knew, at least generally, medieval secular romances. Balzac is, for example, described as always being "astride his imagination, always charging, with his heavy, his heroic lance in rest, at every object that sprang up in his path."[5] The imagery of this passage,

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[2]The Selected Letters of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1955), p. 104.

[3]Henry James, The Life of Hawthorne ("English Men of Letters"; New York and London: Macmillan Co., 1879), p. 131. Hereafter cited as Hawthorne.

[4]Ibid., pp. 17, 63.

[5]Henry James, "The Lesson of Balzac," The Question of Our Speech (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1905), pp. 76-77.

as it continues, also demonstrates James' acquaintance with the romances of violence and travel, both of which were being given to the late nineteenth-century reading public in massive doses by H. Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling, for whom James had only disparaging respect. James asks of Balzac:

> . . . where, with so strenuous a conception of the use of material, was material itself so strenuously quarried? Out of what mines, by what innumerable tortuous channels, in what endless winding processions of laden chariots and tugging teams and marching elephants, did the immense assignments required for his work reach him?[6]

James' letters are strewn with allusions--albeit often made ironically or, as in the case of Balzac, to intensify his praises--to ship-wrecks, lion-hunts, trumpets, and banners.[7]

James also, of course, knew Cervantes' Don Quixote, not simply as the archetypal anti-romance, but as a dramatization of the problem central to imaginative writing and to human life, the problem of the discrepancy between illusion and actuality, romance and reality.[8] References to Don Quixote, to be treated in more detail later, are scattered

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[6] Ibid., p. 77.

[7] John Paterson, "The Language of 'Adventure' in Henry James," American Literature, XXXII (November, 1960), 291-301, analyzes these allusions in some detail.

[8] Frederick Karl, An Age of Fiction: The Nineteenth Century British Novel (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1964), pp. 4-5, and Lionel Trilling, "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," The Liberal Imagination (New York: The Viking Press, 1950), p. 208, both name Don Quixote as the seminal work for establishing the problem of illusion and actuality as the problem most central to the novel.

through James' criticism and fiction, and in 1891, James translated and wrote the introduction for Alphonse Daudet's Port Tarascon, whose hero, Tartarin, is "Don Quixote in the skin of Sancho Panza."[9] Of the dual nature of Daudet's hero, James writes:

> When Sancho Panza sees his romantic counterpart laid utterly low . . . [,]it is enough to say that the thrill of battle could only be over from the moment such abundant and discouraging evidence was produced of the quantity of compromise it takes to transmute our dreams into action, our inspiration into works--even Sancho Panza, for all his escape, his gain of security, weeps for the prostrate hidalgo.[10]

As he saw Cervantes' Don Quixote and Daudet's Tartarin illustrating the comic side of the problem of distinguishing romance from reality, he saw Flaubert's Emma Bovary illustrating the tragic side; he described her as "absorbed in romantic intention and vision while fairly rolling in the dust."[11] James would also have undoubtedly been acquainted with W. D. Howells' short-story, "A Romance of Real Life" (1887), in which the temptations of the writer to distort reality by peering at it through the lenses of romance are satirically exposed.[12]

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[9]Henry James, "Introduction," Port Tarascon (New York: Harper and Bros., 1891), p. 4.

[10]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[11]Henry James, "Gustave Flaubert," Notes on Novelists (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 80.

[12]W. D. Howells, "A Romance of Real Life," Suburban Sketches (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1872). Myron Simon's essay, "Howells on Romantic Fiction," Studies in Short Fiction, II (Spring, 1965), 241-46, illuminates the romantic temptations to which the writer might succumb.

Cervantes, Daudet, Flaubert, and Howells, perhaps, sounded the problem of a romance-oriented imagination whereas Robert Louis Stevenson and Hawthorne sounded the problem of creating a genre of romance, and to James' mind solved it most satisfactorily. These writers significantly influenced James in his use of the romance tradition, although an awareness of the historical tradition must also have come to him through his appreciation of Bunyan and Spenser and of traditional fairy-tales and legends.

From the medieval period on, the romance, as a literary genre, has been subject to the extremes of critical pleasure and displeasure, much as has the appearance of romance in James' writing. Even during the times when the romance tradition was most harshly condemned, it was nevertheless used by its very critics, and its suppression was only nominal. It becomes clear, upon tracing its course, however superficially, that its major characteristics not only have been sustained in literature to the present time, but also that, following every attempt at suppression, it has had a full resurgence. Such a resurgence took place at the end of the nineteenth century in reaction to French naturalism--in France with J.-K. Huysmans and in England with Stevenson, Kipling, Haggard, Andrew Lang, and Maurice Hewlett. At this time James was coming to the height of his powers. Critics of the romance, men speaking out for realism, classicism, morality, have principally

castigated it for being improbable and eccentric and amoral. By examining the fortunes of the romance in English literary history to the end of the nineteenth century, albeit in brief, it is possible to suggest that, because it raises questions pertaining to man's relationship to the historic past and to the supernatural, to his illusions, his ideals, and his growth to self-awareness, the romance has been a valuable literary form and that as such Henry James profited from it.

Irving Babbitt, invoking Aristotle as his starting point, maintains that persisting into the twentieth century is the general notion that while the classic is to be associated with the probable, the romantic is associated with the wonderful.[13] As Babbitt develops his thesis in Rousseau and Romanticism, the romantic wonderful is shown to evolve into the eccentric, romanticism into irresponsible relativism. Babbitt, however, underestimates the idealistic goals that lay behind the early romances and were upheld through the decline of the heroic romances. Tasso defines the epic or romantic poem, for example, as the "imitation of illustrious actions, complete and great, told in most noble verse, and made with this purpose, to move men's minds with wonder, and thus to their profit."[14]

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[13]Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism (2d ed.; Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1947), p. 4.

[14]John Arthos, On the Poetry of Spenser and the Form of Romances (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1956), p. 55, quoting Tasso.

The imitation the early romancers sought was not of things "as they are," but "as they should be"; they sought to convey an illusion, not of life as does Henry James, but of a higher reality.

In many ways, Book I of Spenser's Faerie Queene is the noble prototype for the baser heroic romances that succeeded it. Its characteristics may serve as the basis for most subsequent definitions of romance. Its setting is in the past and in the distance; its language is allegorical. The first stanza of the prologue to Book I establishes its purpose: "Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song." And the means by which this purpose is to be accomplished are set forth in the first three stanzas of Canto I: (1) there is a hero, handsome, good, and brave, honored by and honoring the highest authority in the human and divine community and committed to achieve further honor for himself and his spiritual and secular lords; (2) his fulfilling this latter task will necessarily involve him in journeying and combat with a mortal and monstrous foe, "a Dragon, horrible and stearne." At the outset of his adventure the Redcrosse Knight is accompanied by the beautiful and pure Una; but tricked by the Great Enchanter into doubting her chastity, he flees, alone in his virtue, out into Faerie Land with its prodigies of evil and good, ugliness and beauty. His isolation, however, is not absolute; he confronts his world with its unknown proportions of evil, knowing he can act according to divine and social sanctions.

Ultimately, through his faith and his love, the hero of The Faerie Queene perceives and destroys evil and achieves a perfection recognized by these most exalted external sanctions. Ultimately, his actions--neither iconoclastic nor rebellious--and his perfection reaffirm and elevate the feeling of harmony among men and between men and God. In his study of Spenserian romances, John Arthos emphasizes that in The Faerie Queene

> Glory is achieved not alone in the fulfilment of man's own nature but also in helping to purify the relations between men in society (destroying injustice, calumny, deceit) for only in a just and perfect society do even love and marriage establish a permanent relationship.[15]

The medieval romances which Sir Walter Scott, in his "Essay on Romance," designated as "spiritual romances" conclude with a martyr's death, his altar on earth, and his seat among the saints in heaven--the most just and perfect society.[16]

By the middle of the seventeenth century, a new romance form appeared in France, to be immediately translated for an eager English public. This, the chivalric romance, reached its apex in the works of La Calprenède and Madeline de Scudéry, with one title often extending over fifteen or twenty volumes. These romances, too, could be characterized by a hero of noble character and noble action, who was bound to meet with improbable prodigies on his journeys. Nor, as Arthur Cooke points out in his study of

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[15] Ibid., p. 91.

[16] Sir Walter Scott, The Prose Works, VI (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834), 142.

the theory of the romance from 1650 to 1800, were these latter-day romancers attempting to describe an impossible world of the imagination:

> They merely endeavored to avoid the grosser elements of this one [this world] so as not to contaminate the reader's morals or put any evil suggestions in his head. Much less did they ever advance the idea that perhaps true reality might be in the world of dreams.[17]

The chivalric romance, then, in spite of its emphasis upon what is called by Congreve "miraculous contingencies and impossible performances,"[18] did not run counter to the general neo-classical conviction of a world well-ordered and readily comprehended through rationality.

Similar to the hero of the earlier romances, the chivalric hero was not really isolated, but quite snug in his virtues and in his ultimate success. The chivalric romance of the late seventeenth century, however, is completely secularized. Although the hero is pious, and always destroys his dragon, his success is climaxed by his proving his noble descent, winning the lady's hand and the throne and respect of the land. The romancers themselves, however, as Cooke makes clear, felt that the ideals they promoted were attainable by society and that their works had a distinctly utilitarian value; Mlle de Scudéry, for example, regarded her romances:

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[17]Arthur L. Cooke, "The Concept and Theory of Romance from 1650 to 1800" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1944), p. 72.

[18]Ernest Baker, The Later Romances and the Establishment of Realism, Vol. III: The History of the English Novel (London: H. F. and G. Witherby, 1934), pp. 103-104, quoting Congreve, Incognita, or, Love and Duty Reconcil'd (1692).

> . . . as useful and pleasant guide books for the moral and social education of the reader. By rewarding virtue and punishing vice [they] strengthened the reader's moral principles, and by depicting love in the highest form [they] gave him a model for his own conduct in the affairs of the heart.[19]

Her romances were thus hand-books on morality, providing the reader with models upon which to base his conduct in society. In language, the seventeenth-century romances also represented a shift from the earlier romances; although La Calprènede and Mlle de Scudéry consciously sought for an elevated rhetoric, because of their secularization, their works converted the complex and rational allegory of Spenser into sentimental melodrama.

In the 100 years between 1641, when Mlle de Scudéry's first book, Ibrahim, was published, and 1740, when Pamela appeared, the educative values of the romance came to be suspect, and ironically the romances were denounced as dangerous for the very reasons they were once so enthusiastically endorsed. They were condemned by the critics and readers of the new novels for their reliance upon the courtly code of love and honor and upon the misuse of history; both with regard to human nature and to historical fact the romances were termed improbable. Cooke cites a letter written in 1757 by a Mrs. Chapone to a friend:

> I make no scruples to call romances the worst of all species of writing: unnatural representations of the passions, false sentiments, false precepts, false wit, false honor, and false modesty with a strange heap of improbable, unnatural incidents mixed up with

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[19]Cooke, p. 70.

> the true history and fastened upon some of the great names of antiquity.[20]

J. M. S. Tompkins summarizes the thought of the time, pinpointing the reason for the antipathy toward the romance as follows:

> To be romantic is to prefer the satisfactions of imagination to those of reason; it is to remain wilfully blind to the real nature of man and the world, to insist on finding in daily life those figures of beauty and terror, at once grander and simpler than life, that haunt the mind in reverie; it is in short, to emancipate Fancy, that Cinderella of the eighteenth century, from the control of her stern sister, Judgment.[21]

The romance seemed irretrievably associated with the improbable, and hence with the imagination, that faculty most blessed by the nineteenth-century romantic poets and with qualification by Henry James.

That the romance was not dead, in spite of its critics, Sheridan Baker demonstrates in his essay on "The Idea of the Romance in the Eighteenth-Century Novel"; not only was it yet considered edifying, but it was also being used by the novelists for purposes of their own. Baker maintains first, that with the eighteenth century, the individual, able now to rise in the social scale, fulfilled the idea of success as suggested by the climax of the old romance, and second, that the ideals set down by the romance actually did serve as standards for excellence in conduct.[22]

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[20] Ibid., p. 215.

[21] J. M. S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England, 1770-1800 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 210.

[22] Sheridan Baker, "The Idea of Romance in Eighteenth-Century Literature," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, XLIX (1964), 510.

Baker's essay substantiates this latter point with a passage from The Progress of Romance (1785) by Clara Reeve, who, in her conviction that the romances could teach young men and women right manners and morals, sounds like Mlle de Scudéry's disciple. Most significantly, however, Baker suggests that for the eighteenth-century novelists the romance became a symbol of man's illusions; yet even as they burlesque the ideals of the romance, the novelists show their heroes achieving the romantic ideal in their rise from the ranks of nobodies. Thus, as Baker also stresses, the eighteenth-century novelists, like Cervantes, "discovered beneath the satiric romancing of everyday follies the essential display of man as a comically illusioned contradiction."[23] The influence of the romance upon the emerging novel, then, seems dual; we still have the individual acting and growing within the realm of external and social ideals, but we also have the individual whose thoughts, conditioned by The Grand Cyrus and Cassandra, exemplify man's tendency and need to exercise the imagination, to cultivate ideals, and inevitably to be disillusioned. Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey, of course, epitomizes the duality of the anti-romance, with Mrs. Radcliffe's Romance of the Forest being the source of Catherine Morland's illusions and with Henry Tilney being the means not only by which she is disillusioned, but also by which she rises socially, marrying him and joining the aristocracy.

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[23] Ibid., p. 518.

That there were pleasures as well as dangers to be had from the imagination became manifestly clear by the flowering of the Gothic romance at the close of the century. The pattern noted in The Faerie Queene continues to prevail in the Gothic romances; an individual, isolated from society and security, encounters perils. And the secular and sentimental moral emphasis remains consistent with that of the seventeenth-century romances. Thus vice is punished and virtue and love are triumphant at the conclusion of the first Gothic novel, Walpole's Castle of Otranto, as well as the conclusion of the work with which the genre is culminated, Maturin's Wanderer.

Cooke finds Miss Reeve, author of a Gothic romance, An Old English Baron, as well as The Progress of Romance, suggesting in 1793 that "the Gothic romance might prove an antidote to the philosophy of the French Revolution by glorifying manners and customs of olden times."[24] But Devendra Varma's thesis that the Gothic novel was symptomatic of the forces leading to the French Revolution and symbolic of the collapse of the feudal system seems more probable,[25] for if the Gothic romance gratified the reader's moral sense, it primarily spoke to his imagination and his desire to be terrified. As Tompkins declares:

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[24]Cooke, p. 334.

[25]Devendra P. Varma, The Gothic Flame (London: Arthur Barker, Ltd., 1957), p. 218.

> The marvellous, as Clara Reeve had employed it, could be justified as an emphatic means of drawing attention to the moral . . . but not even disingenuity could stretch this excuse into a shelter for the Gothic romance in its heyday. More and more clearly another line of defense emerges. Let it be admitted that the romantic and marvellous has no direct contribution to make to ethics; at least it exercises and strengthens the imagination which "may at length take bolder and more successful flights."[26]

The Gothic romancers sought to achieve their ends not only by the description of supernatural effects, unnatural lusts, and morally offensive acts, but also by the evocation of the temporally and the spatially exotic. Besides being haunted, Mrs. Radcliffe's castles stand in medieval Italy, ruined and hovering in the mist. From Walpole on, however, the writer of Gothic novels insisted on some kind of compromise with reality. Walpole's intention was specifically "to blend the marvellous of the old story with the natural of modern novels," and he hence harbored low comic servants among his ruins. In spite of her medievalism, Mrs. Radcliffe's characters always wear the garb and speak the idiom of the eighteenth century; but if historical accuracy was not her aim, probability was. Her conclusions always carefully rationalize the supernatural away, and we are left in her novels with the probability of a mood--the mood, Tompkins suggests, "of a sensitive dreamer before Gothic buildings and picturesque scenery."[27] Mrs. Radcliffe was able to sustain her mood by always leaving

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[26]Tompkins, p. 217.

[27]Ibid., p. 225.

one wing of her castle unexplored--some ruin for the reader's imagination to roam. Tompkins quotes her as theorizing, "To the warm imagination the forms which float half-veiled in darkness afford a higher delight than the most distinct scenery the sun can show."[28] In the Gothic romance, then, the imagination of the characters and the readers is unleashed, but, with the sweet smugness of the sentimental moralizer, Mrs. Radcliffe also manages to abandon the unknown and to preserve the ideals of love and honor.

Sir Walter Scott followed Mrs. Radcliffe in romancing, especially in sketching vast canvasses of the past. Although he seems more set upon historical and psychological accuracy than his predecessor, Frederick Karl makes the valid point that

> . . . within a romantic context he creates what appear to be realistic characters; yet when these characters must act, they do so unrealistically, creating an evidently stilted situation. Further even within realistic scenes, his characters do not act according to any inner logic, but rather to the needs of the plot or the predisposition of the author, to preserve the old order and protect property.[29]

Scott could indeed stir the imagination of his characters and his readers with his efflorescent descriptions of the Scottish landscape and the Scottish past, but such stirrings led more to sentimental nostalgia than to psychological considerations. Young Edward Waverley grew up feasting in the large Gothic library at Waverley-Honor on the romantic fiction of England, France, and Spain:

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[28] Ibid., p. 257.

[29] Karl, p. 66.

> . . . "[chewing] the cud of sweet and bitter fancy," and, like a child among his toys, culled and arranged, from the splendid yet useless imagery and emblems with which his imagination was stored, visions as brilliant and as fading as those of an evening sky.[30]

Yet, Scott warns the reader that his tale is not to be an "imitation of the romance of Cervantes"; it is, as he determines it shall be, on the order of the chivalric romances--a tale which upholds the ideals of love and honor, which illustrates "moral lessons" as "the most important part of my plan."

The Gothic romance and Scott's romances were the off-shoots of the Romantic Movement in the field of prose fiction. Indeed, the catalytic factors which prompted the creation of these romances at the end of the eighteenth century were neither the chivalric romances of more than a century before nor the anti-romantic aspects of the novels, but rather the works of such imaginative writers as Ossian and the graveyard poets. Their descriptions of an awesome history, of wild landscapes, of death and decay were directly aimed at stimulating emotions and imagination. The individual, whether character or reader, no longer could see himself quite so easily as a complacent member of a mechanistic and rationally comprehended world; his imagination brought him face to face with the mysterious past, often an unknown culture, and evil incomprehensible; his pulses throbbed with terror, an emotion unexpected in

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[30]Sir Walter Scott, Waverley (New York: George D. Sproul, 1901), p. 22.

himself and previously unrecognized. The appeal of Mrs. Radcliffe and Scott is finally, however, to the sentiments and the imagination through a representation of the external world rather than through the representation of an inner, psychological world.

As the Romantic Movement quickened and erupted into the French Revolution, this individual, while recognizing himself as mysteriously linked with the larger natural and supernatural world, came to be able to assert himself with new authority. Supported by Rousseau's premise for politics that society was corrupting and Humes' premise for aesthetics that beauty is determined in the mind of the beholder, the individual could overthrow the traces of the old restrictive moral codes of society. "I" rather than "Everyman" was important, the internal and subjective rather than the external and objective. Childe Harold, bearing

> With haughtly scorn which mock'd the smart,
> Through Europe to the AEolian shore
> The pageant of his bleeding heart,

was the new hero. And sympathy was aroused for the sin- and death-haunted Ancient Mariner:

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide wide sea!
> And never a saint took pity on
> My soul in agony.

The new hero resembled the heroes of the older romance in his isolation and his wanderings, but differed from them in his rejection of external standards and in his insistence on the value of his own self-determined standards and his own egocentric feelings. Rational

processes and external standards give him little comfort. Unlike the heroes of early romance, he is alienated from society by the force of his personal credo and by his consciousness of non-rational processes. He broods more gloomily than any previous hero, for his world is overcast with guilt, like the Ancient Mariner's, and angst, like Werther's. His victory is, like Heathcliff's, often pyhrric, and the happy ending, which Sheridan Baker points to as our permanent legacy from the romance,[31] becomes inverted.

With the overlapping of the conventions of the older romance with the concepts of romanticism, a new definition of the romance seems necessary. Not only when it has existed independently, but also when it has been incorporated into works pronounced realistic by their authors because of their examination of the present and the factual, the romance has been characterized by two qualities: (1) it has sponsored the imagination, pronouncedly asking for "a willing suspension of disbelief" when it has evoked the unknown--the temporally and the spatially exotic and the supernatural, and (2) it has perpetuated, often with a heavy hand, certain moral ideals which traditionally worked for the preservation of the society. Until the advent of Romanticism, however, the inherent and inevitable clash between these two characteristics was not brought fully into the open. The imagination

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[31]Sheridan Baker, p. 250.

of the individual character as well as that of the individual reader, having been given free rein, had sooner or later to conflict with the standards of behavior supported by society. This conflict has led to the definition of romance given by Donald Billiar, who contrasts it with the novel--the former being concerned with representative and isolated individuals in relation to the cosmos, the latter with several individuals in relation to their society. Richard Chase and Northrop Frye emphasize that the characters of the romance will consequently tend to exist in "ideal relation" or as "stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes."[32]

Certainly, Romanticism has enhanced the romance's traditional emphasis upon the isolated individual who dwells in distant time and place and who encounters perils and prodigies to make the imagination stand on end. What the Romantic Movement has added to a concept of romance is the sense that the perils and prodigies are not merely discovered in the hero's external surroundings, but most disturbingly also in himself. The medieval romance, however, may still make itself felt in other regards, first, in its reliance upon allegory and melodrama; secondly, in its impetus toward victory for society and the morally good. Although, with

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[32]Donald Billiar, "The Philosophical Romance in Nineteenth-Century England" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1963), pp. 16-21; Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), pp. 12-13; Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 304.

the advent of Romanticism, the hero no longer necessarily chooses the accepted way to success in society, he may achieve an understanding of the ideals of society and of himself in relation to them. Don Quixote becomes an archetypal hero, for as the nineteenth-century hero moves toward self-knowledge and as his early ideals prove to be illusions, he also seems increasingly to be "one of us." He may not win the lady's hand, but he proves his noble descent by discovering his humanity.

As there was a reaction against the chivalric romance in the eighteenth century, so there was a reaction against the Gothic and the sentimental romance in the nineteenth. Although Dickens and Thackeray were not above using the romantic past, the Gothic supernatural, and sentiment to ring down the curtain on happiness and social harmony, they saw society whole. The novels of Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, and Maupassant were also speaking out strongly to the nineteenth-century English writer for the scientific fact and for the necessity of examining the panorama of present-day society.

Against this current of realism another wave of romances arose at the end of the century, sponsored by Lang, Arthur Machen, Anthony Hope, Hewlett, Kipling, Haggard, and Stevenson--and questioned by Henry James. All would have agreed with Stevenson's reply to James' "The Art of Fiction":

> No art does "compete with life." Man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half-shut his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality.[33]

But Lang shut his eyes to indulge his imagination in the wonders of Faerie, and Hope and Hewlett immersed themselves in the glories of the past; Machen sought "ecstasy," that grand amorphous sensation; Kipling and Haggard fled into the distant jungles and the deserts where physical violence was king. In France, Durtal, the nearly autobiographical hero of J.-K. Huysmans' Là-bas (1891) debated the merits of romance and realism in words which bear a strong resemblance to James' definition of romance in his preface to The American:

> The novel, if that were possible ought to be subdivided into two parts,--two parts, yet welded together or rather inextricably united, as they are in life,--that of the soul and that of the body, and their mutual reactions, their contradictions, their points of agreement, studied. In a word the main highway, so strongly marked out by Zola, must be followed, but likewise it would be needful to trace a parallel road in the air, a second highway, to reach out to the regions beyond and after, to frame in fact a spiritual realism that would be infinitely grander, stronger and more complete![34]

Huysmans' hero, however, was convinced that the romance as well as the novel had so degenerated that only a "yearning for the supernatural that, for lack of more elevated ideals, was stumbling in the byways of spiritualism and the occult"

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[33]Robert Louis Stevenson, "A Humble Remonstrance," Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Janet Adam Smith (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1948), p. 91.

[34]J.-K. Huysmans, Là-bas, trans. Lucien Descaves (London: The Fortune Press, 1930), p. 5.

remained in the world of letters. Here was the old romance, with one of its aspects blown to excess--the supernatural, the past, the distance, the melodramatic--with the individual, perhaps a man of imagination, but one of essentially unchanging illusions. Of the Europeans, Stevenson alone, according to James, saw that romance provided a superior means for examining human life psychologically, in terms of the inner man and in terms of human relations.

Meanwhile in the United States, William Gilmore Simms in his preface to The Yemassee and Nathaniel Hawthorne in his prefaces to The House of the Seven Gables, The Blithedale Romance, and The Marble Faun had, since the early part of the century, been attempting to explain their reasons for calling their works romances instead of novels. The romance in Simms' view exemplifies "the wild and wonderful,"[35] in Hawthorne's view it concerns "the Marvellous,"[36] yet Simms says the romance "shall grasp at the possible," and Hawthorne asserts that "it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart." This truth, he insists, however, shall not be presented didactically; it shall not

> . . . impale the story with its moral as with an iron rod,--or, rather, as by sticking a pin through a

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[35]Chase, quoting from the preface to William Gilmore Simms' The Yemassee (1835), p. 17.

[36]Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, Vol. III: The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. G. P. Lathrop (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1883), p. 13.

> butterfly,--thus at once depriving it of life, and causing it to stiffen in an ungainly and unnatural attitude.[37]

F. O. Matthiessen and Chase find in Hawthorne's and Simms' prefaces the crucial testimony to the allegorical quality of American romances. While avoiding didacticism and a literal verisimilitude, Hawthorne relies upon symbols, as Matthiessen points out, to deal with humanity in general, with "'the life in the life.'"[38] When Hawthorne sets his characters in the past, he isolates them, forcing them to cope with supernatural wonders in the way of the older romance, forcing them to question themselves and their ideals in the way of the new romance. Man is once more Everyman rather than "I," yet even as he comes to understand himself and his relation to society, he is alone.

Romance, then, is traditionally a many-stringed instrument, and, used over the course of centuries, certain of its strings have been played with greater stress. When the string of the improbable--Mrs. Radcliffe's supernatural or Hawthorne's "Marvellous" or Babbitt's "wonderful"--has been played alone, the result has been only a titillating melody, not lingering. Similarly when the string of morality has been plucked hard, the result has been either didactic allegory or sentimental melodrama. But a concern with the

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[37] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[38] F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 271.

improbable and with morality has also led to an examination of the destiny of an individual: an individual alienated from society, physically and by the quality of his imagination and his ideals--an individual whose imagination is expanded and ideals challenged by a confrontation with the unknown in himself and his society. In his long experience as a critic, as well as a practitioner, of the romance, Henry James came to know the instrument of romance well--its facile conventions as well as potentialities for high seriousness.

From the time of his first published criticism in 1864 through the writing of the prefaces for the New York edition between 1907 and 1909 and on to his statements on "The New Novel," James expressed an always lively interest in the nature of romance and in the nineteenth-century controversy over the distinction between romanticism and realism and the romance and the novel; he vacillated between damning and honoring romanticism and the romance, and even went so far as to throw up his hands and deny the existence of the distinction. Even in his most definitive statements regarding the romance, in his preface to The American, he continued to maintain that making the differentiation was as difficult as putting a marker between North and South. The criteria which have been used here to describe the central concern or the traditional romance--the idealistic and/or imaginative individual on a quest--are not the criteria which James uses in his criticism of the romance.

In the prefaces, however, he identifies the individual imagination as the best possible means for projecting a romance.

To the young James, publishing for the first time and on "Fiction and Sir Walter Scott," no prose-writer before Scott had exhibited "so vast and rich an imagination."[39] Describing the lack of pointed moral instruction in Waverley, James praises it with an early exuberance he would later have dampened:

> Waverley was the first novel that was self-forgetful. It proposed simply to amuse the reader as an old English ballad amused him. . . . It was the novel irresponsible.[40]

Scott's "stream of wondrous improvisation" and "the richness of his invention and memory"[41] most endeared him to the young writer of romances. Yet James also recognized that while Scott was romantically "tender of the past," he could also construct realistic "triumphs of fact."[42]

In 1875, James fell happily among the French realists, spending frequent Sundays with Flaubert, Maupassant, Zola, and Edmond Goncourt, and "triumphs of fact" became more interesting to him than evocations of the past. In this year, James also wrote "Benvolio," a story easily identified as an allegory; in its introductory paragraph, James himself prevaricates about calling it a fairy-tale. Although the story

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[39]Henry James, "Fiction and Sir Walter Scott," Notes and Reviews (Cambridge: Dunster House, 1921), pp. 10-11.

[40]Ibid., p. 11.

[41]Ibid., p. 14.

[42]Ibid., p. 12.

questions the attitudes of romance, James nevertheless relies upon what is traditionally a technique of romance to make his point.

Benvolio, a young poet-playwright and "a tissue of contradiction," is caught between his antithetical desires for the active and the contemplative lives and his desires for two women, the romantic Countess and the Puritanical Scholastica. As Leon Edel suggests, Benvolio represents James himself, pulled between Europe and poetic imaginings on the one hand and America and critical writing on the other.[43] Cornelia Pulsifer Kelley interprets the allegory, however, in her study of The Early Development of Henry James in terms of the pull in James' early career between romanticism and realism with the imaginative George Sand and the moralistic George Eliot representing the two polarities. The conclusion of the story is ambiguous: Benvolio, angered at the effectiveness of the Countess' malevolence in arranging to have Scholastica leave for the Antipodes, retrieves her, but married to her, his poetry becomes "dismally dull," and he longs for the romantic Countess. The allegory would thus seem to have a self-directed moral: be wary of the lack of scruples and seriousness in romance but remember her beauty and her wonder. In spite of her recognition of this moral, Miss Kelley insists that the strain of romance in James' works was not in the main stream of his development, that it was only an intrusion:

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[43]Leon Edel, The Conquest of London: 1870-1881 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1962), p. 193.

> . . . even as he felt her charms [the charms of his Countess, George Sand], he realized her restrictions--she was an improvisatrice, working by means of her imagination and her fancy rather than by observation and thought and high ideals of morality. . . . in 1877 and again in 1879, there was critical work which shows James definitely bidding farewell to his Countess. He promised to think of her sometimes, but he would not give her all his attention. With the increasing attraction which George Eliot and Turgenieff had for James, it was inevitable that the active influence of romanticism should stop.[44]

Edel's emphasis upon Benvolio's last words to the Countess--"Don't you see, can't you imagine, that I cared for you only by contrast?"--seems to me to lead to a more consistent interpretation of this autobiographical allegory; according to Edel:

> Contrast and comparison was [sic] to be the law of his [James'] life; and in the performance of this, an act of critical judgment was a necessary as well as an artistic function. He reconciled both; and he paid his price. He became at once the most intellectual of artists, and the most passionate of critics. And he always led the double life of Benvolio: he courted Europe and he never forgot America.[45]

It is this all-important ability to synthesize contrasts which James specifically praises in his preface to The American in discussing the romance. "Men of the largest responding imagination before the human scene" (AN, p. 31) will be able to synthesize the real and the romantic. Into this category James was able to place both Scott, the romantic, and Zola, the naturalist, two seemingly antithetical writers; yet James saw them both as bringing romantic and

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[44]Cornelia Pulsifer Kelley, The Early Development of Henry James (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 245-46.

[45]Conquest, p. 193.

realistic disparities together, as having a current which is "extraordinarily rich and mixed, washing us successively with the warm wave of the near and familiar and the tonic shock, as may be, of the far and strange." James was not like Lang, who in 1887, wrote that "if the battle between the crocodile of Realism and the catawampus of Romance is to be fought out to the bitter end--why, in that Rognarok, I am on the side of the catawampus";[46] James would not choose, and hence, contrary to Miss Kelley's thesis, his fiction continues to wash us in waves of the romance.

In 1877, he was still happy enough under the influence of the French writers to proclaim in a letter to his friend Elizabeth Boott, "I am a realist!";[47] yet his exclamation came in defense of The American--the work he was later to perceive as arch-romance and that prompted him to define the genre. Two years after his defensive exclamation this determined devoté of realism brought his doctrines up against those of an admirable and professed romancer. Hawthorne was described in James' 1879 book for the "English Men of Letters" series as "not in the least a realist--he was not to my mind enough of one."[48] If the example of George Sand made James realize that the imagination could

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[46]Roger Lancelyn Green, Andrew Lang (Leicester: Edmund Ward, 1946), p. 111, quoting Andrew Lang, Contemporary Review (November, 1887).

[47]Conquest, p. 254.

[48]Hawthorne, p. 65.

be infinitely inventive as well as "restless, nervous, and capricious,[49] in Hawthorne he realized that the imagination of the romance-maker was especially able to probe psychological depths. It was to Hawthorne's everlasting credit that he applied his imagination to glimpse into the "region of mysteries and subtleties"[50] of human consciousness to discover what James was later to call "the latent romance of New England."[51] James writes with boundless admiration for the way in which

> . . . the imagination in this capital son of the old Puritans, reflected the hue of the more purely moral part, of the dusky overshadowed conscience. The conscience, by no fault of its own, in every genuine offshoot of that sombre lineage, lay under the shadow of the sense of sin. . . . Hawthorne's way was the best, for he contrived, by an exquisite process, best known to himself, to transmute this heavy moral burden into the very substance of the imagination, to make it evaporate in the light and charming form of the artistic production.[52]

Hawthorne succeeded, James repeatedly notes, because his imagination enhanced his moral sense; "when his fancy was strongest and keenest, the dark Puritan tinge showed in it most richly."[53]

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[49]Henry James, "George Sand," Literary Reviews and Essays, ed. Albert Mordell (New York: Grove Press, 1957), pp. 126, 134.

[50]Hawthorne, p. 51.

[51]Henry James, "Nathaniel Hawthorne," Vol. XVIII of The Library of the World's Best Literature, ed. Charles Dudley Warner (New York: J. A. Hill, 1896), pp. 7053-54.

[52]Hawthorne, pp. 57-58.

[53]Ibid., p. 102.

James saw Hawthorne's major flaw, however, as also stemming from his imagination, from his imagination reduced to a mechanized fancy. In attempting to differentiate between the two inventive faculties, James refers to the one as "larger and more potent," the other as displaying "a kind of small ingenuity, a taste for conceits and analogies."[54] He had made a similar distinction in his 1864 review of Harriet Prescott's Azarian, convinced that "in the writing of fiction there is no grander instrument than a potent imagination and none more pernicious than an unbridled fancy."[55] (This almost Coleridgean distinction between imagination and fancy is only strictly kept by James, however, when he wishes to contrast the two faculties.)

James found Hawthorne adopting the habit of the transcendentalists' imagination for "perpetually looking for images which shall place themselves in picturesque correspondence with the spiritual facts."[56] This search for images, which James calls "the very essence of poetry," can, however, become fancy's routine. When Hawthorne searched too assiduously, his symbolism became superficial and forced--an end in itself; it could also deprive his works of vitality, making them coldly intellectual. Thus James considers overdrawn the repeated appearance of the "A" in The Scarlet Letter

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[54] Ibid., p. 61.

[55] Henry James, "Miss Prescott's Azarian," Notes and Reviews, pp. 31-32.

[56] Hawthorne, p. 119.

and such scenes as that in which the spiritual chasm between Hester Prynne and Pearl is demonstrated by the brook flowing between them. Similarly he was dissatisfied with several of Hawthorne's shorter, allegorical tales, allegory being "one of the lighter exercises of the imagination," spoiling "two good things, a story and a moral, a meaning and a form."[57]

In spite of his appreciation and recognition of the particular quality of romance in Hawthorne's works, in his 1884 essay on "The Art of Fiction" James emphatically begged the question of a distinction between the romance and the novel:

> The novel and the romance, the novel of incident and that of character--these clumsy separations appear to me to have been made by critics and readers for their own convenience and to help them out of some of their occasional queer predicaments. . . . The French, who have brought the theory to remarkable completeness, have but one name for the novel, and have not attempted smaller things in it, that I can see, for that.[58]

The only justification for distinguishing the romance from the novel, he asserts in 1884, would be "simply for the pleasantness of the thing." In his essay, however, James is pleading for "The Rights of the Artist," the freedom for the individual artist to represent life as he perceived it; it is a romantic cry in keeping with other declarations of independence, and as such it rings with absolute pronouncements: "the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems

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[57] Ibid., p. 62.

[58] Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," Partial Portraits (London: Macmillan & Co., 1888), p. 394.

to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel"[59] . . . "the only classification of the novel I can understand is into that which has life and that which has it not."[60] And as a manifesto there could be no distracting digressions from the central position that the novel must produce "an illusion of life." "The Art of Fiction" in its salvos for realism, however, was James' loudest protest against the romance, and even here he does not totally negate the genre. His plea is simply for the liberty of the writer, and for such a work as Treasure Island, which he later terms a romance, he has high praise, for it admirably conveys "an illusion of life."

In 1884, however, this apostle of realism and of the novel was not to go unnoticed by the opposite camp; James' essay was soon answered by Stevenson's "A Humble Remonstrance." Stevenson, who two years before had published "A Gossip on Romance," in which he had defined romance as "the poetry of circumstance," now insisted upon a similar category of fiction called "the novel of adventure." Both relied upon incidents, satisfying "the nameless longings of the reader and [obeying] the ideal laws of the day dream."[61] In "The Art of Fiction" James had appropriated the term "adventure," which the romancers had traditionally claimed as their own, and declared

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[59] Ibid., p. 390.

[60] Ibid., p. 393.

[61] Robert Louis Stevenson, "A Gossip on Romance," Memories and Portraits and Random Memories, Vol. XIII: "South Seas Edition" (4th ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p. 136.

that any psychological reason may provoke adventure; Stevenson honed down this declaration, maintaining that the novel of adventure deals with certain kinds of psychological experiences:

> Danger is the matter with which this class of novel deals; fear, the passion with which it idly trifles; and the characters are portrayed only so far as they realize the sense of danger and provoke the sympathy of fear.[62]

The day after he had read it, James answered Stevenson's article with a letter stating his agreement with Stevenson's position. He was particularly impressed with Stevenson's conclusion which advised a young writer to

> . . . bear in mind that his novel is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitude; but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its significant simplicity.[63]

Following the initial exchange between Stevenson and James in 1884, a friendship began, which flourished in correspondence from the time of Stevenson's departure from England until his death in Samoa in 1894. The friendship was supplemented in 1887 and in 1900 by James, with two highly complimentary essays on Stevenson, and I believe that the spate of very conscious romances which James wrote in the last decade of the century may be due in part to his respect for the "illusion of life" which he knew Stevenson was able to pack into his romances. James felt that Stevenson's imagination never soured to fancy and his

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[62] "A Humble Remonstrance," p. 95.

[63] Ibid., p. 100.

stories never shrank to the merely didactic or picturesque. He triumphed in conveying the "extraordinary," by which James meant not only "the improbable," but also "the heroic . . . especially as these things shine afar in the credulous eye of youth."[64] Speaking for his friend, James himself endorses the tradition of romance in the 1887 essay:

> He would say we ought to make believe that the extraordinary is the best part of life, even if it were not, and to do so because the finest feelings--suspense, daring, decision, passion, curiosity, gallantry, eloquence, friendship--are involved in it, and it is of infinite importance that the tradition of these precious things should not perish.[65]

James is primarily inclined to endorse Stevenson's concept of the romance, however, because he had found the romance in Stevenson's hands particularly adaptable to psychology--as in Kidnapped and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"--and to quite ordinary, even contemporary, human affairs--as in "The Suicide Club." Although he did not categorize Treasure Island in "The Art of Fiction," in his 1887 essay on Stevenson he acknowledges the work not only as a romance, but also as an "indescribable mixture of the prodigious and the human, of surprising coincidences and familiar feelings."[66] Kidnapped represents a similar mixture; for this book James had deep respect, for it was a signal

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[64]"Robert Louis Stevenson," Partial Portraits, pp. 163-64.

[65]Ibid., p. 165.

[66]Ibid., p. 168.

demonstration of what the best fiction was capable of: of illustrating "human affairs in cases so delicate and complicated that any other vehicle would be clumsy."[67] James was convinced that in spite of Stevenson's defense of the romance and his "Protean imagination,"[68] his feeling for life was never obscured:

> He is an artist accomplished even to sophistication, whose constant theme is the unsophisticated. Sometimes, as in Kidnapped, the air is so ripe that it lifts the subject into the general air; the execution is so serious that the idea (the idea of a boy's romantic adventures), becomes a matter of universal relations.[69]

Flaubert was different from Stevenson and a more difficult matter. In a convenient image James describes Flaubert's often noted duality as a "curious splendid insect sustained on wings of a different coloration, the right a vivid red, say, and the left as frank a yellow."[70] The right side is representative of Flaubert's realistic novels, Madame Bovary and L'Education Sentimentale, the left by the romantic Sâlammbo and La Tentation de Saint-Antoine. Like Hawthorne, Flaubert sought for images; yet there were no spiritual facts behind the natural facts Flaubert projected; according to James:

> M. Flaubert's peculiar talent is the description--minute, incisive, exhaustive--of material

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[67] Ibid., p. 173.

[68] The Letters of Henry James, ed. Percy Lubbock, I (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 175. Hereafter cited in the text as L.

[69] "Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 145.

[70] "Gustave Flaubert," p. 74.

> objects. . . . He succeeds wonderfully well in making an image, in finding and combining just the words in which the look of the object resides.[71]

Flaubert's romantic works abound in the merely descriptive, picturesque, mechanical, and although James refers to his description of St. Anthony's vision as an undertaking of "no small imaginative energy,"[72] his further statements in the essay of 1874 and in an essay of 1902 suggest that Flaubert's romances were the product of an exacting fancy. His earlier conclusion regarding La Tentation is supplemented by the fuller, later statement of his conception of Flaubert's aesthetic position:

> M. Flaubert's picturesque is a strangely artificial and cold-blooded picturesque--abounding in the grotesque and repulsive, the abnormal and the barely conceivable, but seeming to attain to it all by infinite labor, ingenuity, and research--never by one of the fine intuitions of a joyous and generous invention.[73]

Nevertheless, it was Flaubert, who, as James certainly appreciated, could create in his most realistic work, Madame Bovary, the most moving picture of the romantic temperament.

A study of the prefaces to the New York edition can both clarify and illuminate the province James finally came to consider as characteristic of the romance since his rejection of the genre in "The Art of Fiction," since the development of his respect for Stevenson, the man and the

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[71] "Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony," Literary Reviews, p. 146.

[72] Ibid., p. 147.

[73] Ibid., p. 150.

artist, and since his increased admiration for Hawthorne.[74] On preparing for the re-issuing of his writings and on the re-reading of The American, James realized that his early novel contained "the stalest stuff of romance" (AN, p. 24); he consequently seems to have imposed upon himself the necessity of producing once and for all a proper definition of romance. To establish the most valid critical standards for determining why one work of art may convey "the air of reality" while another conveys "the air of romance," James began by examining the conventional concepts of romance, the conventional concepts being those which he discovered in The American and which in a letter written in 1904 on the occasion of the Hawthorne Centenary he classified as "the artificial romantic note." Invariably the "artificial" romance relied upon a

> . . . list of romantic properties. The country of romance has been for them [the writers of artificial romance] but a particular spot on the map, colored blue or red or yellow--they have to take it from the map; or has been this, that, or the other particular set of complications, machinations, coincidences, or escapes, this, that, or the other fashion of firearm or cutlass, cock of hat, frizzle of wig, violence of scuffle, or sound of expletive: mere accidents and outward patches.[75]

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[74]Peter Buitenhuis, "Henry James on Hawthorne," New England Quarterly, XXXII (June, 1959), 207-225, examines the five pieces of criticism James wrote on Hawthorne and argues persuasively that James' respect for Hawthorne rose following his examination of his predecessor's limitations in 1879.

[75]Henry James, "The Hawthorne Centenary," Henry James: The American Essays, ed. Leon Edel (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 27.

Opposed to the "artificial" romantic note was the "real" romantic note, which James believed Hawthorne struck. In 1899 W. D. Howells had made a similar distinction between the "romantic" and the "romantistic," and in 1901 Frank Norris had contrasted the "romantic" with the "sentimental."[76] In his preface for The American James attempts to eliminate the confusion between the artificial romance and the real romance with general statements regarding the

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[76]W. D. Howells, "Novel-Writing and Novel-Reading, An Impersonal Explanation," ed. William M. Gibson, Bulletin of the New York Public Library, LXII (January, 1958), 20, maintains, "The romance is of as great purity of intention as the novel, but it deals with life allegorically; it employs types rather than characters and studies them in the ideal rather than the real; it handles the passions broadly . . . The romantistic novel professes like the real novel to portray actual life, but it does this with an excess of drawing and coloring which are false to nature. It attributes motives to people which do not govern real people, and its characters are of the quality of types; they are heroic for good or for bad. It seeks effect rather than truth; and endeavors to hide in a cloud of incident the deformity and artificiality of its creations. It revels in the extravagant, the unusual, and the bizarre." Louis J. Budd, "W. D. Howells' Defense of the Romance," PMLA, LXVII (March, 1952), 32-42, illuminates the way in which Howells' distinction pervaded his work. Frank Norris, "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," Boston Evening Transcript, December 18, 1901, p. 14, explains that "The true Romance is a more serious business than this. It is not merely a conjurer's trick box, full of flimsy quackeries, tinsel and claptraps, meant only to amuse, and relying upon deception to do even that. Is it not something better than this? Can we not see in it an instrument, keen, finely tempered, flawless--an instrument with which we may go straight through the clothes and tissues and wrappings of flesh down deep into the red, living heart of things?" As early as 1876 James himself in "Daniel Deronda: A Conversation," Partial Portraits, p. 76, had compared the "vulgar romance" with the "finely romantic," which he felt characterized George Eliot's "idea of Mordecai believing, without ground of belief, that if he only wait, a young man on whom nature and society have centered all their gifts will come to him and receive from his hands the precious vessel of his hopes."

particular subject matter and method of the real romance. In his prefaces for Volume XII (containing "The Aspern Papers," "The Turn of the Screw," "The Liar," and "The Two Faces") and Volume XVII (containing "The Altar of the Dead," "The Beast in the Jungle," "The Birthplace," "The Private Life," "Owen Wingrave," "The Friends of the Friends," "Sir Edmund Orme," "The Real Right Thing," "The Jolly Corner," and "Julia Bride") he described both the subject matter and the method of the real romance in greater detail.

James deals initially in his preface to The American with the concept that the romance conventionally has priority over "the strange and far" (AN, p. 31). "The strange and far" which James claims for proper romance, however, is not that which grows "on the other side of the Globe in the Dictionary of Dates,"[77] but that which concerns "the unknown." In maintaining that the real represents things known, the romantic things unknown, James sets his first criterion for judging true romance:

> 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 our way. The romantic stands, on the other hand, for the things that, with all the facilities in the world, all the wealth and all the courage and all the wit and all the adventure, we never can directly know; the things that can reach us only through the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire. (AN, pp. 31-32)

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[77] "The Hawthorne Centenary," p. 27.

The final phrases are crucial. What are the things "we never can directly know"? That they can be apprehended only "through the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire" gives a partial explanation. If the substance of romance can be perceived only through "thought" and "desire," such substance would not consist of either circumstantial or physical facts, which may be experienced or observed; it would concern the metaphysical or the psychological world of intangible forces of evil and perfect ideals. In choosing the term "desire," with which to describe romance, James anticipates Northrop Frye's definition of romance as a kind of "wish-fulfillment dream"[78] and corroborates Stevenson's association between the romance, "the nameless longings of the reader and . . . the ideal laws of the day dream." But if the romance merely conjures up

> . . . some vision of a sublime security like that enjoyed on the flowery plains of heaven, where we may conceive ourselves proceeding in ecstasy from one prodigious phase and form of it to another, (AN, p. 32)

it would have to be classified as artificial. Nor could melodrama--those works in which "bad people" try to get "good people" into their power and vice versa (AN, p. 37)--qualify as real romance. The forces of good and evil which the "circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire" exposed in the real romance were, for James, always in the

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[78]Frye, p. 186.

"human heart" itself. He consequently praised Hawthorne's romances for revealing "the spiritual contortions, the darkened outlook, of the ingrained sense of sin, of evil, and of responsibility . . . the pressing moral anxiety, the restless individual conscience."[79] In Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," James also saw the romance giving "a genuine feeling for the perpetual moral question, a fresh sense of the difficulty of being good and the brutishness of being bad."[80]

"The things we can never directly know" are also the things belonging to time past or time future. Although James categorized H. G. Wells' future-looking science fiction as romance, his own romances always looked to the past as did Hawthorne's. In their examination of the New England past, however, Hawthorne's romances did not violate a sense of reality:

> [Hawthorne's] fancy, which was always alive, played a little with the somewhat meagre and angular facts of the colonial period and forthwith converted many of them into impressive legends and pictures. There is a little infusion of colour, a little vagueness about certain details, but it is very gracefully done, and realities are kept in view sufficiently to make us feel that if we are reading romance, it is romance that rather supplements than contradicts history.[81]

In his own life, James was ever sensitive to the past. Spotting "a castle and a ruin" as a boy in France,

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[79]"Nathaniel Hawthorne," p. 7054.

[80]"Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 169.

[81]Hawthorne, p. 65.

visiting 600-year-old Wenlock Abbey, watching the excavation of the Roman Forum, comparing circumstances of the 1914 War to those of the French Revolution, James identified himself with the historical past, often identifying the historical past with romance. Returning to London as a young man in 1869, he delighted in discovering the "romantic rightness" with which things substantiated the history and literature he had read; this thrill of personally recognizing the actuality of the past inspired in him "the idea of connectability,"[82]--the idea that by authenticating the past through his own recognition of it, he became a part of it.

He was as poignantly aware of his personal past as he was of the general historical past; on a return visit to Geneva, where the Jameses had stayed as a family in 1859, he sat alone in "sociable conversation with the family ghosts" (L, I, 140); Boston seemed to evoke the ghosts of friends and of his younger self; he described the sensation of coming back to New England as follows:

> For my poor little personal C., [ambridge] of the far-off unspeakable past years, hangs there behind, like a pale pathetic ghost hangs there behind, fixing me with tender pleading eyes, eyes of such exquisite pathetic appeal and holding up the silver mirror, just faintly dim, that is like a sphere peopled with old ghosts.[83]

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[82]Henry James, Notes of a Son and Brother, included in Henry James: Autobiography, ed. F. W. Dupee (New York: Criterion Books, 1956), p. 549. Hereafter cited in the text as NSB.

[83]Henry James, The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth Murdock (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 318-19. Hereafter cited in the text as Nbks.

At first, James' interest in the past seems simply to smack of nostalgia--nostalgia for a more ceremonious age and a more youthful self.

James, however, always personally saw "the strange and far" of the historical past in morally ambiguous terms. In A Small Boy and Others he comments on

> . . . the rich burden of a Past, the consequences of too much history. I liked for my part a lot of history, but felt in face of certain queer old obsequiosities and appeals, whinings and sidlings and hand-rubbings and curtsey-droppings, the general play of apology and humility, behind which the great dim social complexity seemed to mass itself, that one didn't want so inordinate a quality.[84]

The ceremonies in a "tarnished and ghost-haunted Castle" could boil down to "too much standing on one's hind-legs--too much pomp and state--for nothing and nobody."[85] The past, then, with its rigid and complex social formulas could trammel the freedom of the mind (and the body). Because of its ambiguous qualities, it was also fascinating. The area surrounding the technical institution James attended as a boy in Geneva was dark and dreary--was "mere mean blackness of an old-world sordid order" (NSB, p. 240). But the school-boy recognized "rich blackness in other connections"; in a "rich blackness" lay the possibilities of an old-world splendid order. Even in the most melancholy and most silent

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[84]Henry James, A Small Boy and Others (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 310. Hereafter cited in the text as SBO.

[85]Selected Letters, p. 192.

corners created by the past, James found at this time that history was interesting. It stimulated his imagination to question "how" and "why," and the process of thus probing the unknown was both "burden" and "joy."

Confrontation with his own past, however, could bring him to feel "the infinite pity and tragedy of all the past." On a visit to his sister's grave in Cambridge, he was moved not only by his memory of her, but also by the lines from Dante engraved on her urn:

> Everything was there, everything came; the recognition, stillness, the strangeness, the pity and the sanctity and the terror, the breath-catching passion and the divine relief of tears. (Nbks, p. 321)

James' response to this 1905 visit to the past echoes a passage from Stevenson's The Weir of Hermiston, of which he was sufficiently fond to quote in his 1900 essay on his friend; as Kirstie sings, Archie is reminded of his mother and the songs she used to sing:

> ". . . of their common ancestors now dead, of their rude wars composed, their weapons buried with them, and of these strange changelings, their descendants, who lingered a little in their places and would soon be gone also, and perhaps sung of by others at the gloaming hour. By one of the unconscious arts of tenderness the two women were enshrined together in his memory. Tears, in that hour of sensibility, came into his eyes indifferently at the thought of either; and the girl, from being something merely bright and shapely, was caught up into the zone of things serious as life and death and his dead mother."[86]

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[86] "Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson," Notes on Novelists, p. 24.

Thus James saw the past neither as an age of perfection nor as a vale of tears; he saw it rather as giving to the individual of the present a sense not only of the heights attainable by man but also of the limitations of these heights--limitations inevitable because of the inevitability of human evil and human suffering.

Ghosts haunted James' vision of both the historical past and his personal past. They were for the most part benign, like those sociable ghosts of Geneva, or to be infinitely pitied, like the ghost of Minnie Temple, who "would have given anything to live" (NSB, p. 544). These ghosts haunted a man, not to win his soul to evil, but to remind him of his limitations. They testified, as James wrote in the preface to Volume XVII, that "the state of the dead is but part of the sense of the living" (AN, pp. 244-45); they reminded him that the individual of the present belongs to a continuum of human suffering. The ghosts of clanking chains and rattling bones James would place in the costume chest of artificial romance; but the ghosts with the ambiguous moral properties of humanity were also fit subjects for the "circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire." Such was the phantom which James perceived in his dream of the Galerie d'Apollon--an apparition which was both terrifying and terrified (SBO, pp. 347-49). Although his statement in the preface for "The Turn of the Screw"--"Good ghosts, speaking by book, make poor subjects" (AN, p. 175)--carries the command of a literary dictate,

James' ghosts are only as good or as bad as their human observers make them.

Before he continued with his definition of the romance in his preface to The American, James had to re-examine not only the claim the writers of artificial romance placed upon "the strange and far," but also upon "the idea of the facing of danger, the acceptance of great risks for the fascination, the very love, of their uncertainty, the joy of success if possible and of battle in any case" (AN, p. 32). In an apparent reply to Stevenson's formulation of "the novel of adventure" in "A Humble Remonstrance" and in a re-phrasing of his statements in "The Art of Fiction," James insists here that "the panting pursuit of danger is the pursuit of life itself in which danger awaits us possibly at every step and faces us at every turn." The writers of artificial romance seem to have pre-empted "the idea of facing danger" in two ways: (1) through the appearance "of boats, or of caravans, or of tigers, or of historical characters, or of ghosts, or of forgers, or of detectives, or of beautiful wicked women, or of pistols and knives" and (2) through "the appreciation of danger." Although James insists that this latter means represents only a difference in degree rather than kind, the method by which James feels real romance best succeeds necessitates an individual's "appreciation of danger." This is the basis for his second and longer definition of the romance in the preface to The American:

> The only general attribute of projected romance that I can see, the only one that fits all its cases, is the fact of the kind of experience with which it deals--experience liberated, so to speak; experience disengaged, disembroiled, disencumbered, exempt from the conditions that we usually know to attach to it and, if we wish so to put the matter, drag upon it, and operating in a medium which relieves it, in a particular interest, of the inconvenience of a related, a measurable state, a state subject to all our vulgar communities. The greatest intensity may so be arrived at evidently--when the sacrifice of community, of the "related" sides of situations, has not been too rash. It must to this end not flagrantly betray itself; we must even be kept if possible, for our illusions, from suspecting any sacrifice at all. 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: we only swing apart from the globe--though remaining as exhilarated, naturally, as we like, especially when all goes well. The art of the romancer is, "for the fun of it," insidiously to cut the cable, to cut it without our detecting him. What I have recognized then in "The American," much to my surprise and after long years, is that the experience here represented is the disconnected and uncontrolled experience--uncontrolled by our general sense of "the way things happen"--which romance alone more or less successfully palms off on us. (AN, pp. 33-34)

The important question James raises here is how "the illusion of life," "our general sense of the 'way things happen'," may be sustained while the reader's imagination is liberated, drawn from the realm of known experience to that of the unknown; in short, how the disconnected experience may be shown to have infinite connections.

In James' view, the solution to these problems lies in the author's ability to create a liberated imagination in his central character. Key terms in the above passage are "related" and "community," both of which imply a social

context. It is exactly this context away from which the hero (or heroine) of the romance moves, always isolated, journeying, actually and/or metaphorically by the circuit and subterfuge of his thought and his desire. In discussing James' theory of the romance, Richard Chase associates James' definition of romance as "experience liberated" in his preface to The American with his statement in the preface to The Princess Casamassima, "Experience . . . is our apprehension and our measure of what happens to us as social creatures" (AN, pp. 64-65). If romance is "experience liberated" and sets the individual apart from "our vulgar communities," "at large and unrelated," Chase concludes that "in a romance, 'experience' has less to do with human beings as 'social creatures' than as individuals."[87]

Obviously James has his discussion of The American in mind when he writes of Isabel Archer's "mild adventure" in his preface to The Portrait of a Lady, which follows The American in the New York edition. He recalls his determination and aim to produce in his portrait "the maximum of intensity with minimum of strain" (AN, p. 56), by having events recognized and responded to through Isabel's consciousness. The adventure was essentially to involve an "'exciting' inward life." Borrowing imagery from the artificial romance, James describes his young woman's lonely vigil into the night, while she meditates on her husband's relationship with Madame Merle, as throwing

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[87]Chase, p. 22.

> . . . the action further than twenty "incidents" might have done. It was designed to have all the vivacity of incident and all the economy of picture. . . . It is a representation simply of her motionlessly seeing, and an attempt withal to make the mere still lucidity of her act as "interesting" as the surprise of a caravan or the identification of a pirate. (AN, p. 57)

The Portrait of a Lady James would never term a romance, yet the method developed for this story, that of placing "the centre of the subject in the young woman's consciousness" is the only one he can consider using in those stories in which he consciously "casts [his] lot with pure romance" (AN, p. 175). In the resolute "Art of Fiction" James, in denying the integrity of the romance also denied a special category for adventure, as has been indicated earlier. Adventure can come, he explains in this early essay, in myriad packages--in the moral consciousness of a child or in the "murders, mysteries, islands of dreadful renown, hair-breadth escapes, miraculous coincidences and buried doubloons."[88] The latter type of adventure, characteristic of the artificial romance, succeeds in Treasure Island, however, because Stevenson brought together "the prodigious and the human . . . surprising coincidences and familiar feelings."[89] Yet it is the former type of adventure--that which focuses more sharply upon the "psychological reason"--which James considers potentially most exciting.[90]

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[88] "The Art of Fiction," p. 403.

[89] "Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 169.

[90] "The Art of Fiction," p. 402.

In the prefaces to Volumes XII and XVII James more clearly relates the cable, attaching the known to the unknown, to the individual consciousness. He comments:

> The safest arena for the play of moving accidents and mighty mutations and strange encounters, or whatever odd matters, is the field, as I may call it, rather of their second than of their first exhibition. By which, to avoid obscurity, I mean nothing more cryptic than I feel myself show them best by showing almost exclusively the way they are felt, by recognizing as their main interest some impression strongly made by them and intensely received. . . . We want it [the mystification] 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. . . . here prodigies, when they come straight, come with an effect imperilled; through some other history--the indispensable history of somebody's normal relation to something. (AN, p. 256)

Thus in discussing the adventures of the hero of "The Jolly Corner," James claims them to be more thrilling, more suspense-packed than a "bright career among pirates and detectives," for here "the forces of violence" are engaged more "'subtly,'" engaged that is, in the consciousness (AN, pp. 257-58).

A letter to H. G. Wells, which aims primarily at pointing out the disadvantages of writing first-person narratives, nevertheless justifies its use for portraying "the fantastic":

> Save in the fantastic (Copperfield, Jane Eyre, that charming thing of Stevenson's with the bad title--"Kidnapped") it [that accursed autobiographical form] has no authority, no persuasive or convincing force--its grasp of reality and truth isn't strong and disinterested. (L, I, 181)

When the subject matter involves the unknown, it would thus seem that the particular closeness of the voice of the first-person does carry authority, does make the experience more

credible. For the sake of verisimilitude in his tales of "the extraordinary," James also relies upon the convention of the discovered manuscript; thus in "Sir Edmund Orme," and "The Friends of the Friends" an anonymous first-person narrator produces the old document which contains a story told by another first-person narrator. Verisimilitude is consequently assured for the record of the past. In "The Turn of the Screw," as is well-known, the governess' first-person account of the events at Bly is produced only after two other narrators have spoken and there has been a series of circumstantial delays. The additional narrators and the delays not only give an aura of portentuousness to the manuscript itself, but they also make the described events seem more irretrievable from the past; the additional information which the narrators provide appears to lend the "air of reality" to the governess' manuscript, but complicates rather than clarifies her voice.

The problem of sustaining the illusion of life, even after the cable of the balloon has been cut, is solved mainly, as has been discussed above, by describing the reactions of an individual consciousness. In severing the cord, however, the romancer must take precaution not to falsify his reader's sense of verisimilitude particularly in projecting a sense of evil. Thus, the only fault James finds with "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is in the powders in the story's sequel. They seem to James "too explicit and explanatory . . . more conceivable (so far as one may

speak of the conceivable in such a case) if the author had not made it definite."[91] James criticized Baudelaire's representation of evil for similar reasons; unlike Hawthorne who identified evil at its source, "deep in the human consciousness," James maintained that the French poet comprehended it, not as a result of experience, but only in relation to specific externals; Baudelaire made evil "an affair of blood and carrion and physical sickness . . . stinking corpses and starving prostitutes and empty landanum bottles," and this, James judged, was "an almost ludicrously puerile view of the matter."[92]

Aware that his "sinister romance," "The Turn of the Screw," did indeed liberate experience, but that its concern was "an annexed but independent world" (AN, pp. 170-71), he was determined to avoid a mistake similar to Stevenson's and Baudelaire's. His plan was, then, not only to focus on the governess' consciousness but also to appeal to the reader's general sense of evil. To "make him think evil," the particulars James decided to play upon were the reader's own experience, imagination, and emotions, rather than the "weak specification" (AN, p. 176) or the "solidity of specification," which according to the credo in "The Art of Fiction" was the "supreme virtue" of the novel. By being a little vague about certain details, as James thought Flaubert should

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[91]"Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 171.

[92]Henry James, "Charles Baudelaire," French Poets and Novelists (London: Macmillan Co., 1878), p. 61.

have been in describing St. Anthony's visions and as he felt Hawthorne rightly was in his historical studies, a writer would construct a finer romance although he might not erect a "triumph of facts."

In his preface to The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne explained that

> . . . this tale comes under the Romantic definition . . . in the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us.[93]

In order to convey the unknown of the past, "the idea of connectability" was important to the romancer; although the connection might be severed, and the individual set adrift in the past, the connection could only be made through an individual conscious of the present as well as the past. The preface to "The Aspern Papers" reflects James' admiration for Hawthorne's ability to fulfill the goal set forth for The Seven Gables in the preface for the work; James suggests that the past is "palpable" to the present to the extent that it may be reached by the present:

> . . . the case had the air of the past just in the degree in which that air, I confess, most appeals to me--when the region over which it hangs is far enough away without being too far. I delight in a palpable imaginable visitable past--in the nearer distances and the clearer mysteries, the marks and signs of a world we may reach over to as by making a long arm we grasp an object at the other end of our table. . . . That, to my imagination, is the past fragrant of all, or of almost all, the poetry of the thing outlived and lost and gone, and yet in which the precious element of closeness, telling so of connexions but tasting so of differences, remains appreciable. (AN, p. 164)

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[93]Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, p. 14.

If Gabrielle d'Annunzio had been as rightly romantic in all of his works as he was in Le Vergini, James would perhaps have rated his "aesthetic consciousness" more highly; this single excellent piece, he wrote in his 1902 essay on d'Annunzio, was "thoroughly romantic,"

> . . . romance . . . of the happiest kind, the kind that consists in the imaginative development of observable things, things present, significant, related to us, and not in a weak false fumble for the romantic and the disconnected.[94]

Not primarily because it shows an older world, in ruins, but because of the contrast implied between the beauty of its gardens, architecture, and manners and "our vulgar communities," does James call the tale a romance. It succeeds as a romance, however, because its representation of a beautiful and ideal civilization is perceived through the consciousness of a young man, a consciousness which had been fed on memories of the grand manner of the Renaissance and which instinctively recognized "the shame and scandal of what in an odious age it [the grand manner] has been reduced to."[95] The past, then, with its precious difference, with its statement of a more perfect life, gave the beauty to Le Vergini and the "blush" of romance to "The Aspern Papers"; yet this beauty and this blush could best be approached through a consciousness which belonged to the present.

In James' opinion Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym fails because horror becomes an end in itself, and horror becomes

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[94]"Gabriele D'Annunzio," Notes on Novelists, p. 278.

[95]Ibid., p. 280.

an end in itself because Poe does not make the story "the indispensable history of somebody's normal relation to something."[96] There is no doubt that James seeks in his own romances to awaken "an excited horror, a promoted pity" (AN, p. 177), suspense and wonder; yet these responses were possible only when a link could be established with identifiable facts, with the present time, and within a human context. Stevenson's romances are superb because he recognized, as James says of his own stories in Volume XVII, that

> The moving accident, the rare conjunction, whatever it be, doesn't make the story--in the sense that the story is our excitement, our amusement, our thrill and our suspense; the human emotion and the human attestation, the clustering human conditions we expect presented, only make it. The extraordinary is most extraordinary in that it happens to you and me. (AN, p. 257)

James' own "Sir Edmund Orme" succeeds because it makes the connection; here "the strange and sinister [are] embroidered on the very type of the normal and easy" (AN, p. 261).

Indeed, the right romantic note is beautifully struck, the extraordinary is encountered, the balloon of experience is properly freed when an illusion of the fact, the present time, and the human context is also conveyed, and to James' mind it is best conveyed by the ordinary individual consciousness. James is not merely trying to have his romance and eat

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[96] In "Tennyson's Drama," Views and Reviews (Boston: Ball Publishing Co., 1908), p. 187, James criticizes Victor Hugo's Marie Tudor for similar reasons: "The drama is one masterly compound of abominable horror; horror for horror's sake--for the sake of chiaroscuro, of colour, of the footlights, of the actors; not in the least in any visible interest of human nature, of moral verity, of the discrimination of character."

it, too, however, in demanding the connections between romance and human experience. Nor is he doing so when he maintains that "a law of some rich passion for extremes" rules in writers of great imagination. It seems rather that he is testifying to the value and the possibility of an individual's examining "the things we never can directly know," the past and the supernatural, the possible forces of evil and the possible forms of good, but that the value and the possibility, if there is no connection made with "our vulgar communities," will be ludicrous. Hawthorne with his pressing interest in delving into "the whole deep mystery of man's soul and conscience"[97] would seem to James to have made the connection beautifully.

In his criticism and, as the remaining chapters of this essay hope to suggest, in his fiction, Henry James embraces all aspects of the romance tradition, which must include the tradition of the anti-romance. The anti-romance tradition, which was initiated by Cervantes and fostered in the eighteenth century, came, by the nineteenth century, to show man tragically as well as comically illusioned, and James, through his critical examination of the artificial romantic note, knew well the ease with which an author was beguiled by his own illusions. His letters, notebooks, autobiographies, and biographies reveal how well he knew that a man as well as an artist could be so beguiled.

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[97] Hawthorne, p. 65.

He had himself been so often tempted by the false romance.

Maxwell Geismar's recent blatant condemnation of James hinges primarily on the apparent romance in his works; according to Geismar they have "no recognizable life," but are rather a web of illusion, enchantment, and magic.[98] Voyeurism, escapism, a preposterous supernatural, and a completely personalized, "completely fabricated" set of "'aristocratic' values,"[99] gleam in the Jamesian romance. Geismar's claims, which draw heavily upon James' autobiography and Freudian psychology, also smack loudly of the earlier criticism of Carl Van Doren, Van Wyck Brooks, Vernon Parrington, and Ferner Nuhn.[100] Brooks, Parrington, and Nuhn invoke autobiographical material in order to prove that James himself,

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[98]Maxwell Geismar, Henry James and the Jacobites (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1963), p. 8.

[99]Ibid., p. 245.

[100]Robert P. Falk, "Henry James' Romantic 'Vision of the Real' in the 1870's," Essays Critical and Historical Dedicated to Lily B. Campbell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), pp. 235-55, discusses James' attempt to find a middle-ground between romanticism and realism in the seventies, concluding that his was a search for "a mean between the extremes of a scientific and a deterministic world view, on the one side, and the inherited ideals of the enlightenment and a traditional faith in the individual, on the other." Falk also summarizes, briefly, the change in the critical currents, noting Van Wyck Brooks in The Pilgrimage of Henry James (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1925), Vernon Parrington in The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1930), pp. 239-41, and Carl Van Doren in The American Novel (New York: Macmillan Co., 1921), pp. 163-89, as critics who view James' tendencies toward romance with a jaundiced eye.

always being under the spell of an idealized other world, could not help but write romances in which the hero was always an alien and in which things were not as they are but always as they might be. They see James as writing seventeenth-century chivalric romances, as having breathed neither the air of the Cervantes tradition nor that of the Romantic Movement. Brooks maintains that James holds a view of the world stemming largely from the picture books and novels of his childhood reading; he thus justifies his conclusion--and Geismar's later one--that "the child had been father of the man; the man had never outgrown the child. And Europe had been a fairy-tale to the end."[101]

The material offered us by James' autobiographies, his notebooks and letters, however, serves to demonstrate the writer's cognizance and appreciation of the individual whose imagination is tuned quixotically to romance, whose imagination dwells in ideals and illusions. Not only do the critics of James' penchant for the romance neglect to deal with his critical statements regarding the romance, but in their concentration upon James the man, the American-European, the boyish consumer of fiction, they are also seemingly unaware of the fact that in his personal writing as well as in his fiction James sees himself and the romance-oriented character with the same consciousness. It seems to me that Geismar goes particularly astray in

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[101] Brooks, p. 170.

his insistence that James throws up veils of illusion when it is repeatedly evident that James demonstrates the necessity of stripping them away. Christof Wegelin's scholarship admirably places James' early romantic interest in "Europe" in a distinctly American tradition;[102] he makes evident that Cooper, Irving, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and even Twain had also been personally caught in what James came to call "a superstitious valuation of Europe," that James was not merely a child longing to perpetuate fairy-tales or a mis-cast aristocrat longing for the order of yester-year, as the critics who denounce his romance tendencies maintain.

By examining the autobiographical data, we may see romance as a persistent interest in James' life; more important, we may illustrate his awareness of his own leanings toward the romance and his awareness of the dangers and advantages inherent in this position. The sources for what James in 1905 called his "inward romantic principle" would seem to be three; his early and continuous direct contacts with different cultures, his vicarious contacts through reading and through numerous acquaintances, and his sense of "otherness."

In his autobiography James cites a vision of the column in the Place Vendôme as his first memory; it is

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[102] Christof Wegelin, The Image of Europe in Henry James (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1958), pp. 9-31.

essentially a memory of "Europe," and the plot--if an autobiography has one--of A Small Boy and Others concerns the small boy's return to Europe. In James' early reading and in his early friends and relatives in America, there were surely romantic possibilities. But "Europe," above all, offered great possibilities for romance. The climax of the first autobiographical volume occurs in 1855 when the James family had again gone abroad and was travelling from Lyons into the French provinces. Henry had already contemplated "the voices and graces of the past, of the court, of the French scheme of manners in general and of ancient inns." Yet such contemplation had not fully prepared him for "the romance of travel" in a horse-drawn carriage with a bevy of fine whiskered and braided European servants. The epiphany of what was in general such a memorable journey was brought by the sudden appearance of "a castle and a ruin . . . a woman in a black bodice, a white shirt and a red petticoat" (SBO, pp. 283-84). James rhapsodizes:

> Supremely, in that ecstatic vision, was "Europe," sublime synthesis, expressed and guaranteed to me--as if by a mystic gage, which spread all through the summer air. . . . It made a bridge over to more things than I then knew. (SBO, pp. 284-85)

The qualities inherent in this vision and comprising this "sublime synthesis," that is, the romance of Europe, would seem to be a sense of a past which built monuments but which also left them to decay; a sense of another, a different, more structured and more aesthetic society, implied by the picturesque peasant woman; and a sense of the unknown--"a

bridge"--which might be explored. Because A Small Boy and Others was written in 1914 through the "golden haze" of memory, the coloring of the description in that "ecstatic vision"--so perfectly picturesque to anyone on the lookout for the perfectly picturesque--is not simply that of a poster-painter; James, with the perspective of a much older man, was reproducing in his autobiography the scene through the eyes of a twelve-year-old child. He consciously uses the language of chivalric romance as he speaks of the challenge of his boyish naiveté, for as the older man, he knew what lay on the other side of the bridge. This naiveté of vision, the romance-oriented imagination, however, served James and serves several of his fictional characters as the bridge to a greater self-consciousness. The romance-oriented imagination and "the unbridled fancy" are related in the same fashion to the more potent faculty of the imagination.

What is frequently recognized by critics is that, as "Europe" had been the locus for romance to the young James, so for the older James this locus became America. In a letter dated 1903, he writes that "Europe has ceased to be romantic to me, and my own country in the evening of my days has become so" (L, I, 411). Always possible in America was a fresher and a freer social context; New Hampshire life he described in 1904 as having "a pure bucolic and Arcadian, wildly informal and 'un-frilled' life" (L, II, 18). In commenting on James' ambivalent

appreciation of Europe and America, Ferner Nuhn, however, finds him incorrigibly romantic for indiscriminately liking "otherness" for its own sake;[103] yet to accept Nuhn's assertion is to credit James with an interest in the merely exotic. F. W. Dupee, who also notes James' shifting interest in the romance of America, seems to answer Nuhn; discussing James' "inward romantic principle," he writes that

> . . . he [James] had no imagination for the purely exotic. He could never simply "ride away," like the woman in Lawrence's story or the boat in Rimbaud's poem. For James the inward romantic principle operated within quite definite boundaries. What really lived for him, in an imaginative unity transcending geography, was a universe composed of Italy, France, England, and eastern America; and no part of it was finally stronger than the rest.[104]

The inward romantic principle did not seduce James beyond the pale of humanity; he was no Faust. Wherever he travelled, it was his own conscious awareness of what he observed that was significant; similarly his sense of his sense of the past and the supernatural kept his romance-oriented imagination within the sphere of the human. Thus he kept his ties with "our vulgar communities."

The infantile view of the wondrous Place Vendôme was speedily reinforced with reading about wondrous Europe; it

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[103]Ferner Nuhn, "The Enchanted Kingdom of Henry James," The Wind Blew From the East (New York: Harper and Bros., 1940), pp. 89-90.

[104]F. W. Dupee, Henry James ("American Men of Letters"; New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1951), p. 275.

is evident that James was a voracious reader as Van Wyck Brooks insists. Dupee quotes Henry James, Sr., on his son's proclivity for reading:

> Harry is not so fond of study, properly so-called, as of reading. . . . He is a devourer of libraries and an immense writer of novels and dramas.[105]

James' letter on "Hop o' my Thumb" reveals, however, that he had soon set aside childish things, that he had soon done with fairy-tales and "began to prefer 'stories of Real Life.'" Among those denoted as such are Nicholas Nickleby, Robinson Crusoe, the tales of Captain Marryat, and The Initials, all of which an older James was to recognize as belonging in varying degrees to the realm of romance. The point to be made here is that a young James was provided with lenses tinted by the possibility of investigating the exotic and of maintaining certain ideals in the face of dangers and difficulties, but that the older James was well able to identify these lenses.

James was fully aware of his predilection to approach life through literature. Explaining the circumstances of that first ecstatic vision of "Europe," he recalls:

> . . . it was the suggested romance, flushed with suppositions and echoes, with implications and memories of one's "reading," save the mark. (SBO, p. 282)

In a letter of 1904, he justifies the fact that

> . . . reading tends to take for me the place of experience or rather (pour qui sait lire) experience

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[105]Ibid., p. 22.

> concentrated. You will say this is a dull picture, but I cultivate dullness in a world grown too noisy. (L, II, 11)

Leon Edel's analysis of the episode in A Small Boy and Others in which James nearly simultaneously encountered his first "grown-up" book, The Initials, and the theater prodigies, the Boon Children, verifies James' tendency to fuse literature and life. In reading The Initials, James "memorably felt that romance was thick round me--everything, at such a crisis, seeming to make for it at once" (SBO, p. 79); "romance" in the form of the Boon Children, Edel points out, then took Henry from fiction to life, and he discovered "that experience existed alike in the pages of a book and in the life around him: that fiction at such moments became life and life fiction."[106]

James' autobiographies, letters, and notebooks contain numerous instances of his translation of literature into experience, his reliance upon a literary source to define actual circumstances, the most quixotic of processes. His cousin Anne King is an Electra or a "little Brontë heroine"; his friend William Morris Hunt resembled "the knight of La Mancha"; a Cambridge boarding house became the Maison Vauquer; nineteenth-century England appeared an echo of the feudal world of Robin Hood or the brutal world of Cruishank's Dickens; because of his novel-reading, he felt that in London he moved "all the while here on identified

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[106]Leon Edel, The Untried Years: 1843-1870 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1953), p. 68.

ground" (L, I, 54). Perhaps the best example of James' characteristic literary exaltation of experience comes in his notebooks in a description of a visit to Scotland:

> What struck me as much as anything was my drive, in the gloaming, over from Kirriemuir to Cortachy; though taking the road afterward by daylight, I saw it was commonplace. In the late Scotch twilight, and the keen air, it was romantic; at least it was romantic to ford the river at the entrance to Cortachy, to drive through the dim avenues and up to the great lighted pile of the castle, where Lady A. hearing my wheels on the gravel (I was late) put her handsome head from a window in the clock-tower, asked if it was I, and wished me a bonny good evening. I was in a Waverly novel. (Nbks, p. 36)

Any implication that James confused the literary and the real, however, is misleading, for he is always conscious of his use of literature as a means of comprehending or coping with actuality. Thus, he is fully aware of the fact that the road to Cortachy is, by daylight, rather commonplace. Similarly, this notebook account is followed on the next page by an account of his re-reading of Redgauntlet, the first Scott he had looked at in many years. The charm had gone for him, and he was "amazed at the badness" of the book, setting it in "l'enfance de l'art" (Nbks, p. 37). At seventeen, James began an exuberantly romantic and rhetorical letter to his friend, T. S. Perry; he was this early in his career parodying the romantic hero, the romantic setting, romantic eloquence, and his own romantic leanings with gusto as Cervantes and Jane Austen had done before him in their fiction:

> In sooth, ne'er was seen a nobler form than that of 'Enry James de Jeames or one which the most cunning

> sculptor might endeavor to imitate with less hope of success. Born of a race who counted their ancestors far back into the dim ages of chivalry he seemed to have been endowed by the Wizard Nature, both with the fiery indomitable spirit of those times and with their softer attributes of poesy and romance.[107]

James is, however, quick to put "a truce to this idiotic strain," to explain in plain English that Henry James, Jr., Esquire, has merely gotten out of bed, and to recommend that Perry look elsewhere for "hair-breadth escapes and 'exciting adventures by flood and field,'" for the world of artificial romance. The romantic and the consciously literary, however, even in this boyhood letter, were serving James not only as a method for amusing both himself and his friend, but they were also serving as an enticing introduction into a discourse on the day-to-day events in his life in the Rhineland which implicitly were imbued with a sense of excitement equal to that generated by "'Enry James de Jeames." After all, these day-to-day events were the adventures of the actual Henry James, Jr., Esquire.

Just as the seventeen-year-old Henry could give a vigorous account of his various activities as a student and tourist to Perry, throughout his life James himself vicariously appreciated the romantic activities of his friends. It is not ridiculous to compare the world of sighs which Desdemona gave Othello with the keen interest James gave his correspondents for the tales of their adventures. What

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[107] Selected Letters, p. 11.

was important to both Desdemona and James was the fact that the recitation of wonders came through a beloved or respected and therefore credible source. In his notebooks, James recalls a visit with Oliver Wendell Holmes' mother, from whom he

> . . . got the news, of all his [Holmes'] London, his general English, success and felicity, and vibrated so with the wonder and romance and curiosity and dim weak tender (oh, tender!) envy of it, that my walk up the hill, afterwards . . . was all coloured and gilded, and humming with it, and the emotion, exquisite of its kind, so remained with me that I always think of that occasion, that hour, as a sovereign contribution to the germ of that inward romantic principle which was to determine, so much later on (ten years!), my own vision-haunted migration. (Nbks, pp. 319-20)

Hearing reports of his friends' travels, he frequently replied, stating his vicarious pleasure in their "tangled skein of . . . adventures" (L, I, 380-81) or commending them as being given to "thrilling Romance" (L, II, 49).

There was also a life of involvement and active commitment to high ideals, beyond that of travelling, which James recognized as admirable and as romantic. His letters to those who were committed to the active life--unlike himself who became increasingly devoted to a more contemplative existence--express an appreciation, heightened by the same "dim weak tender envy." Edel notes James' interest in reading war memoirs and Napoleonic lore, an interest which undoubtedly derived from his admiration for the participants in the Civil War,[108] from which he was excluded. His letter

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[108]Edel is referring specifically to James' admiration for Field Marshall Viscount Wolseley whose two volumed

to Margot Asquith, which he wrote when he had completed reading her diaries, might have been addressed to any of the soldiers, judges, or editors whose active lives James envied:

> Well, you take me by the hand and lead me back in, and still in, and make things beautifully up to me--all--my losses and misses and exclusions and privations and do it by having taken all the right notes, apprehended all the right values and enjoyed all the right reactions--meaning by the right ones, those that must have ministered most to interest and emotion; those that I dimly made you out as getting while I flattened my nose against the shop window and you were there within, eating the tarts, shall I say, or handing them over the counter? . . . I find my experience, therefore, the experience of simply reading you (you having had all t'other) veritably romantic.[109]

Story of a Soldier's Life he found irresistibly interesting; James' letter to Wolseley is quoted in The Untried Years, p. 188. James' comments on the "romance" of the Civil War occur primarily in Notes of a Son and Brother, pp. 383-424, 460-77. The "romance" of this war which brought his two younger brothers briskly out of juvenility, however, James could only treat with ambiguity as for example in the following comment: All aspects of the War were "draped romantically in the purple folds of the whole. I think it must have been the sense of the various climaxes, the enjoyed, because so long postponed, revenges of the War, that lifted the moment in the largest embrace: the general consciousness was of such big things at last in sight, the huge national emergence, the widening assurance, however overdarkened, it is true, by the vast black cost of what General Grant (no light-handed artist he!) was doing to us." Professor Powers has also pointed out a letter of James to Oliver Wendell Holmes, thanking the Supreme Court Justice for his address entitled "The Soldier's Faith" and complimenting his "romantic eloquence" and "romantic feeling." The letter appears in "The Letters of Henry James to Mr. Justice Holmes," ed. Mark De Wolfe Howe, Yale Review, XXXVIII (Spring, 1949), 418. James' "fascinated perusal of Marbot's magnificent memoirs" also directly inspired his romance of "Owen Wingrave" (1892) (Nbks, p. 118).

[109] Selected Letters, pp. 214-15.

But that James exaggerated the romance in his friends' lives to praise them and to delight them is made evident by this encomnium to W. E. Norris:

> Very romantic and charming the arrival of your gallant George--from all across Europe--for his Christmas with you; your account of it touches me and I find myself ranking you with the celebrated fair of history and fable for whom the swimming of the Hellespont and the breaking of the lance were perpetrated. (L, I, 212-13)

Dupee's interpretation of James' well-known "confession" to A. F. de Navarro of "the starved romance of my life" seems accurate; he suggests that in the context of the letter to Navarro this "confession" is "a delicate tribute."[110] With such tributes, however, James holds his own; he admires the grand actions and the splendid journeys of his friends, yet, because of the obvious humor and exaggeration of these tributes, he never really depreciates his own contemplative life.

Unlike Desdemona who listened so intently to stories of the Cannibals and "the Anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," James inclined to appreciate his friends' adventures in potentially knowable circumstances; thus he yearned for "a small installment of the romantic serial, The Mundane Situation of R.L.S." (L, I, 132) and ceaselessly protested to Robert Louis Stevenson that he was unable to comprehend his Samoan surroundings:

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[110] Dupee, p. 215.

> You live in conditions so unimaginable and to the tune of experience so great and so strange that you must forgive me if I am altogether out of step with your events. (L, I, 209)

Though he could write to Stevenson that "the succession of incidents and places in your career is ever romantic" (L, I, 131), he was never interested in incident for incident's sake, but rather was consistently interested in the fine qualities of Stevenson's mind--in what he would later call Stevenson's "romantic consciousness"[111]--through which the incidents and far-away places were filtered.

James' interest in the distant country where he was not and in the spirited lives of fictional heroes and actual friends is an aspect of his sense of "otherness." Biographers and critics have been quick to point out the dichotomy indicated by the title of his first autobiographical volume, A Small Boy and Others, and to cite the passage in it describing the small boy's longing

> . . . to exchange my lot for that of somebody else, on the assumed certainty of gaining by the bargain. . . . They were so other--that was what I felt; and to be other, other almost anyhow, seemed as good as the probable taste of the bright compound wistfully watched in the confectioner's window. (SBO, p. 175)

This image of estrangement and yearning is then echoed in the letter quoted above to Margot Asquith. Characteristically, James uses the image to show those who are "other"--Lady Margot and his cousin Gus Barker, so self-assured in his white uniform as he pares his nails in James'

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[111]"The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 5.

autobiography--in a resplendent light. But--and also characteristic of James when he is talking about himself--the image is double-edged, for James does not demean himself while he is praising others. James' sense of "otherness" seems a sane schizophrenia, a variety of Keats' "negative capability." It established the "others" as an ideal but simultaneously established the observer of this ideal as a highly valued entity for his very ability to observe. This paradoxical position reflects an attitude of the romance and of Romanticism, the emphasis upon the attainable cultural and social ideals being derivative of the romance tradition, the emphasis upon the individual's alienation from the ideal being an intrinsic part of the Romantic tradition. The position is also reflected in several Jamesian characters, who in turn echo their creator.

Yet the position is essentially that necessary for the artist. As such, Ferner Nuhn's picture of James as the Redcrosse Knight--the traditional romance figure--has only partial validity; Nuhn maintains that James

> . . . the knight from the other kingdom had his own knowledge, which served him for his own purposes. He came with a fresh vision from a different world. He managed somehow to stand off from the enchantment, to see it with new eyes, even as it held for him the old charm.[112]

Dupee's comparison of James to Don Quixote--the anti-romance figure--is more complete:

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[112]Nuhn, p. 88.

> He remained watchful and fundamentally independent, and among the rampant realists and roaring democrats of twentieth century London he was like no one so much as Don Quixote keeping his single and past-honoring vigil in the inn-courtyard.[113]

Yet Dupee just touches on what distinguishes James, the man, from his fictional characters who more aptly resemble the spell-bound knight; James was estranged not only because he was always an American in Europe or a European in America or because of any orientation toward the past, but because, as an artist, he was always the conscious observer of the observed. The proper analogy is thus not between James and Don Quixote, but between James and Cervantes, who appreciated the position of both the observed and the observer, who understood the pleasure and the danger of illusions.

In James' fiction, a pattern emerges which approximately parallels the shifting attitude he shows toward romance in his criticism. From 1864 to 1877, when he published The American and proclaimed "I am a realist," with unintentional irony in light of his later recognition of the work as artificial romance, James clearly was using the conventions of artificial romance in his fiction; from 1878 to 1890, during which time he published not only "The Art of Fiction," denouncing the romance, but also his praise of Hawthorne's and Stevenson's romances, he sketched sharp and satiric portraits of the shallowness and destructiveness of the romance-oriented imagination; yet he continued to use

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[113]Dupee, p. 222.

the conventions of the genre; from 1891 on, he was conscientiously writing real romances, conceiving at this time the finest of his supernatural tales and his most considered studies of the romance-oriented imagination.

In 1900, James snatched up a suggestion he had received from Howells for an "international ghost" as the means for unfolding a ghost-story he had started the preceding year. The Sense of the Past, some one-hundred pages of which was the immediate upshot of this suggestion, however, remained an unfinished work, encompassing the anti-romance and all aspects of the real romance as James came later to define it in his prefaces. Involved in The Wings of the Dove and The Ambassadors, he put The Sense of the Past aside until 1914; but during this interim period he not only admittedly drew upon the material of the romance for other works, but I believe he also sapped it in writing The Ambassadors in particular. The seriousness with which James conceived of The Sense of the Past as well as an indication of his re-awakened interest in the international theme is evident in the following statement from his notebooks:

> Hasn't one got hold of, doesn't one make out, rather, something in the general glimmer of the notion of what the quasi-grotesque Europeo-American situation, in the way of the gruesome, may, pushed to the full and right expression of its grotesqueness, has to give? That general formula haunts me, and as a morality as well as a terror, an idea as well as a ghost. (Nbks, p. 300)

Elizabeth Stevenson correctly sees James as progressing along Alfred North Whitehead's three recurring stages of learning: (1) romance, (2) precision, and (3) generalization; James' career, she maintains, is romance at both ends, "with realism in the middle."[114] Whitehead explains his "generalization" as an Hegelian synthesis:

> It is a return to romanticism with the added advantage of classified ideas and relevant techniques. It is the fruition which has been the goal of the precise training. It is the final success.[115]

As a result of his continued examination of the romance in his own life, in his own works, and in the works of other writers, I propose that James finally not only recognized the romance-oriented imagination as a universal human attribute, potentially dangerous and potentially conducive to attaining self-consciousness, but also recognized the attributes of real romance as a means of representing the process by which the individual attains self-consciousness.

On occasion, James would call those of his works he specifically designated as romance, "pot-boilers," "jeux d'esprit," "amusettes," which would imply that they were written merely to entertain--that they were written in the spirit of the artificial romantic note. Given, however, the seriousness with which James discusses these amusettes in his prefaces and The Sense of the Past in his

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[114]Elizabeth Stevenson, The Crooked Corridor (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), p. 115.

[115]Ibid., p. 113.

notebooks in 1900 and 1914, and given the respect he had for the acknowledged romancers, Hawthorne and Stevenson, these self-directed calumnies must be taken as playful or protective irony and as an indication of James' recognition and control of the dangers of excessive romancing. In 1900, he had complained to Edmund Gosse, of "this deluge of cheap romanticism and chromolithographic archaics," as manifested particularly in Maurice Hewlett's Italian Novelle (L, I, 345), and in 1914, he asked in his essay, "The New Novel,"

> Was it not for all the world as if even the brightest practitioners of the past, those we now distinguish as saved for glory in spite of themselves, had been as sentimental as they could, or, to give the trick another name, as romantic and thereby as shamelessly "dodgy"?--just in order not to be close and fresh, not to be authentic, as that takes trouble, takes talent, and you can be sentimental, you can be romantic, you can be dodgy, alas, not a bit less on the footing of genius than on the footing of mediocrity or even of imbecility?[116]

But 1900 and 1914 were years when James was not only criticizing the romance's indiscriminate reliance upon the exotic past and melodramatic sentiment: they were also years when he was much taken up with his idea of the "international ghost." What he sought in these years--and indeed consistently--was a "gleam or reflection of the life we live," and primarily by centering his story in the consciousness of an individual, he kept up the illusion of life in his romances and prevented them from sinking to outright escapism or melodrama.

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[116]"The New Novel," Notes on Novelists, p. 322.

James might have disputed, if pressed, whether this focus upon the individual was necessarily a characteristic of the romance; yet he would have acknowledged that a concern with the past and the supernatural was. His own discussions of the romance indicate, however, that this individual consciousness, the "commodious car of the imagination," is all-important, and the historical tradition of the romance, the fusion of the medieval romance with the Romanticism of the nineteenth-century English poets and the nineteenth-century American novelists, encompasses James' examination of the individual who, wearing his ideals as illusions, seeks desperately and alone for their fulfillment and for a comprehension of himself in relationship to a larger moral and social framework.

CHAPTER II

OF "DISPOSSESSED PRINCES AND WANDERING HEIRS"

In "remounting the stream of time" to select the works which he would include in the New York edition, James went back no further than 1871--and then only to pick up one story, "A Passionate Pilgrim." Since its initial publication in The Atlantic Monthly, he had favored this tale with three revisions, and four times he saw it through publication: originally in 1871, in 1875 when it became the title story for his first collection of tales, in the 1885 Stories Revised, and finally as the representative of his earliest work in the New York edition.[1]

The reasons for this obvious favoritism and for his decision to enter "A Passionate Pilgrim" in his official collected works are found in the preface for Volume XIII, a conscious gathering of international tales. The reasons, both critical and personal, relate to the romance. James recalls in the preface that "A Passionate Pilgrim" was begun in 1870, the year after he had returned to America from his first adult trip to Europe; the story seemed to an older

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[1]Albert Frank Gegenheimer's article, "Early and Late Revisions in Henry James' 'A Passionate Pilgrim,'" American Literature, XXIII (May, 1951), 233-42, primarily discusses James' movement toward a more concise style.

James the formulation of a crucial period in his own life, "in the highest degree documentary for myself" (AN, p. 196). It testified to the fact that he took "the adventure of [his] twenty-sixth year 'hard'" (AN, p. 194). America, following his return, no longer seemed the homeland, but now could only be a place of "brooding exile" while Europe had become the place where somehow he might "come into his 'own.'" In 1867 he had written with self-confidence to his friend Thomas Sargeant Perry that

> We have exquisite qualities as a race, and it seems to me that we are ahead of the European races in the fact that more than either of them we can deal freely with forms of civilization not our own, can pick and choose and assimilate and in short (aesthetically &c) claim our property wherever we find it.[2]

The evidence in James' letters from Europe in 1869-1870 suggests that he had claimed his property abroad; he reels and moans through the streets of Rome, among ruins and monuments, and for the first time "lives" (L, I, 24-25); he wanders through the English country-side, "suggestive of the opening chapters of half-remembered novels," and imagines a boyhood studying "in the Cathedral shade" and playing in "the misty meadows" (L, I, 28). He signs himself, "Thy lone and loving exile." Admittedly borrowing from traditional romance, James establishes an analogy in his preface between his own early attitude toward Europe and the situation of "dispossessed princes and wandering heirs" (AN, p. 195). And

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[2] Selected Letters, pp. 22-23.

thus, long before Van Wyck Brooks wrote The Pilgrimage of Henry James, James himself recognized his relationship to the heroes of romance and to Clement Searle, the "passionate pilgrim" of the tale, who by living in America had been "dispossessed" of both his rightful material and his rightful spiritual heritage and who in England would be restored to his "own."

Increasingly, however, James recognizes that his own penchant for romanticizing Europe is a national as well as an individual characteristic. Twice he had acknowledged the validity of Hawthorne's complaint regarding America's "commonplace prosperity" and of his praise of ruin as the soil of romance.[3] In "At Isella," a story written in the same year as "A Passionate Pilgrim," however, Hawthorne's preface to The Marble Faun receives a more literal transmutation into fiction; the story's narrator attempts to explain his antipathy for America and his vision of Europe, land of wish-fulfillment:

> I have come on a pilgrimage. . . . To understand what I mean, you must have lived, as I have lived, in a land beyond the seas, barren of romance and grace. This Italy of yours, on whose threshold I stand, is

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[3]In the preface to The Marble Faun, Vol. VI: The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. G. P. Lathrop (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1883), p. 15, Hawthorne insists that "no author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. . . . Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow." James amplifies Hawthorne's list of America's wants with his own list of the "items of high civilization" in both Hawthorne, p. 43, and the Notebooks, p. 14.

> the home of history, of beauty, of the arts--of all that makes life splendid and sweet. . . . We are brought up to think that when we have earned leisure and rest--at some bright hour, when fortune smiles--we may go forth and cross oceans and mountains and see on Italian soil the primal substance--the Platonic 'idea'--of our consoling dreams and our richest fancies.[4]

The theme of a present generation's longing for a foothold in Europe, a connection with the past and with a noble line is persistent in Hawthorne's fiction. The Pyncheon family of The House of the Seven Gables, for example, was beset by its "impalpable claim" to lands in Maine "more extensive than many a dukedom, or even a reigning prince's territory, on European soil," a claim which

> . . . caused the poorest member of the race to feel as if he had inherited a kind of nobility, and might yet come into the possession of princely wealth to support it.[5]

Hawthorne (1879) is ample testimony to James' familiarity with The House of the Seven Gables; but we can only assume that he would have known Hawthorne's posthumous work, Dr. Grimshawe's Secret, the story of Edward Redclyffe's transition from America, where, apparently an orphan, he had no links with the past, to England where his hopes for establishing himself as the rightful heir of the Braithwaite family and of their ancient hall were to be mysteriously realized. Although Redclyffe asserts both a genealogical

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[4]Henry James, "At Isella," Vol. II: The Complete Tales of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1962), p. 16. Hereafter cited in the text as Tales.

[5]Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, pp. 32-33.

and a property claim in England, Hawthorne also explains that simply as an American he would have felt a particular claim to England:

> . . . he was drawn [to England] by feelings which every educated and impressible American feels, in a degree scarcely conceivable by the English themselves. And being here . . . he began to feel the deep yearning which a sensitive American--his mind full of English thoughts, his imagination of English poetry, his heart of English character and sentiment--cannot fail to be influenced by,--the yearning of the blood within his veins for that from which it has been estranged; the half-fanciful regret that he should ever have been separated from these woods, these fields, these natural features of scenery, to which his nature was moulded, from the men who are still so like himself, from these habits of life and thought which (though he may not have known them for two centuries) he still perceives to have remained in some mysterious way latent in the depths of his character.[6]

Thus the American claimants to British lands and British titles whose requests Hawthorne records in his "Consular Experiences" could be considered as acting out the wishes of any American; Hawthorne, himself, "conscious of a fervent hereditary attachment to the native soil of our forefathers, "felt England to be "our own Old Home"[7] and called the collection of essays in which the "Consular Experiences" appears Our Old Home.

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[6]Nathaniel Hawthorne, Dr. Grimshawe's Secret, Vol. XIII: The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. G. P. Lathrop (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1883), pp. 180-81.

[7]Nathaniel Hawthorne, Our Old Home, Vol. VII: The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. G. P. Lathrop (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1883), p. 56.

The ease with which the American claimant could actually exercise his prerogatives in the land of his forefathers and in Europe as a whole was a different matter from merely feeling his prerogatives to be just. James' personal and critical writings in the middle and late 1870's repeatedly deny the youthful optimism of his 1867 letter to Perry; the American could "pick and choose and assimilate" from European cultures, but in doing so, he was always in the position of the outsider, and as James' fiction indicates, the position was painful. What the American then had to fall back upon--and not in the high spirits that the letter to Perry suggests--was his "moral consciousness." Although after his return to America in 1870, James' loneliness and disappointment in his native land's barrenness is expressed in his description of America's "vast white distant sky" and "stiff sparse individual blades of grass,"[8] although he consequently longed for Europe, Europe was not to alleviate his feelings of isolation. In 1873, he writes to W. D. Howells from Berne, querying, "What is the meaning of this destiny of desolate exile--this dreary necessity of having month after month to do without friends for the sake of this arrogant old Europe which so little befriends us?" (L, I, 34). In 1874, he writes to Grace Norton from Florence, "I feel forever how Europe keeps holding one

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[8] Selected Letters, p. 38.

at arm's length, and condemning one to a meagre scraping of the surface. . . . Sometimes I am overwhelmed with the pitifulness of this absurd want of reciprocity between Italy itself and all my rhapsodies about it" (L, I, 36-37). His fondness for England and the smug fact that he had dined out 107 times in the winter of 1878-79 did not obscure his awareness of himself as essentially an observer, an alien; an 1878 article entitled "Americans Abroad" in The Nation finds him exclaiming, "Americans in Europe are outsiders; that is the great point thrown into relief by all zealous efforts to controvert it."[9] And in spite of any fondness Hawthorne may have shown for England in Our Old Home, James comments in his 1879 study that the book was "the work of an outsider, of a stranger, of a man who to the end remains a mere spectator."[10]

His remarks earlier in Hawthorne, however, point to a central difference between the American and the European, whether Frenchman or Englishman; unlike the European who "has the advantage that his standards are fixed by the general consent of the society in which he lives," the American is an individual in a land of

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[9]Oscar Cargill, The Novels of Henry James (New York: Macmillan Co., 1961), p. 61, brought my attention to this article, published in The Nation, XXVII (October 3, 1878), 208-209.

[10]Hawthorne, p. 120.

individuals--"stiff sparse individual blades of grass," each with "that rather chilly and isolated sense of moral responsibility."[11] Precisely because he is an outsider who not only appreciates, but who also tries to judge between good and evil, the dispossessed American prince comes to grief. He cannot make absolute claims upon either the streets of Rome or the English countryside or the bare rooms of Boston; he may come into his "own," but his "own" can only be the sum of his moral and aesthetic experiences in Rome, England, and Boston. He finally inherits no single socially or geographically defined place as does the medieval romance hero, but like the nineteenth-century romance hero, the American in Europe inherits himself alone.

In the period between his first published story in 1864 and The American in 1877, however, the conventions that James later categorizes as creating the artificial romantic note sounded loud and clear. The skeletons in James' closet include ghosts that are either pleasantly shocking as in "A Romance of Certain Old Clothes" (1868) or that disappear in the clear light of reason as in "The Ghostly Rental" (1876); a sense of danger, generated by purely physical violence, as in "Gabrielle de Bergerac" (1869), and a merely gratuitous setting in the past, as in "A Romance of Certain Old Clothes," are also tarnished derivations from traditional romance. In his stories of

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[11] Ibid., p. 50.

this period the structural conventions of romance--of fairy-tale, melodrama, and allegory--go undisguised. As the source of this early emphasis upon the Marvellous and the past, critics usually point to Hawthorne.[12] There is a general--if ill-timed and ill-considered--sigh of relief among them when James saved himself in 1875, by attending the salons of Turgenev and the French naturalists; in particular he saved himself, they feel, from the pernicious influence of George Sand and W. D. Howells, who had praised his romantic tendencies and had encouraged him to take Hawthorne as his master.[13] The sigh, however, was ill-timed and ill-considered, for as James moved out of this early period, he increasingly saw the conventions of romance--the supernatural, the past, a world divided Manichaeistically into representations of good and evil--as belonging to a state of mind, not only an American state of mind, but eventually a human state of mind. James' early romantics do exhibit this romance-oriented imagination, but the world in which they move is also the world of artificial romance where the good are victorious over the bad. As James consistently aligns his romantics on the side of the good in this period, their romance-oriented imaginations are only additional dimensions of their goodness. Not until

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[12]Marius Bewley in The Complex Fate (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952), p. 4, and Cornelia Pulsifer Kelley, pp. 76-84, assert that James absorbed only the romantic paraphenalia of Hawthorne's works in his early tales.

[13]Kelley, pp. 76-91.

"A Passionate Pilgrim" and "Madame de Mauves" does he begin to consider the fallibility of the romance-oriented imagination; not until The American does he begin to consider that the hero himself may come to realize the dangers of romantic idealizing.

An example of the romance-oriented imagination most overtly set amidst the conventions of romance occurs in "Gabrielle de Bergerac" (1869). Miss Kelley maintains that with this story, James reached the high point in his career as a romance writer,[14] romance being for her characterized by "an order of life which is no more" and a strong, imperative passion in the manner of Mme Sand. Illicit love and physical violence--signalled by the appearance of the paraphenalia of artificial romance: an ascent into a crumbling tower, sword-play, a bloody wound--move the tale, which sustains the general pattern of romance. The unknown hero, Coquelin, a peasant who has travelled to America and is dedicated to democracy, returns to the Old World to rescue the fair maid, highborn Gabrielle, from the chateau where she is held by her evil captors, her brother and the decadent nobleman he has selected for her husband. The interest of the tale, however, lies in the implicit internal struggles in the romance-oriented imaginations of Coquelin, Gabrielle, and the Chevalier, who, as Gabrielle's nephew and Coquelin's pupil, narrates their

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[14] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

story years later to a friend. Seemingly each of the three central characters is attempting to comprehend the past.

An older James, describing his first return to Europe through the eyes of his younger self in A Small Boy and Others, sees the "suggested romance" of Europe exactly summarized in his vision of a peasant woman scraping a living alongside "a castle and a ruin" (SBO, p. 285); for the young James, these were the tangible relics that allowed his imagination to conceive a more splendid or possibly a more terrible civilization. The nature of the three major characters in "Gabrielle de Bergerac" is also epitomized by their attitudes toward a peasant and a ruined castle tower. To the Chevalier, who like James in A Small Boy and Others recalls his own past in narrating the story, the ruined castle of Fossy encompasses a past of extreme contradictions; his description of it is fraught with ambiguities: with "feudal arrogance" the castle rises from a "gentle eminence"; its tower is an "empty skull," yet harbors flitting swallows; the court-yards are broad and sunny, yet the dungeons beneath are as dark as midnight (Tales, II, 142-43). Coquelin, the descendant of peasants, in contrast to the Chevalier, can see only the inherent evil in the ruin and the stultifying feudal system it represents:

> It's haunted with the ghost of the past. It smells of tragedies, sorrows and cruelties. . . . it's like the history of that abominable past of which it's a relic. At first glance we see nothing but the great proportions, the show and splendor; but when we come to explore, we detect a vast underground world of iniquity

> and suffering. Only half this castle is above the soil, the rest is dungeons and vaults and oubliettes. (Tales, II, 144)

His view of the castle, however, is as exaggerated in one direction as is the view of Gabrielle in the other; her vision evokes the very splendor he renounces, a splendor redolent of medieval romance:

> Fancy the great moat below filled with water and sheeted with lilies, and the drawbridge lowered, and a company of knights riding into the gates. Within, in one of those vaulted, quaintly timbered rooms, the châtelaine stands ready to receive them, with her woman, her chaplain, her physician, and her little page. They come clanking up the staircase, with ringing swords, sweeping the ground with their plumes. They are all brave and splendid and fierce. (Tales, II 145)

The story reaches a climax in the characters' expression of their antithetical attitudes toward the castle, and both Gabrielle and Coquelin compromise. When Coquelin protests that such a life as Gabrielle has described could be sweet only for the knight, Gabrielle throws her fan over a parapet and renounces the name of Bergerac to convince him of her belief that aristocratic property and aristocratic titles finally have nothing to do with noble temperament.[15] In casting off the fan--"an antiquated and sadly dilapidated instrument"--she anticipates her refusal of the Vicomte, the dissipated noble her brother demands she marry for the sake of the family's good name. Her gesture at Fossy also

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[15]Wegelin, p. 44, points out that also in "Madame de Mauves" and The American, the notion of a correlation between a noble birth and a noble temperament is examined.

inspires Coquelin to mitigate his extreme stance; he climbs into the decaying tower of the castle, and by conquering its heights, performs a feat of daring for his lady as those despised knights of old might have done. Thus the attitude toward the past that James seems to wish to convey in the story resembles the Chevalier's attitude toward the castle: one of ambivalence.

The modification of Coquelin's and Gabrielle's positions is prepared for earlier in the story by James' concern to show them both as having an imagination that relishes differences, otherness, the unknown. Coquelin, like his pupil, the Chevalier, is teased not only by the worlds described in Ovid, Virgil, and Plutarch, but also by Perrault's tales and La Fontaine's fables; the stories of beauties and beasts, wood-cutters and princes, mysterious meetings in castles and forests for both Coquelin and the Chevalier raise infinite questions that give rise to infinite reverie over an idealistic, long-ago world. Gabrielle's imagination, however, is stirred by Coquelin's meagre background; as he is interested in the aristocratic romance, she is interested in the picturesque poor. To Gabrielle, Coquelin was "a son of the soil";

> Marked as he was, in aspect and utterance, with the genuine plebeian stamp, he opened a way for the girl's fancy into a vague, unknown world. (Tales, II, 114)

But with Gabrielle's renunciation of her family name, her eventual marriage to the lowborn tutor, her death with him

in the Girondist cause, her fancy is fulfilled by the circumstances of the great plebeian romance--the French Revolution. And Coquelin's marriage to the highborn lady fulfills his aristocratic yearnings. And the moderate Girondist cause satisfies them both.

Gabrielle's decisions, however, blow the story up into artificial romance. They demand that she be rescued from a compulsory marriage, such as Christopher Newman will later term "infamous"; she--"a poor girl . . . an image of sombre desperation" escapes the wicked Vicomte with his horrible grimaces and the wicked Baron with his "great flaming eyes." Good triumphs, and the past, being apparently inextricably associated with evil, is rejected. The curtain does not fall, however, on the flight of Gabrielle and Coquelin, but returns to the dialogue between the Chevalier and his friend. As he explains that his aunt and his tutor were put to death on the scaffold during the Reign of Terror, the past is paradoxically endorsed. Their death was, after all, glorious. With the Chevalier's final words and with his interpolations throughout the tale condemning the present, the story, in spite of its apparent ambiguities, becomes artificial romance.

James opens the tale with a description of a portrait, a device the Gothic romancers and Hawthorne found useful for bringing a confrontation with the unknown or

the past,[16] and which he would use again in "A Passionate Pilgrim" and "Madame de Mauves," The Sense of the Past and The Ambassadors; the portrait here is of the beautiful Gabrielle on the eve of the Revolution. Given by M. de Bergerac to his friend, it allows him to illuminate the past, the circumstances of his childhood as the Chevalier and of his aunt's love-affair with Coquelin. Thus, as in the supernatural tales of the nineties, "Gabrielle de Bergerac" relies upon a series of narrators to create the illusion of moving back into time and to test the validity of the first-person narration.

The Chevalier, imagining that dungeons, after all, form the foundation of the castle of Fossy, appreciates the plight of the democratic Coquelin. He names his tutor certainly a more "excellent fellow" than the Vicomte; yet the Vicomte--this "last relic of the lily-handed youth of the bon-temps"--also dies with glory under the Terrorists' axe. Thus the Chevalier's interspersed remarks affirm his admiration for an age in which both the external and internal signs of nobility were evident. He regrets that his family chateau has been replaced by a "homeopathic" establishment; he parenthetically contradicts Coquelin's assertion that "to be indifferent to it [a good name] is the sign of a noble mind" (Tales, II, 146). He is unquestionably nostalgic. Early in

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[16]Matthiessen, American Renaussance, p. 300, cites James' debt to Hawthorne for the use of the portrait as the means of showing the way "the history-ridden modern American actually steps across into the past."

the story he asks rhetorically whether "the instructors of youth nowadays condescend to the fairy-tale pure and simple?"--and the implicit answer must be negative; after all there were no times like those of the "old, old world" or of the "Grand Siècle" just as there were no times like those before and during 1789. If there was once conflict in his mind about the greatness of the past, none exists in the conclusion, for James is as nostalgic as his narrator.

James hints at the right romantic note in "Gabrielle de Bergerac" in his three studies of the romance-oriented imagination. Gabrielle, particularly, in the process of deciding to marry Coquelin, is forced to weigh the past against the present and to adjust her romantic illusions. Her decision is made for her, however, by the jealousy of the Vicomte who indirectly accuses her of an illicit affair with the tutor; she marries Coquelin to protect her personal sense of honor. With the Chevalier's nostalgic endorsement of the past, the meaning of her denunciation of the past becomes confused, and the story finally merely equivocal. James is not yet able to describe a character groping through his romantic illusions to self-consciousness. The romance-oriented imaginations of the three central characters in "Gabrielle de Bergerac" seem principally to allow the young James to indulge in some conventional romantic imagery. The individual's attempt to understand the ambiguities of the past in relation to the present is more explicitly the concern of "A Passionate Pilgrim"; Gabrielle, Coquelin, and the

Chevalier are kin to Clement Searle, but Searle, in having made a definite choice between past and present, suffers.

In "A Passionate Pilgrim" both the narrator and Searle are characterized by their romance-oriented imaginations. Because the narrator initially establishes himself as a man whose reading has led him to feel a definite familiarity with the Old World, his statements serve as a norm against which Searle's more efflorescent fancy and exaggerated claims upon the past may be compared.[17] Approaching Lockley Park,[18] Searle's ancestral seat, the narrator explains in a passage, reminiscent of a letter James sent to his father in 1870,[19] that his and Searle's childhood reading had prepared them for the varied aspects of the English country-side. Because of his own predilection to see the present through the filter of his reading and consequently in relationship to an idealized past, the narrator is able to sympathize with the excrescences of

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[17]Krishna Baldev Vaid, Technique in the Tales of Henry James (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 32, illuminates this point by considering the narrator "an objective correlative to the emotions of his companion."

[18]Giorgio Melchiori, "Locksley Hall Revisited: Tennyson and Henry James," Review of English Literature, VI (October, 1965), 9-25, points out the Shakespearean and the Tennysonian references in James' story, but neglects to consider these references, as well as those to Smollett and Jane Austen, as frequently being the manifestations of the romance-oriented imagination.

[19]The Letters of Henry James, ed. Percy Lubbock, I (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1920), 28-29. Wegelin, p. 36, also recognizes the similarity between passages in "A Passionate Pilgrim" and James' letter to his father.

Searle's romance-oriented imagination and to enlist the reader's sympathies. Although James' reliance upon a first-person narrator distracts from the centrality of Searle's story, it generally serves to verify the pathos of the "passionate pilgrim."

That Clement Searle is alone is immediately evident. The narrator, a fellow American, observing Searle for the first time, comes to three conclusions about him: "he was unmarried, he was ill, he was not an Englishman" (Tales, II, 229). Each of these conditions tends to isolate him. Although his bachelorhood may allow him to become enamoured of his cousin, and she with him, it creates a predicament that permits her brother to consider Searle a swindler and to eject him from his home. His illness, with its overtones of necrophilia, induces a boisterous heartiness in Simmons, the crass American lawyer, and disgust in his gentleman cousin; even the narrator, while sympathetic to Searle's ailment and determined to make Searle a well man indicates his inability to comprehend his friend. Searle's illness, like Milly Theale's, is never actually identified, thus shrouding him with a strange fragility and heightening our apprehension for his well-being. A similar irony also works in the conclusion of the early story and the late novel; at the moment when Searle's and Milly's desire to live is the most intense, circumstances cause the disease to become overpowering.

Searle's nationality and his reason for being in England, more than either his illness or his bachelorhood,

however, precipitates his alienation. Simmons summarizes his situation by describing him as "a poor nobody of a Yankee [walking] right into an old English estate" (Tales, II, 232). Like the American claimants at the Liverpool consulate and like Edward Redclyffe,[20] Searle has pinned his hopes on demonstrating his kinship to an aristocratic English family and his rights to their property. Like James himself, who, in re-reading "A Passionate Pilgrim" more than thirty-five years later, compared his state to that of "dispossessed princes and wandering heirs," Searle is compared by the narrator to "a proscribed and exiled prince, hovering about the dominion of the usurper" (Tales, II, 253). Simmons' initial remarks clearly suggest that in America Searle was as alienated as he became in England, "'I've heard people say at home that you dressed and talked and acted like an Englishman. But I know Englishmen, and I know you. You're not one of them, Searle, not you'" (Tales, II, 231). Of his own life in America, Searle explains to the narrator,

> "I have always fancied that I was meant for a gentler world. . . . I came into the world an aristocrat. . . . Sitting here, in this old park, in this old land, I feel--I feel that I hover on the misty verge of what I might have been! I should have been born here and not there; here my vulgar idleness would have been--don't laugh now!--would have been elegant leisure." (Tales, II, 245)

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[20]Wegelin, pp. 37-38, citing N. P. Willis, Hawthorne, and Twain as James' predecessors, makes a case for the figure of the American claimant as having achieved the status of a literary convention by the time "A Passionate Pilgrim" was written.

The major cause for Searle's alienation, however, is suggested in this explanation to the narrator of his aristocratic longings; he is both cursed and blessed by his romance-oriented imagination. His tendency to perceive the world through the prism of romance destroys his claims to Lockley Park, on the one hand, yet on the other hand, this same tendency brings him nearer to the sphere of what really is his "own," brings him nearer to seeing himself in relation to the present and to the human community. In spite of James' acknowledged resemblances between himself at the age of twenty-six and Searle, the exaggerated nature of Searle's imagination clearly distinguishes him from his creator. As the sympathetic narrator, who is more nearly like James, sets down his story, Searle is shown gradually to lose his sense of perspective, his physical illness mounting as his fantasies thicken.

The closer Searle comes to Lockley Park, the more intensely his imagination glows. Not only does he, with the narrator, greet the landscape and the people en route to the estate "as children greet the loved pictures in a story-book, lost mourned and found again" (Tales, II, 251), but as soon as he sees the estate itself, he immediately is off in his own world of fantasy, contemplating the possible legends and histories connected with the hall, drawing literary allusions, rhapsodically imitating the archaic language of romance, wondering, "'How I could lounge my bit

of life away on this shady stretch of turf! Haven't I some maiden-cousin in yon moated grange who would give me kind leave?'" (Tales, II, 253). In the house, he meets what he had anticipated: legends and Miss Searle, the kind maiden-cousin. His interest in the history of the manor and its treasures soon becomes an obsession; he longs for Miss Searle to tell him of the "loves and murders and mysteries" in the tradition of the house and hangs on her brother's words as he recounts them.

Even before he has heard the actual history of the first Clement Searle, on merely seeing the portrait of his ancestral namesake, he imagines the tale:

> "He perished at sea. His spirit came ashore and wandered forlorn till it got lodgment again in my poor body. In my poor body it has lived, homesick, these forty years, shaking its rickety cage, urging me, stupid, to carry it back to the scenes of its youth. And I never knew what was the matter with me! Let me exhale my spirit here!" (Tales, II, 256)

The narrator, earlier concerned about Searle's morbidity, had hinted that his friend was haunted, thus anticipating Searle's explicit desire to be affiliated with the ghosts of the past. Searle himself had predicted that if Lockley Park had a ghost, he expected to see it; consequently when his cousin relates the story of his namesake--who fled to America, leaving behind the pregnant daughter of the local curate--Searle is delighted to think that the ghost of the curate's daughter should haunt him, but queries, "'Can a ghost haunt a ghost? I am a ghost!'" (Tales, II, 272).

It is inevitable that the portrait of the original Clement Searle become the passage to the past, that Searle become his namesake and be visited by the curate's daughter--inevitable, because Searle's romance-oriented imagination had become so rarified in focusing upon the past that he had lost contact with the present. His fancy, like that of Ralph Pendrel's and even Lambert Strether's, is too eager to substitute the artifact for the reality, the past for the present.

His penchant for forcing the present into the past is most evident in his attitude toward himself and toward Miss Searle. Appearing initially to the narrator "with an air of half-mourning," Searle continues to take pleasure in associating himself with the dead. He is incapable of seeing, as does the narrator, that he has too readily renounced his will to live. In his last deed,--the removal of his ring to pay for a poor Englishman's passage to America--he does link himself to the present and the future as well as to his former homeland; yet the words accompanying his action do not merely identify him with the dead and the past, but suggest that this self-conscious association with the grandeur of the past has become more preposterous than pathetic, for he says of himself, "'What mighty knuckles! There must be such knuckles in the mummies of the Pharaohs!'" (Tales, II, 303).

Whereas the narrator comprehends Miss Searle as "neither young nor beautiful," as pale and timid and about thirty-three years old, Searle insists upon seeing her as "in a romance," a phrase he twice uses in speaking his thoughts to her. As a figure of romance she not only becomes younger and more beautiful than she is, but she also ceases to exist in the present; in his first meeting with her, Searle expatiates, "'You're a woman of the past. You're nobly simple. It has been a romance to see you. . . . Let me fancy you the soul of all the dead women who have trod these terrace flags, which lie here like sepulchral tablets in the pavement of a church'" (Tales, II, 264). He would, it seems, rather have her dead than alive. In his second meeting, he insists upon associating her with another Searle ancestor done up in portraiture--Margaret Searle, who "had married a beggarly foreigner, in obedience to her heart and in defiance of her family" (Tales, II, 286).

In idealizing Miss Searle as "nobly simple" rather than calling her "simple, too simple" as the narrator does, in transfiguring her into a dead noblewoman and into an artifact, he has given her a new lease on life, but he has used her to satisfy his own fancies and has made her present existence more precarious. Searle's treatment of his cousin is certainly more considerate than her brother's, which anticipates Urbain de Bellegarde's treatment of his sister; yet in this first full study of the romance-oriented imagination James clearly suggests the danger in having an

interest in the past that sours to an egocentric obsession with the dead, thereby denying the possibility of love in the present.

Searle's vision of the curate's daughter's ghost provides the story's climax. Not only in this scene does his interest in the past take shape and come to haunt him, but his morbid desires are also fulfilled. James' rhetoric in 1871 is too often unadulterated Radcliffe; yet it emphasizes his point; Searle, "pale as a corpse" after seeing the ghost, begins his physical decline to death. At this moment, if he is most ill and most alone, he is also most ecstatically alive, for he gasps with the realization, "'I'm a personage! I'm rare among men! I'm a haunted man!'" (Tales, II, 289). "With his cadaverous, emaciated face, his tragic wrinkles, . . . and a certain high fantastical air in the flickering alterations of his brow," Searle reminds the narrator of "the vision-haunted knight of La Mancha, nursed by the Duke and Duchess."

The analogy between Searle and Don Quixote is crucial. Throughout the tale, Searle's general orientation toward romance, his devotion to the past, his idealization of women, always accompanied by elaborate gestures of courtesy and rhetoric, had allied him with Cervantes' hero, but from the time the appearance of the apparition established his undeniable bond with the past, Searle becomes increasingly quixotic; the narrator comments that in his company, he

"found it hard to distinguish between the play of fancy and the labor of thought and to fix the balance between perception and illusion," for his friend "now began to speak almost wholly as from the imagined consciousness of his old-time kinsmen" (Tales, II, 291).

At the times when he seems most alienated from others through his recognition of his special attribute and through his confusion of reality and illusion, like Don Quixote, Searle becomes most poignantly human. He begins to reconcile himself to the living human community. At Oxford, he turns "rhapsodist and seer" and is wined and dined by the collegiates whom he places, however, in another age; he becomes the benefactor of the impoverished Mr. Rawson, who is as desperate to seek the New World as Searle had been to seek the Old. By the introduction of the romantic Rawson--longing for a "cooling, cleansing plunge into the unknowing and the unknown"--into the conclusion, James seems clearly to classify the romance-oriented imagination as an essential human foible. His generosity toward Rawson establishes a link between himself and the living present, and his egocentricity is mitigated by his capacity for kindness; yet finally his fostered illusions remain intact, for as long as he finds his identity in being haunted, in living a romance, he rejects the human conditions of the present.

"A Passionate Pilgrim," like "Gabrielle de Bergerac," illustrates a conventional melodramatic pattern of romance. Searle, as the hero returning home again from far distances,

awakens the heart of his cousin, whom the narrator terms the "Belle au Bois Dormant." Once again amidst shadows cast by candelabra, the hero confronts the villain, Richard Searle; grotesque in his shortness and in the preternatural redness of his hair,[21] with "the face of a scholar, a dilletante, a man who lives in a library, bending over books and prints and medals" (Tales, II, 267), he is in appearance the forerunner of Peter Quint, in vocation the precursor of Gilbert Osmond, and in his insidious control over his sister's life he resembles both of these villains wrapped up with Urbain de Bellegarde. In "Gabrielle de Bergerac," the traditional pattern of the romance is fulfilled with Coquelin's winning of Gabrielle's hand; Searle, too, becomes the traditional romance-hero as he finally claims Miss Searle, thereby thwarting her brother's evil will; albeit, he claims her on his death-bed. Yet the artificial romance of sentimental melodrama is merely the underpinning for the more important story of Searle's lonely journey to come into his "own," not simply in the manner he conceives, as a unique "personage," but also through his tenuous re-alignment with society. Like the Chevalier, however, Searle does not reconcile his idealization of the past with the evidence of its evil primarily because both he and his creator continue to divide human nature into static moral categories.

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[21]Verena Tarrant and Milly Theale, both representative of the opposite side of the Manichaean coin, both representative of goodness and innocence, are also characterized by their brilliant red hair.

The stories following immediately upon the heels of "A Passionate Pilgrim" in 1871 show James still examining the romance-oriented imagination and still placing his subject in a conventional romantic structure. Nothing the young American traveller in "At Isella" encounters abroad spoils his illusions; except perhaps the Catholic priests, who do not prove to be evil, thus frustrating his Puritan expectations for a necessarily surreptitious Catholic clergy. Certainly the Signora to whom he delivers his eulogy, quoted above, does not disappoint him. Dressed exactly according to the canons of romance, in a black dress with red flounces, she is beautiful and betrayed. Although she tells a different story about Italy--of a forced marriage and a husband who strikes and starves her--a story which she insists is not romance, she gives the hero his opportunity to participate in what he considers to be romance. He is able to perform the supreme good: to rescue a virtuous lady in distress from the evil forces which keep her from her true love. As the hero gives the Signora funds to make her escape to her true love, away from Italy to Switzerland, he satisfies his "richest fancies," and the appearance of the wicked husband in hot pursuit soon after the Signora's escape completes the melodrama as well as the conventional American view of a lovely but evil, feudalistic Europe, which compels young girls into "infamous" marriages. "At Isella" hardly simmers, even as a "pot-boiler"; with the hero's expectations perfectly fulfilled, the story exemplifies James at his most artificially

romantic whereas in "A Passionate Pilgrim" with Clement Searle's insistence upon living in a romance in spite of the frustrations of his expectations, James strikes at "the real romantic note."

Although he once thought Watch and Ward could compete as "the great American novel,"[22] James saw this first novel through only one serialization (The Atlantic Monthly, 1871) and one publication in book form (1878) as contrasted with the four publications of "A Passionate Pilgrim." It rings all the changes on the scales of romance. Instead of "The Sleeping Beauty" or "Rapunzel," "Snow White" or "Cinderella" forms the underlying pattern of Watch and Ward: the heroine of the fairy-tale, bereft of parents, aided by a fairy-godmother, grows into the most lovely and gracious of ladies and overcomes immense obstacles to be united with the most noble and patient of men, in the same way that Nora Lambert is aided by Roger Lawrence, who turns out to be both fairy-godmother and Prince Charming. The traditional story, however, as James has modified it here, belongs as much to the prince as the princess, for both Roger and Nora encounter the obstacles.

Roger is first distracted from the course of true love on a journey to South America (a unique and unsuccessful experimental journey for James into the tropical exotic) by the beautiful Teresita of the liquid eyes and the "faded

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[22]Leon Edel, "Introduction," Watch and Ward (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960), p. 5.

pink morning dress, very much open at the throat."[23] She is all picturesque naiveté while Miss Sands of Boston society is all sophistication in her attractions. But Roger's course is set early in the narrative--he has determined from the beginning of the story to raise Nora to be his bride--and these two stereotyped temptresses seem extraneous intrusions. The obstacles confronting Nora, however, are valid, and although the two men who tempt her from the path of true love are as much types as the two women, they challenge her moral perception.

Both Roger and Nora, like Searle and the hero of "At Isella," are conscious of participating in a romance. Roger, envious of the romance heroes to whom Nora devotes so much time through her reading, conceives of himself in the guises of various romance figures--as

> a beneficient shadow, a vague tutelar name [who comes] . . . back in glory, fragrant with exotic perfumes and shod with shoes of mystery,[24]

as a Rochester, as "a good old Catholic," who would keep her shut up in a convent--but he tells her instead that in his heart he has "a prettier romance" than any she could read. It is, however, the standard romance; following a code of courtly love, like Searle and the hero of "At Isella," Roger idealizes Nora and hopes she will come to consider him worthy as a lover. It is not so simple for Nora with her brace of suitors and her orientation toward romance.

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[23]Henry James, Watch and Ward (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, & Co., 1878), p. 43.

[24]Ibid., p. 54.

Since coming under Roger's guardianship, Nora had been nourished on romance. More clearly than Gabrielle de Bergerac, she is the first of James' contributions to the "long line of romance-reading girls," which the eighteenth-century reading public enjoyed and which included not only Catherine Morland and Emma Woodhouse, but also Steele's Biddy Tipkin and Smollett's Lydia Melford.[25] Because of her reading, Nora, like her successor Isabel Archer, is most readily smitten by the man who appeals to her fancy. George Fenton and Hubert Lawrence, Fortune Hunter and Corrupt Clergyman,[26] marplots both, who would marry her only for her money or her beauty, speak to her imagination whereas poor Roger speaks to her conscience. Fenton, who appears from the still mysterious West to claim cousinship, allows Nora to catch "a hint of indefinite continuity! . . . an echo of her past."[27] Although his tattooed hand, his narrow shoulders, and diamond stick-pin automatically make him suspect as the villain in a nineteenth-century stage melodrama, Nora is delighted to find through him a connection with the past. Likewise she nearly succumbs to Hubert's

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[25]Sheridan Baker, "The Comedy of Illusion in Northanger Abbey," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, LI (1966), 549-50, identifies the "'female Quixote'" as a stock character.

[26]Edel, "Introduction," Watch and Ward, pp. 15-16, places the characters in the novel in slightly different categories; Roger, Fenton, and Hubert are respectively the Loyal, the Cunning, and the Strong.

[27]Watch and Ward, p. 62.

amourous intentions, following his impassioned speech about the need for novelists with highly colored imaginations and the rightfulness of a clergyman's escaping to Turkey where he could wear a turban and converse with "a pretty Mahometan or a prepossessing idolatress."[28]

Nora finally does make the right choice because her world is as simple as conventional melodrama; Fenton must prove himself a scoundrel and Hubert must prove himself a cad, and Nora, recognizing her errors, must accept the man of her conscience. Her romance-oriented imagination makes her decisions difficult, and yet in the aftermath of her mistakes, it brings her to an appreciation of Roger's position, silently stated in his "haggard eyes," the eyes of the long-suffering courtly lover. Like Searle at the end of his story, Nora at the end of Watch and Ward is more alone as she wanders the New York streets prior to her reunion with Roger than she was as an orphan; nevertheless at the moment of most extreme isolation and out of their own suffering, both she and Searle grow in compassion. Nora's story, however, ends in the pretty, sentimental romance that Roger had plotted, with the good and the evil pigeon-holed, whereas Searle, unable to judge, moves out of the traditional romance to take on the features of the nineteenth-century hero. Society confirms Nora's triumph; Searle's triumph is in the grave, his reunion with the

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[28] Ibid., p. 146.

past--his own true love--being possible only in death. Unlike Nora whose wishes, when fulfilled, are socially acclaimed, Searle's victory is pyrrhic.

By the time of "Madame de Mauves"--written three years after "A Passionate Pilgrim"--James' awareness of the treacheries of the romance-oriented imagination has grown. Here again novels have molded a young woman's judgement of human nature; if Euphemia Cleve suffers from her fancies, however, she insists upon them the more vindictively. She, too, bereft of parents (her widowed American mother having placed her in a Parisian convent at an early age), feeds on romances. James emphasizes the innocence as well as the inflexibility of her romantic imaginings:

> Even after experience had given her a hundred rude hints, she found it easier to believe in fables, when they had a certain nobleness of meaning, than in well-attested but sordid facts. She believed that a gentleman with a long pedigree must of necessity be a very fine fellow, and that the consciousness of a picturesque family tradition imparts an exquisite tone to the character. Noblesse oblige, she thought, as regards yourself, and insures, as regards your wife. She had never spoken to a nobleman in her life, and these convictions were but a matter of transcendent theory. (Tales, III, 129-30)

Her innocence, initially responsible for her tendency to idealize, however, turns eventually to a wilful blindness in the grip of an idée fixe. Noblesse does not in her case insure the wife, but rather than admit to disappointment when it becomes apparent that her noble-blooded husband has taken to other women, she silently endures, self-righteous in her theory. She is as adamantine in her romantic concept

of evil as she is in her concept of good; although the Baron de Mauves repents, Madame de Mauves, in her cold and outraged virtue, drives him to blow out his brains. Her obsession with idealistic standards of conduct necessitates that justice be revenge; love cannot survive in such an environment.

The story, however, belongs not altogether to Madame de Mauves; Longmore, through whose eyes she is admired, has a central role as her interpreter. He is also in the position of rescuing the captive maiden, releasing her from the bondage of an ogre by his offers of love. Standing in place of his imagination is conscience. Clement Searle, Madame de Mauves, and the hero of "At Isella" have the peculiarly American imagination of the claimant who idealizes Europe; in describing the confrontation of their romantic ideals with a corrupt, feudalistic Europe, James is appealing to another peculiarly American response--the response of the American Puritan and the American democrat. Because Longmore responds to Europe from the beginning as the Puritan and the democrat, his story is very much a matter of a young man's inevitable encounter with predictable wickedness. His explicitly "Puritanic soul" immediately establishes categories of good and evil, placing Madame de Mauves, "a sweet American girl" with "dove-like eyes," in the one and the Baron de Mauves, "an unclean Frenchman" who comes near being "a monster with visibly cloven feet, exhaling brimstone," in the other. Longmore's New England

conscience coincides with the romance-oriented imagination, however, in his consideration of women. His initial alignment of Madame de Mauves with the forces of good is the beginning of an idealization which becomes more deeply entrenched as he realizes the nature of her predicament. He tells her,

> "You're too good to be happy on the terms offered you. . . . You believe in purity and duty and dignity, and you live in a world in which they are daily belied." (Tales, III, 168)

Europe, however, also touches Longmore's Puritanic soul aesthetically, and the ideals of his New England background, as set as those of any romance hero, are challenged by his aesthetic bent. In a scene foreshadowing Strether's unexpected meeting in the French countryside with Chad and Madame de Vionnet, Longmore wanders into a landscape, so perfect in every detail "all the French novels seemed to have described it, all the French landscapists to have painted it" (Tales, III, 183). The scene--"plain ripe nature [expressing] the unperverted reality of things" (Tales, III, 184)--contrasts with Longmore's transcendental thoughts of sacrifice and renunciation. The appearance of a picturesque artist and his companion assures him that conjugal bliss--that most desired ideal--is possible for some. In the perfection of the scene, however, Longmore mistakes the relationship of this happy couple; discovering they are artist and model, he is left wondering at women's "measureless mystery . . . whether there was greater beauty

in their strength or in their weakness" and feeling his rigid moral position mocked by "some obtrusive vision of unattainable bliss" (Tales, III, 189).

Returning to Madame de Mauves with love in his hand after his sojourn in the country, he is offered instead the chance for an ideal friendship, in the name of reason. As a result of his recent experience in the country, he cries out that "'reason is a mere word! The only reality in the world is feeling'" (Tales, III, 194). Her reply demands that to please her he should remain an ideal gentleman, generous rather than selfish, rare rather than vulgar; once more he is set pondering the merits of an ascetic moral code. The "ideal of conduct" she conceives for him is no less than Neo-Platonic; with his head thrown back, Longmore tries to find her ideal among "the blinking, mocking stars" (Tales, III, 199). He accepts the ideal, however, in spite of the mockery in the stars and in the rural lovers, and returns to America to love his lady from afar.

The conclusion of the story, however, throws Longmore and James' reader once again into a quandary. Hearing how his lady's self-righteous coldness causes her repentant husband to commit suicide, Longmore hesitates to return to Europe to requite his love; his first impulse to do so is supplanted by "a singular feeling--a feeling for which awe would be hardly too strong a name" (Tales, III, 209). Awe, however, with its connotations of horror and reverence, suggests that

Longmore's final attitude is ambivalent;[29] from thinking in absolute terms himself, he has been consistently led to question the validity of an absolute stance. He still, however, retains an "ardent tenderness of memory" for Madame de Mauves, and by not returning to Europe, he may continue to cherish his idealized version of her.

With Madame de Mauves rigid in her romantic idealism and the baron repentant in his degeneracy, with America less spiritual and Europe less corrupt, with the princess and the ogre exchanging positions, the melodrama is reversed; good gets the upper-hand, but good is now tainted with evil. In the stories written prior to 1874, good and evil remained static qualities, but of unequal potency, for good eventually prevailed. Once evil was identified, the Chevalier and Clement Searle could side-step its existence, for they never found it in themselves. The hero of "At Isella" and Nora Lambert could actively squelch it. The last minute inversion of the melodrama in "Madama de Mauves" suggests, however, that James is more concerned in this story than he has been in his earlier tales in examining the problem of moral perception, for the conclusion indicates that the ideals of Madame de Mauve's romance-oriented imagination and Longmore's New England conscience are equally fallible, though perhaps not equally destructive.

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[29] The ambiguity of Longmore's final words is also noted by Wegelin, p. 45.

Frederick Crews quite correctly maintains that a study of James' chronological development shows that his "characters become less susceptible to moral categorization: it is increasingly difficult to divide the cast into heroes and villains."[30] Longmore's confusion in judging Madame de Mauves testifies to this development although, until the reversal at the story's conclusion, the melodrama is sustained. In The American, however, written three years later in 1877, the melodrama thickens as the story progresses, with the European bad becoming worse and the American good becoming better. But James is by no means retrogressing, for in focusing only upon the character of Christopher Newman, he demonstrates more fully than he had done before the difficulty an individual has in making the correct moral choice. Although Newman claims to have never read a novel and consequently does not have the high flights of romantic fancy which characterize Searle and Madame de Mauves, he enjoys both the theater and the tall-tales of the Western campfire, and James thus cuts him to the pattern of a latter-day Quixote. At the end of the novel, evil appears, readily identifiable and readily isolated in the Bellegardes; yet for Newman, the process of confronting evil in his self-willed idealistic world is as difficult as it was for Don Quixote to distinguish illusion from reality.

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[30] Frederick C. Crews, The Tragedy of Manners: Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 8.

In the opening pages of The American, James does Newman's portrait, setting down his appearance and history in detail. Externally, he fills out "the national mould"; his past amounts to "an intensely Western story."[31] Yet among the other Americans whom Newman meets on his European travels, he stands apart; he has neither the gregariousness of Tom Tristram nor Mrs. Tristram's romance-oriented imagination nor the Reverend Babcock's moral indignation. He is neither the passionate nor the passionless pilgrim. A fellow American can best categorize him, but in the novel he is the only representative of the category; Mrs. Tristram tells him:

> "You are the great Western Barbarian, stepping forth in his innocence and might, gazing a while at this poor effete Old World and then swooping down on it." (Amn, p. 44)

If there is any American with whom he can be identified, it would be the practical and good-humored Benjamin Franklin, who is the single other American the Bellegarde's ancient friend, M. de la Rochefidèle, remembers having met and whose Philadelphia success story is compared to Newman's San Francisco successes. As if spelling out the implications of his name, Newman sees himself as "a new man inside [an] old skin, and [longing] for a new world" (Amn, p. 33). In his innocence and romantic idealism, he forgets that Christopher Columbus had discovered the New World and that Christopher Newman can only discover the Old World.

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[31]Henry James, The American (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1877), pp. 6, 27. Hereafter cited as Amn in the text.

Although James points out that his hero's eye--a fusion of innocence and experience--was "by no means the glowing orb of romance," to the other characters in the novel, the "great Western Barbarian" appears precisely as the hero of romance.[32] Because of his complete freedom of movement, both Noémie Nioche and Tom Tristram see him as acting with the "caprice de prince." Because of the immense, idealistic, and egocentric scope of his desires--he wants "the tallest mountains, and the bluest lakes, and the finest pictures, and the handsomest churches, and the most celebrated men, and the most beautiful women" (Amn, p. 34)--he reminds Mrs. Tristram "of the heroes of the French romantic poets, Rolla and Fortunio and all those other insatiable gentlemen for whom nothing in this world was handsome enough"; she also recommends that he behave toward Claire de Cintré as would a romance hero: "'Fly to the rescue of Madame de Cintré. . . . Pounce down, seize her in your talons, and carry her off. Marry her yourself'" (Amn, p. 103). Parisian society generally acknowledges him to be performing the role of the bear-prince in the story of the Beauty and the Beast. Newman himself insists that he is noble although Valentin protests that his nobility is automatically disproved by his having manufactured wash-tubs; and eventually because

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[32]Edward Stone, The Battle and the Books: Some Aspects of Henry James (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1964), pp. 158-62, is concerned with the "fabulous" aspects of The American, whereas Constance Rourke, American Humor: A Study of the National Character is concerned with the "fable" of the American character in the novel.

Newman has been "a commercial person," the Bellegardes deny his nobility and his suit to Claire.

Like the romance hero, whose noble lineage is initially disguised, he must prove that he is a prince, of a nature more noble than any title can imply. The story of The American is the story of the testing of Newman's nobility; James summarizes the nature of his trial in his preface, with the point being

> . . . in especial that he should suffer at the hands of persons pretending to represent the highest possible civilization and to be of an order in every way superior to his own. What would he "do" in that predicament, how would he right himself, or how, failing a remedy, would he conduct himself under his wrong? (AN, p. 22)

As a result of his trial, Newman proves himself of a moral nature far more noble than any line of nobility accepted by "the highest possible civilization."

In The Pilgrimage of Henry James, Van Wyck Brooks cites the end of the Civil War as marking a definite change in the intellectual life of America; with it, "the age of faith has come to an end; the age of business has begun."[33] Certainly, Christopher Newman plunges into the American business world after his service in the war, but the age of faith continues, for James implies that Newman entered business to uphold a distinct commitment to life in response to an "angry, bitter sense of the [war's] waste of precious things" (Amn, p. 27). Nor, having made his pile, was he simply satisfied to continue accumulating dollars. His trip

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[33]Brooks, p. 34.

to Europe expresses a general dissatisfaction, for in Paris "a vague sense that more answers were possible than his philosophy had hitherto dreamt of had already taken possession of him" (Amn, p. 29). His awareness of his alienation from both the citizens of Paris and its colony of American citizens is marked by his eagerness to learn from any source. In a metaphor that anticipates the relationship between Strether and Maria Gostrey, Newman tells Mrs. Tristram with humility, "'I feel as simple as a little child, and a little child might take me by the hand and lead me about'" (Amn, p. 29).

To his European and American acquaintances alike his moral stance is always enigmatic. To the upright Reverend Babcock, his eagerness, the quality of open-mindedness coupled with his capacity to assimilate experiences, demonstrates a singular inability to discriminate; in Babcock's eyes, his fellow American, specifically, has no sense of evil. The Reverend Mrs. Pocock might criticize Strether in similar terms. Certainly a few of Babcock's scruples would have been useful to Newman, whose general inclination to discover the good in any painting as well as in any man results in his ludicrous commission of Mademoiselle Nioche's imitations as well as in his foolhardy confidence in Madame de Bellegarde's and Urbain's good faith.

The trip leading to his encounter with the Unitarian minister is clearly a device to contrast Newman with a

European as well as an American counterpart, for, after leaving Babcock, Newman explains in a letter to Mrs. Tristram that he took up the company of an English journalist. For the Englishman, however, Newman's reactions were "'too virtuous by half; I was too stern a moralist. He told me, in a friendly way, that I was cursed with a conscience.'" Admittedly bewildered by these opposing judgements making him to be neither fish nor fowl, Newman nevertheless characteristically makes his own decision about the matter: "'I didn't worry about it and very soon made up my mind they were both idiots'" (Amn, p. 97).

Newman does have a conscience; he is committed to being good, to being "trustful, generous, liberal, patient, easy, pocketing frequent irritation and furnishing unlimited modesty" (Amn, p. 369) and to having consequently a justifiably high opinion of himself for embodying these qualities. Nevertheless, his idealistic determination to find goodness in others precipitates his sorrow. Before his experiences in Paris, he had been aware that there was "something stronger in life than his own will. But the mysterious something could only be the devil, and he was accordingly seized with an intense personal enmity to this impertinent force" (Amn, p. 28). "The devil" he confronts in Paris, however, exists in human form; Newman finally even catches a glimpse of him in himself.

In his idealization of women, Newman is particularly blinded to the existence of any "devil." Women in his opinion are "a religion, or at least an ideal of some sort"; in the "vague acceptance of final responsibility to some illumined feminine brow" he goes so far as to find "his metaphysical inspiration" (Amn, p. 39). The sub-plot concerning the Nioches not only serves as the means by which Valentin is brought to his death, but the character of Noémie also reveals Newman's facile good faith in women. Her treatment of Valentin convinces him at last that she is no merely impoverished and innocent coquette in need of a dot, and her eventual appearance with the decadent Lord Deepmere, which confirms her determination to scale society by selling her charms, coincides with his disillusionment with the house of Bellegarde. His failure to recognize Mademoiselle Nioche's lack of scruples underscores his more serious failure to recognize the lack of scruples in the family of Claire de Cintré.

Having decided that his wife must be perfection, having decided that Claire must be his wife, Newman finds her flawless and quixotically tries to ignore any faults her family may have by asserting his own good will. In speaking of her, Newman uses the most hackneyed terms of endearment--all superlatives, all glittering idealizations. They are the expressions of sentimental melodrama, surely absorbed from his experiences at the theater. To the degree

that Newman interprets his circumstances as if he were at the theater, he is responding with a romance-oriented imagination, acting as quixotically as does Longmore--that other man of conscience--in the French countryside. In so doing, he converts reality to romance just as much as does Clement Searle.

For Newman, Claire is always a heroine; attending her salon,

> He felt as if he were at a play. . . . She was a part of the play he was seeing acted, quite as much as her companions; but she filled the stage and how much better she did it. (Amn, p. 132)

Even before he had met her, he was intrigued by Tom Tristram's tale of

> . . . the lovely Claire on her knees, with loosened tresses and streaming eyes, and the rest of them standing over her with spikes and goads and red-hot irons. (Amn, p. 132)

His interest had been peaked by his visit to the family home which to him resembled "something in a play; . . . that dark old house over there looks as if wicked things had been done in it, and might be done again" (Amn, p. 102). And so outraged is Newman at the notion of girls "subjected to compulsion" in the matter of marriage that he accepts Mrs. Tristram's gauntlet to be a romance hero and to fly to Claire's rescue; however, in his self-confident dispensation of goodwill and in his concentration upon Claire's perfections rather than on any possible "wicked things" in the old house, he fails entirely to recognize the reality of his situation. He

is acting as if he were participating in the impossible fantasy which he overhears Claire telling her niece:

> "But in the end the young prince married the beautiful Florabella . . . and carried her off to live with him in the Land of the Pink Sky. There she was so happy that she forgot all her troubles, and went out to drive every day of her life in an ivory coach drawn by five-hundred white mice." (Amn, p. 196)

The most obvious foil to Newman is his aristocratic friend, Valentin. Quite pointedly James associates Valentin with romance; not only does he have "a mustache as delicate as that of a page in a romance" (Amn, p. 118), but as Newman sees him, he is in toto, "the ideal Frenchman, the Frenchman of tradition and romance, so far as our hero was acquainted with these mystical influences" (Amn, p. 127). The world of romance to which Valentin belongs also provides a standard against which Newman with his own moral code may be compared as a new romance hero. The contrast between Valentin's ultramontane mother and brother and Newman's sterling moral qualities establish moral polarities in the novel typical of melodrama, but the difference between the older romance hero and the new romance hero is delineated by the implicit comparison between Valentin and Newman.

Valentin operates within a known system of values. Having highest priority with him and his society is

> . . . something mysterious and sacred to which he occasionally alluded in terms more ecstatic even than those in which he spoke of the last pretty woman, and which was simply the beautiful though somewhat superannuated image of honor. (Amn, p. 127)

Valentin's image of honor necessitates his always acting to protect his family name from shame. The field of jobs thus open to Valentin is exceedingly narrow, for to preserve the dignity of the family name, he can neither enter business, politics, literature, nor marry a roturière. To uphold the family name from degradation before a lady, his only alternative is to seek revenge in a duel, the final justification for his action being that "'It's a remnant of a higher-tempered time; one ought to cling to it'" (Amn, p. 313). Accepting a code of behavior simply because it was ordained by past society is ludicrous to Newman; "'Because your great-grandfather was an ass, is that any reason why you should be?'" he asks Valentin. By following the dictates of the past, Valentin dies in his duel; but on his deathbed, when he hears that Newman's suit to his sister has been denied, he betrays his family's honor by telling secrets which will give Newman the means to pursue honor in the traditional manner--by revenge. Valentin, thus, expects Newman to act as he would have done in similar circumstances.

Newman has been tempted before to abide by a code of honor. In relating the events leading up to his departure from America, he recalls a business deal that would have enabled him to acquire sixty-thousand dollars and to have his revenge on a man who had wronged him; but his new lease on life he attributes to his renunciation of the plan. James surely meant this situation to anticipate Newman's

later situation. With Valentin's information, which leads to his being able to implicate Madame de Bellegarde in the death of her husband and Urbain's acquiescence to the deed, with Madame de Bellegarde's noticeable agitation on hearing Newman's account of her crime, he might have brought scandal--a most devasting kind of shame in a society with a socially defined concept of honor--down upon the Bellegardes. Newman ponders at length how he shall use his knowledge to bring about his revenge, a revenge that he decidedly wants: "'They have hurt me, and I want to hurt them'" (Amn, p. 387), he tells Mrs. Bread. But the basis for his desire to vindicate himself is different from the concept of revenge Valentin abides by in his duel. Whereas the Frenchman sees himself as upholding a time-honored ritual, Newman sees himself quite simply as "a good fellow wronged" (Amn, p. 463). Unlike Valentin in deciding to fight his duel, Newman in deciding to hurt the Bellegardes has to think through his situation alone. The fact that he is free is pointed out and envied by several characters in the novel--Tristram, Mlle Nioche, Valentin--but they can understand freedom only theoretically; the actual condition of being free to determine his own values is agonizing to Newman. Having himself set a premium upon being good-natured in all things, he is in a dilemma when he realizes first that all the world does not respond to his good-nature and second that in seeking revenge he must paradoxically deny his good-nature in order to support it. As a man of

good-nature, he would rather not fumble in the "horrible rubbish-heap of iniquity" (Amn, p. 372), comprising the Bellegardes' past, by the means which Valentin had suggested.

In describing the sequence of thought behind his composition of The American in the preface to the novel, James recalls that by conceiving of circumstances other than a jilting as the way to set up the trial for his hero, he "even then" was trying to avoid "the stalest stuff of romance" (AN, p. 24). Nevertheless, in the same paragraph, James points out that from the beginning of the novel he "had been plotting arch-romance without knowing it." There is as much irony, however, in the young James' determination to side-step romance by picturing a Paris other than that of "rash infatuations and bold bad treacheries" as there is in his exclamation to Lizzy Boott regarding The American's realistic, if "unhappy," ending, for following the Bellegardes' denial of Newman's suit, The American sinks to artificial romance. Valentin had warned Newman that "old trees have crooked branches, old houses have queer cracks, old races have odd secrets," and as these secrets are taken out of their closets, the Old World proves as corrupt as the New World could have wanted it, with Newman becoming the reflection of a hero in a Radcliffian romance. Bent on revenge, he ponders the Bellegardes' evil-doings with hackneyed rhetorical relish,

> There was blood in the secret at the very least! . . . Mother and son would drop their lovely victim in terror and take to hiding. . . . [The dark old house] had given occasion, first and last, to tyrannies and sufferings enough. (Amn, pp. 371-72)

Yet James always seems aware that his hero is participating in romance. For example, as Mrs. Bread narrates the circumstances of the elder Marquis de Bellegarde's death, her pauses are as effective as "the most artistic of romancers," causing Newman to make "a movement as if he were turning over the page of a novel" (Amn, p. 396). Staring at the blank wall of Claire's convent later, he rejects her interment as a reality;

> It was too strange and too mocking to be real; it was like a page torn out of a romance, with no context in his own experience. (Amn, p. 419)

But as long as he feels himself operating within the context of romance, Newman is unconsciously the traditional hero of romance.

Although Mrs. Bread and Mrs. Tristram give him moral support in his plan for revenge, Newman must find his own solution. He wanders alone in Europe, in England, across the United States back to San Francisco, and finally returns to Paris, going first to the Rue d'Enfer where the Carmelite convent in which Claire is interred is located, and then to Notre-Dame. In describing Newman's early life in America, James explains that "in his darkest days he had had but one simple, practical impulse--the desire, as he would have phrased it, to see the thing through" (Amn, p. 28). He

returns to Paris, then, to see the thing through, but he cannot use the instrument of revenge.

In England, he likes to reflect not only that he had left "no monuments of his 'meanness'" (Amn, p. 461), but that also he would live out his life, "making it a religion to do nothing that [Madame de Cintré] would have disliked"; to have used his knowledge against the Bellegardes would have been to act to displease her. The reflections are typical of Newman. They epitomize his good-nature, his tendency to idealize women in particular and to let mankind in general go about its business. If we consider his earlier renunciation of revenge, these thoughts indicate the course his final decision must take. The visit to both the Rue d'Enfer and Notre-Dame, however, suggest that his final decision is not, unlike the earlier renunciation, merely based on good-nature, for this he had possessed from the outset of the novel. In front of the impenetrable Carmelite convent, he comes to realize that Claire is "lost beyond recall" and implicitly that some aspects of life are beyond his control and comprehension; in the dim other-worldliness of Notre-Dame, he remembers his own suffering, but he has forgotten its source. Thus, having relinquished Claire to death-in-life and having dismissed the Bellegardes and their crimes, he attains a knowledge and an ability to accept life impossible to him if he had conducted himself as a traditional romance hero.

The necessity of causing further suffering to others to compensate for his own suffering seems to him finally only shameful; society, however, does not cry shame; his realization is his own. In the cathedral, he comes to "himself again"; his good-nature is restored (Amn, p. 469). But Newman seems now cognizant of the value and necessity of charity in a world fraught with suffering. His moral nobility needs no title when he thus comes into his "own." He has claimed his kingdom when his actions stem from his own suffering, from his knowledge of his limitations, of the fact that he cannot be an all-conquering hero nor an all-comprehending one, nor need he be. In the medieval romance, the hero who comes into his "own" is reunited with society through his assumption of a title and through his marriage, his actions re-affirming society's institutions and principles; but Newman remains alone. Sitting in Notre-Dame, he feels not only "out of this world," but also that "now he must take care of himself"; he leaves Mrs. Bread; he takes his farewell of the Tristrams. Yet in his renunciation of revenge, in his sense of shame at having wanted to hurt anyone, like the nineteenth-century romance hero, he alone represents a way for salvation in a corrupt world.

Early in the novel Newman describes the feeling he had had when he had decided to relinquish his revenge upon another American business man by comparing this feeling to that of attending a play:

> "I could feel it going on inside of me. You may depend upon it that there are things going on inside of us that we understand mighty little about." (Amn, p. 32)

When he again washes his hands of the desire and means for revenge, at the novel's conclusion, his life is no longer a matter of theater-going or of romancing. As he sits in Notre-Dame, neither spectator nor actor in melodrama or romance, he is simply a man who comprehends himself and his limitations somewhat more fully.

It seems, then, that as Newman extricates himself from romance, the young James "even then" had an inkling that he was palming off on us "the disconnected and uncontrolled experience." But unlike the situation in "Madame de Mauves" and in "A Passionate Pilgrim," melodrama must finally be acknowledged as the basis for reality in The American. Evil has to go down under good. As James repeats in his preface, his hero was to be wronged, and in showing him wronged, not only did James pull out all the Gothic and melodramatic stops, short of having the Bellegardes hiss, but he also relied upon the most stereotyped American concepts of Europe--tears in the confessional, secrets in the chapel of a ruined castle, eye-beams that glint like steel blades, living death in the sepulcher-like convent, and a past stained with sin. And in the degree that the Bellegardes (with the exceptions of Claire and Valentin, both of whom are sacrificed to tradition) are blackened, Newman is whitewashed. Artificial romance is rampant, yet it has also provided the background

from which Newman eventually emerges to work out the more real romance of his struggle toward self-discovery. To be sure, he is at the conclusion of the novel, the moral and magnanimous man James had intended him to be (AN, p. 22); but he is more significantly a man whose only victory is in his acquisition of self-knowledge.

CHAPTER III

THE COSTUMES AND MASKS OF THE IMAGINATION

In 1877, James had confidently explained The American and his position as a novelist by proclaiming, "I am a realist!" In 1878, this position seemed assured; Daisy Miller became a best-seller, and the novelist was lionized. Ten years later, however, James felt that he had written his last novel, The Tragic Muse, and that, after all, prose fiction paled before the supreme form of the drama. He would, therefore, become a dramatist. Financial necessity may have prompted his decision, or it may have been a rationalization, for his letters to W. D. Howells and Robert Louis Stevenson testify to his disappointment in the critics' reaction to the two novels that preceded The Tragic Muse--The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima.[1] The decision seems also an appropriate climax to a period of conscientious experimentation with the techniques of fiction and of careful formulation of its underlying principles.

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[1]The letters which are especially pertinent to an understanding of James' decisions at this time are cited in The Letters of Henry James, ed. Percy Lubbock, I, 134-39, 161-63, 181-83.

In November, 1878, he wrote to his brother, "I have a constant impulse to try experiments of form. . . . It is something to have learned how to write, and when I look round me and see how few people (doing my sort of work) know how (to my sense,) I don't regret my step-by-step evolution" (L, I, 66). He had taken a crucial step in his evolution in 1875, when he had gained a seat at "the council of the gods,"[2] a seat, that is, in Flaubert's parlor with Edmond Goncourt, Daudet, Zola, and Maupassant. He was to visit with various members of this coterie of French naturalists again in 1876, 1884, and 1889, becoming, however, increasingly disillusioned with the narrowness of their theories. Their devotion to external facts and their denunciation of sentimentality in the interest of logical causes demolished the necessary "grain of subjection or of mystery," he explained to his brother in an 1889 letter; they were "besotted mandarins" (L, I, 155). In 1877, however, his enthusiasm for their commitment to the methods and principles of Balzac and Taine is echoed in his exclamation, "I am a realist!"

The conclusion of The American, which provoked this exclamation, does prohibit sentiment and comfortable moralizing. According to W. C. Frierson, the conclusion is the logical result of certain circumstances:[3] the novel

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[2]Edel, The Conquest of London, p. 214.

[3]William C. Frierson, The English Novel in Transition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942), p. 109.

describes man as a product of a particular environment and demonstrates the conflict between an individual of one culture with a family of another. James reveals his interest in the purely objective fact--sordid, picturesque, extraneous, as it may be--in his description of Newman's stroll through the Swiss village where Valentin lies dying: the American avoids the manure heaps and scrutinizes "the brown, bent old women showing their hugely darned stocking-heels at the ends of their slowly-clicking sabots" (Amn, p. 258). Intended, perhaps, to contrast with Valentin's lamentable state, the details, nevertheless, seem largely gratuitous. The American remains a strange hybrid, for the strains of artificial and real romance are as prevalent as the strains of Taine's doctrine of "causes" and Balzac's taste for physical facts.[4]

F. O. Matthiessen points out that James in his 1879 study of Hawthorne did attempt

> . . . to make an accurate tribute, but since he was primarily a novelist in his mid-thirties still somewhat slowly finding his way, he inevitably used this book as a means of clarifying his own views by stating why the recent movement in fiction, which went back to Balzac for its directive, now seemed to him on much firmer ground than the provincial American had been.[5]

If James appreciated Hawthorne's comprehension of "the deeper psychology," his familiarity with the naturalists

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[4]Frierson argues persuasively that Taine and Balzac were the major influences on the philosophy and the methodology of the naturalists.

[5]Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. 294.

pointed up his limitations. The cause of these limitations could be placed at the door of his environment; New England could not offer "the fund of suggestion for a novelist" that Europe, with its "accumulation of history and custom . . . [its]complexity of manners and types," could.[6] Although James declares that Hawthorne knew as much about the social complexities of Boston as Balzac, Flaubert, and Zola knew of French society, he makes clear that the accumulations of French society provided its writers with a larger opportunity for observing social idiosyncrasies. James implies, however, that Hawthorne, unlike the French writers in their attempt to treat society at large, had neither the need for theoretical systems that explained social behavior, nor the need for assiduous documentation of details. He concludes that the American had "none of the apparatus of an historian, and his shadowy style of portraiture never suggests a rigid standard of accuracy."[7] James might seem to be patronizing Hawthorne if he were not so sympathetic toward the struggle that Hawthorne's environment and his self-imposed solitude created for him; his sympathy is evident in his quotation from one of the romancer's letters to Longfellow:

> I have another great difficulty in the lack of materials; for I have seen so little of the world that I have nothing but thin air to concoct my

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[6] Hawthorne, p. 42.

[7] Ibid., p. 4.

> stories of, and it is not easy to give a life-like semblance to such shadowy stuff.[8]

The sparseness of Hawthorne's environment and his own isolation, thus, threw him at the mercy of his imagination. His facts and his characters, James contends, are consequently subjectively constructed; the "shadowy style," which was the product of Hawthorne's imagination, provided proper expression for the deep mysteries of man's moral nature. In praise of Hawthorne's imagination and his shadows, James raises a protest against the kind of story the French writers, carrying their theories to the logical extreme, could write: stories of "mere accidents and conventionalities, the surface occurrences in life."[9] Earlier in the same year in which Hawthorne was published, James had written to his mother commending Fanny Kemble for her "deep, rich, human nature"; in contrast to the rest of the world, which seemed to be little else but "desperately poor surface," James had found Mrs. Kemble's nature as provocative as Hawthorne's novels, "like a straight deep cistern" (L, I, 67).

Hawthorne's greatest strength, however, was also his greatest weakness; forced, because of the limitations of New England, to rely upon his imagination, Hawthorne, James felt, could on occasion distort reality. As I have already noted, James held that the imagination,

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[8] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

[9] Ibid., p. 63.

particularly when nourished, like Hawthorne's, in transcendentalism, degenerated into mere fancy. Hawthorne's fancy was responsible for his overly-ingenious symbolism and allegories, for it subjugated his characters to a merely intellectual situation, divesting them of their humanity as much as the theories of the naturalists. Comparing The Scarlet Letter to John Gibson Lockhart's Adam Blair, James believes that the American's cold fantasy, dancing through "the moon-lighted air of his intellect," produced a work wanting in warm-blooded humanity.[10] Particularly in the decade following Hawthorne, James, aware of the tendency of Hawthorne's imagination to deteriorate into fancy and to distort reality, conceived of a spate of characters with imaginations potentially destructive to themselves and to others.

"The Art of Fiction," coming five years after Hawthorne and denouncing the distinction between the novel and the romance, has been cited as the most clearly discernible starting point for James' "naturalistic period."[11] Although in 1879 he had given a sympathetic explanation for Hawthorne's failure to be an historian in his fiction, five years later he was insisting that the novelist be historian. His insistence suggests that he had been impressed by the arguments of the cercle Flaubert, whose members he visited

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[10] Ibid., pp. 111-13.

[11] Lyall H. Powers, "Henry James and Zola's Roman expérimental," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXX (October, 1960), 16.

the same year he produced "The Art of Fiction." Like the historian, the novelist was necessarily to be concerned with gathering evidence, that is, with gathering the objective facts which would provide that "solidity of specification"; like the historian, he was also to be concerned with the "actions of men." In "The Art of Fiction" James emphasizes that the general "human spectacle" is the artist's proper subject.

Major passages in "The Art of Fiction" also link it to the 1879 discussion of Hawthorne and to the 1887 discussion of Robert Louis Stevenson as well as to the French writers. James unquestionably has the American romancer in mind when he asserts that a novel can be written if the writer has had a certain amount of experience and has examined it in "the chamber of [his] consciousness"; if the writer brings his imagination to bear upon his experience, "it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations."[12] Although James had criticized the transcendentalists' tendency to allow their imaginations to reduce the natural fact to the intellectual symbol, he recognized that the process of penetrating the surface facts to plumb deeper meanings was the basis for an examination of man's moral nature; the imaginative process, in spite of his previous qualifications, James thus seems to endorse whole-heartedly. Hawthorne's life and practice are surely behind the 1884 contention that

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[12]"The Art of Fiction," p. 388.

"a greater source of strength than any accident of residence or place in the social scale" is the artist's imagination, for this faculty endows him with "the power to guess the unseen from the seen."[13]

Ramifying his argument that the subject-matter for the fiction-writer may come from any strata of life, James maintains that any subject-matter may harbor an adventure; his assertion leads him to a discussion of the merits of Edmond de Goncourt's Cherie and Stevenson's Treasure Island. The "geography" of both Stevenson's and Goncourt's books, the one consisting of a child's moral consciousness, the other of the islands of the Spanish Main, according to James, provide material for adventure equally; Goncourt's book, however, fails to be adventurous whereas Stevenson's succeeds. It succeeds, not because of, but in spite of, the fact that it depends upon the popular paraphenalia of the artificial romance. Stevenson's task, to James' mind, was actually more difficult than Goncourt's, for everyone has been a child "in fact,"[14] but quests for buried treasure have been conducted only via the imagination. The imagination,

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[13] Ibid., p. 389. In "The Life of George Eliot," Partial Portraits, pp. 57-58, James similarly commends George Eliot's imagination which "enabled her to sit at home with book and pen and yet enter into the life of other generations; project herself into Warwickshire alehouses and Florentine symposia, reconstitute conditions utterly different from her own." On page 62, he also refers to "the remarkable, extraordinary process by which this serious lady should make us believe that nothing in the world was alien to her."

[14] "The Art of Fiction," p. 403.

which stirred Stevenson to create and which stirs in the readers of his stories, James thus again stresses as being essential to conveying the "illusion of life."

The close relationship between Stevenson and James, as I noted in my first chapter, evolved from "The Art of Fiction" and from Stevenson's remonstrance against it. The 1887 essay that James subsequently wrote about his friend substantiates the major points made in "The Art of Fiction": that the supreme test for fiction is whether or not it sustains "the illusion of life" and that the manner in which the writer conveys his subject, rather than the subject itself, forms the basis for the test. Stevenson passes this test with banners flying. In his essay, James answers an article, which charged that Stevenson was all style and no subject, by identifying his friend's subject: first, a caring for life, then for youth in life, then for the imaginative tendency of youthfulness. Although he recognizes the variety of Stevenson's subject-matter as he has also recognized the variety of his style, he concludes that Stevenson exercises his imagination most truly in describing the child's "capacity for successful make-believe."[15] The heroic ideal, set amongst dangers and triumphs, James saw, as constituting this Stevensonian world of make-believe.

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[15]"Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 146.

In the decade of the eighties, James' fiction describes, as did Stevenson's work, what James terms, "the quest of personal adventure."[16] James' characters, however, with their heroic ideals and imagined dangers and triumphs could not make-believe successfully; the end of the quest for them was harsh, not the "glorified, pacified Bohemia" that in 1887 James saw as concluding the quest of Stevenson's adventurers. Thus, during this period James re-affirms the imagination as a sine qua non for the writer of fiction, but in his fiction he is examining its role in human life. Without doubt, Hawthorne's example of the way in which the artist, who relied almost exclusively on his imagination, could abuse his talent and the naturalists' scientific emphasis upon external facts and logical causes for social behavior brought him to consider the possible advantages and disadvantages of an active imagination.

From James' disappointment in the reading public and a disappointment in his own ability to emulate Balzac, F. W. Dupee concludes that the perverse picture of humanity in the works of the late eighties--The Bostonians, The Princess Casamassima, and "The Aspern Papers"--stemmed from James' own "inverted idealism."[17] Despite Dupee's persuasive analysis of James' critical and biographical remarks, it seems to me that from the lusty cry in defense of The American at the end of the seventies to the premature swan-song for the novel at the end of the eighties, James was essentially involved in

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[16] Ibid., p. 159.

[17] Dupee, p. 149.

examining the shortcomings of the imagination, not only in the art of fiction, but also in the individual life. Between "An International Episode" (1878) and "The Aspern Papers" (1888), when the influence of Balzac and his literary "grandsons" brought him out of the ways of artificial romance, James increasingly viewed the imagination as debilitating for the individual who lacks either a sense of security or a sense of morality. He nevertheless continues to construct his works on a substructure of the traditional pattern of romance, and only his imaginative characters are capable of developing a higher consciousness. But his recognition of the dangers of the imagination seems to have made him simultaneously aware of the possible ironies in the traditional pattern.

The imagination with which James' characters of this period are cursed or, occasionally, blessed is fanciful and oriented to romance. His creation of Mrs. Rooth in The Tragic Muse (1890) is evidence that the character who was haunted by the reading of artificial romances fascinated James throughout the eighties. Long a consumer of the romance of Eugène Sue and Madame Sophie Gay, Mrs. Rooth has a typically romance-oriented imagination:

> She took the refined, sentimental, tender view of the universe, beginning with her own history and feelings. She believed in everything high and pure, . . . She delighted in novels, poems, perversions, misrepresentations and evasions, and had a capacity for smooth, superfluous falsification . . . Mrs. Rooth was very fond of a moral and had never lost her taste for edification. She delighted in a beautiful character and was gratified to find so many represented in the contemporary French drama. She never failed to direct Miriam's attention to them and to remind her that there is nothing in life

> so precious as an ideal. . . . She made even the true seem fictive.[18]

This is the imagination that James pictures as destructive: it is essentially egocentric, one's "own history and feelings" being of foremost concern, thus making one self-conscious rather than conscious; it theorizes and attempts to re-shape the universe and the lives of others, that is, to edify; it therefore falsifies the individual's understanding of others, idealizing them as "beautiful characters," converting them into works of art rather than loving them as human beings. Thus the fanciful mind sets its owner as well as others in false costumes--in the trappings of artificial romance. The theater and the visual arts as well as literature in general stimulate imaginations like Mrs. Rooth's to dissociate the aesthetic and the moral; this is a dissociation which Dorothy Van Ghent claims is not made by

> . . . the most capacious and most integrated--the most "civilized"--consciousness, whose sense relationships (aesthetic relationships) with the external world of scenes and objects have the same quality and the same spiritual determination as its relationships with people (moral relationships).[19]

In general, too, the fancy that James so ruthlessly exposes during the eighties is enchanted by differences--by what is "other"; consequently, the aristocrat, who resembles the ideal for those like Mrs. Rooth, looks in another direction and goes slumming. His interest is in the misery of

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[18]Henry James, The Tragic Muse, I (3 vols.; London: Macmillan Co., 1890), 206-208.

[19]Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper and Bros., 1961), p. 218.

"the people," a phrase James encloses in quotation marks as if to stress his character's sense of the gratifying distinction. The phrase and the quotation marks, obviously ironic, underscore the egocentricity of the character's imagination as well as his tendency to objectify other human beings. In his 1888 essay on Maupassant, James praises the naturalists for having thoughtfully examined "that vast dim section of society . . . that dark misery," whereas other writers had either ignored the lower classes or categorized them as "picturesque."[20] Not until 1905 when H. G. Wells published Kipps did James feel that the English poor had been treated "without the picturesque, the grotesque, the fantastic and romantic interference of which Dickens, e.g. is so misleadingly, of which even George Eliot is so deviatingly, full" (L, II, 40). "The power to guess the unseen from the seen," to perceive and appreciate the differences amidst the similarities remains a problem central to James' fiction, but in the period of the eighties he seems more absorbed in exposing its debilitations than its saving graces. Only Isabel Archer and Hyacinth Robinson are able to strip their imaginations of the romance-orientation and become, in so doing, fully imaginative, fully conscious.

In the year before Hawthorne, and in the wake of Daisy Miller's success, James published the story of

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[20] "Guy de Maupassant," Partial Portraits, p. 283.

another American girl, Bessie Alden, in "An International Episode." He was not yet wholly skeptical of the romance-oriented imagination. Reflecting Hawthorne's comments in the preface to The Marble Faun and his own varied revisions of these comments, James has Mrs. Westgate, Bessie's sister, telling her two visiting Englishmen the plain facts about the New World:

> "You must take us as we come--with all our imperfections on our heads. Of course we haven't your country life, and your old ruins, and your great estates, and your leisure life, and all that. (Tales, IV, 266)

The speech is an obvious bow toward Hawthorne and an obvious justification for his romanticizing and for Bessie's.

Bessie, blue-stockinged and Bostonian, is one of James' most omnivorous consumers of fiction; her conversations with Lord Lambeth, the young English peer who has been smitten by her spirit of independence, are dominated by her literary and historical allusions. Although Lord Lambeth protests that "the novels always overdo it" (Tales, IV, 271), Bessie insists that the rough New England coast cannot match the coastal scenery in Kingsley's novels and that she can learn about English society from Thackeray and George Eliot and even Mrs. Gore. Her reading has led her to idealize the English aristocracy and to expect "reverberations of greatness" from any young man who qualifies as an "hereditary legislator." To satisfy her romantic expectations, she persistently questions Lord Lambeth about his property, his titles, and his parliamentary duties. His nonchalance toward

his position only increases Bessie's persistence. He cannot, however, conform to the stereotype aristocratic hero of her reading, for "there was but little of the hero in the young man himself" (Tales, IV, 312). He remains, as James claims in an 1879 letter, as he was intended to be, "a lovable, sympathetic, excellent-natured young personage, full of good feelings and of all possible delicacies of conduct."[21]

With "An International Episode," James would seem to be exploiting his earlier success with the international theme in Daisy Miller, for the story is a simple study of cultural misunderstandings. Bessie's questions regarding Lord Lambeth's titles are essentially disinterested as her comments on the injustice of class precedence testify; she may have romantic notions, but she is also a sound democrat. Lord Lambeth's mother and sister, the Duchess of Bayswater and the Countess of Pimlico, as well as Percy Beaumont, Lambeth's older and wiser friend, however, misinterpret her fondness for castles, convinced that she is only a fast little fortune-hunter and that her dream to live in a castle expresses a determination to marry into one. Thus her misrepresentation of the English, like Clement Searle's has led directly to their misrepresentation of her.

But Bessie's romantic yearnings do not work against her democratic insistence on the integrity of the individual;

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[21]Selected Letters, p. 74.

although her inordinate liking for the picturesque past obscures communication with the English, her imagination, fortifying her democratic leanings, has given her a working ideal: the individual, who is always all-important, can identify and fulfill his opportunities. Lord Lambeth proposes a visit to his estate; his mother and sister consequently come to inspect Bessie; they depart; he proposes marriage; Bessie refuses. Her reasons are two: her disappointment in the young lord's inability to meet her ideal of a young lord--that is, to fulfill his own great opportunities--and second, her surprise at the Duchess' and the Countess' attempt to humiliate her with their rude manners--that is, to deny her the respect she deserves as an individual. At the conclusion of "An International Episode," Bessie Alden regrets nothing; she keeps her illusions intact, and although she misses her visit to an English castle, she can tour Canterbury Cathedral alone, better informed of its history than a young Englishman, but no wiser about herself. James' full investigation of the romance-oriented imagination is only beginning, but that it does not necessarily lead to enlightenment is evident from "An International Episode."

In Washington Square (1881) he shows the romance-oriented imagination, full-blown, untrammeled by reality. Lavinia Penniman's imagination clothes her desires in only the most stereotyped, if the most extravagant, trappings.

Her imagination has its own flamboyant existence; dissociated from her moral sense, it cannot possibly serve as the basis for growth in consciousness. If she had reined in her imagination from playing havoc with the life of her niece, Catherine Sloper, she could be considered an essentially comic character. In the second chapter of his novel James gives a full run-down of her character, which makes Mrs. Rooth a close literary descendant:

> Mrs. Penniman was a tall, thin, fair, rather faded woman, with a perfectly amiable disposition, a high standard of gentility, a taste for light literature, and a certain foolish indirectness and obliquity of character. She was romantic; she was sentimental; she had a passion for little secrets and mysteries--a very innocent passion, for her secrets had hitherto always been as unpractical as addled eggs.[22]

Her nature seems to be a mirror image of the "light literature" she reads; it, too, would be romantic, sentimental, permeated with "little secrets and mysteries." Thus Aunt Penniman, like Mrs. Rooth, seems to become a parody of James' criticism on the artificial romance, which would also be harmless, were it not for a certain "obliquity of character."

Aunt Penniman's actions--as reflections of the romantic ideal--serve as occasional leavening for James' story, which is essentially Catherine's story. When the aunt arranges a romantic rendezvous with the girl's suitor, Morris Townsend, in an oyster saloon at dusk and comes

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[22]Henry James, Washington Square (New York: Harper and Bros., 1881), pp. 15-16. Hereafter cited in the text as WS.

"enveloped in an impenetrable veil" (WS, p. 117), when she holds a tryst with him on a street corner "in a region of empty lots" and carries a little reticule to convey the image of herself as "'a woman of the people'" (WS, p. 205), she is precisely as Morris Townsend characterizes her: "a fantastic old woman" (WS, p. 118). The humor of these performances in costume is diminished, however, by the fact that Aunt Penniman's imagination sees others as playing roles in the romance. The romance is a standard one, and Catherine is cast as a conventional heroine with her aunt figuring more prominently than the conventional confidante:

> Mrs. Penniman's real hope was that the girl would make a secret marriage, at which she would officiate as bride'swoman or duenna. She had a vision of this ceremony being performed in some subterranean chapel; subterranean chapels in New York were not frequent, but Mrs. Penniman's imagination was not chilled by trifles; and of the guilty couple--she liked to think of poor Catherine and her suitor as the guilty couple--being shuffled away in a fast-whirling vehicle to some obscure lodging in the suburbs, where she would pay them (in a thick veil) clandestine visits; where they would endure a period of romantic privation; and when ultimately, after she would have been their earthly providence, their intercessor, their advocate, and their medium of communication with the world, they would be reconciled to her brother in an artistic tableau, in which she herself should be somehow the central figure. (WS, pp. 116-17)

Aunt Penniman's romance-oriented imagination does not make her the villain of the novel, for she does not betray Catherine intentionally; the persistence with which she determines to make romance reality, to make others wear costumes similar to those she herself dons, does, however, contribute to Catherine's unhappiness, for her imagination is basically

egocentric. In theorizing about the lives of others, she seeks to manipulate them so that she, as the power behind the scenes, will come out in the center of the artistic tableau. At no time does Mrs. Penniman conceive of herself as Catherine's rival for Morris' hand, but she consistently upstages Catherine in controlling his affairs and thus the girl's own; James declares that

> . . . there were times when [Aunt Penniman] lost sight altogether of the modest heroine of the play in the contemplation of certain great scenes which would naturally occur between the hero and herself. (WS, p. 76)

During Catherine's sojourn in Europe with her father, Mrs. Penniman is Morris' sole entertainer in the handsome house on Washington Square, and in her various trysts with him in New York she manages complex plans for her niece's destiny--far beyond the scope of the niece's imagination or desires. Following the anticipated "great scene" between Catherine and Morris, the scene in which the fortune-hunter reveals his intention to desert the poor little rich girl, Catherine begins to comprehend the degree to which her Aunt Lavinia's machinations have influenced her life. Her comprehension takes the form of a series of impassioned exclamations and questions:

> "Is it you that have worked on him and taken him from me? He doesn't belong to you, and I don't see how you have anything to do with what is between us! Is it you that have made this plot, and told him to leave me?"(WS, p. 230)

Catherine's passion gives her a new clairvoyanance and her choice of the word, "plot," seems singularly

appropriate to associate with her aunt. With the same degree of facility and sentiment, with the same lack of moral seriousness as the writers of artificial romance, Mrs. Penniman had hatched a plot. Like the writers of artificial romance Aunt Lavinia creates by means of her fancy and consequently is incapable of perceiving the psychological reality of the situation. If she has a shallow comprehension of Morris Townsend's aims and methods, she has less comprehension of Catherine's moral composition. Although she has cast her niece in a particular role, Catherine's behavior baffles her pre-conceptions. Thus in the early stages of Catherine's relationship with Townsend, Mrs. Penniman is confounded when the young man tells her that

> . . . her niece preferred, unromantically, an interview in a chintz-covered parlor to a sentimental tryst beside a fountain sheeted with dead leaves. (WS, p. 74)

Although she retains a discreet silence during the twenty years Morris is gone from Washington Square, Catherine's refusal to welcome him on his return is inexplicable to Mrs. Penniman; the long conflict which Catherine undergoes between her sense of duty and her desires, her pride, and her suffering, Aunt Penniman cannot fathom. Her concluding words to Morris, which are based on the assumption that he will yet be successful in his suit, indicate that she still imagines herself as the old plotter.

In opposition to Lavinia Penniman is Dr. Sloper, her brother and Catherine's father. Unlike Catherine, who

is long in coming to perceive that her aunt might be a "dangerous woman," Dr. Sloper always suspects his sister's penchant for romance. He foresaw that

> "When Catherine is about seventeen, . . . Lavinia will try and persuade her that some young man with a mustache is in love with her. It will be quite untrue; no young man, with a mustache or without, will ever be in love with Catherine. . . . Catherine won't see it and won't believe it, fortunately for her peace of mind; poor Catherine isn't romantic." (WS, p. 16)

His foresight reveals his understanding of his sister's turn of mind and his disgust with it; it also reveals his inability to understand his daughter. The first chapter of the novel establishes Dr. Sloper as "a clever man," intelligent and witty; unlike Aunt Penniman he never appears ludicrous, but also unlike his sister his determination to be right and to rule Catherine do make him the villain of the piece. His inability to comprehend his daughter's conscience, her capacity for love, and her own romance-oriented imagination make his renowned intelligence worthless.

Determined, however, that he will not prove a villain, he declares to his daughter's suitor at one point,

> "[Catherine] is past the age at which people are forbidden, and I am not a father in an old-fashioned novel. But I shall strongly order her to break with you." (WS, p. 93)

In spite of this declaration and his disenchantment with Mrs. Penniman's romantic attitudes, Dr. Sloper is the evil authoritarian figure of the old-fashioned novel. In having him deny that he is such a figure, even as he fulfills it, James ironically reveals the density of the doctor's own illusions.

Dr. Sloper, of course, sees Morris Townsend as the villain. In an attempt to divert Catherine's thoughts from Morris, the doctor initiates the trip to Europe, and after six months of traveling, during which time he does not mention Morris' name, he leads Catherine up into a lonely Alpine valley and momentarily abandons her to a sense of desolation and dread. He goes even further than Aunt Penniman in converting reality to romance, for he consciously stages a climax for his confrontation with his daughter, a climax taken directly from romance. The scene is as appropriate for a murder as it is for the barrage of threatening questions he fires at his daughter when he returns, looking like Maturin's Wanderer, "with eyes that had kept the light of the flushing snow-summits" (WS, p. 177). His final question is one that might have been asked by the wicked husband in "At Isella," more subtly by either the elder Searle or Urbain de Bellegarde, "'Should you like to be left in such place as this, to starve?'" (WS, p. 179). Although his purpose is to terrify Catherine into thinking that her lover is capable of deserting her "in such a place . . . to starve," he succeeds only in convincing the girl and the reader of his own capacity for cruelty and duplicity.

If Washington Square were merely an old-fashioned romance, the rightful hero would be Morris Townsend; he comes from afar to the bastion where the maiden is kept captive by her evil father. Morris Townsend, however, is a cad, without the conscience of either Clement Searle,

Longmore, or Christopher Newman, and the captive maiden is both heroine and hero. Contrary to her father's estimation, Catherine is romantic; her imagination in contrast to her aunt's is a feeble instrument, primarily because it is tempered by a strong sense of duty. In her first encounter with Morris, however, he appears to her as a young man in a novel or a play, even "solemnly beautiful," making her think of "a young knight in a poem" (WS, p. 44). His talk, his manners, the notion--formulated by Aunt Penniman--of his coming a-courting, transform the stranger into a dazzling apparition. To the end of the novel he fulfills Aunt Penniman's romantic fancies whereas Catherine has found other fulfillment.

She never fully relinquishes her image of Morris as an ideal, however; when the doctor, prior to his death, tells her that her former suitor has come back to New York "fat and bald" and asks that she promise never to marry him, her father's description presents "a strange image to Catherine's mind, out of which the memory of the most beautiful young man in the world had never faded" (WS, p. 247), and she refuses to comply with her father's request. By consequently reducing his daughter's inheritance, he seems to have his revenge upon her wilfulness. Catherine, however, has the last word; her pride and her conscious need for a free choice, her desire to be herself, cause her to refuse her father just as she rejects Morris on similar grounds. Unlike Nora Lambert of Watch and Ward, who has the opportunity to

choose between good and evil, Catherine's alternatives are more limited; to follow the path of filial duty and submit her will to her father's on the one hand would be to deny the ideal she had cherished for so long; on the other, to accept Morris' offer of friendship would be to deny the years of suffering he had caused her. Although Catherine's greatest desires were always to do what she felt was right in the eyes of others, throughout the novel she exists in moral isolation, comprehended by neither her father nor her aunt nor her suitor. Nor is her final action comprehended; in making the decision to reject Townsend, however, Catherine endorses the only proven good: herself. She capitulates to neither her father's will nor to her illusion of "the most beautiful young man in the world," but in the ironic melodrama of Washington Square, the heroine rescues herself. She is clearly the younger sister of Isabel Archer, Hyacinth Robinson, and eventually Lambert Strether.

Isabel Archer's imagination, however, is as flamboyant as Aunt Penniman's. She, too, thrills at the notion of rides in "fast-whirling vehicle[s]" and can exclaim, "'A swift carriage, of a dark night rattling with four horses over roads that one can't see--that's my idea of happiness.'"[23] But Isabel's intelligence and sense of

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[23]Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1882), p. 144. Hereafter cited in the text as PL. F. O. Matthiessen, "The Painter's Sponge and Varnish Bottle," Henry James: The Major Phase (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp. 154-55, presents persuasive evidence for the fact that in his revisions for the

morality are finer than Lavinia Penniman's; she would not cut a ridiculous figure by actually assuming the costume of romance, yet costuming herself and others is an incessant activity of her imagination. Ultimately, Washington Square seems to have served as James' apprentice work for The Portrait of the Lady, with The Portrait also being published in 1881 and with both Catherine Sloper and Lavinia Penniman serving as models for Isabel. Isabel, however, achieves a depth of consciousness which no other character in James' fiction in the remainder of the decade attains, and her romance-oriented imagination, giving her "the power to guess the unseen behind the seen," proves a mixed blessing; her pursuit of happiness in a coach and four leads her to a comprehension of the need to be herself and the need to love. If she is isolated at the end of the novel, she is conscious not only of the continuity of human suffering but also of the necessity of human love.[24]

In the preface for The Portrait of the Lady, James makes clear his determination to "place the center of the

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New York edition, James attempted "to sharpen the reader's impression"of Isabel's incorrigibly romantic approach to life by substituting "picturesque" for "romantic." As James has also laced his later text with heroic images,for similar reasons, in my discussion of The Portrait of the Lady, I will have occasion to refer to the New York edition of the novel.

[24]Edwin T. Bowden, The Dungeon of the Heart: Human Isolation and the American Novel (New York: Macmillan Co., 1961), pp. 96-99, comments succinctly and relevantly; he finds that Isabel's answer to her dilemma is first, "neither a despair nor a surrender to her isolation, but . . . a resolution to continue to live her life to its fullest, a deliberate choosing to join her lot to that of mankind," and second, a moral responsibility "to her obligations, to the consequences of her free choice of action."

subject in the young woman's own consciousness" (AN, p. 51). By such a plan, he felt that he would make the girl's most interesting relation be with herself. He also realized, pointing to Turgenieff as his mentor in the matter, that the girl could not stand in perfect isolation; if he was to bring out her full character, he would have to set her in relation to others; he would have to organize an "ado" about Isabel Archer. The ado resembles both the fairy-tale structure of Watch and Ward and the traditional romance. The growth of the heroine and the question of her marriage determine the structure of Watch and Ward and The Portrait; like Nora Lambert, Isabel is an orphan who must choose her husband alone, but who has assistance from various, beneficent fairy-godmothers, or godfathers, as the case may be. The prototype for both girls is Portia, who had to choose among fifty princes and whom James specifically names in his preface as the model for his "intelligent and presumptuous" (AN, p. 49) girl. Nora's growth, however, is physical as well as moral, and her decision to marry Roger brings the story to a traditionally happy conclusion; Isabel's growth takes place only in her consciousness, and her marriage to Gilbert Osmond represents not only the conclusion of one stage of her growth, but also the beginning of another.

The matter of Isabel's marriage, however, James does not name in his preface as part of her ado; his emphasis is rather on her trip to Europe, "which in fact will form, and all inevitably, no small part of her

principal adventure" (AN, p. 56). He speculates that in being independent "of flood and field, of the moving accident, of battle and murder and sudden death," her adventure might be judged mild; yet by conveying her "sense" of her journey and her encounters abroad, he is able to make them seem as prodigious as those in an artificial romance. The adventures James thus plots for Isabel become adventures only as they are reflected in her mind. In a metaphorical sense, James is more closely following not only the medieval romance, but also his own romance of The American; for as Isabel travels to strange lands from America, she plunges farther into the unknown depths in her own mind. Repeatedly throughout The Portrait of a Lady, James' descriptions of places and situations are related to images in Isabel's mind, images which are sifted from her readings in romance. She necessarily journeys alone, and if at the end of the novel it might be inferred that she saves her step-daughter--an innocent, like Claire de Cintré, locked away in a convent--she has also discovered the means for saving herself, through the interaction of her imagination and her moral sense in the development of her consciousness.

At the beginning of the novel, James sets Isabel down in Europe to begin her mild adventure; his flashback in Chapter III, however, places her in America, alone in a gloomy room with a book. By correlating these three factors--the condition of isolation, the gloom of the room, and the

book--James establishes the essential qualities in the nature of his young woman. Of her own volition, she is alone; her cries of liberty, which rang through the first two chapters of the novel, are now given a childhood antecedent. James explains that Isabel, having rebelled against "the laws" of the neighborhood school, had retreated to a "mysterious apartment" in her grandmother's house where her sense of independence filled her simultaneously with elation and "the pain of exclusion" (PL, p. 18). For company in her retreat, she had her pick of books from a well-stocked library; she is consequently self-educated, with the foundation of her knowledge deriving from those books, James points out, which had the most engaging frontispieces. Isabel's criteria for selection suggest that the picturesque description, the historical crisis, the sentimental romance, formed the basis of her education. Like Nora, Isabel thus seems related to the "long line of romance-reading girls."[25]

The room in which Isabel habitually sequestered herself is as Gothic as Northanger Abbey in the dark. James describes it, however, as carefully as if he were transcribing details from a naturalist's notebook; known as the "office," it is located behind the library, filled with pieces of discarded furniture, properly entered from a door to the street which remains bolted, and illuminated by side-lights which remain covered with green paper. The

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[25]See Chapter II, p.107, and footnote 25.

Gothic quality of the room is consequently elicited by Isabel's romantic sense of it, James' descriptions telling us more about the nature of his heroine's mind than about Albany architecture. When her aunt questions her fondness for her grandmother's old house, Isabel replies, "'I like places in which things have happened--even if they're sad things. A great many people have died here; the place has been full of life'" (PL, p. 22). To Isabel, the unused room is also a place where things have happened and can happen. In her mind, the furniture is not merely discarded, for example, but personified as the victims of injustice; sad and disgraced outcasts, Isabel could confide her sorrows in their cushions. Her childish identification with the suffering sofas is comic, but James strikes a deeper Gothic bell as he explains Isabel's reaction to the mysteriously condemned and bolted door and the oddly papered windows:

> She knew that this silent, motionless portal opened into the street; if the sidelights had not been filled with green paper she might have looked out upon the little brown stoop and the well-worn brick pavement. But she had no wish to look out, for this would have interfered with her theory that there was a strange, unseen place on the other side--a place which became to the child's imagination according to its different moods a region of delight or of terror. (PL, p. 19)

The unknown is thus pleasantly tantalizing to Isabel, the alternating extremes of gaiety and sorrow, delight and terror continually exhilarating.

James' flashback establishes Isabel as a young woman who enjoys her freedom, her emotions, and her theories. The habit of theorizing, of forming an abstract hypothesis about

life before the experiences of living, derives from the habit of discovering the experiences of living through reading. As the above passages suggest, Isabel's theory about places in general and about one room in particular also become theories for living. Isabel insists upon the existence of an alternate world to the known world of brown stoops and well-worn pavements, an unknown world of romance. She wants the pleasure of a place, perpetually unseen in actuality, in which to spin out her theories, but as yet she only has the power to see a romantic unseen.

Isabel thinks of her grandmother's house, which she characteristically finds "romantic" because of its appearance "of a bustling inn" and its covered piazza, not only in terms of single rooms. Behind the house is "a long garden, sloping down to the stable" (PL, p. 18), a garden which provides the original for the picture Isabel has of her own mind; the peach-trees of the original, however, have been substituted for more romantic flora:

> Her nature had, for her own imagination, a certain garden-like quality, a suggestion of perfume and murmuring boughs, of shady bowers and lengthening vistas, which made her feel that introspection was, after all, an exercise in the open air, and that a visit to the recesses of one's mind was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses. (PL, p. 44)

The seemingly unknown niches of her mind Isabel early in the novel thus considers to be merely extensions of the general Eden of her consciousness. Yet she is aware that

> . . . there were other gardens in the world than those of her virginal soul, and that there were moreover a

> great many places which were not gardens at all--only dusky pestiferous tracts, planted thick with ugliness and misery. . . . she often checked herself with the thought of the thousands of people who were less happy than herself--a thought which for the moment made her absorbing happiness appear to her a kind of immodesty. (PL, pp. 44-45)

But at the outset of the novel, knowing no "ugliness or misery" herself, Isabel is aware of their existence beyond herself only theoretically, romantically. The only contact she has had with the more wretched gardens of the world occurred when her French bonne eloped with a Russian nobleman, but this being for her a splendid "romantic episode," her tendency to correlate life and literature was strengthened. Although, unlike Olive Chancellor, she is not plagued with thoughts for reforming the world's unhappiness, she nevertheless remains curious about ugliness and misery, as a "source of interest, and even instruction" (PL, p. 26).

Her romantic theory about suffering is so precious to her it provides the reason for her rejection of Lord Warburton's proposal of marriage. To marry him, the first of her suitors, she explains would be to escape her fate, defining her concept of her fate as follows:

> "I can't escape unhappiness . . . it comes over me every now and then that I can never be happy in any extraordinary way; not by turning away, by separating myself . . . from life. From the usual chances and dangers, from what most people know and suffer." (PL, p. 114)

James' germinal idea for his novel was of "a certain young woman affronting her destiny" (AN, p. 48), an idea which Isabel expresses for herself; she, however, cannot have her

creator's sense of irony. "Chances and dangers," "what most people know and suffer" will be Isabel's lot, but as she speaks of such conditions and of her fate, she has only a bookish comprehension of them and a romantic yearning for their fulfillment. As she explains later, she also has a rather extraordinary view of her happiness, equating it with a ride in a coach and four. Imagining herself as a high-born damsel and as part of "the people," she thus clothes herself in a variety of romantic costumes and reveals her lack of self-understanding.

Isabel's rejection of Warburton seemingly contradicts the aspirations of her romance-oriented imagination. After a second meeting with him, she associates him with "a hero of romance." As she approaches his ancestral seat, "it seemed to her a matter of course that it should be a noble picture" (PL, p. 66). As she had selected her books by the frontispieces, she also enters life within the places she visits through the pictorial vision; earlier her uncle's home had seemed "a picture made real" (PL, p. 45). Lockleigh Hall,[26] Warburton's home, is complete with moat and affected the young visitor as "a castle in a fairy-tale" (PL, p. 66). When he comes to woo her at her uncle's, Isabel realizes that

> . . . her situation was one which a few weeks ago she would have deemed deeply romantic: the park of an old

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[26]The name of Warburton's estate is reminiscent of those other romanticized manors, Lockley Park in "A Passionate Pilgrim" and Tennyson's "Locksley Hall." James' own early romanticisms thus seem to aid and abet that of his characters.

> English country-house, with the foreground embellished by a local noble-man in the act of making love to a young lady who, on careful inspection, should be found to present remarkable analogies with herself. (PL, p. 89)

Elevated to the position of heroine herself, she perversely backs away, for the elevation had come too gracefully. In the New York edition James describes her reaction to Warburton's offer in terms of garden imagery; the Englishman in a romantic gesture quite literally offers Isabel the world and his words come to her "like the fragrance . . . of she knew not what strange gardens, what charged airs."[27] Ironically, she cannot accept this offer, which perhaps too closely resembles the perfumed and known world of her own mind.

Caspar Goodwood, the second of Isabel's suitors, has the opposite effect upon her. He, too, however, is cast in the image of an heroic figure. In the first edition, the idea of his being "a commander of men" (PL, p. 100) pleases Isabel, and in the New York edition she imagines him riding on "a plunging steed, the whirlwind of a great war"; a hard, strong man, she describes him in the later edition as armoured--"in plates of steel handsomely inlaid with gold,"[28]--like the warriors she had seen in museums and portraits. Unlike Warburton, a country-squire, Goodwood is an embattled crusader, and Isabel thinks he will

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[27]Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady, Vol. I: "New York Edition" (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 144.

[28]PL, I: New York, 164-65.

someday be challenged by the ugliness and misery which Warburton's existence would seem to deny her. Goodwood, however, with his hard energy and his apparent involvement with violence also seems to deprive Isabel of her sense of freedom, the open vistas, which her mind demands, whereas with Warburton she feels the need for the opportunities of danger and darkness. Her conceptualizations of both Warburton and Goodwood--conceptualizations that reverse the implications of their names, Goodwood being the warrior and Warburton the good tree of state--make the two men dehumanized ideals.

James points out that Isabel enjoys the idea that she might someday be in a difficult position, in which she herself would be called upon to be heroic; her romance-oriented imagination thus makes an ideal of herself as well as of others.[29] Early in her stay at her uncle's home, Gardencourt, she expresses to her aunt and uncle her

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[29]Naomi Lebowitz in The Imagination of Loving: Henry James' Legacy to the Novel (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), corroborates my understanding of Isabel's romantic imagination as well as my discussion of the importance of Ralph's final words and Goodwood's final action in relation to Isabel's final decision. I am in debt to Mrs. Lebowitz in general for suggesting that the romantic vision may make an individual the victim as well as the victimizer. Mrs. Lebowitz, p. 69, makes a particularly sound case for the fact that "Osmond was able to use [Isabel], to court her in terms of the picturesque, and in terms of a false romance, only because she was willing to see relationship romantically and picturesquely instead of realistically."

eagerness for a revolution (PL, p. 61). In such an event, she considers that she could be a hero on both sides, helping the downtrodden republican side first, the noble royalist side second. Gilbert Osmond, the third of the suitors, allows Isabel to fulfill "the requirements of her imagination," the phrase which her cousin Ralph, having a different understanding of these requirements, ironically uses to persuade his father to make her his heir. Gilbert Osmond allows her to be heroic in both directions, to satisfy her aspiration for contact with suffering as well as her taste for picturesque beauty. Osmond, too, has the look of the romance hero, of the sixteenth-century courtiers whose portraits Isabel had seen, and Madame Merle, consciously, and Ralph, ironically, reinforce Isabel's romantic conception of Osmond, by comparing him to a disguised prince in exile.

Isabel's introduction to her third suitor significantly comes through Serena Merle, who, as Osmond's emissary in the wider world, mirrors her source; Isabel is at first spell-bound by Madame Merle for the same reasons that she is later intrigued by Osmond. For Isabel's initial encounter with Serena Merle, James fuses elements similar to those he had joined for her first encounter with her aunt; the mysterious melancholy of the unused room in Albany is increased on the day of her aunt's arrival by inclement weather, just as Madame Merle's unexpected appearance in

the drawing-room at Gardencourt is made more portentous by twilight, a cold rain, and a bough-shaking wind. Her aunt had represented the possibilities of European travel to her; Madame Merle, whom Isabel first observes playing the piano, represents the possibilities of knowledge of a finer kind. James felt that in this particular scene he had produced "the maximum of intensity with the minimum of strain" (AN, p. 56), for he had conveyed Isabel's impression that the scene was a turning-point in her life as well as if he had had her undergo an adventure of "field and flood." Although Mrs. Touchett deprecates her sophisticated friend's fondness for the mysterious, Isabel "cared for knowledge with a tinge of the unfamiliar" (PL, p. 41). If, as James asserts, she "had a natural shrinking from raising curtains and looking into unlighted corners" (PL, p. 173), from discovering anything malign about her new friend, she also seems to relish the notion that Madame Merle is a woman with a past, and the older woman plays up the aura of mystery Isabel enjoys by coyly maintaining that she tries to remain in "the quiet, dusky cupboard where there's an odour of stale spices" (PL, p. 168). When Isabel comes to know her better, she comes to realize that a different morality from her own lay in the dusky corners on which the curtain was never raised.

Osmond's Florentine home reflects what seems to Isabel's romance-oriented imagination his capacity to combine

the necessary extremes with the atmosphere of the unknown. The house occupies a part of a hill-top, thereby overlooking a garden of tangled roses and a long valley of olive-trees and vineyards. James immediately points out, however, that on a spring morning the visitors to the house were directed away from the garden side of things to the shady side of the house. Yet the house itself, which James carefully personifies, does not seem to appreciate the "splendid openness" of its view although it "looked" in that direction; the function of the windows on that side of the house "seemed less to offer communication with the world than to defy the world to look in" (PL, p. 198), and the front of the house appears as a mask with heavy eye-lids but with no eyes. The house, too, seems to be in disguise. In visiting Osmond herself in his hill-top home, Isabel feels that his shady side, "what he withheld," is his most attractive quality; his romantic appearance, his slight gestures, his concern for "art and beauty and history" all seem "promises of interest" to her.[30] Isabel also invents "a fine theory" about his gentlemanly poverty; as she could imagine herself siding with the poorer gardens of the world and with the republicans in a revolution, it pleases her to think that with her uncle's resources she can now serve a needy and a

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[30] PL, I: New York, 376-77. James emphasizes Isabel's interest in the romantic unknown by adding the phrases, "what he withheld" and "promises of interest" to the original text.

worthy cause: Gilbert Osmond. Conceiving of him as a lonely voyager on the beach, "looking seaward yet not putting to sea" (PL, p. 373), she was confident that she could "launch his boat for him."

The metaphors which James adds to the New York edition of The Portrait to describe Isabel's feelings about the days passed with Osmond in Rome--days which climax with his proposal of marriage--indicate the intensity of her romantic illusions. She first personifies these days as "the figure of some small princess of one of the ages of dress over-muffled in a mantle of state and dragging a train that it took pages or historians to hold up."[31] Osmond has so succeeded in sucking her into his general romance that he has made her see herself in relationship to a princess with a court and has put her in touch with the past. (Madame Merle, in the trip which follows the visit in Rome, does likewise, for James pictures her as "a lady in waiting to a princess circulating incognita."[32]) Muffling the days with a sense of state and a sense of the past, Osmond keeps the aura of mystery, but an ominous allusion to the weight of the princess' costume anticipates the days when Isabel will discover the weight of the costume in which Osmond will insist that she be draped. The second image which Isabel evokes to express her Roman holiday with Osmond springs from

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[31] PL, II: New York, 16.

[32] Ibid., p. 38.

travel romance; Warburton had suggested "strange gardens" to her, but Osmond actually converts her stay in Rome to an adventure on "some romantic island from which, after feasting on purple grapes, she was putting off while the breeze rose."[33] Thus her sense of her own voyage to unknown places on the open sea and her sense of Osmond's voyage in the craft she has launched indicate that Osmond has successfully appealed not only to her own desire for freedom, but also to her desire to do noble deeds.

But Isabel does not put off while the breeze rises; Osmond proposes to her, and her reaction is like a pang that suggested "the slipping of a fine bolt--backward, forward, she couldn't have said which."[34] This image, which James adds to the 1881 text, seems a specific echo of the bolted door in Albany which, being always closed, gave her imagination free rein; in feeling that the bolt might slip backward and the unseen become seen, she seems to anticipate the readjustment of her own illusions.[35] The bolt does slip back, and the deepening vision which Isabel attains necessitates a deepening of feeling. Ralph had once told Isabel, "'You want to see, but not to feel'" (PL, p. 130); she has always

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[33] Ibid., p. 16.

[34] Ibid., p. 18.

[35] John Rodenbeck in "The Bolted Door in James' The Portrait of a Lady," Modern Fiction Studies, X (Winter, 1964-65), 330-40, contends that bolted within her imagination, within her "bookish self-satisfaction," Isabel is not free; she must, therefore, break the bolts of "her own little office of conceited imagination" as Osmond would have to demolish the walls of his conventions before he could be free.

wanted to feel, contrary to his explanation of her character, but her feelings had previously been filtered through her visual and literary imagination, thus becoming sensations.

At the beginning of the second stage of her "mild adventure," that is, at the beginning of her married life, James again sets a Gothic stage. Another American, Ned Rosier, with an imagination as innocently slanted toward romance as Isabel's had been when she arrived in Europe, comes to call on the Osmond house in Rome and describes it as a younger Isabel might have and as Christopher Newman described another stronghold in Paris; the Palazzo Roccanera seemed to little Rosier a dungeon, "a kind of domestic fortress, a pile which bore a stern old Roman name, which smelt of historic deeds, of crime and craft and violence" (PL, p. 319); hoping against hope to rescue Osmond's daughter, Pansy, from her father's uncompromising bonds, Rosier is

> . . . haunted by the conviction that at picturesque periods young girls had been shut up there to keep them from their true loves, and, under threat of being thrown into convents, had been forced into unholy marriages. (PL, p. 319)

Ned Rosier's assessment of Pansy's situation is correct, making this aspect of The Portrait of a Lady similar to the artificial romance in The American, but Isabel comprehends, in a way unlike that of any other Gothic heroine, that she and her step-daughter are being kept in Osmond's dungeon.

In her long meditative vigil, Isabel examines her habitation; not the Palazzo Roccanera, but Osmond's mind, for

> . . . he had led her into the mansion of his own habitation . . . She could live it over again, the incredulous terror with which she had taken the measure of her dwelling. Between these four walls she had lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life. It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation. Osmond's beautiful mind gave it neither light nor air; Osmond's beautiful mind indeed seemed to peep down from a small high window and mocked her. (PL, p. 375)

Living in the confines of Osmond's mind,

> . . . she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end. Instead of leading to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, so that one could look down with a sense of exaltation and advantage, and judge and choose and pity, it led rather downward and earthward, into realms of restriction and depression where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above. (PL, pp. 371-72)

In this second scene that James cites in his preface as conveying a "maximum of intensity," Isabel considers that Osmond would actually like her locked in the Palazzo Roccanera in order to prevent her communication with Ralph, but she also knows that he is more interested in permanently bolting shut her mind by restricting it to the confines of his own. For the freedom of her ideas, Osmond despises her, and in her knowledge of this fact, Isabel confronts her husband's character--his egoism and his conventionality--as well as the errors her own romance-oriented imagination has led her into--her own misplaced desire to clothe Osmond in other garb and to be wardrobe mistress herself.

In Albany, Isabel had fostered the "office's" Gothic qualities whereas in Rome the unseen is terrifying, and

suffering becomes "an active condition" for her. Another image, also occurring during her vigil, suggests how the idea of the unknown, which had once so titillated her imagination, now arouses only horror; in her life with Osmond

> The dusk at first was vague and thin, and she could still see her way in it. But it steadily increased and if here and there it had occasionally lifted there were certain corners of her life that were impenetrably black. These shadows were not an emanation from her own mind: she was very sure of that; she had done her best to be just and temperate, to see only the truth. They were a part, they were a part of her husband's very presence. (PL, p. 372)

What Osmond withheld still remains in part unknown, but Isabel's early enchantment over the possibilities of discovering the meaning of the promises his character implied ceases. The vision of her husband's and of Madame Merle's familiarity, which remains with her throughout her vigil, is a forecasting of her discovery of further horror in dark corners.

The fate which she had once told Warburton she wanted is hers; as Olive Chancellor seeks martyrdom and achieves it, Isabel Archer had not wanted to be separated from her chances to suffer, and in Osmond's house, both the actual and the metaphorical dwelling, she suffers. In the Albany "office," she could imagine crime, violence, and physical cruelty as part of the unseen, but she had not been able to imagine the effects of simple hatred; she had wanted to identify with the misery of the common lot, but finds that her mental unhappiness casts her below them. Unable to act on the basis of his

own romance-oriented imagination, Ralph had hoped to set Isabel in motion with his father's inheritance, to set her soaring above men's heads; neither he nor she, who wanted her depths as well as her heights, could have imagined that she would fall so far downward from the "high places of happiness." She had expected to help Osmond in his poverty and loneliness; she will still be useful to him, but only if she allows her ideas to become as sorted, sifted, and arranged as the objects in his house and the conventions of his mind; instead of appreciating the independence of her thoughts, the open vistas of her mind, she realizes, he would trim her mind down to a "small garden-plot" where "he would rake the soil gently and water the flowers" (PL, p. 378). No garden could be more ugly or miserable.

During her first visit to Rome, Isabel's imagination had been touched by the present-day city's fusion with the past;

> She had an imagination that kindled at the mention of great deeds, and wherever she turned some great deed had been acted. (PL, p. 250)

She was not, however, impressed only by the glory of the past, nor was she solely interested in her theories of historical cause and social effect. "The sense of the terrible human past" weighed heavily upon her. But prior to her marriage, Isabel's more melancholy feelings about the Roman past could be easily dispelled, for at that time she was also given to flights from the "high places of happiness." During her prolonged stay in Rome at the house of Osmond, however,

Isabel's appreciation of the past changes; with her penchant for romance giving her the initial impetus to look behind and with her personal suffering serving as an additional catalyst, she comes to feel in the ruins of Rome the fact that human life passes, yet it endures and prevails. And in terms of this general fact she also comes to feel that her own suffering is only an infinitesimal part of the whole. In saying that "she rested her weariness upon things that had crumbled for centuries and yet still were upright" (PL, p. 454), James implies that Isabel finds in the past neither great deeds to be emulated or analyzed nor horrors to be scandalized by, but a sense of continuity with the present, a sense that human life, with its sorrows and its glories, is to be valued. Her earlier romantic interest in the past and its sufferings allowed her to have her cake and eat it, too; she could switch from past to present with as much freedom as she could switch sides in a revolution and with as little depth of feeling. Now, however, her sense of the past sets her own present in perspective, and she sees herself as belonging to humanity, not merely observing it.

To indicate the depth of her change, James again invokes the Gothic; among the monuments of Rome, Isabel felt the possibility of a "spiritual visitation": "Even when Pansy and the Countess were with her, she felt the touch of a vanished world" (PL, p. 454). The dead to her are not now merely objects of romantic curiosity, but they are creatures like herself, who in Osmond's house has known

suffocation and darkness, even mould and decay (PL, p. 377), and who has come to be in need of sympathy.

On returning to Gardencourt from Rome, Isabel experiences her spiritual visitation. The first evening she spent in her uncle's house, she had pursued Ralph with questions about the ghost in residence, questions typical of the romance-oriented imagination and typical of the American's expectations of old European houses, as "A Passionate Pilgrim" testifies. Ralph had explained the impossibility of her seeing the ghost at that time:

> "I might show it to you, but you'd never see it. The privilege isn't given to every one; it's not enviable. It has never been seen by a young, happy innocent person like you. You must have suffered first, have gained some miserable knowledge. In that way your eyes are open to it. I saw it long ago. (PL, pp. 39-40)

Ralph at the beginning of the novel is thus at the stage that Isabel reaches at the end of the novel. He feels.

At the moment of Ralph's death, a spirit appears to Isabel. By using only pronouns, James gives the impression that the spirit is Ralph himself as well as the promised Gardencourt ghost. James is consequently able not only to reinforce the sense that Isabel, because of her insight into her own suffering, has identified herself with the general human condition, but also to imply that Ralph's final words with her have transcended his death. Her final conversation with her cousin reveals the depth of feeling they both have reached. As both speak from long suppressed emotions--he of his role in her unhappiness, she of this unhappiness--as

their mutual forgiving becomes implicit, their suffering becomes less important than their love; Ralph says, "'[The pain] passes, after all; it's passing now. But love remains'" (PL, p. 507).

The extent of the growth of Isabel's consciousness as a result of her imaginings is measured by contrasting her feelings during the final events at Gardencourt with her feelings during the journey from Rome to England, the trip forbidden by her husband. Making the train ride "with sightless eyes," she has come to resemble Osmond's Florentine house. Oblivious to the lands through which she passes, to their spring freshness, her vision is of other countries--"strange-looking, dimly-lighted, pathless lands, in which there was no change of season, but only as it seemed, a perpetual dreariness of winter" (PL, p. 491). The gardens with their lengthening vistas have disappeared, and Isabel's imagination has her traversing wastelands, "the dusky, pestiferous tracts, planted thick with ugliness and misery," which she had once thought potentially interesting and informative. Her imagination, moving rapidly from one extreme to another, travels to more exotic realms, but this latter mental realm is the ultimate extension of the wasteland, for she imagines her own death:

> To cease utterly, to give it all up and not know anything more--this idea was as sweet as the vision of a cool bath in a marble tank, in a darkened chamber, in a hot land. (PL, p. 492)

Her romantic desire for death seems on the way to being satisfied as she arrives in the London station; its "dusky, smoky, far-arching vault . . . the strange, livid light, the dense, dark pushing crowd" (PL, p. 493) appear the external manifestation of her mental image of the wasteland.

En route, she had speculated on the impossibility of her continuing to live only to suffer, but not until Ralph's ghost appears to her as the spirit of Gardencourt does she know how to bear the burden of her knowledge and her sorrow. In dying Ralph tells her, "'Dear Isabel, life is better, for in life there's love. Death is good--but there's no love'" (PL, p. 505). Isabel, undecided about her return to Rome until Ralph's funeral and a new proposal from Caspar Goodwood, can return with Ralph's legacy of love; not only will she be sustained by the memory of his love for her, but if in Rome she finds herself unloved, there will be loving for her to do. Pansy waits for her.

Isabel's return to her husband's house has been interpreted as the fulfillment of a death-wish.[36] But just as her wandering through Rome's ruins have set her suffering in perspective, her trip to Ralph's deathbed have given her living purpose. Isabel's decision to return seems a positive confrontation with life. As Goodwood had so bluntly pointed out to her, Isabel at the end of the novel is "perfectly

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[36]Arnold Kettle, Introduction to the English Novel, II (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 30-34.

alone" (PL, p. 517). The love that he offers her, clearly a sexual, as opposed to Ralph's spiritual, love, represents another mode of escape, but another escape synonymous with death, for his love is "an act of possession," and during the moment of his kiss, Isabel feels herself destroyed first by lightning, then by drowning. Her protest against his possession, which ultimately takes the form of her flight back to Rome, is an assertion of her right to be free; it is an assertion of her need to choose to love.

In the first three of her major decisions to travel--to go with her aunt to Europe, to marry Osmond and move to Rome, to leave Rome against his orders and come to Ralph in England--she has been acting always at least in part in relation to romance. Her first two moves spring from her heroic ideals and of their potential fulfillment in herself and Osmond; her return to England comes in part from her romantic renunciation of these ideals; but her return to Rome is stripped of any romantic trappings. Yet she has become her own latter-day romance hero, for the loneliness of loving, rather than being loved, constitutes a great deed. She returns to Rome to accept the consequences of her own romanticizing, to live with spiritual freedom within the known social responsibilities of her marriage.

Left to play a role in the artificial romance at the end of the novel is Gilbert Osmond. There is much talk of revenge in the final chapters of the novel. When Madame Merle perceives that Osmond has taken his revenge against

her on Isabel, he proclaims that she talks of revenge "like a third-rate novelist." His verbal attempts to vindicate himself, however, like Dr. Sloper's jibes at the "old-fashioned novel," are denied by his actions. When Isabel states her need to go to her dying cousin's bedside, for example,he betrays himself by accusing her of seeking revenge upon him; he threatens her with an unknown revenge if she should disobey him. Isabel, like Christopher Newman, has the opportunity to avenge herself against both of her betrayers, but like her fellow American, she exercises it only mildly. Visiting Pansy before her departure for England, she meets Serena Merle, and with the knowledge the Countess Gemini has given her of the actual nature of her husband's, Madame Merle's, and Pansy's relationship, with a few words, she could expose Madame Merle's guilt; she resists the temptation, however, to say something "that would hiss like a lash" (PL, p. 484), leaving the part of the serpent to her husband, and takes a meager revenge in her silence. Similarly, in not returning to her husband's house from her trip to England, she might have created chaos among his conventions. Isabel, like her counterpart in The American in his feud with the Bellegardes, will not use the methods of a third-rate novelist. Nor will James. He yet has a captive maiden locked away in a convent, but this is not his heroine. His heroine leaves the ways of the artificial romance to Osmond; she foregoes revenge and returns to Rome, with her imagination

able to perceive the unseen from the seen and able to comprehend the subject of real romance--"the truth of the human heart"--rather than sentimental and abstract ideals.[37]

In The Bostonians (1886), James scrutinizes the romance-oriented imagination in its destructive and comic extremity, elaborating on his portrait of Aunt Penniman. In Olive Chancellor, James describes the full consequences of the imagination which repudiates the present in its concentration upon the past, which repudiates humanity in its concentration upon its own egocentric and theoretical values. If James had an inkling of the destructive potentiality of the rigid ideals of the romance-oriented imagination in "Madame de Mauves" or in the dedication to the past in "A Passionate Pilgrim," in The Bostonians he lays bare these possibilities.

Olive's reading matter, which includes Goethe, George Eliot, and "a great deal of history,"[38] more closely resembles Isabel's reading than Aunt Penniman's "light literature," however. From Faust Olive takes a motto, "Entsagen sollst du, sollst entsagen!" which she translates

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[37]Chase, p. 134, maintains that at the conclusion of The Portrait of a Lady, James "brings Isabel's point of view around from that of the romancer to that of the novelist," that is, she no longer "responds to character intensely only when it conceives of itself at a high level of abstraction and when its acts are symbolic of ideal values," but she is now willing to see "in ordinary circumstances the inescapable root condition of significant actions."

[38]Henry James, The Bostonians (London: Macmillan Co., 1886), p. 175. Hereafter cited in the text as Bos.

freely for her protégée, Verena Tarrant, as "'Thou shalt renounce, refrain, abstain!'" (Bos, p. 86), and with reinforcement from models in history she applies her motto rigorously. For victory in her cause--in general the emancipation of women from their bondage to men, in particular the liberation of Verena from Basil Ransom's masculine spell--Olive renounces all obstructing thoughts and all other activities: her dedication to the cause necessitates not only abstinence from sexual pleasures, but eventually abstinence from life itself, for every fiber in Olive's nature strains toward martyrdom. Her morbidity impresses Basil from his first meeting with his cousin. Clement Searle's morbid penchant seems faint aligned with the intensity of Olive's; hers is a strenuous love-affair with death. Her necrophilia and her dream of "women weak, insulted, but devoted in every pulse of their being to the cause, and asking no better fate than to die for it" (Bos, p. 37) places her in the masochistic tradition of the Romantic Agony;[39] only when Olive is renouncing and refraining, that is, conscientiously suffering, does she live.

From her researches into the past, Olive has discovered the models that re-affirm the righteousness of her

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[39]Daniel Lerner and Oscar Cargill, "Henry James at the Grecian Urn," PMLA, LXVI (June, 1951), pp. 316-31, draw on Verena's reference to Olive as Antigone to nominate her as "a tragic figure--a woman helpless in her compulsions." Not only do they neglect to correlate Olive's necrophilia with Sophocles' heroine's similarly disturbing desire, but they also neglect to see the comic irony in James' portrait.

convictions. The analogy which appeals to her most strongly is between Joan of Arc and Verena, whose supernatural powers resemble the saint's and in whom she can imagine a similar military triumph and a similar beatified martyrdom.[40] Olive dedicates herself to preparing Verena for her assumption of the role of the militant maid and begins by weaving a possessive web about the girl that was "as dense as a suit of golden mail" (Bos, p. 167).

As a whole, The Bostonians seems suspended from a network of battle images. That the fires of war between the sexes are generated and fanned by Olive suggests not only her perversity, but also James' comic intent. If her name connotes "Peace," she is also the feminine counterpart of another Puritan Chancellor and great military leader, Oliver Cromwell. Masochistic sufferer that she is, "Of all things in the world contention was most sweet to [Olive] (though why it is hard to imagine, for it always cost her tears, headaches, a day or two in bed, acute emotion)" (Bos, p. 14). Olive's historical orientation puts her in touch with centuries of suffering humanity as did Isabel's in her wanderings among the ruins of Rome; Olive, however, sees only the "unhappiness of women" and, insisting on a solution to the problem, she chooses the way history has usually chosen--battle. Under the spell of Mrs. Farrinder, a more vociferous feminist, a vision comes to Olive first of the "ages of oppression" that had rolled over women and then of herself and the shabby

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[40] The Bostonians, pp. 86, 123, 147.

group attending to Mrs. Farrinder's words as a new company of heroes leading squadrons in a new crusade:

> This was the great, the just revolution. It must triumph, it must sweep everything before it; it must exact from the other, the brutal, the blood-stained, ravening race, the last particle of expiation. (Bos, p. 37)

In the watches of the night, Olive continues to view long ghostly processions of "the bullied wives, the stricken mothers, the dishonored, deserted maidens" (Bos, p. 181) and to insist upon revenge.

Because her faith in the new company of heroes begins to waver, however, Verena's importance to the movement, as the inspiring saint, increases; with the abolitionists' cause concluded by victory over the South and with the passing of the last of the grand old guard--Miss Birdseye--the first Bostonian age of heroes subsides. Olive admires Miss Birdseye's "old-fashioned weapons" and would have liked

> . . . to hang them up as venerable relics of a patient fight, and this was what she seemed to do when she made the poor lady relate her battles--never glorious and brilliant, but obscure and wastefully heroic--call back the figures of her companions in arms, exhibit her medals and scars. (Bos, p. 178)

Although the intensity of her feelings taints Olive's admiration for the ancient warrior with sadism, Olive's vision is a comic conversion of "this essentially formless old woman, who had no more outline than a bundle of hay" (Bos, p. 29).

With her fancy pumping the smoke of battle through the novel, Olive's sense of dread and danger is always aflame. James' emphasis upon her feeling of peril seems to substantiate

his assertions in "The Art of Fiction" and later in his preface for The American that danger can be claimed by no one segment of life and hence by no one kind of fiction. Olive's life in Boston can be fraught with as much danger, violence, and adventure as can life on the Spanish Main because there is a "psychological reason." Olive's nature, of which Basil has a hint in Chapter II, is like "a skiff in a stormy sea" (Bos, p. 10), a simile which becomes an effulgent metaphor as it takes root in Olive's mind in Chapter XXXIX. When Basil takes Verena off for a sail, her drive to torment herself reaches a masochistic-sadistic culmination in her vision of Verena's death:

> Olive's imagination hurried, with a bound, to the worst. She saw the boat overturned and drifting out to sea, and (after a week of nameless horror) the body of an unknown young woman, defaced beyond recognition, but with long auburn hair and in a white dress, washed up in some faraway cove. (Bos, p. 411)

Both the episode and the tableau of the imagined scene are taken from artificial romance, for Olive, like the writers of those romances, who think they convey an illusion of life, thinks she comprehends life by imagining absolutes of good and evil and by keeping them and herself at a dangerous fever-pitch.

In his first encounter with Olive, long before he has reason to believe that she is a fighting woman, Basil feels "an unformulated pity for her," a "vague compassion" (Bos, p. 11). Although Oscar Cargill argues that Olive borders on being one of James' "Bad Heroines" and therefore

evokes a certain amount of pity,[41] it seems to me any pity in James' attitude toward Olive is braced with comic irony. The final battle between Basil and Olive, which takes place in the Boston Music Hall, is an historical gladiatorial contest with the loser achieving her long cherished wish for martyrdom. When Basil victoriously rescues the victim, Verena, from the sacrificial pyre of the lecture podium,[42] Olive must face the lions, "the mighty multitude" of the disappointed lecture audience--alone. James describes her as "upright in her desolation," but

> . . . looking for death . . . [and] if she could have met it there and then, bristling with steel or lurid with fire, she would have rushed on it without a tremor, like the heroine she was. (Bos, p. 447)

Forced to placate the crowd alone, Olive offers herself

> . . . to be trampled to death and torn to pieces. She might have suggested to [Ransom] some feminine firebrand of Paris revolutions, erect on a barricade, or even the sacrificial figure of Hypatia, whirled through the furious mob of Alexandria. (Bos, p. 448)

Thus in the last passages of the novel, Olive herself becomes one of the suffering women of the past whom she had studied so strenuously. Previously she had identified Verena with the greatest of historical personages; now she is herself identified with them. Her situation, however, is ironic, for not only is Ransom, her arch foe, the one who most appreciates

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[41] Cargill, The Novels of Henry James, p. 136.

[42] Charles Anderson in "James' Portrait of a Southerner," American Literature, XXVII (November, 1955), 315, makes a similar analogy between the podium and the pyre.

her exalted status as revolutionary and martyr, but also the fulfillment of her desires for martyrdom suggests the total romantic objectification of herself and consequent dissociation of herself from reality.

Olive's martyrdom is also crowned with vulgarity and disaster rather than glory. Basil's successful wooing and winning of Verena, which necessitates Olive's appearance before the mob, sounds her death knell, and although she had long been yearning for death in her cause, her price had always been the spiritual transformation of the "ravening race." Verena's lecture at the Boston Music Hall was to be the major spectacle in this reformation; with the young saint snatched away from her role, however, it becomes a fiasco. Olive's martyrdom is thus a hollow crown, and if we pity Olive for this ironic reversal in her scheme and for the ironic fulfillment of her romantic yearnings, we also have to laugh, for her perverse images of herself remain preposterously incongruous with reality.

At the tastefully appointed home of Mr. Burrage, an aesthetic young man and a follower of Verena, Olive wonders if a truce might not be possible; here "human life ceased to be a battle" (Bos, p. 153). But as soon as she leaves her aesthetic surroundings, she is again thinking of revolution and reformation and is rejoicing that she was born before the evil in the world had been swept away so that she might have a hand in triumphing over it. Her cries of her envisioned triumph ring so stridently through

the novel that not only Verena is enraptured by them. Basil, a former Confederate soldier and a man of chivalry,[43] is not unfamiliar with soldiering, but his experiences with the military and with an historical code of honor have not been visionary. In dealing with Olive, however, he finds it necessary to adapt her crusader's vocabulary to civilian life. Basil does not long regard Olive as a figure of compassion; she forces him to arms with the defensive battery of guns she places around Verena (Bos, p. 276). As she has categorized him as the enemy, he must see her in similar romantically theoretical terms:

> . . . she was a fighting woman, and she would fight him to the death, giving him not an inch of odds. He felt that she was in there all day long, in her cottage-fortress; her resistance was in the air he breathed. (Bos, pp. 391-92)

His confrontation with an embattled woman causes him to modify his definition of chivalry: "Chivalry was forbearance and generosity with regard to the weak; and there was nothing weak about Miss Olive" (Bos, p. 391). He eventually recognizes what Olive had known all along that the situation between them was "war to the knife" (Bos, p. 383).

With his masculinity, his Southern origins, his conservatism, and his commitment to sex and to life, Basil Ransom is Olive Chancellor's obvious antithesis, and the "moral tension," which is established between them and

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[43] Throughout his essay Anderson points to chivalry as one of Basil's overriding characteristics, crediting his success with Verena to his chivalric manners.

focused in Verena provides a situation which James works into the framework of a traditional romance. Not only are there numerous references to Olive's affinities with witches,[44] but Basil with his Southern background and his chivalric manners is a natural romantic hero. He comes, a poor stranger, to the citadel of Boston from an exotic land; he is handsome, with "a fine head" and "magnificent eyes," and James embroiders the romantic outline to describe his hair as rolling back from his forehead in "a leonine manner" and his eyes as having a "smouldering fire" (Bos, p. 4). The chivalric code is always with him, especially as it insists upon delicate courtesies to women, the weak. Although he, too, accepts Miss Birdseye as a beloved old warrior and takes Doctor Prance as a comrade, although he comes to regard Olive as his antagonist, in his relationship with Mrs. Luna and with Verena,--with "real damsels"[45]--he is usually conscious of the chivalric proprieties.

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[44] One of the more revealing analogies between Olive and the spirits of evil is that made by Mrs. Luna, who acknowledges that Olive's meeting at Miss Birdseye's is "a rendez-vous of witches on the Brocken . . . [of] witches and wizards, mediums and spirit-rappers, and roaring radicals" (Bos, p. 6). That she should be so closely identified with Faust is ironical in light of her preference for the work. W. R. Martin in "The Use of the Fairy-Tale: A Note on the Structure of The Bostonians," English Studies in Africa, II (1959), 98-109, has done a careful, if rather unilluminating study of the references to fairy-tales in the novel.

[45] I am grateful to Professor Powers for recognizing the need to emphasize that Basil distinguishes the feminine woman from un-feminine woman.

Given his heritage, Basil Ransom ought to have an imagination tilted toward romance. Romantic literature, however, was not necessarily his forte; he had read "Comte, he had read everything" (Bos, p. 19). Not until he had become familiar with Olive's strategies does he begin to imagine life with historical battle-lines drawn. Perhaps there had been too many actual battles in his own career as a Confederate soldier. But it is more likely that he simply recognizes belligerence when he sees it. Not until the eve of the final battle in the Music Hall, which strikes him as having "a Roman vastness" (Bos, p. 429), does Basil indulge in Olive's sweeping historical perspectives, and at this time his most difficult fight with her was on. When James had described Basil standing with Verena before the tablets in Memorial Hall, which were dedicated to the Harvard students who had fallen in the Civil War, he illuminated the disparity between his and Olive's vision of the past. Basil's reflections on the young Union dead cause him to forget "the whole question of sides and parties" (Bos, p. 242); the monument seems to him to be dedicated to the generous sacrifice and example of "the victims of defeat as well as the sons of triumph," whereas Olive's reflections on the past defy compassion. She can see the past only in relation to women and to her own extreme feelings. When Verena speaks to Basil about women's suffering, he replies, "'The suffering of women is the suffering of all humanity'"

(Bos, p. 232). He may endorse the tenet of the chivalric code that gives women a status inferior to men's, but his sense of compassion and awe, which the past inspires in him, which resembles Isabel's attitude among the ruins of Rome, suggests a more profound comprehension of the past than Olive's. For Basil, the past does not consume the present and the romantic vision does not disguise humanity.

Basil's siege against Olive does not get underway with full strength until his second visit to Boston. The weather on the day of his second arrival is auspicious; it was "brilliant enough to minister to any illusion" (Bos, p. 209). In general, Boston weather seems to foster the comic romantic illusions in the minds of its women inhabitants. Miss Birdseye had "the romance of her life" in comforting the exiles from European despotism and the slaves from Southern plantations, no less exotic with their African origins. Mrs. Luna was equally attracted to her mysterious and impoverished cousin from the South:

> What [she] cared for was the fallen aristocracy (it seemed to be falling everywhere very much; was not Basil an example of it: was he not like a French gentilhomme de province after the Revolution? or an monarchial émigré from the Languedoc?) the despoiled patriciate, I say, whose attitude was noble and touching and toward whom one might exercise a charity as discreet as their pride was sensitive. (Bos, p. 207)

Mrs. Farrinder, another example of the romantic Bostonian, imagines herself as ferocious in the feminist cause as Napoleon was in his. Even before Verena appeared in Olive's

life and her illusions come to tyrannize it, Olive had been preoccupied with "the romance of the people" (Bos, p. 34) as are Mrs. Penniman and Isabel. She had ridden the street-cars in order not to reveal her station, and she had tried to strike up intimate relations with poor shop-girls although she loathed the street-cars and the shop-girls liked their Charlies better than Olive or the ballot.

Basil, the only non-Bostonian in the crowd (Mrs. Luna, who hovers over New York and Europe, has ties), seems to come away from this city of illusions unscathed. A poor man and unproven, he has at the end of the novel proved himself in the professional world by having an article accepted for publication in The Rational Review and by having stormed the Music Hall and by physical force rescued his lady-fair. Basil does best the Bostonians at their own game; yet in order to do so, he has had to think in their romantic images, which necessitates his considering not only Olive his enemy, but also Verena a victim and himself as her savior (Bos, p. 241).

Although Basil succeeds in working within the illusions of the Bostonians and in eventually breaking through these illusions into "the outer world" (Bos, p. 442), he does not leave the fray unmarred. His chivalric code, the basis for his own idealizations, is sorely taxed. He has had to lead an attack on women, not only on Olive and the entire feminist cause, but on Verena herself; using

the same kind of device as does Olive, he, too, has had to cast a spell over Verena. Similarly, in the moments before he spirits her away, Verena "asked him to go away just as any plighted maiden might have asked any favor of her lover" (Bos, pp. 444-45), but denying the demands of the code, which would have had him comply with his lady's request, he stays. James' subsequent comment is delicately ironic:

> But it was the poor girl's misfortune that, whatever she did or said, or left unsaid, only had the effect of making her dearer to him and making the people who were clamoring for her seem more and more a raving rabble.

In breaking the code, Basil seeks ultimately to re-establish it. His quarrel with the feminist movement is a quarrel against fakery as well as against the subjugation of women to self-destructive, sex-destructive theories; his spell, of course, is his own love, his insistent masculinity and his insistent ego asking Verena to be herself, to assert her feminity and her own ego. That he has had to turn the world into a battle-ground between the forces of good and evil and that his victory involves no growth in consciousness makes Basil James' most traditional romantic hero.

Olive is left holding the nineteenth-century romantic hero's bag of angst; the ironic reversal implicit in the fulfillment of her romantic illusions makes her pathetic, her self-revelations make her pitiful. Basil's self-knowledge remains consistent; Olive's imagination brings her to the border of consciousness as opposed to self-consciousness. On the day of Verena's disappearance

with Basil in the sail-boat, she relentlessly questions herself, and James indicates specifically that her own past, if not the historical past, comes to illuminate her present:

> . . . she knew again, how noble and beautiful her scheme had been, but how it had all rested on an illusion. . . . What was before her now was reality, with the beautiful, indifferent sky pouring down its complacent rays upon it. The reality was simply that Verena had been more to her than she ever was to Verena. . . . These hours of backward clearness come to all men and women, once at least, when they read the past in light of the present, with the reason of things like unobserved finger-posts, protruding where they never saw them before. . . . They understand as Olive understood, but it is probable that they rarely suffer as she suffered. (Bos, p. 480)

As she begins to break through her own illusions into the outer world of reality and as she prepares to face the multitude alone in Verena's place, Olive might seem to be on her way to a fuller understanding of herself and humanity. Although she recognizes that her love for Verena has been excessive, she seems far from reaching Isabel's awareness of the need to love rather than to be loved and of the need to live with a sense of the consequences of her own action rather than to die in the scourging heat of self-hate and self-love. Olive, dissatisfied with herself as much as with the world, however, does die daily, for the ideal costumes she has put on herself and others pinch too tightly.

Lionel Trilling's identification of Hyacinth Robinson as "The Young Man from the Provinces" puts him squarely in the romance tradition:

> He need not come from the province in a literal fact; his class may constitute his province. But a

> provincial birth and rearing suggest the simplicity and high hopes he begins with--he starts with a great demand upon life and a great wonder about its complexity and promise. He may be of a good family but he must be poor. He is intelligent, or at least aware, but not at all shrewd in worldly matters. He must have acquired a certain amount of education, should have learned something about life from books, although not the truth. . . . there is some mystery about his birth; . . . His situation is as chancy as that of any questing knight of medieval romance. He is confronted by situations whose meanings are dark to him, in which his choice seems always decisive. He understands everything to be a "test."[46]

The Princess Casamassima (1886) amply illustrates James' interest in the naturalists' conviction of the influence of heredity and environment on the development of character, and yet even this interest supports his shaping of Hyacinth Robinson to the particular mould of the romance hero that Trilling labels "The Young Man from the Provinces." Although Hyacinth's French mother was of "the people," although he is raised in London slums, the romantic supposition that his father was of English nobility is cherished and nourished in his home in the slums. In addition, by thus cloaking Hyacinth's birth in mystery, James seems to be relying on a frequent convention of traditional romance.[47]

Miss Amanda Pynsent, Hyacinth's surrogate mother, knowing that his true mother had murdered her noble lover, creates an environment for Hyacinth which will allow any innate aristocratic tendencies in the boy to flourish.

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[46]Trilling, pp. 61-63.

[47]Baker in "The Idea of Romance in Eighteenth-Century Literature," p. 510, makes particular note of this convention.

That the nobleman is actually the boy's father, however, is never proven. Nevertheless through Hyacinth's possible relation to nobility Pinnie seeks to fulfill her own yearnings toward romance as Aunt Penniman had sought to fulfill hers through the relationship of her niece and Morris Townsend; yet Pinnie's egocentric modeling of Hyacinth to the shape of an aristocrat will, she hopes, ultimately be for Hyacinth's happiness. She errs, but her errors resemble Ralph's. James makes it clear in his first chapter, however, that Hyacinth's own romantic inclinations are probably more due to Pinnie's fancies than to any aristocratic genes:

> Her weakness and isolation went out to his, and in the course of time this united desolation was peopled by the dressmaker's romantic mind with a hundred consoling evocations. The boy proved neither a dunce nor a reprobate: but what endeared him to her most was her conviction that he belonged, "by the left hand," as she had read in a novel, to a proud and ancient race. . . . She had from his earliest age made him feel that there was a grandeur in his past.[48]

It is not surprising, therefore, that Hyacinth's favorite childhood activities were reading the first page of the romances in the Family Herald and the London Journal, which were posted in the window of the neighborhood confectionary, and admiring the illustrations of the noble characters,--"(they were always of the highest birth)" (PC, p. 4)--who figured in the romances. Although Hyacinth comes to feel that Pinnie has made a farce of his life by concealing his

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[48]Henry James, The Princess Casamassima (London: Macmillan Co., 1886), pp. 8-9. Hereafter cited in the text as PC.

mother's origins from him and by constructing a tower of romance around him on the basis of his father's origins, he admits that nine-tenths of his own time was spent in brooding about his paternal ancestors. With only Pinnie's information to begin with, he is hardly more justified than either Clement Searle or Edward Redclyffe in researching the affairs of the noble house to which he thinks his father might have belonged.

James' general plan for The Princess Casamassima, as he discloses it in his preface, was to describe a "sensitive nature or a fine mind" which would be capable of benefiting from the superb accumulations of civilization, but which would be "condemned to see these things only from outside" (AN, p. 60). Being outside was a situation with which James himself was not unfamiliar; he, too, had experienced "wistfulness and envy and despair" in observing "others," and the image which he uses to define his relationship to Lady Margot Asquith and to his cousin Gus Barker seems to have its precedent in the Princess Casamassima's description of Hyacinth's position:

> "Fancy the strange, bitter fate: to be constituted as you are constituted, to feel the capacity you must feel, and yet to look at the good things of life only through glass of the pastry-cook's window!" (PC, pp. 316-17)

James, as an artist, however, could have his pastry and eat it, too, whereas the glass of the pastry-cook's window not only prevents Hyacinth from obtaining the good things inside

but also magnifies their desirability. The good things which Hyacinth, from his position outside, imagines inside are in particular "societies in which, in splendid rooms, with smiles and soft voices, distinguished men, with women, who were both proud and gentle, talked of art, literature, and history" (PC, p. 104). Because art, literature, and history themselves became the glass, the medium through which Hyacinth attempts to approach society, he idealizes himself and the others.

In his preface, James argues that Sir Walter Scott's Edgar of Ravenswood is a limited conception, for Scott failed to convey his hero's sense of his feelings; "visited by the tragic tempest of 'The Bride of Lammermoor,' [he] has a black cloak and hat and feathers more than he has a mind" (AN, p. 68). Hyacinth has a mind, but James' prefatory comments seem to suggest that his intention was to create a hero whose mind would be dominated by the romantic paraphenalia which were the sole props upon which Scott had rested his character.

The Princess Casamassima is the most prominent figure for Hyacinth to drape in the costumes of his romance-oriented imagination. James stages Hyacinth's first encounter with the Princess at the theater in the opening chapter of the Second Book of the novel. The theater itself acts as a stimulus for Hyacinth's dissociation of reality and romance as it does later for Strether:

> . . . the theatre, in any conditions, was full of sweet deception for him. His imagination projected itself lovingly across the footlights, gilded and

> coloured the shabby canvas and battered accessories, and lost itself so effectually in the fictive world that the end of the piece, however, long or however short, brought with it a kind of alarm, like a stoppage of his personal life. (PC, p. 140)

On this particular evening, Hyacinth's imagination sustains his personal life, for his imagination, stimulated by the theater's fictive world, makes "the true fictive." Thus Captain Sholto, who brings Hyacinth to the Princess' box, seems to wear his hair in the fashion of the portraits of 1820, and the proposal to meet the lady seems "fictive and phantasmagoric"; but Hyacinth, recalling the grace with which the heroes of several French novels undertook the task, steps forward. The Princess herself not only seems to him to epitomize his notion of what a princess should be; she comes close to seeming divine. He sees her in the light of both art and history, but as he contemplates the perfection of her head, his romanticizing turns her into a piece of statuary:

> That head, where two or three diamond stars glittered in the thick delicate hair which defined its shape, suggested to Hyacinth something antique and celebrated, something he had admired of old . . . in a statue, in a picture, in a museum. Purity of line and form, of cheek and chin and lip and brow, a colour that seemed to live and glow, a radiance of grace and eminence and success--these things were seated in triumph in the face of the Princess. (PC, pp. 154-55)

As Hyacinth sits with the Princess and Madame Grandoni in their box, he feels that his own situation has become "a play with the play" (PC, p. 155); the romance has become more real than the reality, and he as well as the Princess has become an ideal and a de-humanized work of art.

The Princess continues to seem to Hyacinth to belong to the world of romance and as his association with her continues, he, too, takes for himself more of the aura of romance. Thus when he attends her in her London drawing-room, he experiences

> . . . much the same feeling with which, at the theatre, he had sometimes awaited the entrance of a celebrated actress. In this case the actress was to perform for him alone. (PC, p. 213)[49]

In retrospect, this visit becomes "mythic and legendary," and the book of Tennyson's poems, which he binds for her subsequently, is transformed into a "virtual proof and gage--as if a ghost in vanishing from sight had left a palpable relic" (PC, p. 224). Hyacinth's stay at Medley, the Princess' country-house, however, plunges him farther into romance. The liquor he drinks reminds him of the brew in "Ode to a Nightingale"; the Princess appears as the incarnation of the heroine in a Feuillet novel; she speaks to her servants in Italian as is done in The Three Musketeers, he recalls. If he perceives the Princess and her

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[49]Isabel, Newman, and Lambert Strether have similar experiences when confronted with the ideal human being. I have noted Newman's reaction to his early meetings with Claire. Isabel's first meeting with Osmond struck her "as a dramatic entertainment, rehearsed in advance" (PL, p. 216); In the New York edition James elaborates upon her reaction: Isabel "sat there as if she had been at the play . . . [Madame Merle and Osmond] talked of the Florentine, the Roman, the cosmopolite world, and might have been distinguished performers figuring for a charity. It all had the rich readiness that would have come from rehearsal" (PL, I: New York, 355). Strether's vision of Chad and Madame de Vionnet as actors in a play are discussed in detail in Chapter V.

life as exquisitely romantic, he is also agreeably aware that because of her obsessions with "the people," she has made his own life resemble "some famous novel." Caught up in the opposite romance, the romance of Medley, the "enchanted palace," however, Hyacinth becomes oblivious to reality:

> All warnings, reflexions, considerations of verisimilitude, of the delicate, the natural and the possible, of the value of his independence had become as nothing to him. (PC, p. 303)

From the superlative distance of Paris, where he has the "sense of fraternizing with Balzac and Alfred de Musset" and of being surrounded with echoes from their works, the week at Medley seems to have become an actual piece of fiction and art:

> . . . a kind of fable, the echo of a song; he could read it over like a story bound in vellum and gold, gaze at it as he would have gazed at some exquisite picture. (PC, p. 366)

In Europe, however, Hyacinth is able to reconcile the two conflicting strains in his blood and the two conflicting romances in his life. Since Hyacinth's discovery of his mother's origins and of her violent attempt to bring justice, he, too, had been caught up in the romance of the "people." His enthusiastic decision to embrace danger for their sake and to put his life in the hands of the anarchist leader, Hoffendahl, had climaxed his participation in this romance just as Medley climaxed his participation in the romance of the aristocracy. In Europe, however, he realizes

that he does not have to be lacerated by his mixed background and his antithetical commitments, but that he may be himself. Although his romance-oriented imagination causes him to commune with the past and the supernatural during his European sojourn and to idealize both, because he is also able to comprehend the ambiguous nature of both, he begins to comprehend himself.

Even before he had realized that the dying Frenchwoman whom he had been taken to see in prison as a child was his mother, Hyacinth had developed an interest in the French Revolution. For the revolutionist, which Hyacinth becomes through the influence of his French friends, the Poupins, this is the prototype of all revolutions. Hyacinth does not consider the Revolution, however, simply as the means for eradicating injustice and establishing liberty, equality, and fraternity for all or as the watershed between the past and the present; he views it, rather, as another moment of grandeur in his past and in the general human past. Thus Millicent Henning, undeniable daughter of the lower classes, for whose sake a revolution might be conducted, is pictured as starring in Hyacinth's romantic imaginings in revolutionary scenes of pictorial and dramatic intensity;

> . . . with a red cap of liberty on her head and her white throat bared so that she should be able to shout the louder the Marseillaise of that hour, whatever it might be. If the festival of the Goddess of Reason should ever be enacted in the British Capital . . . who was better designated than Miss

> Henning to figure in a grand statuesque manner as the heroine of the occasion? (PC, p. 121)

At the Place Louis Quinze, the Place de la Révolution, Hyacinth envisions the historic scene, the guillotine in place, the victims waiting; here "the great legend of the French Revolution, a sunrise out of a sea of blood," was real to him; yet he realizes that as real to him as the Revolution's horror was "its magnificent energy, the spirit of life that had been in it, not the spirit of death" (PC, p. 337).

In Paris the past comes to life for Hyacinth; he has a "spiritual visitation," as significantly non-Gothic as Isabel's final visitation. He revives the memory of his maternal grandfather, a Republican clockmaker who died, gun in hand, on the barricades and whose name Hyacinth has inherited; his imagination, then, restores the Frenchman to life. He clothes his "mystic ancestor" in the garb of a stereotype Frenchman--"reckless and a little cracked, and probably immoral; he had difficulties and debts and irrepressible passions; his life had been an incurable fever and its tragic termination was a matter of course" (PC, p. 363)--and together they roam Paris. Hyacinth imagines that his grandfather accompanies him to the site of his barricade as well as to the gardens, churches, and museums, and, satisfied with his make-believe revolutionary companion, he does not look up the living anarchist friends of the Poupins to whom he had been given introductions. To do so

would be equivalent to denying the past, for by evoking the spirit of his grandfather, Hyacinth has brought the past and the present into a sympathetic relationship. As he tours Paris with this spirit as his cicerone, he has discovered that the grandeur of the past has made possible the grandeur of the present. To destroy the past as the anarchist Hoffendahl would do by cutting the ceilings of the Veronese in strips for equal distribution among the populace would be to destroy the present.

As a result of his European foray, Hyacinth has ceased to envy and despair. He is not a mere spectator of the good things of life; he can mingle with them himself. His letter to the Princess from Venice resembles Isabel's response to the ruins of Rome in its recognitions of the interrelation between the past and the present, the achievements and the sufferings of humanity; Hyacinth is not weary with life, however, but eager for it:

> . . . want and toil and suffering are the constant lot of the immense majority of the human race. I've found them everywhere but haven't minded them. Excuse the cynical confession. What has struck me is the great achievements of which man has been capable in spite of them--the splendid accumulations of the happier few, to which doubtless the miserable many have also in their degree contributed. . . . The monuments and treasures of art, the great palaces and properties, the conquests of learning and taste, the general fabric of civilization as we know it, based if you will, upon all the despotisms, 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--our friend Hoffendahl seems to me to hold them too cheap and to wish to substitute for them something in which I can't somehow believe as I do in things with which the yearnings and tears of generations have been mixed. (PC, p. 380)

As a result of realizing that civilization has dispelled its social conflicts and synthesized the past with the present in art, Hyacinth seems able to settle the conflicts in his own heritage. His eagerness for life implies an acceptance of himself. Yet he confesses in the same letter that he might be dreaming, "'I say to myself a dozen times a day that Hyacinth Robinson isn't in it!" (PC, p. 379). His confession seems the logical manifestation of a query he had posed to himself earlier in the novel when he felt alternating currents of shame and despair:

> . . . he didn't care for fancy costumes, he wished to go through life in his own character; but he checked himself with the reflexion that this was apparently exactly what he was destined not to do. His own character? He was to cover that up as carefully as possible; he was to go through life in a mask, in a borrowed mantle; he was to be every day and every hour an actor. (PC, p. 64)

Having worn borrowed mantles for so long, Hyacinth thus has difficulty assuming his own mantle--the synthesis he has found in Europe. And his acquaintances in London have difficulty in accepting it as his own.

On his return from Europe, he speaks out boldly in his own character. Both this character and his vision of civilization, however, are misinterpreted; they are accepted as costumes, as being less than real. Paul Muniment tags Hyacinth as a "duke in disguise"; the Princess calls him "my dear, infatuated little aristocrat"; even Millicent comes to taunt him, as Bessie Alden did Lord Lambeth, for not doing more when he had the blood of half the Peerage in

his veins; and finally the anarchists choose him to shoot a Duke at a grand ball because he looks the part of a grandee. When opinion acknowledges him as being able to participate in those "societies in splendid rooms" as well as being able to accept danger, in order to alleviate the misery of the people, his earliest romantic illusions would seem to be fulfilled. James heavily underscores Hyacinth's final position with tragic irony, however. Not only does the invitation to the ball necessitate that he act to destroy the grandeur of the past, but his friends' facile categorizations deny Hyacinth his personal integrity. He had acted as if he were wearing "a black cloak and hat and feathers" so well for so long that his romanticized aristocratic self is taken for his authentic self.

Having dressed in the clothes of his illusions, Hyacinth allows himself to be manipulated like a character in a false romance. But his illusions have also been the source of the credo which establishes his actuality. Mr. Vetch, who took a friendly hand in Hyacinth's up-bringing, had warned Pinnie, "'Don't stuff him with any more illusions than are necessary to keep him alive; he'll be sure to pick up enough on the way'" (PC, p. 27). The problem that James seems to raise in his portrait of Hyacinth Robinson regards the differentiation of the false illusion and the necessary illusion. The distinction is similar to that between the artificial and the real romantic note, the former being merely an ingenuous pose, the latter conveying "the things

that can reach us only through the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire." Hyacinth strikes the real romantic note in Europe where his comprehension of the past and its relation to the present is attained through his evocation of his grandfather. The illusion which he comes to cherish, which is "necessary to keep him alive" is simply that humanity can be both pitied and loved.

Hyacinth's growth can be measured by his attitudes toward the Princess after her move to the seedy Philistine suburb of Maderia Crescent. On his return from Europe, he was at first disappointed and puzzled by her move, but without the surroundings of her London home or Medley, he could feel that his relationship with her had ceased "to belong to the world of fable" (PC, p. 475). Yet he persisted in calling her "the most remarkable woman in Europe." He idealizes her to the end--enshrining her in their final conversation: "'There's no one in the world and has never been anyone in the world like you'" (PC, p. 577)--and she still inspires him with heroics, of risk and sacrifice for her sake. Her reaction to his idealization of her is justified, for by continuing to see her "so sacrosanct and so precious," he also denies her her humanity. As Olive loves Verena; Isabel, Osmond; and Catherine, Morris, he had loved both Paul and the Princess not wisely but too well. His growth, however, is indicated by his desire to pity the Princess when he learns on his last visit to her that she had been

abandoned by her friend, Madame Grandoni. His attitude stems from his love whereas hers stems from a perpetual need to be immersed in her own romance; happily convinced of her security in this romance, she can inform Hyacinth once and for all that he is "out of it" (PC, p. 576), that he no longer is one of "the people."

Long before he had met the Princess, Hyacinth seemed to himself to be desperately "out of it" (PC, p. 124), as he strolled through "the great roaring indifferent world of London." At the end of the novel he again steeps himself in "the great indifferent city" (PC, p. 587); he has been called "out of it" by the Princess at the novel's conclusion, however, for reasons opposite to those he would have originally given for his ostracism. He is "out of it" finally because of his greater consciousness of the synthesis that has formed the fabric of civilization and of himself. In pleading with him to ignore Hoffendahl's directions, the Poupins testify to their love for him, but they also implicitly plead with him to deny a part of himself. To ignore the summons would be tantamount to proving the Princess' and Paul's categorizations accurate, to admitting that he did not belong to "the people"; it would be comparable to re-enacting his father's treatment of his mother. Hyacinth, unlike his apparent father, considers a promise a duty. By obeying Hoffendahl's commands, however, he would be committing an act of desecration against the civilization he had come to

love; in shooting a particular noble, he would be re-enacting his mother's role. And Hyacinth is done with role-playing; he can no longer perform in borrowed mantles. His suicide is an attempt to speak out in his own voice[50]--self-willed death the only way in which he may insist upon the need for every man to be himself. "The Young Man from the Provinces" ends his quest where he had started it, in the London slums; like the traditional hero of romance, he returns home, but the treasure he brings--his knowledge, his pity, and his love--is rejected, and, unlike Isabel, Hyacinth must choose death in order to express love.

The conclusion of The Princess Casamassima makes it one of James' more pessimistic statements regarding the romance-oriented imagination. Not only does James show Pinnie's aristocratic longings to be harmful to Hyacinth, but he also holds the Princess' plebeian longings up to the chilly light of reality as he had done with his other heroines. Her interest in the misery of "the people" makes her a sister of Gabrielle de Bergerac, Olive, and Isabel. When Paul Muniment announces to the Princess that her only

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[50]Cargill in The Novels of Henry James, p. 164, makes the very valid point that "To escape the dreadful destiny of following precisely in his poor mother's footsteps, thereby demonstrating the utter rule of tainted blood, Hyacinth elects the only other choice left open to him, self-destruction. James has selected what is apparently his most predestined character to exhibit freedom of the will." Powers in "Henry James and Zola's Roman expérimental," p. 22, underscores the difference between Flaubert's pre-destined and romantically-oriented Emma Bovary and James' Hyacinth; Hyacinth is "conscious of the forces which determine his fate."

contribution has been financial and that with her income cancelled, her usefulness to the movement also ceases, there is some reason to pity the Princess as Hyacinth does. But James' scrutiny of the imagination which considers the seamier side of the street the green side persists; the Princess rejects Hyacinth until she herself is rejected, by Paul and by the entire revolutionary group. Then and only then does she go to him. In meeting a member of the group at his door, she falls readily into the jargon of the movement, assuming her identification with "the people." At this moment the Princess is anxious, but it can hardly be for the sake of "the people" or for Hyacinth's sake; she knows, however, that the leaders of the movement have given him permission to star in the drama of the revolution, permission she has long sought and yet might be able to convince Hyacinth to relinquish to her. If there is any question that her motives in coming to Hyacinth are disinterested, James dispells them by explaining that in spite of her anxiety,

> . . . she could still relish the romance of standing in a species of back slum and fraternising with a personage so like a very tame horse whose collar galled him. (PC, p. 591)

The contrast between the Princess' illusions and Hyacinth's illustrates the discrepancy between the romance-oriented imagination or the "unbridled fancy" and the more "potent imagination." The Princess' illusions always place her in a superior, controlling position, about which individuals appear as "personages"; Hyacinth's illusions place

him as one among many. He had worn the trappings of his fancy for so long, however, that when he found the illusions that were "necessary to keep alive," they precipitated his death. Only by destroying himself could he preserve them, only by destroying himself could he take off his mask and be Hyacinth Robinson, a member of both the Peerage and the people, himself and a member of humanity.

"The Aspern Papers" (1888), James felt, had "the flush of romance" because his narrator, the connection with "our vulgar communities," had made the past "palpable imaginable visitable" (AN, p. 164). But the narrator of the story approaches the past only in the terms of artificial romance. As Jeffrey Aspern's editor, he makes it his business--as much as his pleasure--to theorize about the past. Consequently, when he attempts to enter Juliana Bordereau's world, the world of the actual past, of a more aristocratic Venice, of the Byronic age, he does so, convinced of the accuracy of his vision. Although he considers himself completely knowledgeable regarding the past and therefore able to control it, he fails to realize the extent to which his vision is romantically distorted. Thus when he assumes the costume of Jeffrey Aspern[51] himself, he is oblivious to

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[51] William Bysshe Stein in "The Aspern Papers: A Comedy of Masks," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XIV (September, 1959), 172-78, argues convincingly that the narrator's narcissism and voyeurism have led him to attempt to recreate the legend of the American Don Juan, but that his perverted sensibility have produced only a Victorian Don Juan whose self-deception is comic.

the fact that his actions, based on a faulty understanding of the man as a human being, are doomed to defeat.

In "The Aspern Papers," James is working on a structural base similar to that of Washington Square, with the hero's goals being a travesty of the romance hero's. Like Morris Townsend, the narrator, a stranger who comes from afar, must devise the means of forcing the fortress in which his treasure is hidden away. The treasure in neither case is a maiden; as Jeffrey Aspern's editor, the narrator desires the letters and papers of the poet, which are kept under lock and key by Juliana Bordereau, the poet's one-time mistress. The crux of the narrator's design for forcing entrance is the maiden, Tita, Juliana's spinster niece. In the earlier novel, however, the fortune-hunter's motives and methods seem only slightly more refined than those of George Fenton, the cardboard stage villain of Watch and Ward; in the later story, James allows the cad to tell his own tale, giving him consequently all the rope he needs to hang himself.

In the first chapter of the story, the narrator spreads out his strategy--a "plan of campaign"--before Mrs. Prest, his confidante. He reasons that because Juliana, "the old woman," does not have "modern notions," he will have to rely upon "ingratiating diplomatic practices" (Tales, VI, 280), patronizingly to imitate the past. In his initial foray against Juliana's palace, however, he is challenged as to

his identity by a servant from an upper window and expresses his irritation at "this survival of medieval manners, though as I like the old I suppose I ought to have liked it" (Tales, VI, 284). But in spite of his distaste for medieval manners, with conscious cynicism he turns the situation into artificial romance by presenting the servant with "a magic token"--a card inscribed with a false name--which he considers gives him at least "a foot in the citadel."

Upon achieving assurance of an interview with Juliana, the narrator insists that he could not count his success a "triumph" for the man--"who had not the tradition of personal conquest" (Tales, VI, 290)--but only a triumph for the editor. The nicety of the distinction is blurred, however, for the editor is operating in a "tradition of personal conquest," albeit his comprehension of the chivalric tradition is distorted. Just prior to his above declarations, he has stated that "it was the flowers that won my suit" (Tales, VI, 288), thus admitting to having played the role of a traditional romantic hero, to pleading suit. He comically betrays his ability to understand the tradition, however, when he perverts the use of his flowers, when he determines to use them as weapons of war rather than tokens of love:

> I would succeed by big nosegays. I would batter the old woman with lilies--I would bombard their citadel with roses. Their door would have to yield to the pressure when a mountain of carnations would be piled up against it. (Tales, VI, 307)

Jeffrey Aspern loved Juliana and left her, but she cherishes his memory in spite of his desertion. The editor thinks he can follow a similar course with the niece. Seeking only the legendary papers, however, he can only make a pretense of love and leave pain as a memory.

In his attempt to see the unseen in Aspern's life he converts Juliana to an abstract principle:

> That was what the old woman represented--esoteric knowledge; and this was the idea with which my editorial heart used to thrill. (Tales, VI, 306)

As he waits for some sign from her, he spins theories about her life; he "hatch[es] a little romance according to which she was the daughter of an artist," who went abroad in 1820 "on a tossing brig" and lived with her father and sister in "a queer old-fashioned, expatriated, artistic Bohemia" (Tales, VI, 309-10). He thus understands Juliana only theoretically, as either a romantic young girl, who "set her emotions on the top of yellow diligences [and] passed the night at inns where she dreamed of travellers' tales" or as "a subtle old witch." The human being whom Jeffrey Aspern loved he does not know.

But Juliana Bordereau will not be so neatly pigeonholed and is not deceived by the narrator's simulation of the romance hero. She has surprisingly "modern notions" and openly combats the narrator's artificial chivalry with crass business procedures. She drives a shrewd bargain for her rooms and for a portrait of Aspern. And she withers his scheme of gaining her favor through flowers by suggesting that he would make a better bargain by trying to sell them.

The green mask which Juliana wears over her eyes conceals her identity from the narrator. Perhaps remembering "the great green shade" which covered the eyes and nose of Pew, the blind buccaneer in Treasure Island, he imagines "a grinning skull" or "a ghastly death's head lurking behind it" (Tales, VI, 291); later the shade gives him the impression that he is dealing with an auctioneer. He cannot realize that with the mask Juliana preserves not only a mysterious inscrutability but also her own dignity and humanity, which she also seems to defend for the past. Miss Tita has to explain to the narrator that the mask actually prevents invidious comparisons between the extraordinary eyes the poet knew and the present condition of her eyes.

The narrator does not realize until he is discovered in the act of searching her belongings for the poet's papers that the mask had hidden, not an image of death, but a spirit fiercely alive. In this moment it becomes apparent that the shade impaired only his vision, for Juliana all along had been able to detect the nature of a man who hides behind a false name. She correctly identifies him for what he is--"a publishing scoundrel." As the structure of "The Aspern Papers" is an inversion of the traditional romance, the scene in which Juliana points the finger at the editor's true identity is an inversion of a scene from the Gothic romance. The hero's discovery of an ancient manuscript, containing clues to a mystery, is a Gothic convention, which Jane Austen exploited comically in Catherine Morland's discovery of the

laundry list. James' exploitation of the convention is more ironic, however, for his editor's midnight search through the dark palace, into the "witch's" private chambers and her locked secretary, results in his identification rather than his discovery of the legendary papers. Juliana's words, however, make no impression upon his mind. James continues to underscore the scene with irony by making Juliana's appearance a parody of a Gothic apparition; wearing an "everlasting curtain," she is a "strange little bent white tottering figure" (Tales, VI, 362). Contrary to the Gothic romance, the specter retreats from the hero "in horror." The "hero," on the other hand, feels only a passing shame.

Because he thinks he possesses a special sanction from Jeffrey Aspern to probe the past, the narrator feels confident in manipulating and patronizing it. Juliana, however, questioning him on the morality of investigating the past, realizes that his investigations might lead to theories which would distort the truth. Although the narrator insists that his researches uncover only the reality, that they have not done so is evident by his stated bias toward Aspern. Not only does he assume that Aspern's letters to Juliana will be compromising to her, but he has also indicated that in judging Aspern's affairs with women, he was always more indulgent toward the poet than was his fellow editor.

In presuming, however, that he is Aspern's minister on earth, the interpreter of the man and his age, the editor is hoisted with his own petard. That the narrator's sense

of commission from Aspern was stimulated by his romance-oriented imagination is evident early in the story; he explains:

> . . . it was as if his bright ghost had returned to earth to tell me that he regarded the affair as his own no less than mine and that we should see it fraternally, cheerfully to a conclusion. . . . My eccentric private errand became a part of the general romance and the general glory--I felt even a mystic companionship, a moral fraternity with all those who in the past had been in the service of art. (Tales, VI, 305)

His attempts to identify with the poet, however, prove to be a travesty of "the general glory," and the preposterous nature of his claim is clear, when in the moment of moral crisis, Aspern confounds the narrator. With Juliana dead, Tita inherits the Aspern papers and her aunt's concern for their invioliability, and as the narrator realizes that his access to the papers will be possible only through the fulfillment of his chivalric actions, through marriage to Tita, he looks to the portrait of the poet for assistance. Aspern, however, seems only to smile at him "with friendly mockery, as if he were amused at my case" (Tales, VI, 372). After long hours spent wandering through Venice, following his denial of Tita's proposal and his consequent relinquishment of the documents, he finds himself confronted with the equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni. Colleoni--general, patron of the arts, chivalric man--from his long perspective on the past and on humanity also mocks the narrator:

> I only found myself staring at the triumphant captain as if he had seen so many go down into the lagoon

> through centuries--and if he were thinking of battles and stratagems they were of a different quality from any I had to tell him of. He could not direct me what to do, gaze up at him as I might. (Tales, VI, 378)

The narrator's inability finally to comprehend either the past or the present seems implicit in his last look at Venice; the scene of quiet bustle and sociability shifts in his mind to resemble a theatrical setting with "the Venetian figures moving to and fro against the battered scenery of their little houses of comedy, . . . as members of an endless dramatic troupe" (Tales, VI, 379).

James' portrait of "the publishing scoundrel" thus demonstrates most fully the dangers of a romance-oriented imagination dissociated from a sense of morality. Not only has the editor's search for the Aspern papers precipitated Juliana's death, but his cynically chivalric role-playing has victimized Tita. Like Catherine Sloper, however, her staunch sense of duty saves her while the narrator dooms himself to a life of artificial romance. In his egocentricity, he continues to convert human beings into actors and to consult a picture of Jeffrey Aspern to find the true man. Regretting only the loss of the papers, he recognizes neither the consequences of his actions nor his inability to love.[52] His life continues to be a matter of a false identity. The

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[52]Sam Baskett in "The Sense of the Present in The Aspern Papers," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, XLIV (1958), 381, reinforces this position by maintaining that the narrator "inhabits a spiritual wasteland, removed from all meaningful intercourse with human kind, past or present. The most devastating irony, of course, is that he seems totally unaware of his state of damnation."

editor's retention of his romantic illusions, however, seems comic poetic justice; when the governess of "The Turn of the Screw" retains her romantic illusions, James exposes a darker side of human nature, and all ironic comedy turns to pity and fear.

CHAPTER IV

"THE UNDER SIDE OF COMMON ASPECTS"

To his advice to the young writer in "A Humble Remonstrance," Robert Louis Stevenson added a final warning: "the danger is lest, in seeking to draw the normal, a man should draw the null, and write the novel of society instead of the romance of man."[1] Although Stevenson's categories would not have struck a responsive chord in Henry James in 1884, when they were conceived and when James was denying the need to distinguish between the novel and the romance, in the work of the nineties James found himself conscientiously experimenting with pure romance and high fantasy.[2]

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[1]"A Humble Remonstrance," Memories and Portraits and Random Memories, p. 158.

[2]Leon Edel, Introduction, Vol. X: The Complete Tales, pp. 8-9, attributes the spate of tales about the supernatural and the artist in the last decade of the century to the Guy Domville debacle. The supernatural tales, he maintains, were a reaction against the public's philistinism; the tales of artists fictionalized the feeling that James expressed to Howells shortly after the play's failure: "I have fallen upon evil days--every sign or symbol of one's being in the least wanted, anywhere or by anyone have so utterly failed. A new generation that I know not, and mainly prize not, has taken universal possession." Edel believes that "to be unwanted and unread, and to face a fiasco in his theatrical endeavours, produced in James a state of depression and morbidity, which he struggled to overcome during the years just before the century's end." Contrary to Edel's biographical theory, however, James had

He became preoccupied with stories of individuals set apart in isolated communities where they confronted the most awesome form of the unknown: the dead.

The dead who confront the living in the ghost-stories of the nineties are not the nameless and numberless dead of the historical past, those who emerged in Isabel Archer's consciousness among the ruins of Rome or who passed in processions in Olive Chancellor's visions. They belong, like Isabel's vision of the ghost of Gardencourt and Hyacinth's vision of his grandfather, to the more personal past; their message, consequently, has an immediacy, and, either appalled or enchanted by their appearance, James' characters of the nineties feel compelled to react with intensity.

There is no question but that James honored his own dead--in his elegiac letters to the relatives of his dead friends, in his essays on Turgenev and Stevenson, in his memoirs (Notes of a Son and Brother being a eulogy to William James, to Henry James, Sr., and to his cousin Minnie Temple as much as it is autobiography), and in his art. Minnie Temple's ghost he consciously and tenderly "wrapped" in The Wings of the Dove (NSB, p. 544).[3]

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been producing ghost-stories since the beginning of the decade, and even after 1895, his notebooks reveal a new burst of artistic self-confidence. He had decided to do only short-pieces after The Tragic Muse, and the ghost-story was especially suitable to the short-form of fiction, appealing to his own interest in artistic experimentation. And at a time when, because of his theatrical plunge, his financial resources were at an ebb, he would have been eager to exploit the highly profitable market for apparitions, which existed in the last decade of the century.

[3]See Chapter I, p. 46.

Although James was not a haunter of cemeteries like either George Stransom of "The Altar of the Dead" or John Marcher of "The Beast in the Jungle," following his father's death in 1882 and on his return visit to America in 1905, he paid commemorative visits to the Cambridge Cemetery where his family lay. Reading the inscription from Dante on his sister's urn, he felt "the infinite pity and tragedy of all the past" (Nbks, p. 321). His attitude is an expression of his own capacity to understand human suffering and of his own capacity to love.

For James consequently the "ghost-story" was not merely horrific; it was the most satisfactory form of romance (AN, p. 254), the supernatural, being for him the particular prodigy most apt to generate wonder. He felt that the romancer, however, could surreptitiously cut the cable that attached the supernatural world to the natural world only if he had, initially, clearly established the natural world: "our vulgar communities," "a related, a measurable state." The crucial connection between the two worlds is made through the human consciousness that "entertains and records, that amplifies and interprets" the supernatural. The individual, however, does not exercise his consciousness in a vacuum, for even though the romancer has cut the cable, his character continues to stand in "normal relation" to the members of his immediate community.[4]

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[4]See Chapter I, pp. 47-57.

By insisting on the necessity of "normal relations" in his ghost-stories, James is insisting on "psychology," the element that he felt characterized the real romances of both Hawthorne and Stevenson. James considered that Stevenson in particular had revitalized the tradition of "the extraordinary" by adding "psychology" to his romances.[5] As he applies the term in his 1887 essay on his friend, he refers very simply to the interactions between individuals. Kidnapped, for example, was imbued with the psychological element because David Balfour's and Alan Breck's quarrel in the heather "has the very logic and rhythm of life--a quarrel which we feel to be inevitable, though it is about nothing, or almost nothing and which springs from exasperated nerves and the simple shock of temperaments."[6] Stevenson's success in creating the episode led James to assert that such success illuminates the function of the novel as a genre: "it can illustrate human affairs in cases so delicate and complicated that any other vehicle would be clumsy."[7] T. S. Eliot interprets "the deeper psychology"--the term James had used in 1879 to characterize the particular genius of Hawthorne's works--as being a matter of human relations. Hawthorne, according to Eliot, grasped "character through the relation of two or

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[5]"Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 166.

[6]Ibid., p. 172.

[7]Ibid., p. 173.

more persons to each other; and this is what no one else, except James, has done."[8]

In his ghost-stories, however, character is also grasped through the relation of the living to the dead, a relation which, then, determines how the living act among one another. In general, in James' fiction, the individual who can perceive the supernatural is privileged. Clement Searle, after seeing the apparition of the curate's daughter, for example, is able to consider himself a "personage," and Isabel is permitted to see the ghost of Gardencourt only after her long initiation of suffering. The gift of psychic powers, however, in James' fiction is a test, for the gift can be easily abused. Searle's reaction to the ghost exemplifies the nature of the temptation: he felt himself to be rare among men. His expression of egotism on his death-bed is essentially pathetic. In the ghost-stories of the nineties, if the character is egocentric and so insecure as to be unable to accept his own imperfection, he sees the dead as evil and destroys the love which is possible among the living. His commitment to the images of the dead--in particular if these images are colored by romance--obscures his commitment to the living. In his supernatural tales of the nineties, James thus carries his examination of the

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[8]T. S. Eliot, "The Hawthorne Aspect," reprinted in The Question of Henry James, ed. F. W. Dupee (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1945), p. 116.

romance-oriented imagination to a logical extreme in his portrayal of the imagination obsessed by a romanticized view of the dead as well as the living. In the eighties, his studies of Bessie Alden, Aunt Penniman, Olive Chancellor, Mrs. Rooth, and even of the narrator of "The Aspern Papers" border on the comic; in the nineties, however, with his study of the governess in "The Turn of the Screw," the irony of her failure to see through her romantic illusions and into herself is tragic.

The apparitions in James' tales are apparitions rather than the hallucinations of a sick mind, as many critics maintain.[9] His statements in the prefaces for Volumes XII and XVII leave little doubt about the fact that he considered the ghost a viable fictional convention. He spurned the apparitions documented by the Society for Psychical Research, however, because:

> Recorded and attested "ghosts" are . . . as little expressive, as little dramatic, above all as little continuous and conscious and responsive, as is consistent with their taking the trouble . . . to appear at all. (AN, p. 174)

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[9]The best-known proponents of the "nonapparitionist theory" of "The Turn of the Screw" are Edmund Wilson, "The Ambiguity of Henry James," Triple Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 160-90; Harold Goddard, "A Pre-Freudian Reading of The Turn of the Screw," Modern Fiction Studies, III (Spring, 1957), 1-36; Leon Edel, ed., The Ghostly Tales of Henry James (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1948), pp. 424-35; and Thomas Granfill and Robert Clark, An Anatomy of The Turn of the Screw (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965). Of the tales which I have chosen for discussion, "The Altar of the Dead" is, strictly speaking, "nonapparitionist." It illustrates an interest in the dead, however, which I feel James is concerned with exploring in his unquestionably apparitionist tales.

Similarly, he spurned the apparitions of traditional Gothic tales, the ghosts of clanking chains and rattling bones, as well as the prodigies of such tales as Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym; these produced horror merely for its own sake. The apparitions in James' fiction in this period are thus neither cosy and familiar nor intrinsically evil. His ghosts are instead completely ambiguous, so lacking in "weak specifications" that they permit their observers to define them. In a single story, contrasting attitudes may be taken toward the apparitions. The central figure, however, is usually unable to endure ambiguity and must therefore assign a particular value to the ghost; unsure of himself, he consequently tends to identify the ghost with an aspect antithetical to his own conception of himself.

The nineteenth century was the heyday of the Doppelgänger: from German philosophy and psychology, the concept of man as having two halves, which together create a unit, made its way first into German romantic literature and then into French, American, and English literature.[10] As Edwin Eigner, who finds the psychology of doubles at the heart of the romance, points out, mesmerist psychologist G. H. Shubert's theory of man as "made up of a reasonable waking self and an evil shadow self, which are always in conflict with one another" made the first significant

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[10]Ralph Tymms, Doubles in Literary Psychology (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1949), pp. 28-29.

inroads in literature by influencing the fiction of E. T. A. Hoffman.[11] In the last thirty years of the century, according to Eigner, Taine brought the concept of the double into good psychological repute, and William James in America, Thomas Henry Huxley in England, and the Janets in France began to explore its implications. Henry James would have been familiar not only with Taine's and his brother's philosophical inquiries, but he would also have known the fictionalized Doppelgänger of Poe's "William Wilson," Maupassant's "Le Horla," Conrad's "The Secret Sharer," and, in particular, Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which he recognized as dealing with "the relation of the baser parts of man to his nobler--of the capacity for evil that exists in the most generous natures."[12]

Long before Stevenson had written his story, however, James was cognizant of the Doppelgänger; his awareness of this tradition stretches at least as far back as 1871 and "A Passionate Pilgrim," in which Clement Searle sees himself reflected in several images. He specifically identifies a vagrant fern-collector as "my doppel-ganger," seeing an exact duplication of himself in the man's outcast state. According to the narrator, however, the tramp is also Searle's moral antithesis, with a face "pale, haggard,

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[11]Edwin M. Eigner, Robert Louis Stevenson and Romantic Tradition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 22.

[12]"Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 169.

and degraded beyond description;--a singular mixture of brutality and finess. . . . Never was a form of rascally beggarhood more complete" (Tales, II, 243). In the portrait of the ancestral Clement Searle, who escaped to America, and in the impoverished Oxonian, Rawson, who yearns for America, Searle also recognizes his alter-egos. The dichotomy established between the ancestral Searle, whose sudden departure left the curate's daughter in an awkward position, and the nineteenth-century Searle, whose return meant rescue for a maiden cousin, again suggests the ethical division between the good and the evil self. And in his romance-oriented imagination Searle is as eager to identify himself with the degraded aristocrat as with the degraded fern-collector. Searle's relationship with Rawson, however, gives a peculiarly Jamesian slant to the Doppelgänger tradition; Searle, dying and thereby fulfilling his own yearning for unification with the past, leaves his slight fortune to Rawson, thus satisfying the other man's longing to visit the land of the future. Searle's gesture to Rawson, however, unites the two impulses in the present.

James was aware that there were numerous ways to divide a man, and many of them he explored in his ghost-stories in the nineties. His interest in the Doppelgänger is evident in "A Private Life" (1892), an acknowledged study of alter-egos. The dual aspects in the tale are the

private and the public personalities, "the assertion of either of which on any occasion directly involved the entire extinction of the other" (AN, p. 280). The narrator, with the help of a friend, pieces together the theory that Clare Vawdry, a well-known author, has his true existence in a ghostly presence that never appears in public, whereas Lord Mellifont, a dazzling socialite, has no existence apart from his admiring public audience. Those ghosts of the tales in the nineties, which are recognizable Doppelgänger, however, most frequently reflect the individual's temporal or ethical opposites. The Doppelgänger who exists by duplication also thrives in the tales of the nineties, but to James the more difficult human problem was the unification of disparate parts of the self.

The double lives in Hawthorne's stories--in "An Old Woman's Tale," "Young Goodman Brown," and The House of the Seven Gables, for example--cast reflections similar to those in James' tales: the present sees itself mirrored in the past, the good in the evil. These Hawthornesque double lives James noted in particular. His earlier, ambivalent feelings about the success of Hawthorne's imagination had changed to praise by the nineties, and in the introduction to the Hawthorne selections in The Library of the World's Best Literature (1896), he no longer protests that Hawthorne is "not realist enough." His assessment in the nineties condones the process and the products of Hawthorne's imagination without qualification:

> This ingenuity grew alert and irrepressible as it manoeuvered for the back view and turned up the under side of common aspects,--the laws secretly broken, the impulses secretly felt, the hidden passions, the double lives, the dark corners, the closed rooms, the skeletons in the cupboard and at the feast. It made, in short, and cherished, for fancy's sake, a mystery and a glamour where there were otherwise none very ready to its hand; so that it ended by living in a world of things symbolic and allegoric, a presentation of objects casting in every case, far behind them a shadow more curious and more amusing than the apparent figure.[13]

But James' new acceptance of Hawthorne's allegoric practice, his realization that the romancer dipped "into the moral world without being in the least a moralist," does not mean that James' own works have become more allegoric. Although the individuals with their romance-oriented imaginations may see their circumstances allegorically, their mode of vision is not James'. He observes his characters lifting "the under side of common aspects" to discover their unknown antithetical selves in an apparitional Doppelgänger. In doing so, they have the opportunity to discover themselves. Too often, however, the heroes and heroines of the ghost-stories are unable to accept their look-alike opposites, and their rejection implies their inability to accept the wholeness of themselves and others as human.

"Sir Edmund Orme" (1891) marks James' first full-fledged ghost-story since "The Ghostly Rental" (1876).[14] Feeling that the story deserved more recognition than it

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[13]"Nathaniel Hawthorne," p. 7054.

[14]The idea for "Sir Edmund Orme," however, was set down in his notebooks in 1878. See pp. 9-10 of the Notebooks.

had received, James included it in the New York edition. The importance of "Sir Edmund Orme" for this study is that the apparition, who appears simultaneously to both the story's narrator and to his future mother-in-law, produces contrary reactions. To the narrator, he is a creature of wonder; to the mother-in-law, a thing of horror, an objectification of her own guilt. At regular intervals Sir Edmund Orme, "a pale young man in black," returns to haunt Mrs. Marden, who caused his death by a broken heart when she married another; he always appears to her when her daughter, Charlotte, seems to be toying with another young lover's affections. As Charlotte's lover, the narrator, thus, is exposed to Sir Edmund's ghost.

From Mrs. Marden's point of view, Sir Edmund may very well figure as a conventional revenge-ghost, but from James' and the narrator's point of view, his appearances offer other implications. Throughout the story, his appearances are associated with the progress of true love. Mrs. Marden, although terrified by the ghost, recognizes that only the man who would "really be in love" with her daughter should share her vision of the apparition, for the vision would provide the test of his love. The narrator passes the test; his knowledge of the ghost does not thwart his love for the girl. Instead--and in spite of the additional trial to which his love is put by the often flirtatious Charlotte--his love for her increases in proportion to his respect and sympathy for the dead young man. Although

he cannot explain Sir Edmund's substance, he feels that

> He was as positive, as individual, as ultimate a fact as any of [my fellow-mortals]. Above all he was as respectable, as sensitive a fact; so that I should no more have thought of taking a liberty, of practicing an experiment with him, for instance, or speaking to him, since he set the example of silence, than I should have thought of committing any other social grossness. . . . I very soon came to attach an idea of beauty to his unmentionable presence, the beauty of an old story of love and pain. (Tales, VIII, 145)

Instead of being horrified by the ghost, the narrator can see the resemblance between himself and the pale young man's apparition. Unlike Mrs. Marden, he also appreciates the apparition's suffering, and his appreciation suggests his lack of egotism and his capacity for sympathy.

In the story's concluding moment, Sir Edmund's purposes are achieved. He appears once too often for Mrs. Marden, who dies of a heart attack, but as he hovers over her bed, Charlotte, too, sees him for the first time, clings to her lover, and in this embrace, agrees to marry him. And with true love consummated, Sir Edmund vanishes.

Although Sir Edmund Orme appears in the friendly, breezy atmosphere of Brighton, James is aware of the ghost-story's more conventional and artificial settings. The critical interview in which Mrs. Marden identifies the apparition as her former lover, for example, takes place in an Indian room, furnished with bizarre hangings and exotic idols. James had originally planned that

"Owen Wingrave" (1892) should be "relegated into some picturesque little past when the army occupied more place in life--poeticized by some slightly romantic setting" (Nbks, p. 120). This would appeal to the readers of the Graphic, for whom James was commissioned to write a tale and for whose readers he had keen contempt; he cautioned himself not to make the story too "'psychological,'" for the readers of this magazine, he felt, "understand that no more than a donkey understands a violin." For the actual story James keeps the romantic setting--an ancient house of "sinister gloom"--although he abandons the "picturesque little past"; he also keeps the psychological at a minimum, for the center of consciousness, Spencer Coyle, cannot record the relations with the dead that jolt the more remarkable consciousness of Owen Wingrave.

Owen Wingrave, whose morbid surname James had given to the heroines of his first ghostly tale, "A Romance of Certain Old Clothes," comes from a long line of soldiers, men of duty and "pluck and heroism." Owen, however, has turned to pacificism and sees only the "immeasurable misery" of war. Nevertheless, although he may say, "Damn the military temperament," the intensity of his idealism and of his pride closely resembles the intensity of his ancestor's military temperament. In the last half of the story Spencer Coyle describes the boy's conflict with his family, living and dead. At the Wingrave family seat of

Paramore, however, the dissimilarity between Owen's convictions and those of his family are subsumed in their similarity.

James' notes point out his intention to create in Owen a character whose very denial of his family would stress his relationship with his family; James initially envisioned for the young man

> The image, the type, the vision, the character, as a transmitted, hereditary, mystical, almost supernatural force, challenge, incentive, almost haunting, apparitional presence, in the life and consciousness of a descendant--a descendant of totally different temperament and range of qualities, yet subjected to a superstitious awe in relation to carrying out the tradition of absolutely military valour--personal bravery and honour. (Nbks, p. 118)

Because of his ability to defend his pacifistic convictions in the family circle, the narrator admires Owen's "power of resistance" and considers him "in a high sense of the term, a fighting man" (Tales, IX, 43). Only Coyle seems cognizant that such a stance necessitates as much "pluck and heroism" as the battlefield itself.

Owen's ancestors in their portraits, his grandfather, his aunt, his fellow student, and Kate Julian, the girl he loves, all accuse him of dishonorable cowardliness. Thus Owen has to contend with the disapproval of the past and the present--disapproval from the past emanating in particular from the portrait of his great-great-grandfather, as it does from the portrait of Colonel Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables, and disapproval from the present

in the challenges of Kate Julian. The two coincide in forcing Owen's decision to sleep in the room in which the ancestor had killed another young boy--his own son--and which he supposedly returns to haunt. By meeting the girl's taunt of cowardliness, he proves himself gallant as well as courageous; by meeting his death-dealing ancestor, he sustains the family honor and reveals himself to be a true Wingrave, military temperament and all. Spencer Coyle records the effects of the meeting: Owen is found dead upon the floor of the haunted room, looking "like a young soldier on a battle-field."

There is no difficulty in judging the ghost in "Owen Wingrave" as there is in "Sir Edmund Orme"; although the ghost never actually appears in the story, he is represented as being as life-destroying in the rigidity of his standards as the Bellegardes. The story is barely saved from being facile melodrama, however, by the evidence of the similarity between Owen and his family, by the suggestion that Owen and his ghostly executioner are doubles. The Doppelgänger, projected by the look-alike ancestral portrait, is, of course, a common Gothic device which James exploits in both "A Passionate Pilgrim" and The Sense of the Past. Owen's staunch pacifistic attitude is that which generally corresponds with his creator's; yet James also found military heroics romantic and cites the memoirs of General Marbot as the immediate stimulus for

the tale of a pacifistic hero.[15] Like Hawthorne, James recognized the morte main the past could exercise upon the present, and also like Hawthorne, he recognized that the one being contiguous with the other, an attempt at severance could only be destructive. In "Owen Wingrave," although his principal concern is to show the strangle hold of the past, James also suggests the dangers of a dissociation of the past and the present; but because no one in the story recognizes these dangers, it finally remains simple melodrama.

In "The Altar of the Dead" (1895), the several ideas, which James had been working out in his ghostly tales in the early part of the nineties, coalesce. George Stransom, the story's center of consciousness, like Adela Chart of "The Marriages" (1891), has dedicated his life to the dead. In his original notes for the story, James conceives of a hero who finds the living shamefully indifferent to the dead:

> He is struck with the way they are forgotten, are unhallowed--unhonoured, neglected, shoved out of sight; allowed to become so much more dead, even, than the fate that has overtaken them has made them. (Nbks, p. 164)

And in his preface, James recalls from personal experience two specific examples of the ease with which the living ignore the dead. He is especially struck by the degree to which city-dwellers become conditioned to depersonalization; his examples pointed

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[15] See Chapter I, footnote 108.

> . . . to the general black truth that London was a terrible place to die in; doubtless not so much moreover by conscious cruelty or perversity as under the awful doom of general dishumanisation. (AN, p. 244)

Adela Chart's worship of her mother had also been partially motivated by London's indifference to the dead. Behind "The Altar of the Dead" lies the idea that any "free intelligence" would eventually contemplate the dead, for "the sense of the state of the dead is but a part of the sense of the state of the living" (AN, pp. 244-45). The story seems, then, to be a plea not only for a recognition of the continuity between the past and present, but also for the dead to be held "in memoriam."

But the story itself demonstrates that a slavish and egocentric dedication to the dead may suffocate the living. That George Stransom's attitude toward the past and the dead provides an escape from a confrontation with the present and the living is apparent at the beginning of the story; Stransom has the following colloquy with himself: "Was it a credible future? Was it an incredible past? Whatever it was, it was an immense escape from the actual" (Tales, IX, 232). Long before Stransom erected an actual altar to his dead, he had had an altar for them in his imagination; his stated motivation was his pity for the dead, who "asked so little that they got, poor things, even less, and died again, died every day of the hard usage of life" (Tales, IX, 232).

An element of self-satisfied pride and self-indulgence, however, is evident in "the religion of the Dead" which he subsequently evolves:

> It suited his inclination, it satisfied his spirit, it gave employment to his piety. It answered his love of great offices, of a solemn and splendid ritual, for no shrine could be more bedecked and no ceremonial more stately than those to which his worship was attached. (Tales, IX, 233)

His conception of the material altar develops shortly after a chance meeting with Paul Creston, an old friend, who, unbeknown to Stransom, had remarried after the death of his first wife. To Stransom, the introduction to a second Mrs. Creston is a moral shock. He had idealized the first Mrs. Creston as much as he had idealized Mary Antrim, his own bride-to-be, who had died before their wedding-day. Creston's second marriage (his first had been to a woman who had perfectly devoted her life to him) Stransom finds frivolous and indecent, particularly when the second wife is only "perhaps a human being." By comparison with the ideal first wife, the second woman is, in Stransom's eyes, "a wife for foreign service or purely external use" (Tales, IX, 236). He thus reduces the living woman to a mere token, even as he reassures himself that he will not desert the memory of Kate Creston; he sanctifies himself, consequently, in the process of sanctifying the dead and renouncing the living.

His altar is established in "a temple of the old persuasion," and although Stransom welcomes others to find

their own meaning in the perpetual blaze of candles which he has set up in the once dark chapel of the church and although he associates each of his candles with a dead friend, his altar is also built to his own glory. He considers that "his bounty" has dispelled darkness; he has become a shepherd, tending "a huddled flock." When he begins to be aware that a woman is visiting his altar with a fidelity even greater than his own, he is pleased that he has provided contentment for someone other than himself; he contemplates that the woman's "debt, . . . of course, was much greater than his, because while she had only given him a worshipper he had given her a magnificent temple" (Tales, IX, 248). That Stransom's altar to the dead is an altar to himself becomes blatantly clear when he reveals his final plan to the woman; at his death a candle will be set in the chapel, the tallest of them all, "before which all the others will pale" (Tales, IX, 280); it will be his own. His egotistic presumptuousness is complete when he indicates that he will appoint her the superintendent of the fund to maintain the chapel and to kindle his candle after his death. When his fellow mourner asks, "'And who will kindle one even for me?'" he has no answer, for his thoughts are not with the living, but with the ideal and less troublesome dead.

Stransom's dedication to the dead, a dedication that permits him to beatify himself, withers his relationship with the living. He admits:

> There were hours at which he almost caught himself wishing that certain of his friends would now die, that he might establish with them in this manner a connection more charming than, as it happened, it was possible to enjoy with them in life. (Tales, IX, 242)

If thoughts could kill, Stransom would commit multiple murder; pity for the dishonored dead, in light of the honor he gives to the living, no longer seems relevant to his piety. With his acquaintances dead, Stransom would be able to exist in a world of ideals, fabricated and controlled by himself, a world of impossible fantasy; he would be able to avoid forever the difficulties of coping with the responsibilities of loving.

The impoverished nature of his relationships with the living is most clearly illustrated by his relationship with the woman mourner. Their mutual interest in the dead does bring them together, and it also serves as the basis for their continued relationship. But they remain as nameless to each other as their dead also remain nameless to each other; the woman remains "she" as the dead are always "they" or the "Others." In attempting to convince himself that "they were growing old together in their piety" (Tales, IX, 249), Stransom prevents himself from realizing that they could be growing younger through their love. Stransom insists, however, that his worship must be paramount, for no one, not even the one person who shares a similar worship and who expresses sympathy for his manifold dead, can understand the perfection and the

distinctness of his relationship with the past. His idealization of the past, no less than his egotism, does not allow him to be "unfaithful" to his loves of the past; love for the living worshipper at the shrine in the chapel must be postponed.

The world of Stransom's fellow mourner contains only one figure: Acton Hague, the single person among Stransom's dead associates not to have a candle with the elect. Before the altar had materialized beyond his mind, Stransom had felt that his dead wandered in an amorphous purgatory; with the erection of the shrine, he has played God, and while elevating his chosen dead to a heaven of their own, he has damned Acton Hague by consciously refusing to admit him to his memorial. In doing so, Stransom seeks to forget him, but the conscientious act of forgetting could only inadvertently reinforce the memory of the man and the insult he had given. Acton Hague is a presence in "The Altar of the Dead" similar to that of the master of Bly in "The Turn of the Screw" and Mrs. Newsome in <u>The Ambassadors</u>; neither appears in the story, and yet as representatives of the past they exercise an inordinate amount of influence upon the present. But Hague might also be considered Stransom's <u>Doppelgänger</u>. The oneness of the two men is evidenced by the fact that they love the same woman. Their differences are alluded to: Hague was the public personage, Stransom the private; Hague manipulated the living, Stransom only the dead; Hague was the

wicked betrayer, Stransom, the innocent betrayed. The central irony of the story resides in Stransom's discovery that all of his carefully numbered candles are, for the woman mourner, a single pillar of flame in memory of his despised double, Hague.

His discovery of the subject of the woman's worship, however, leads not only to his acceptance of Hague and his recognition of his own ability to err, but also to his recognition of his love for the woman. The question of forgiving Hague, the act which would signal the decline of his egotism, is the greatest obstacle to his love. When he first realizes why the woman has dedicated herself to his shrine, he feels he has been "the victim of a fraud"; he feels a peculiar irony, akin to guilt, however, in the fact that the woman, who is more wronged by Hague than he, could be so forgiving:

> He felt her spirit, in the strange business to be finer than his own in the very degree in which she might have been, in which she certainly had been, more wronged. A woman, when she was wronged, was always more wronged than a man. (Tales, IX, 260)

Yet a sense of injustice--and envy--pervades his thoughts as he considers that she had been

> Moulded indeed . . . by powerful hands to have converted her injury into an exaltation so sublime. The fellow had only to die for everything that was ugly in him to be washed out in a torrent. (Tales, IX, 260)

The woman establishes a condition: a candle shall be placed on the altar to commemorate Hague or she will no

longer be able to come to Stransom's shrine. Stransom cannot set a candle for his one enemy; with self-righteousness, he feels that his having remained silent about Hague's wrong-doing is forgiveness enough. But knowing that the lady is consequently absent from the chapel, Stransom discontinues his own visits. His thoughts, however, circle around her. Instead of considering with pride how much he had given her as he had previously done, he now ponders the reverse situation: "He had taken from her so much more [by his refusal] than she had taken from him" (Tales, IX, 262). He finds himself increasingly concerned about the nature of Hague's relationship with the woman, and although his concern has a taint of voyeurism, nevertheless the principal effect of his concern is an awakening of his jealousy. And by identifying his jealousy, he comes one step farther: he realizes that jealousy has its roots in love. The emphasis in his determination to exclude Hague from the "constellation of candles" shifts; if he thinks of his personal injury, he also comes to reason that Hague should have no candle because the woman had been sacrificed. Eventually, as he prolongs his absence from the chapel, he realizes that their relationship could have an existence independent of the dead, his dead as well as hers; the realization is made when Stransom finds that without her, his dead are truly dead:

> 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. (Tales, IX, 266)

Before, an egocentric idealization of the dead had intervened in their relationship; too late Stransom understands that his love for the dead could be contingent upon his love of the living.

In Stransom's earlier attitude toward the dead, the note of patronage had accompanied the note of pity. His later response to "them," when the loss of the woman seems irreparable, results from his own loneliness. When he returns to his shrine following his long absence, his response to the dead seems to be as generalized as Isabel's response to the ruins of Rome. Knowing his own need for love, he can now conceive of his altar, not as an act of personal beneficence, but as the guarantee that those of the past could be saved "for actuality, for continuity, for the certainty of human remembrance" (Tales, IX, 267). With all of his friends now dead, as he had earlier wished, he feels no joy, however.

A candle stands on the altar for each of his associates; a single place remains. The question that James implicitly suggests dominates Stransom's thoughts is whether the last space shall belong to himself or to his double. Supposedly recovering from an illness, he makes a final and fatal trip to his chapel; in his last obeissance before the altar, at the moment when he gives himself up to the dead, he has a vision of Mary Antrim and of "human beauty and

human charity" (Tales, IX, 270). His joy at being a part of humanity in these terms not only dispells his loneliness, but also makes him conscious of the wrong implicit in his action of expelling Acton Hague from his altar. Stransom's action, which excluded him from "human remembrance," was tantamount to a denial of the man's humanity. By accepting this wrong of his own, he also accepts Hague's wrong; Stransom and his Doppelgänger, thus, become one.

Stransom dies in the arms of the woman both he and Hague had loved, explaining to her as he dies that the remaining candle was to be for her dead, for Hague. For George Stransom, "coming into his own" initially would have meant taking his place as the tallest candle on the altar; at the end of his life, however, by relinquishing this place to his double, he takes his place in humanity, welcomed simultaneously into the arms of his dead and his living loves.

In "The Way It Came" (1896), re-named "The Friends of the Friends" for the New York edition, the narrator is unable to attain the full consciousness of George Stransom. Unlike Stransom, she allows a ghost to destroy her love for a person present and living. Unlike Stransom, she also has a breezy skepticism of the supernatural from the beginning of the tale. The two "friends of the friends," however, have both had the experience of being at a distance from home and of apprehending one of their parents at the moment of death. The narrator, as well as society in

general, casually refers to the woman as "'the one, you know, who saw her father's ghost'" (Tales, IX, 373); as for the man, the narrator blithely explains, "'he had seen his mother's.'" The narrator thus gives the reported facts, but her tone betrays her sympathy with them. Yet primarily because the two had shared the similar experience of seeing a ghost and because they both persistently refused to be photographed,[16] their mutual friends attempt to arrange their meeting. They are, however, uncannily not to meet, the one always seeming to be absent when the other is present.

The narrator, who becomes engaged to the man, finds herself finally in the right position to bring the two together. Immediately upon making the plans for the woman and her fiancé to meet, however, she regrets her magnanimity. Because the woman's husband had recently died, the narrator feels a presentiment that if the meeting should occur between her two friends, her own engagement might dissolve; she claims, "'It wasn't jealousy--it was the fear of jealousy'" (Tales, IX, 381), which prompts her to interfere actively to prevent the scheduled tryst between her two friends. She rises at midnight, thinking to "lay the

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[16]Tymms, p. 88, drawing upon Frazer's Golden Bough, explains the taboo of the portrait-double as follows: "In some primitive religions, the portrait, like the reflection and shadow, is thought to be capable of containing, or annexing a man's very soul; so that whoever possesses the portrait has power over the original." James twists the conventional taboo, however, by having the narrator lose possession of her lover after obtaining his photograph. He will not be possessed, just as the ghost of the woman will not be understood in merely romantic or scientific terms.

ghost" of her jealousy with a message to her fiancé of a change in plans. She succeeds, however, in stirring up a ghost. The woman comes alone to the narrator's house, but sees the recently taken photograph of the man, symbolizing the narrator's attempt to possess the man's soul. On the day following the thwarted rendezvous, the narrator discovers that the woman had died after returning home the previous evening, but that she had somehow also paid a visit to her fiancé's chambers.

James' notes for "The Way It Came" indicate a story of ten parts, which in the completed version are condensed to seven. As the editors of his notebooks point out, however, he did not compress the most crucial sections. He fully develops the section, for example, in which he wanted to emphasize "The ambiguity" and the return of the narrator's jealousy (Nbks, p. 244). The ambiguity, which James foments, involves not merely the question of whether the figure who appeared in the fiancé's rooms was alive or dead, but whether he continues to consider the woman as being alive. The narrator seemingly proves that within a logical sequence of time the woman would not have been alive when she came to the man's rooms. But her proof is not to her satisfaction, for her lover insists that the figure who visited him was living. Consequently the narrator feels that whenever her lover kisses her, he is kissing the dead woman. If her fiancé had treated his visitor as "one of those inexplicable occurrences that are

chronicled in thrilling books and disputed about at learned societies" (Tales, IX, 396), that is, if he had treated the event as an episode from artificial romance or from the annals of the Society for Psychical Research, her jealousy would have been abated. The narrator's lover, however, expresses feelings similar to those of the young man who saw Sir Edmund Orme; he respected his strange visitor and her need for silence and sympathy; her visit was exquisite, wonderful, beautiful.

The narrator cannot, however, accept ambiguity. As in "Sir Edmund Orme," the apparition, thus, inspires contrasting views. If she cannot define the woman's mysterious visit as a fatuous prodigy or as a scientific fact, she will consider her as a rival. From guilt and jealousy she thus manufactures her own Doppelgänger, one who is her antithesis. She cannot accept the possibility that her fiancé's ability to see the ghost of the woman she had deceived might suggest a greater capacity to love. The man continues to seek the narrator's love, having no intention of exchanging his living fiancée for his ghostly visitant, and he is clearly aghast at her decision, a week before their scheduled wedding, to cancel the marriage. Justifying her decision, the narrator explains, "He challenged my sincerity, my sanity, almost my humanity, and that of course widened our breach and confirmed our rupture" (Tales, IX, 400). Ironically, the narrator cannot realize that her fiancé's challenges are valid.

Thus, for James, the dead themselves are not destructive; only the visions the living have of the dead and impose upon their relations with the living are dangerous. At the end of the story, the narrator reports that neither she nor her lover ever married, but remained "in solitude and silence." Because of her inability to accept the ghost of the woman sympathetically and her insistence upon her own point of view, she deprives her former fiancé and herself of love. Like the narrator of "The Turn of the Screw," she seemingly must create her antithesis in order to prove herself right. Via her romance-oriented imagination, the insecure governess of James' "sinister romance" also creates her antithesis in an attempt to establish the validity of her own particular moral position.

Although the critics have approached "The Turn of the Screw" from an array of angles, seldom is the story and its well-known ambiguity seen from the perspective of James' other works and his own criteria for real romance.[17] James'

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[17]Wilson, however, makes a relevant parallel between the governess' and Olive Chancellor's sado-masochist tendencies; Dorothea Krook's comparison in The Ordeal of Consciousness, pp. 132-33, of the governess and the narrator of The Sacred Fount, both of whom are caught in a moral dilemma resulting from their epistemological dilemma, is illuminating; George Dove in "The 'Haunted Personality' in Henry James," Tennessee Studies in Literature, III (1958), pp. 99-106, relates the governess' general sense of insecurity to that of the other central characters in the ghost-stories of the nineties. Edel's general Introduction to The Ghostly Tales, pp. xix-xxiii, considers the tale in relation not only to other stories of mistreated children (The Other House, What Masie Knew, The Awkward Age) but also to other stories of curiosity (What Masie Knew, The Sacred Fount, In the Cage),

general definition of the romance in his preface to The American prepares us for his more detailed prefatory comments on his own romances, those works which successfully palm off the "disconnected and uncontrolled experience" and the "excursion into chaos" (AN, p. 172). As he explains in his preface for the story, his initial idea[18] interested him because:

> The thing had . . . the immense merit of allowing the imagination absolute freedom of hand, of inviting it to act on a perfectly clear field, with no "outside" control involved. . . . I find here a perfect example of an exercise of the imagination unassisted, unassociated. (AN, pp. 170-71)

"The Turn of the Screw" thus most perfectly fulfills James' metaphor for the romance as "the balloon of experience," with its "commodious car of the imagination" set free from the known world when the romancer cuts the cable connecting it to this world. The imagination to which James is referring in his preface to "The Turn of the Screw" is his own, the artist's, and yet in light of his conception of the cable and of the importance he gives to the "human

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which James completed in the nineties. Cranfill's and Clark's Anatomy, however, seems a singular example of the dangers of plucking a single work from its place in literary history as well as from its place in the canon of the author's work; in spite of its authoritative pretensions, the Anatomy neglects to consider "The Turn of the Screw" as a work written by a man who was highly read in the literature of his time and who had written other ghost-tales.

[18] In his preface James recalls the anecdote he had heard from the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1895 about "a couple of small children in an out-of-the-way place, to whom the spirits of certain 'bad' servants, dead in the employ of the house, were believed to have appeared with the design of 'getting hold' of them" (AN, pp. 170-71). Edel in his introduction to the tale in The Ghostly Tales, p. 427, points

consciousness" in the ghost-story, the imagination must also refer to the imagination of both the reader and the story's narrator. Thus, in "The Turn of the Screw," in cutting the governess' imagination loose to soar into chaos and the unknown, he subsequently also cuts the reader's imagination loose.

The governess' imagination is as romance-oriented as any imagination James created and the consequences of its machinations as disastrous. In her confusion of the aesthetic ideal and the moral ideal, she resembles Isabel and Hyacinth. In her insistence upon drawing a Manichaean pattern of good and evil from romances of the past and thrusting it upon the present, she resembles Madame de Mauves and Olive Chancellor, and for the sake of her ideals, she, too, nourishes her anguish. Where others see the dead as yet requiring respect and sympathy, like Mrs. Marden and the unnamed narrator of "The Way It Came," she makes them objects of fear and hate, as she is unable to accept the possibility of evil in her own nature. As in his other romances of the nineties, James incorporates the Doppelgänger into the fabric of "The Turn of the Screw" and implies that the governess' inability to accept the figure of the Doppelgänger, the dead as well as the living, the evil as well as the good, signifies her inability to comprehend human nature in general and herself in particular.

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out that in his earlier reference to the Archbishop's anecdote he had not so emphatically made the story "one of belief--of allegation."

As "the youngest of several daughters of a poor country parson," the governess would be endowed with an imagination which had been brought up on traditional Christian images of good and evil, the divine and the infernal. In discussing her literary background, she declares that no "stray speciman" of eighteenth-century fiction "had reached the sequestered home and appealed to the unavowed curiosity of my youth" (Tales, X, 70). If she had no novels to fill her imagination, she undoubtedly was exposed to fiction more diverse than Biblical revelations, for in her narrative she repeatedly makes allusions to the world of the fairy-tale and the traditional romance. The parallels between the governess' background and that of the Brontë sisters--also the daughters of a "poor country parson," girls who peopled their sequestered Yorkshire home with figures of their fantasy and who later went out into the world as governesses themselves--seems unmistakable. Other allusions in "The Turn of the Screw" to the Brontës and their works suggest that James was drawing upon the well-known facts of their biography to create his lonely governess with her intensely romantic vision.[19]

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[19]I am grateful to Professor Sheridan Baker for pointing out the correlations between the governess' childhood and that of the Brontës. Mrs. Gaskell's two volume biography of Charlotte Brontë (The Life of Charlotte Brontë [New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1857]) was followed by a number of biographies on the family in the nineteenth century; T. Wemyss Reid in his own monograph (Charlotte Brontë [London: Macmillan Co., 1877], p. 7) writes that

From her first sight of Flora, the child appears to the governess as "beatific" and "heavenly" with a "radiant image" and "angelic beauty"--"one of Raphael's holy innocents" (Tales, X, 24-25),[20] but the religious imagery is immediately fused with the romantic. And then the romantic imagery takes control. When Flora takes the governess on a tour of Bly, the young woman feels that while

> . . . my little conductress with her hair of gold and her frock of blue, danced before me round corners and pattered down passages, I had the view of a castle of romance inhabited by a rosy sprite, such a place as would somehow, for diversion of the young idea, take all colour out of storybooks and fairy-tales. Wasn't it just a storybook over which I had fallen a-daze and a-dream? (Tales, X, 27)

The governess answers her own question with an emphatic negative and proceeds to de-romanticize her vision by proclaiming the house in actuality "big, ugly, antique, but convenient." Her attempt to look at her circumstances realistically immediately drops, however, for in the next breath she more emphatically asserts a romantic position: "I had the fancy of

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"Mrs. Gaskell's 'Life of Charlotte Brontë' no sooner appeared than it took firm possession of the public mind," indicating the degree to which the nineteenth-century reading public would have been familiar with the Brontë biography. In "The Lesson of Balzac" (1905), p. 63, James himself writes of "the romantic tradition of the Brontës," of "their dreary, their tragic history, their loneliness and poverty of life."

[20]Mrs. Gaskell, I, 75, quotes the considerable list of artists whose works Charlotte Brontë longed to see and writes with amazement, "Here is this little girl, in a remote Yorkshire parsonage, who has probably never seen anything worthy the name of a painting in her life, studying the names and characteristics of the great old Italian and Flemish masters."

our being almost as lost as a handful of passengers in a great drifting ship. Well, I was, strangely, at the helm" (Tales, X, 27). These images, which conclude the first chapter of the story, exemplify the governess' persistence in casting her circumstances in terms of romance, with herself as the hero, the savior, the captain at the helm. Like the heroes of romance, she had come to Bly, to a strange and unknown country and like the hero she must have a mission. What else but the protection, the rescue, of two beautiful and innocent children?

Her view of the children initially is consistently romantic. Miles she also finds "incredibly beautiful," "divine," with an "indescribable little air of knowing nothing in the world but love" (Tales, X, 32). She sees the brother and sister together as "a pair of little grandees, of princes of the blood, for whom everything to be right, would have to be enclosed and protected" (Tales, X, 34), even as she sees herself as the one who will do the enclosing and the protecting. Throughout the story, her desire to hold the children to her ideal--to keep them cherubs and the fairy prince and princess--never wavers. With them she could not conceive of life as a matter of "grey prose," for overwhelmed by their beauty, and consequently assured of their innocence, she feels their life together "was all the romance and the poetry of the schoolroom" (Tales, X, 40). She is delighted to

think that Miles, in particular, has had "no history," and that the only reason he was dismissed from his public school was that he was "too fine and fair for the little horrid, unclean school-world." In her schoolroom at Bly, she can create a clean little school-world and preserve innocence.

Although she claims that she realizes she was "under the spell" of the children's beauty and innocence, she does not realize the degree to which she continues to foster the romantic spell herself. If her opportunities for satisfying her curiosity in fiction had once been limited, at Bly she evidently takes full advantage of a well-stocked library. Prior to her third vision of Peter Quint, she has been sitting up late, reading Fielding's Amelia, whose beautiful heroine courageously retains her virtue in the face of life's vicissitudes, including threats from a host of unscrupulous admirers. Such a figure would readily inspire an insecure young woman to honor sexual purity and to persevere in wielding virtue as her single weapon against the world. But even before this--following her first vision of the master's dead valet--she wondered if there was "a 'secret' at Bly--a mystery of Udolpho or an insane, an unmentionable relative kept in unsuspected confinement" (Tales, X, 38). Her references suggest that between her arrival at Bly and the appearance of Quint, she had consumed an enormous quantity of fiction, notably the Gothic of Mrs. Radcliffe and Jane Eyre, the story of another governess

left in charge of another lonely country-house by an idolized employer.[21]

The governess explains that studies in her schoolroom were not entirely devoted to romance and poetry, as if she were defensive about the encouragement she gave the children in these pursuits. Not only do "the true knights we love to read about" become a norm of reference for herself and Miles, but by her evident delight in the children's improvised drama, she converts Bly into fiction, much as the Brontë children converted Haworth. The children please her most when they are "reading her passages, telling her stories, acting her charades, pouncing out at her, in disguises, as animals and historical characters, and above all astonishing her by the 'pieces' they had secretly got by heart" (Tales, X, 68). Her use of the third-person here, in a narrative which generally employs the first-person, suggests that she eagerly participates in the chilren's play-acting by assuming a role herself. For never having been to the theater, the governess also proves quick to identify Quint as looking like an actor and Bly itself as resembling a deserted theater.

The governess' motive in taking the job at Bly is central to the romance in which she considers herself participating. She was the heroine of the scene only because she had been given a commission by one superior:

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[21]Edel, The Ghostly Tales, pp. 217-18, associates the governess not only with Jane Eyre, but also with the governesses of James' own youth.

the master of Bly. Her idealization of herself and of her responsibilities at Bly are directly related to her initial idealization of her employer; in her friend Douglas' words--words which sound like a condensation of her own young ecstatic feelings--he appeared to her as "such a figure as had never risen, save in a dream or an old novel . . . as gallant and splendid" (Tales, X, 19). The job becomes pure romance to the young girl from the Hampshire vicarage when such an employer proceeds to offer it to her as a personal favor to himself. Although the master sets certain rigid conditions regarding the position, these the governess could only take to be the inevitable conditions of the knightly trial, like the conditions set by the omnipotent ruler in any fairy-tale. By asking that she never trouble him after assuming her responsibilities at Bly and that she "meet all questions herself," by trusting her completely, the master of Bly inspires her impatient heroism, her sense of virtue, and her courage.

The master of Bly never appears in the governess' narrative, and yet his presence is frequently felt, for the young woman repeatedly considers herself and her duties in relation to her idealization of him. In her first days at Bly, she is pleased with her image of herself as she feels the image would please her employer as well; she reflects that

> . . . by my discretion, my quiet good sense and general high propriety, I was giving pleasure--if he ever thought of it!--to the person to whose

> pressure I had responded. What I was doing was what he had earnestly hoped and directly asked me, and that I could, after all, do it proved even a greater joy than I had expected. I daresay I fancied myself, in short, a remarkable young woman and took comfort in the faith that this would more publicly appear. (Tales, X, 35)

Such a general sense of well-being, however, could never be entirely satisfying to a young woman who has discovered that she is "remarkable," who has a high trust to fulfill publicly. She has passed the initial tests of establishing the proper relationships with the inhabitants, she is convinced, but having done so, she can tackle trials which will demand proof of a more heroic mettle. She soon is able to find joy, as opposed to mere satisfaction, in her "extraordinary flight of heroism." From the time she first sights the apparitions, she perceives her task as necessarily requiring more than quiet good sense and high propriety; she charges into battle, armoured with noble purpose, for god, for king, but primarily for self:

> I now saw that I had been asked for a service admirable and difficult; and there would be a greatness in letting it be seen--oh, in the right quarter!--that I could succeed where many another girl might have failed. . . . I was there to protect and defend the little creatures in the world the most bereaved and the most loveable, the appeal of whose helplessness had suddenly become only too explicit, a deep, constant ache of one's own committed heart. We were cut off, really together; we were united in our danger. . . . It was in short a magnificent chance. (Tales, X, 53)

Immediately following her meditation upon her initial success and her anticipation of future success, the governess has her first vision of Peter Quint. He appears as if to complete her romantic concept of her circumstances; he appears

as "definite as a picture in a frame" (Tales, X, 37), and throughout her story, the governess retains the frame that sustains her initial interpretation of Quint as absolute evil. Every castle or romance must have its malefactors; every gallant ship must ride a treacherous sea, but since her arrival at Bly the governess has been hard pressed to discover the evil against which she may prove herself. She could not imagine it in her gracious employer; Mrs. Grose is properly subservient; the children are too beautiful. Since her responsibilities at Bly are centered in the children and her success consequently determined by her ability to "watch, teach, 'form'" (Tales, X, 25), them, any evil at Bly will have to be directed against them if she is to prove herself. Her romance-oriented imagination blinds her to the possibility that evil might exist simultaneously with good in the apparitions, in the children, in herself, in the master.[22] Like Olive Chancellor, who automatically sees women as good and men as evil, the governess, who must have an opponent, chooses her predecessors at Bly. She readily enlarges upon the housekeeper's lack of respect for them, and from Mrs. Grose's vague allusions to their social and sexual freedom, easily finds them to be the embodiment of evil and her necessary antagonists.

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[22]John Lydenberg in "The Governess Turns the Screws," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XII (June, 1957), 37-58, maintains that the governess' authoritarian character necessitates that she live in a world of extremes, of slaves and masters, of good and evil; a world of normal people, whose antithetical tendencies are intertwined, is a world in which she cannot operate.

In his general statements regarding the romance, in the preface to The American, James points disparagingly at the tendency of the romance to pit the "'power' of bad people" against that of the good, specifically criticizing The American for its facile melodrama. Yet from the evidence of his prefatory remarks on "The Turn of the Screw," James' intention to evoke the forces of evil in the story seems clear. Quint and Miss Jessel are described as "hovering prowling blighting presences . . . [a] pair of abnormal agents . . . goblins, elves, imps, demons," "causing the situation to reek with the air of Evil" (AN, p. 175). Having planted these "demon-spirits" in his tale, James declares that he has "briefly cast [his] lot with pure romance" (AN, p. 175). But examination of Quint and Miss Jessel from points of view other than the governess' suggests that James has merely cut the cable, and that the governess, and not the romancer, is adrift in the realm of "pure romance." The apparitions of the former governess and valet do return to haunt Bly as Sir Edmund Orme returned to haunt Mrs. Marden and the narrator of his story and as Cuthbert Frush returned to haunt Miss Amy and Miss Susan Frush in "The Third Person" (1900); James' frequent experimentation with the convention of the supernatural as well as his minute descriptions of the ghosts' apparel and appearance puncture the validity of the non-apparitionists' theories. A sick mind would not record the fine and varied details which the governess

notes on first seeing Quint. If she does not conjure up the ghosts in the cauldron of her fancy, however, because of her lack of security and lack of self-knowledge, her fancy does color them in terms of absolute evil with no shadings of humanity. The narrator's opinion of Colonel Capadose in "The Liar" (1888),[23] George Stransom's of Acton Hague, Mrs. Marden's of Sir Edmund Orme all become suspect when the possible opinions of other characters in the stories are considered.

As the governess' concept of the specific nature of her service shapes itself in her imagination, her concept of Quint and Miss Jessel also coalesces. She imagines herself as "a screen" that will stand between the children and the specters, thus preventing the innocents from apprehending evil, and in her attempt to keep up the screen, she lashes herself as furiously as Olive Chancellor with her sense of failure on the one hand and her eagerness to be "an expiatory victim" on the other. Her antagonists, who at first were mere "horrors," she increasingly pictures as fiends and demons, the damned and the infernal. The children do not become more angelic, however, although the

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[23] In the New York edition, "The Turn of the Screw" is not placed chronologically with James' other ghost-stories in Volume XVII, as Edel and Cranfill and Clark note, but in Volume XII, between "The Aspern Papers" and "The Liar," both of which are characterized by first-person narrators, who self-righteously and self-deceptively justify their immoral attempts to pry into the lives of others and to expose the truth as they alone perceive it.

governess' efforts to force their inner natures to conform to their outward beauty are intensified. To preserve their innocence, she becomes their "gaoler" as well as "a screen," for only when they are tied to her apron strings can she be certain they are not communicating with the demons.

To the children, however, Quint and Miss Jessel would not be demons. Alive, they might well have been their only friends in the isolation of Bly. Although James gives the reader sufficient scope to "think the evil" by releasing his ghosts from "weak specifications," exactly what the children's relationship with the former governess and valet had been, James keeps as ambiguous as he does the nature of the relationship between the two themselves. That Flora and Miles were often in the company of their present governess' predecessors is the only fact perfectly clear from Mrs. Grose's discourse. Contrary to the governess' initial impression, the children--Miles, in particular--did have a history of which Quint and Miss Jessel form a part. Having only a "small sequestered life" to comprise her own past, the governess seems to hope to reduce the children's memory of their past experiences to a range as restricted as her own. Her determination to wipe out their memories and their continued interest in knowledge seems a sanctified brain-washing. She would have the children learn by the book alone--the method by which she has schooled herself--rather than by experience. She

would have both the children and their virtues fugitive and cloistered. But once Miles and Flora have seen or heard something of life from the former governess and valet,--of social and sexual freedom, of suffering, of evil--they cannot be hustled into a convent with the submissiveness of a Pansy Osmond.[24]

Converted into abstract symbols of evil by the intensity of the governess' imagination, Quint and Miss Jessel cease to be human beings, whose sins may be expiated through their own suffering and through the understanding and love of others. But in spite of the governess' consistently opprobrious vision, the ghosts of Bly are not monolithically evil. Their suffering is too great. The governess' first image of Miss Jessel, an image Flora perhaps also stores in her memory, is of a woman "'In mourning--rather poor, almost shabby. But--yes--with extraordinary beauty'" (Tales, X, 59). The governess next sees her predecessor seated on the staircase "with her back presented to me, her body half bowed and her head, in an attitude of woe, in her hands" (Tales, X, 74). The sense of Miss Jessel as a figure of pity rather than a figure of evil is further increased by the governess' third vision; with her imagination elaborately embroidering upon the scene, the governess perceives Miss Jessel writing a love-letter to Quint in the schoolroom. This detail, which must

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[24]Joseph Firebaugh in "Inadequacy in Eden: Knowledge and The Turn of the Screw," Modern Fiction Studies, III (Spring, 1957), 57-63, writes persuasively that "denial of knowledge is . . . a major theme in the story."

be pure fabrication, unless the governess is standing over the visitant's shoulder, adds to our feeling of sympathy for the dead woman's state. To the governess, her state of "indescribable melancholy" and "unutterable woe" and her "dishonoured and tragic" appearance (Tales, X, 97) result from a condition of torment; if she is damned, however, as the governess maintains, she is damned only to the Second Circle of the Inferno where Francesca's story made Dante faint for pity.

Peter Quint's appearance evokes little pity; his preternaturally red hair and pale skin, his wide mouth and thin lips, have been associated with arch-villains earlier in James' works. His strange, sharp eyes and arched eyebrows, which the governess thinks "might move a good deal," belong to the individual, however, or if the governess would have it so, to any stage Iago or chapbook Mephisto. She does have it so, for soon enough his pale face becomes the "white face of damnation" (Tales, X, 133), and he is transformed from a mere "hound" to a prowling "baffled beast" (Tales, X, 134). Through the governess' exaggerated descriptions and Mrs. Grose's prejudices, however, a dim human figure does emerge. His circumstances seem in several regards to parallel Heathcliff's; Quint is perpetually the outsider. Only once does the governess apprehend him within the house; in her first encounter he is restlessly moving on the tower as if he might be surveying a cherished domain, but nevertheless outside. In the second and fourth meetings,

she perceives him through the dining-room window, staring into the house. The governess claims a triumph when she realizes that Quint is shut out, with the panes of glass, through which he can only observe, representing "a kind of failure" (Tales, X, 129) for him. In her third meeting with Quint within the house, which is the briefest of her encounters with him, he vanishes up the stairs quickly and almost furtively. If, like Heathcliff, he seeks to belong to a domesticated life at least in part, he also belongs to an elemental world; midnight and the open air are both Quint's and Heathcliff's elements. Like Heathcliff, Quint also enjoys the outdoors, hatless, ignoring ordinary, civilized precautions. Animal images might rightly describe Quint, but those with which the governess associates him carry only pejorative implications.

Nelly Dean, however, has a greater tolerance for nonchalance in matters of social propriety than does Mrs. Grose. The housekeeper at Bly has no use for a man of servant-standing who would make free with his superiors and who should suddenly be elevated to the head of the household.[25] Nelly Dean accepts not only Heathcliff's tyrannical rule, but also his passion for Cathy, like Miss Jessel, a lady, who enjoys roaming the bracken. The

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[25]Cranfill and Clark devote a chapter in Anatomy, entitled "I Know My Place," pp. 106-17, to a discussion of the governess' and Mrs. Grose's concern with class distinctions and with the possible squabbles "below-stairs" over the question of authority before the arrival of the new governess.

conclusion of Wuthering Heights provides a beginning for "The Turn of the Screw"; in his tale, James seems to have transferred the ghosts of Heathcliff and Cathy, forever wandering their moors, forever defying convention, to the landscape of Bly.[26] There are no indications in "The Turn of the Screw," however, that Quint's and Miss Jessel's love was the grand elemental passion of Cathy's and Heathcliff's; nor was the valet's death--by a fall on an icy road preceded by an evening of drinking--comparable to Heathcliff's gradual fusion with nature. Nevertheless, the similarities between Heathcliff and Quint suggest that James conceived his apparition of the valet as more ambiguous and more sympathetic than did his governess.

Quint and Miss Jessel are also too closely related to the master of Bly and to the governess herself to be treated as images of absolute evil; they are their living models' Doppelgänger[27]--perhaps evil, but suffering too

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[26]Professor Joe Lee Davis points out that Quint and Miss Jessel as well as Heathcliff and Cathy appear to embody the concept of earthly immortality which Emily Brontë expresses in her brief stanza:

> We would not leave our nature home
> For any world beyond the tomb.
> No, mother, on thy kindly breast
> Let us be laid in lasting rest,
> Or waken but to share with thee
> A mutual immortality.

Quoted in Baker's From the Brontës to Meredith: Romanticism in the English Novel, Vol. VIII: The History of the English Novel, p. 68.

[27]I am in debt to Martha Banta's "The Two Worlds of Henry James: A Study in the Fiction of the Supernatural," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Indiana, 1964, p. 190, for her suggestion that Quint and Miss Jessel are Doppelgänger ghosts.

violently and too much akin to be rejected unequivocably. Mrs. Grose in one of her early conversations with the governess establishes the initial tie between Quint and the master by an ambiguous pronoun. To the governess' comment that "'He seems to like us young and pretty!'" the housekeeper replies, "'Oh, he did . . . it was the way he liked everyone!'" (Tales, X, 31) But when she adds as a further qualification, "'I mean that's his way--the master's,'" she introduces a note of confusion, which the governess, whose initial pronoun had referred to the master, is quick to pick up: "'But of whom did you speak first?'" Although Mrs. Grose tries to cover her tracks, her implicit identification of Quint and the master paves the way for the governess to make a similar identification. The relationship between the dead and the living is clearly reinforced by the governess' first vision of the valet's ghost; in her mood of dissatisfied complacency, she feels

> . . . that it would be as charming as a charming story suddenly to meet someone. Someone who would appear there at the turn of a path and would stand before me and smile and approve. I didn't ask more than that--I only asked that he should know; and the only way to be sure he knew would be to see it and the kind light of it in his handsome face. (Tales, X, 35)

Her expectancy is fulfilled, however, not by the kind light of the master's handsome face, but by the intense light of Quint's handsome face. Whether or not the governess' vision of Quint on the tower is evidence of her sexual repression, James seems undeniably to be implying that although the governess attempts to separate good and evil, they are

inevitably linked. A bond between master and servant is further substantiated by the valet's apparent covetousness of the master's waistcoats. Mrs. Grose identifies the figure the governess has spotted on the tower as Quint when she explains that he looks like an actor, for the housekeeper recalls that the valet borrowed the master's clothes. Dressed up like the master and assuming his role at the head of the house, he would thus appear to Mrs. Grose to parody her employer, and her opinions not only bind the two, but also feed the governess' need for an absolute dichotomy between valet and master.

In spite of certain likenesses between them, the new governess seeks to dissociate herself absolutely from the old governess. Mrs. Grose early in the story has connected the new governess with her predecessors by implying that "he"--Quint or the master, or both--liked his women "young and pretty." Through the two visions that the governess has of Miss Jessel in the interior of the house at Bly, the two women also become related. Immediately prior to her apprehension of Miss Jessel in the schoolroom, the governess, having decided to leave Bly and in an admittedly troubled state of mind, collapses on the staircase; her emotional state--she is "tormented . . . with difficulties and obstacles" (Tales, X, 96)--and her physical position exactly resemble the attitude and position she had earlier seen taken by Miss Jessel. Her own recognition of their similarity is heightened by the vision she subsequently

has in the schoolroom, the vision of the former governess, sitting at "my own table" and using "my pens, ink and paper" (Tales, X, 96-97). The former governess, however, is there doing the very thing the present governess has just acknowledged her own inability to do; rather than writing a letter to the master of Bly, the man she perhaps wishes were her "sweetheart," as Miss Jessel is writing to Quint, the governess has decided on flight. The woman at the desk becomes an objectification of the governess' own desires and frustrations; yet instead of recognizing them through a sympathy for Miss Jessel, the governess condemns her as a "terrible, miserable woman." Her condemnation of the weary, woeful ghost seems, however, a lashing out at herself, an impulsive cry that signifies both her inability to accept the heroic image she has of herself and her determination to go on to renew her antipathy toward Miss Jessel--the antipathy that permits her to re-assert her heroism.

The governess goes hatless to her last encounter with Miss Jessel and Flora, thus identifying herself with both Quint and Miss Jessel. When Mrs. Grose protests, the narrator queries, "'Isn't that woman always without one!'" (Tales, X, 108). At the end of their trek through the underbrush to find Flora, their "bareheaded aspect" evokes the child's greeting: "'Why, where are your things?'" Flora's surprise is natural if this is the first time she

has seen her new governess deviate from the rigid norm of the prim and proper. Ordinarily, the new governess is one who assidiously mends the smallest rip in a glove before going out; to find her more like her former governess, less concerned with perfection, and to find her more like herself--for the child is also hatless--would perhaps be to Flora the first time she has found her new governess in the ranks of humanity. The figures of Quint and Miss Jessel, thus, mirror not only the governess' own sense of isolation and fear, and her own desires for freedom, but she also attributes to them the evil of which she herself is above all guilty, the desire to possess the souls of the children.

The governess cannot be merely human; she has so committed herself to perfection and to the eradication of evil that she cannot retreat by modifying either her conception of herself as the necessary savior of the children or her conception of Quint and Miss Jessel as her necessary antagonists. In the final battles to save the souls of Miles and Flora, the governess' sense of egotistic self-righteousness and of romance quickens, for with the children straining to be free of the hot-house atmosphere, of her gaol, she feels they have been captured by the demons. She thus engages the children themselves as her antagonists in the battle of Bly; she recalls that Flora's words "flash like the glitter of a drawn blade" (Tales, X, 113) and that she and Miles have become "like fighters not daring to

close" (Tales, X, 132). But the more deadly battle is with the ghosts, whom, as I have indicated above, she describes in the concluding pages of the tale with intensified inferno imagery. To meet the increased danger, the governess gathers her forces of self-justification and nearly scores triumph upon triumph as she attempts to force the children to purge themselves of evil. But with both children, the victory turns to ashes; Flora wants never to see her again and, according to Mrs. Grose, curses her in no uncertain terms--exactly, it might be inferred, as the present governess had cursed Miss Jessel; Miles dies in her arms at the very moment she is "infatuated . . . blind with victory" (Tales, X, 136) and his final words, "'Peter Quint--you devil!'" may apply, as is often pointed out, either to the apparition at the window or to the specious savior. The governess' romantic penchant for absolutes thus turns directly against her as she is identified by the children with the demons she saw as her moral opposites. Her pupils have learned their lesson so well at the end of the tale that they, too, seem to divide the world into absolutes of good and evil. Had they been allowed to live with whatever knowledge of evil and suffering belonged to their past, their lives might have been resolved in love rather than hate.

In his preface to "The Turn of the Screw" James maintains that in the story

> . . . my values are positively all blanks save so far as an excited horror, a promoted pity, a created expertness--on which punctual effects of strong cause no writer can ever fail to plume himself--proceed to read into them more or less fantastic figures. (AN, p. 177)

The children, the apparitions, and the governess all arouse horror and pity, horror because they have perverted their best impulses to know and to love, and pity because their suffering is unanimous. The children, however, who have been more sinned against than sinning, claim most of our sympathy. The governess is perhaps horrifying and pitiable in equal degrees, for her experience has not led to knowledge. Her values are never blanks; she keeps them stocked to the end of the tale with "fantastic figures" of romance, with the black and white of a rigid Christian ethic; for her, "grey prose" does not exist. In the final scene with Miles she suddenly asks herself, "[If] he were innocent, what then on earth was I?" (Tales, X, 136). The question illuminates once and for all the young woman's pathetic inability to accept humanity as both good and evil, either in another person or in herself, for if Miles was under the influence of good spirits, she herself would then be villain of her romance.

The governess' pride in her romance-oriented imagination--"her chain of logic," her "fine machinery," her ability to perceive where Mrs. Grose cannot--is fused with her conviction of the validity of her moral perception, of her own goodness and of the necessity to make the children good, of the ghosts' evil and of their desire to turn the

children to evil. The effect upon "normal relations" can be death-dealing. The Baron de Mauves commits suicide under the stern gaze of a similar pride. Miles and Flora, unwittingly encouraged to participate in the governess' romance, are permanently disconnected from life--Miles by death and Flora by insanity.

The fusion of imagination and conscience, however, can be life-giving when it leads to knowledge and hence to love, when the individual discovers that the possibilities for evil and suffering in others are inherent in himself. The governess of "The Turn of the Screw" never makes this discovery although the Doppelgänger of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint offer mirror-images of herself and her idolized master. Without this knowledge, her capacity for love is restricted to egotism, and her manuscript, like that of the narrator of "The Liar" and "The Aspern Papers," is a self-justification rather than a confession.

In June of 1900, James had already started work on The Sense of the Past when W. D. Howells asked him for an international ghost-story (L, I, 351). The idea intrigued James, and although even in June he confessed to having a "damnable difficulty" with the piece, he pursued his subject until August when he again wrote to Howells about his problems with the work. Compressing the story to the 50,000 words Howells had requested was proving an impossibility, and he was eager to concentrate his energies on a more "cheerful" international theme, one that developed

into The Ambassadors. Before he decided to abandon The Sense of the Past in mid-stream, however, on the same August day on which he wrote to Howells, he tried to clarify his scheme for himself in his notebooks. Something, he felt, was in the story: "a morality as well as a terror, an idea as well as a ghost" (Nbks, p. 300). The "idea" that prompted his creative efforts and his decision not to abandon the manuscript but to shelve it until 1914 was that of "the revealed effect of the 'terror,' the fact that the young man had himself become a source of it" (Nbks, p. 300). He explained his enthusiasm for his idea in the letter to Howells:

> The beauty of this notion of "The Sense of the Past" . . . is precisely that it involves without the stale effect of the mere bloated bugaboo, the presentation, for folk both in and out of the book, of such a sense of gruesome malaise . . . what the case involves is, awfully interestingly and thrillingly, that the "central figure," the subject of the experience, has the terror of a particular ground for feeling and fearing that he himself is, or may at any moment become, a producer, an object, of this . . . state of panic on the part of the others. He lives in an air of malaise as to the malaise he may, woefully, more or less fatally, find himself creating--and that, roughly speaking, is the essence of what I have seen. It is less gross, much less banal, and exploded than the dear old familiar bugaboo; produces, I think, for the reader, an almost equal funk--or at any rate an equal suspense and unrest; and carries with it . . . a more truly curious and interesting drama--especially a more human one. (L, I, 355-56)

With The Sense of the Past, James thus intentionally aimed at creating a superior romance by making his hero the apparition and by making him conscious of being an apparition. This would be no short jeu d'esprit, but a long and human work

in spite of its technical difficulties. The manuscript which James wrote in 1900 as a prologue to the work and which I shall examine here apart from the pages he added in 1914,[28] place the reason for Ralph Pendrel's turning apparition squarely in his romance-oriented imagination. James introduces Ralph as a man with two passions, his professed love for Aurora Coyne and his love of the past, but in the prologue, James demonstrates the grip the latter passion exercises upon the former. Like every other figure whom James has characterized by the romance-oriented imagination, Ralph tends to idealize himself and those whom he admires by converting them to ideals, to historical personages and objets d'art.[29] Aurora Coyne's comment upon a quotation from his book, "An Essay in the Aid of Reading History," indicates the degree to which his imagination is dominated by "the sense of the past":

> "'There are particular places where things have happened, places enclosed and ordered and subject to the continuity of life mostly, that seem to put us into communication, and the spell is sometimes made to work by the imposition of hands, if it be patient enough, on an old object or an old surface.' It's very wonderful, you know, your having arrived at that, your having guessed it, in this place, which denies the old at every turn and contains so few objects or surfaces."[30]

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[28]We should note, however, that in 1914, James revised his earlier text making it difficult now to ascertain exactly which portions belong to the original 1900 manuscript.

[29]David Beams, "Consciousness in James' The Sense of the Past," Criticism, V (Spring, 1963), p. 161, asserts that Ralph's imagination can only work toward "making life untouchable, making it perfect and rare, making it death."

[30]Henry James, The Sense of the Past (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 34. Hereafter cited in the text as SP.

Ralph thus resembles Hawthorne in his ability to probe surfaces, but his probing has led rather to more surfaces than to "the deeper psychology." When he goes to Aurora Coyne at the beginning of the book to propose marriage, for example, he sees her only as surface and object, as:

> . . . some great portrait of the Renaissance . . . She was an Italian princess of the cinque-cento, and Titian or the grand Veronese might, as the phrase was, have signed her image. She had a wondrous old-time bloom and an air of security. (SP, p. 7)

When she rejects his proposal, Ralph feels that he has "staked his cast, after all, but on the sensibility of a painted picture."

Ralph is keenly aware that such a princess demands more than "a mere thinker," which is how he categorizes himself. He imagines that she prefers "a Malatesta or a Sforza . . . a despot or a condottiere," "some big adventurer," a filibuster, a buccaneer, a cowboy, John Paul Jones. When he explains to Aurora, "'I only know what to do in thought, or as you might say, imagination'" (SP, p. 30), his self-analysis is proud and sound. Yet a defensive note in his words suggests that he cannot accept himself as "a mere thinker," that he actually longs to be "some big adventurer." And with his pride taking control, he decides that he will prove he can be an adventurer by the very means he feels Aurora scorns, by his imagination. Although he feels that he has been thrown out upon the world when he leaves Mrs. Coyne, he has a reassuring vision of himself.

The figure, whom he takes to be an "alternative friend," brings him to decide that the only way to prove himself is by asserting the intensity of his primary passion. He must do so, he decides, even though such an intensity might "constitute a vice," show "an inhuman side" (SP, p. 39). The vision of himself clearly anticipates the Doppelgänger figure, through whom Ralph is to become an adventurer and through whom he will come to realize that his romance-oriented imagination does have an inhuman and vicious side. In the extant text, Aurora's name is not mentioned again; as proud as the governess in "The Turn of the Screw" was of her fine flights of fancy, Ralph sallies forth to test his "sense of the past" and himself, alone.

Ralph's opportunity to submerge himself in the past comes when he inherits an old London house from a distant relative who had been impressed by Ralph's essay. He comes to Number Nine, Mansfield Square, London, much as Clement Searle came to Lockley Park. With all relations severed in the New World, both men arrive in the Old World to establish a claim to an ancestral residence. Ralph Pendrel, with his mother recently dead and fresh from Aurora's refusal, is as much isolated in America as Searle had been. Just as James' earlier hero had been identified as an alien in America by the lawyer Simmons, Ralph had felt, because of his intellectual propensities, that he had as much honor in New York "as a dervish in the East" (SP, p.10). Both

men have long yearned for the past. Ralph believed of himself that

> No man . . . could ever so much have wanted to look behind and still behind--to scale the high wall into which the successive years, each squared block, pile themselves in our rear . . . He was by turn of his spirit oddly indifferent to the actual and the possible; his interest was all in the spent and the displaced, in what had been determined and composed round-about him, what had been presented as a subject and a picture by ceasing--so far as things ever cease--to bustle or even to be. (SP, p. 48)

Ralph's interest in the past, however, does not have the taint of self-conscious morbidity about it that Searle's does, although his attitude toward the dead resembles George Stransom's self-conscious piety. Ralph sees the dead as he sees the past: in aesthetic terms, however. When he asserts, "It was when life was framed in death that the picture was really hung up" (SP, p. 48), he turns both the past and the present, the living and the dead into objects merely to be viewed.[31] Although he expresses his wish to experience the past, "to be again consciously the creature that had been, to breathe as he had breathed and feel the pressure that he had felt" (SP, p. 48), he continues to conceive the past as an aesthetic experience rather than as a complex human experience. As his approach to the past has been through objects and surfaces, his consciousness of the past is a consciousness of objective details. He wants to know

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[31]Beams, p. 161, underscores the sterility of Ralph's sentimental imaginings by pointing out that he does not mourn over his own dead.

> . . . the hour of the day at which this and that happened, and the temperature and the weather and the sound, and yet more the stillness, from the street, and the exact look-out, with the corresponding look-in, through the window and the slant on the walls of the light of afternoon that had been. (SP, p. 49)

Ralph was not so fortunate as Sarah Orne Jewett to receive advice from a man such as Henry James about the difficulties of re-creating and comprehending the past; in 1901, a year after he had given up his own attempt to create a sense of the past, James sent to Miss Jewett the following words of advice, words which might also be taken as an admonition to Ralph Pendrel and a reminder to himself:

> You may multiply the little facts that can be got from pictures and documents, relics and prints as much as you like--the real thing is almost impossible to do and in its essence the whole effect is as nought; I mean the invention, the representation of the old consciousness, the soul, the sense, the vision of individuals in whose mind half the things that make ours, that make our modern world, were non-existant.[32]

Ralph becomes enamoured of Number Nine, Mansfield Square, of its furnishings, and of its isolation from the life of the present. The doors and the windows of the house seal him as closely in his private world of illusions as those of Albany and Bly sealed in their occupants. Left alone in the house by the servants on a windy, rainy day, Ralph loses track of time. The atmospheric conditions are those of the conventional ghost-story, and Ralph's responses are also conventional; Isabel Archer in her office in Albany, in her first confrontation with Madame Merle, and in her

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[32]Selected Letters, p. 199.

vigil in the Palazzo Roccanera as well as the governess in her encounters with the spirits of Bly experience sensations of chilliness and timelessness similar to Ralph's. His sensations, however, not only signify an intensification of his romance-oriented imagination, but specifically they are harbingers of his relinquishment of the present and of his assumption of the identification of a man of the past. He is eager to disassociate himself entirely from the present in the conviction that by immersing himself in the past, he will find a true self. His "backward journey" does lead to self-discovery, but Ralph's idealistic expectations of the past and of "the creature that had been" cannot be fulfilled.

Of all the furnishings in his house, the portraits stimulate Ralph's imagination most completely. Catching their painted eyes, he amuses himself by imagining that they follow him as he moves. One of the gentlemen portrayed, however, has his back turned to Ralph, thereby sharpening his romance-oriented imagination; not only does he begin to wonder about the life of the young man in the portrait,--"who could say . . . on what far-off field of Spain or of Flanders he mightn't have left his life?" (SP, p. 77)--but he also begins to believe that the portrait lives and might be a friend. Ralph's imagination, thus, has endowed the artifact of the past with more vitality than the life of the present. At this point, his

imagination transforms himself into a figure from romance, an artifact and the illusion of an ideal. He feels he has passed

> . . . one of those concentrated terms of pious self-dedication or whatever by which the aspirants of the ages of faith used to earn their knighthood. What was it he had emerged from after this fashion of the accepted probationer? He had had his idea of testing the house, and lo it was the house that by a turn of the tables had tested him. He had at all events grasped his candle as if it had been sword or cross, and his attitude may pass for us as sufficiently his answer or vow. (SP, p. 84)

When the figure in the portrait, then, does advance from his frame, Ralph is ready; he faces the young man, brandishing his candle as a "sword or cross." The adventure, more prodigious than Aurora Coyne could conceive, is beginning, but even Ralph cannot conceive of the nature of the adventure James has in store for him. Believing it to be a "perilous journey," he continues to see it in terms of traditional romance whereas James is leading him on a journey toward self-awareness.

From the view of his back, Ralph initially identifies the young man of the portrait as "a son of his time, and his time was the dawn of the modern era" (SP, p. 77). Confronting him face-to-face, he is confounded to discover that the gentleman's face, however, is his own. For his most consciously ambitious romance, James creates his most elaborate and most unequivocal Doppelgänger, for the young man in the frame leads Ralph to identify himself with the present and with evil, with the temporal and ethical

qualities he had ignored in his pursuit of the idealized past. When the ghost of the curate's daughter had appeared to the modern Clement Searle, the identification between the man of the past and the man of the present was completed to the latter's delight, for Searle makes little ethical distinction among his Doppelgänger; in identifying himself with his ancestor, as well as with the fern-gatherer and Rawson, he does not recognize that he has identified himself with his ancestor's sin or that he, too, might be guilty of wrong. Ralph Pendrel, too, is initially delighted to find an apparent twin in the past whom he can supplant.

In the early tale, James tells Searle's story through a narrator, whereas in the later work events are reflected directly in Ralph's consciousness. Thus in "A Passionate Pilgrim" we have only the recorded and not the felt experience; we do not have what T. S. Eliot calls "the sense of the sense of the past."[33] When Searle says of himself, "'I am a ghost!'" and "'I'm a haunted man!,'" James does not indicate that the passionate pilgrim has any consciousness of the consequences and implications his apparitional condition might have for others.[34] The major implication

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[33]Eliot, p. 115.

[34]Miss Stevenson, The Crooked Corridor, p. 118, writes illuminatingly: "A Passionate Pilgrim objectifies a sick desire and nothing more. The Sense of the Past demonstrates strict consequences. The novel, if it had been finished, would have analyzed, from the inside, that illness of the mind which Ralph showed in romanticizing the past: he was to come to feel a nausea for the alien time in which he was trapped."

the event has for himself is that he may now designate himself as "rare among men." His experience thus intensifies his pride and his illusions. In The Sense of the Past, on the other hand, by projecting his story through Ralph's consciousness, James conveys his hero's growing realization of the fact that brutality and suffering complicate the beauty of the past and that as an apparition from the present, he, too, may be guilty of brutality and the cause of suffering. The realization implicitly undermines his egocentricity and involves him in the welfare of the Midmore family, into whose lives he has stepped from the present. As the pages James wrote in 1914 reveal, in the milieu of the past Ralph's romance-oriented imagination cannot operate as it had previously; he finds himself among human beings rather than objects and ideals. His yearning for his own present time, thus, results not from his romance-oriented imagination, but from an involvement in human affairs.[35]

Clement Searle comes into his own at the end of "A Passionate Pilgrim" through his gesture to Rawson and through his burial in English sod beneath an English yew tree. When Ralph Pendrel comes into his own, however, he

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[35]Miss Banta, p. 263, praises The Sense of the Past as James' attempt "to make the most complex aspects of time and consciousness manageable, to draw a new definition for realism out of the events that go beyond normal standards of reality, and to show how men are their own worst ghosts"; she maintains that with Ralph, James anticipates the alienated man of the twentieth century, the individual who "finds himself cut off from himself, from society, from time, and from empirical reality," but she neglects to consider the importance of the fact that Ralph is to achieve self-knowledge in a social context.

claims himself. Unification with the antithetical qualities of his Doppelgänger will make him whole. Although James left The Sense of the Past in 1900 to work on The Ambassadors, the preliminary notes, which he wrote out in London in 1914 while the 1900 manuscript was being fetched from Rye, as well as his earlier notes and his letters to Howells, provide the clues to his original thoughts for the romance. These later notes disclose that

> What his miraculous excursion into the past, his escapade into the world of that Sense of it that he has so yearned for, what it does to him most of all, he speedily becomes aware with sick dismay, is to make him feel far more off and lost, far more scared, as it were, and terrified, far more horribly, that is, painfully and nostalgically misplaced and disconnected, than had ever entered into the play of his imagination about the matter. (Nbks, p. 367)

Unlike the governess at Bly, Ralph does not find "a magnificent chance" in being cut off and disconnected; unlike the governess at Bly, he recognizes his guilt in perpetrating the malaise that surrounds him and the Midmores. He is a man able to pierce through the illusions of his romance-oriented imagination to recognize "his own time and place and relation to things" (Nbks, p. 367), in connection, however, with another time and place and human community. His journey, if completely described, would have also brought him to the point where he could accept himself and Aurora, not as hero and princess, historical personages and imposing monuments, but as fallible human beings and part of the continuum of the past and the present. Like George Stransom's interest in the dead, Ralph's interest in

the past can be the basis for "the whole tradition of civilized humanity," as William Troy asserts in writing of "The Altar of the Dead."[36] Yet as Stransom's vision of the dead, of the living, and of himself remains egocentric as long as he rejects his Doppelgänger, Ralph's vision of the past, of the present, and of himself is also morally stunted as long as he relies upon romantic ideals to chart his course.

James' famous dream of the Galerie d'Apollon might be a scene in a Gothic romance: "a great storm of thunder and lightning [plays] through the deep embrasures of high windows," and the hero--James, himself--works desperately to press open a locked and barred door; succeeding, he pursues a phantom down a "tremendous, glorious hall . . . over [a] far-gleaming floor" (SBO, pp. 348-49). Yet in this "dream-adventure," as in The Sense of the Past, the phantom is not "the dear old familiar bugaboo." Leon Edel notes that James might have borrowed the phrase, "dream-adventure," from Stevenson's "A Chapter on Dreams,"[37] in which Stevenson discusses the possibility of leading "a double life--one of the day, one of the night."[38] The description James gives of the apparition in his dream,

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[36]William Troy, "The Altar of Henry James," also reprinted in The Question of Henry James, p. 272.

[37]Edel, The Untried Years, p. 68.

[38]Stevenson, "A Chapter on Dreams," Memories and Portraits and Random Memories, p. 164.

however, is too illusory to be interpreted as a Doppelgänger; but in the dream he did fancy himself pressing open the doors of his ideals to confront their opposites. As Ralph Pendrel was to realize that he was the haunter as well as the haunted, the perpetrator as well as the receiver of the malaise, for James, "the lucidity, not to say the sublimity, of the [dream's] crisis" was the realization "that I, in my appalled state, was probably more appalling than the awful agent." James, like Ralph, then, can identify his own guilt in the suffering of others. The Galerie d'Apollon had always stirred a dim contradictory sense of the past in the young James; he saw in it "beauty and art and supreme design, . . . history and fame and power," but as it was also connected with the Second Empire, it was "perhaps even wrong." The appearance of the phantom--both appalled and appalling--in the gallery thus awoke his consciousness to the fact that the beauty and power of the past were not to be dissociated from evil and suffering, nor could he be dissociated from evil and suffering.

CHAPTER V

LAMBERT STRETHER: "BELATED MAN OF THE WORLD"

In 1914, James returned to The Sense of the Past. But again he was unable to finish fictionalizing "the morality as well as the terror, the idea as well as the ghost"; except in the detailed scenario, which he wrote out after he had examined his original manuscript, he was never able to unite Ralph with the antithetical qualities of his Doppelgänger, to connect him with the present, America, and Aurora. Instead, in 1900, James left Ralph on the brink of his adventure, ready to open the door of his London house, the act which would place him "on the right side and the whole world as he had known it on the wrong" (SP, p. 115). Although in his notes and drafts for The Sense of the Past, James had faced "the pure essense of the romantic" bravely enough (Nbks, p. 366), to think that he drew "the morality" and "the idea" for his pure romance off into the transmuted romance of The Ambassadors is tempting.[1] In the same letter

[1]James himself in the preliminary set of notes written in 1914 (Nbks, pp. 364, 367), cites The Sense of the Past as his source for "The Jolly Corner." The hero, Spencer Brydon, literally returns to his "old home" in America after a long sojourn in Europe. As Floyd Stovall points out so well in "Henry James' 'The Jolly Corner,'" Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XXII (June, 1957), 72-84, Brydon on his midnight

to Howells in which he discussed his difficulties with The Sense of the Past, he described another work in progress as "the greatest obsession" (L, I, 357). This was The Ambassadors--"a neat little human--and not the less international--fifty-thousander consummately addressed to your more cheerful department" (L, I, 357). It is thus also tempting to think that Lambert Strether stepped through the door which Ralph Pendrel had left ajar, for The Ambassadors begins with Strether on the brink of his adventure, ready to fling open the door to "Europe" and to exchange his known world for one unknown.[2]

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prowl encounters two apparitions: one of which is evidently a terrified better self, whom he might have become had he stayed in America; the other of which is a terrifying, baser self, whom he now resembles in his essential egocentricity. Both are the ghosts of his own consciousness, whom he must recognize--through self-castigation and sympathy--before he can know himself and the love of Alice Staverton, as Martha Banta explains in "The Two Worlds of Henry James: A Study in the Fiction of the Supernatural," pp. 260-61.

[2]James compares both Ralph and Strether, on the verge of their respective adventures, to Hamlet. Of Strether, James writes, "He was to be thrown forward, rather, thrown quite with violence upon his life-long trick of intense reflexion: which friendly test indeed was to bring him out, through winding passages, through alternations of darkness and light, very much in Paris, but with the surrounding scene itself a minor matter, a mere symbol for more things than had been dreamt of in the philosophy of Woollett" (AN, p. 316). Ralph, after his first experience with his look-alike in the portrait, thinks, "There were at least as many more things in it for one's philosophy than poor Hamlet himself was to have found in heaven and earth" (SP, p. 90). Ralph's comment on himself is another example of his excessively self-conscious romanticizing. James' original adaptation of Hamlet's lines occurs, of course, in relation to Christopher Newman although Newman does not seem cognizant of his literary reference; see Chapter II, p.118.

Although the two later novels of the major phase--The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl--demonstrate certain criteria of the romance,[3] James shows himself most completely to be heir to the traditional romance, the Quixotic romance, and the nineteenth-century romance in The Ambassadors. In Lambert Strether, James brings together the Redcrosse Knight, Don Quixote,and the Ancient Mariner. In the course of the novel, Strether, however, becomes less like the good, medieval knight and more like the good, but guilt-ridden sea-farer; he most consistently resembles Don Quixote.

Like Cervantes' hero and his Jamesian forebears, Strether sees the world through the rose-tinted spectacles of romance. In his preface to the novel, James explains that Strether gave him "the opportunity to 'do' a man of imagination" (AN, p. 313); yet his hero was not to have "imagination in predominance or as his prime faculty" (AN, p. 310). His conscience is his prime faculty, and the "vision" at the heart of The Ambassadors is a moral vision as well as a romantic vision. If the novel is

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[3]Both Miss Stevenson in The Crooked Corridor, p. 118, and Matthiessen in Henry James: The Major Phase, p. 299, point to the particularly rich fabric of imagery in the last three novels as evidence of their being romances. The Wings of the Dove, with its conflict between the dark girl and the pale girl; with its settings of fortresses, palaces, and storms; and with Merton Densher's vision of Milly Theale's transcendent humanity, is a transmuted Gothic romance. The Golden Bowl is the only novel of the "major phase" to close with a "happy ending," with an embrace between the Prince and the Princess, which Baker in "The Idea of Romance in Eighteenth-Century Literature," p. 520, refers to as the traditional romance's legacy to prose fiction.

"a drama of discrimination," as James called it in the preface, the drama presented focuses on the difficulties of coordinating the priorities established by the moral vision with those established by the romantic vision. The ideals of his conscience and of his romance-oriented imagination initially are essentially static, and the dynamic that is established between them in Strether's awakening consciousness is the basis for the novel. Madame de Mauves, the governess of Bly, and Olive Chancellor are particularly noteworthy as having their rigid consciences reinforced by their romantic imaginations. Strether's conscience, however, is "educable," as Austin Warren argues.[4] So also is his imagination. Rather than substantiating his conventional Puritanical moral outlook, his fancy interacts with it, re-fracting it, ultimately providing Strether with a moral stance peculiarly his own.

Strether's original moral scruples are the scruples of Woollett, Massachusetts. The Woollett moral code operates on the principle that evil, being isolated in certain individuals, is easily recognizable, and may consequently be either obliterated or expiated out of existence. Such a philosophy necessitates that Mrs. Newsome

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[4] Austin Warren, "The New England Conscience, Henry James, and Ambassador Strether," Minnesota Review, II (1962), 150. Warren concludes that although Strether acquires an inner-directed conscience and abandons the outer-directed conscience represented by Mrs. Newsome, he nevertheless retains a sense of pride in his self-righteousness.

go in for philanthropy to atone for the sins of her father and her husband, who had been involved in vulgar and vicious business practices, the specific nature of which James leaves as vague as he leaves the nature of the liaison between the spirits of Bly and the children. Thus Mrs. Newsome becomes the embodiment of good as good is publicly recognized in Woollett; she also keeps her philanthropy a public affair. With her organized literary "afternoons" and with The Woollett Review, a journal of economics, politics, and ethics, she makes her public "tribute to the [public] ideal."[5] Far from being disinterested, her concern is cultural and moral reformation. Her good works, therefore, demand a spiralling moral reciprocity: Mrs. Newsome corrects wrong by doing good, but the recipients of her goodness must pay with their intellectual and emotional prostration. Although Mrs. Newsome keeps her hands ostensibly clean by not dipping them directly into the till of her forefathers, the imagery of a moral cash-register rings throughout the novel to describe the motivations of the Woollett clan.

Strether, who attends the Woollett "afternoons" and edits The Woollett Review, by his participation in these activities implicitly accepts the public attitudes of Mrs. Newsome. His trip to Europe is a more explicit

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[5]Henry James, The Ambassadors, Vol. XXI: "New York Edition" (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 66. Hereafter cited in the text as Amb, with Vol. XXI designated as I and Vol. XXII designated as II.

endorsement of her position, for as her ambassador, he wears her colors of righteousness on his sleeve in his confrontation with evil. He is also, of course, to receive his due reward for the satisfactory completion of his mission. As F. W. Dupee points out, his counterparts are the heroes of traditional romance:

> He is engaged . . . in a kind of knightly ordeal, with honor and the princess's hand as the rewards of success. The serving of Mrs. Newsome, the saving of Chad, are an extension of the responsibilities already granted him by the lady of Woollett; they are the responsibilities, now of a potential father and husband.[6]

Leon Edel taps the tone of the novel more accurately, however, in declaring that these bare structural elements as well as the title itself suggest that James was indulging in the mock-heroic.[7]

In his journey into unknown wilds, where "horrors" are said to lurk, Strether is molded on James' other American provincials, Christopher Newman and Isabel Archer. Newman and Isabel, however, travel into situations where strong specifications eventually make the "horrors" they confront readily recognizable. In the Paris to which Strether comes, however,--a "vast bright Babylon," which hangs before him "like some huge iridescent object, a jewel brilliant and hard, in which parts were not to be discriminated nor differences comfortably marked" (Amb, I, 89)--evil is not

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[6]Dupee, p. 241.

[7]Leon Edel, "Preface," The Ambassadors (Boston: Riverside Press, 1960), p. vi.

only more difficult to discern, but it is also more difficult to dissociate from good. Strether's situation in Paris thus tallies with that of the governess at Bly; evil is not only obscure, but it is also more inextricably related to human nature as a whole; it is not "comfortably marked" in certain individuals and absent in others, as Woollett would have it.

The evil from which Strether is to save Chad boils down to the evil of sexual promiscuity and the evil of sloth. In Woollett, Strether comes to realize that there are only two types of human beings--"the male and the female" (Amb, I, 53)--with their moral variations. Mrs. Newsome represents the good woman; the good man is the successful business man. For good people, sex has no place except within the confines of marriage. According to the logic of Woollett, Chad, who stays slothfully on in Paris when he might be back in Woollett working at becoming "the good man," is undoubtedly being kept by a woman, and the woman undoubtedly is "base, venal,--out of the streets" (Amb, I, 55). Woollett's concept of the loose Parisian woman is one which James himself contributed to with his picture of the lower-class Noémie Nioche in The American, but which by the time he wrote his last novels and his prefaces he termed "the dreadful little old tradition, one of the platitudes of the human comedy, that people's moral scheme does break down in Paris" (AN, p. 316).

Maria Gostry immediately identifies the conventional set of convictions and circumstances which bring Strether to Paris:

> [Chad's] a young man on whose head high hopes are placed at Woollett; a young man a wicked woman has got hold of and whom his family over there have sent you out to rescue. You've accepted the mission of separating him from the wicked woman. (Amb, I, 54)

In the terms of Mrs. Newsome's other ambassador, her daughter, Sarah Pocock, Madame de Vionnet, the woman who has got hold of Chad, can be judged only as "hideous," not "even an apology for a decent woman" (Amb, II, 202), and Mrs. Newsome and Sarah, in their high purity, are outraged by any response to the femme du monde other than horror.

To save Chad successfully, however, Strether must do more than drag him back to Woollett out of the clutches of the evil temptress. Part of his mission is to make the young man forget. Whatever encounters Chad has had with vice in general and wanton women in particular, Strether is to wipe away with Woollett's happy alternatives. He explains to Maria that he is

> . . . acting with a sense for [Chad] of other things [than money]. Consideration and comfort and security--the general safety of being anchored by a strong chain. He wants, as I see him, to be protected. Protected I mean from life. (Amb, I, 71)

The governess at Bly felt her function toward the children to be similar, for the saving of Chad involves the exchange of experience and knowledge for comfort and security, which in Woollett are specifically represented by the good job and the good little wife. In Mrs. Newsome's system of reciprocity,

Strether's own reward would also bring comfort and security. As her husband, he, too, would be completely protected from life.

In his mission, Strether thus serves Mrs. Newsome's concept of a world purged of evil as well as her ideal of herself as the perfectly good woman. The mission itself, in being directed against the bad woman, becomes a vindication of the type of woman Mrs. Newsome represents. Once daring to exercise his romantic imagination in Woollett, Strether had told her that she resembled Queen Elizabeth, an analogy which fully expresses both his concept of her and his admiration for her. The analogy is not only a projection of his respect for her moral precepts and her reformatory skills, but it also implies his respect for her as the great virgin queen.[8] Dressed in a black silk dress with an undoubtedly white ruche as her solitary ornament, she seems the personification of the Protestant ethic in its black and white dimensions. She is initially everything to him that Elizabeth was to the Redcrosse Knight. At the outset of the novel he thus idealizes her as much as he is later to idealize Madame de Vionnet. In The American, Claire de Cintré remains the ideal

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[8]William Gibson, "Metaphor in the Plot of The Ambassadors," New England Quarterly, XXIV (September, 1951), 293, sees similar implications in Strether's reference to Mrs. Newsome's resemblance to Queen Elizabeth and Maria Gostrey's resemblance to Mary Stuart.

representative of womanhood in Christopher Newman's eyes, and as such, she remains among "the stalest stuff of romance." Strether, however, eventually comes to see his Queen Elizabeth and his Cleopatra as fallible human beings[9] as Don Quixote eventually recognizes Dulcinea del Tobosco as a peasant girl.

With only two types in Woollett, Strether cast his lot with the women, unlike Basil Ransom, who asserted his manhood to prevent "the decline of the sentiment of sex" (Nbks, p. 47). Jim Pocock's arrival in Paris causes Strether to reflect that

> . . . the society over there, of which Sarah and Mamie--and in a more eminent way, Mrs. Newsome herself,--were specimens, was essentially a society of women, and that poor Jim wasn't in it. He himself, Lambert Strether, was as yet in some degree--which was an odd situation for a man. (Amb, II, 83)

Through most of his European sojourn, Strether's dedication to Mrs. Newsome remains a form of chivalry based on his sense of respect and loyalty, but drained of emotion and glory. Even his friend Waymarsh, in deluging Miss Barrace with flowers, may act in "the real tradition" while he must keep Mrs. Newsome's image high and dry in "the inmost honour of his thoughts" (Amb, I, 269).

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[9] Cargill, The Novels of Henry James, pp. 316-17, finally stretches his point in stressing Strether's passion for Madame de Vionnet and his disappointment in Maria Gostrey, but his initial assertion regarding Strether's attitude toward women seems undeniably sound: "Henry James saw that one of man's strongest emotional propensities is to idealize woman, but until he can see the common clay in her, he is engaging in fantasy."

The extent of his subservience to the ideals of Mrs. Newsome and to the woman herself, as well as the reason for it, is indicated by his attitude toward his position as editor of The Woollett Review. As editor, Strether is able to put his name on the cover of the journal--an act which "seems to rescue a little . . . from the wreck of hopes and ambitions, the refuse heap of disappointments and failures, my one presentable little scrap of an identity" (Amb, I, 65). He is aware that

> He was Lambert Strether because he was on the cover, whereas it should have been, for anything like glory, that he was on the cover because he was Lambert Strether. (Amb, I, 84)

For his public identity--and in Woollett the public identity is the only valuable identity--he must be grateful to Mrs. Newsome, who had established the Review and set him in the editor's chair. Consequently, he submissively acknowledges that

> He would have done anything for Mrs. Newsome, have been still more ridiculous [than having to explain his identity to Maria Gostrey]--as he might, for that matter, have occasion to be yet; which came to saying that this acceptance of fate was all he had to show at fifty-five. (Amb, I, 84-85)

As his fate, "the lady of Woollett" has superimposed her identity upon Strether. Yet he is not a simple cipher; his romance-oriented imagination, the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of his thought and his desire, gives him ideals other than those of Woollett. For something like glory, he would like to be Lambert Strether, and his trip to Europe gives him his chance.

Strether continually looks to art--the visual arts, drama, and literature--and to the past--European history and his own youth--for the ideals that will assist him in becoming Lambert Strether, the Glorious. His imaginings are highly personal. They do not have the public sanction of the Woollett ideals. His aesthetic and historical orientation, however, is trammelled by his Woollett identity. Describing his hero's first hours in Europe, James intrudes upon his musings to explain that "He was burdened, poor Strether, . . . with the oddity of a double consciousness" (Amb, I, 5). Throughout the novel Mrs. Newsome's presence, like that of a ghostly Doppelgänger seems to hover over Strether.[10] James had originally designated Ralph Pendrel as also having a "double consciousness"; but in his portrayal of the difficulties Strether has in balancing the dual load--of his dreary Woollett past and his exhilarating Paris present, of the Woollett sense of morals and the Paris sense of aesthetics and history--James is able to dramatize the idea of The Sense of the Past; Strether's "double consciousness" also generates a state of malaise for himself and for others as Ralph Pendrel's was to have done.

The Ambassadors, however, is almost entirely devoid of references to the supernatural, this being, as James had

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[10]James intended that Mrs. Newsome "away off with her finger on the pulse of Massachusetts, should yet be no less intensely than circuitously present through the whole thing, should be no less felt as to be reckoned with than the most direct exhibition, the finest portrayal at first hand could make her" (AN, p. 319).

promised Howells, a "cheerful" international tale, of the "altogether human order." Evidences of the true Doppelgänger convention, with which James had experimented in such a variety of ways in the 1890's, are consequently absent. The novel, however, abounds in foils; Leon Edel points to numerous pairs that balance and oppose each other as indication of James' skill in structuring his work.[11] Strether himself, however, has a foil in nearly every character, primarily because he sees everyone through his romance-oriented imagination as different from himself, and in his insecurity he sees everyone as superior in these differences. Wistful and envious and innocent, Strether is as eager to be classified with the Europeans, whom he categorizes as idealistic social and aesthetic types, as he had been grateful to receive a moral identity from Mrs. Newsome.

Strether's sense of double consciousness is acute in his early meetings with Maria Gostrey. By perceiving her European ways, he begins to become aware of the contrasting Woollett way. With her social freedom in initiating their acquaintance--her self-introduction to him, a perfectly strange gentleman--she strikes him as having an uncanny knowledge, unlike any other woman he had known. Seated across from him at dinner, she appears as the antithesis of Mrs. Newsome's successful, upright, and virgin Protestant Queen Elizabeth; a red velvet band around her

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[11] Edel, "Preface," The Ambassadors, p. x.

throat, Maria takes on the guise of Mary Stuart, the infatuated and martyred Catholic queen. For Mrs. Newsome, Lewis Lambert Strether is a name stamped on the cover of The Woollett Review; Maria immediately identifies his "Lewis Lambert" as the title of Balzac's novel, and although Strether winces in recalling that "the novel's an awfully bad one," her method of identification--through aesthetics, rather than a public proclamation of morality and industry--is alien to Woollett.

Initially, Strether idealizes Maria; to his eye her social acumen at the breakfast table makes her resemble Major Pendennis dining at his club, and her aesthetic sensibility gives her apartment the look of a pirate's cave with "glints of gold" and "patches of purple" (Amb, I, 120). What he does not recognize is the similarity between himself and this apparently superior woman. If James created Maria principally to function as a ficelle, he also establishes her kinship with his hero:

> She was, however, like himself, marked and wan; only it naturally couldn't have been known to him how much a spectator looking from one to the other might have discerned that they had in common. It wouldn't for such a spectator have been altogether insupposable that, each so finely brown and so sharply spare, each confessing to dents of surface and aids to sight, to a disproportionate nose and a head delicately or grossly grizzled, they might have been brother and sister. (Amb, I, 10)

Maria herself realizes that they both have had "the dreams of their youth" deflated; she maintains ". . . our realities have brought us together. We're beaten brothers in arms"

(Amb, I, 45). Of all Strether's associates, she thus resembles an unghostly Doppelgänger, his alter-ego, whom he must comprehend before he can know himself. The expatriate American, who nevertheless bears on her back "the huge burden of our national consciousness," Maria has adjusted her Woollett to Europe, and the self-knowledge she has gained, Strether comes to at the conclusion of the novel. As Don Quixote protests against the simplicities of Sancho Panza's proverbs, however, Strether cannot swallow Maria's concept of "our realities" whole; he must come to his knowledge through his own experience and his own adjustment of Woollett to Europe. With Maria, he casts himself in the role of Mr. Burchell at Dr. Primrose's fireplace, but he quickly discovers that Europe offers more elevating roles; the dreams of his youth might be fulfilled in the "vast bright Babylon." He is unwilling to be "a beaten brother in arms" before he has had an opportunity to put himself in arms and to find his own "realities."

Coloring all of his vision in Paris is his idealized picture of youth and of himself, at age fifty-five, as being able to participate in the romantic cult of youth.[12] The memory of his immediate personal past provides a largely

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[12]Although Strether's idealization of youth leads him astray, James had written in 1887 in "Robert Louis Stevenson," p. 144, praising Stevenson's similar idealizing in fiction: "The part of life that [Stevenson] cares for most is youth, and the direct expression of the love of youth is the beginning and the end of his message. His appreciation of this delightful period amounts to a passion; and a passion in the age in which we live, strikes us, on the whole, as a sufficient philosophy."

negative example which produces the ideal. He considers the bulk of his years to consist of

> . . . old drudgeries and delusions, and disgusts, old recoveries and their relapses, old fevers with their chills, broken moments of good faith, others of still better doubt, adventures, for the most part, of the sort qualified as lessons. (Amb, I, 85)

Like James before his cousin Gus Barker, Hyacinth before the window of the neighborhood confectionary with its pages from the Family Herald and the London Journal, and Ralph Pendrel before the portrait of his other-century double, Strether longs to assume another identity; he yearns to be young. Behind the years of lesson-learning in the Woollett school of dull knocks, he sees the "pale figure of his real youth" (Amb, I, 83-84), who had also journeyed to Europe. Arriving in Paris, Strether remembers this earlier trip and gradually the "pale figure" of his early manhood assumes flesh and blood. In Chester, he tells Maria that she has made it possible for him to forget his immediate past, and as he strolls the streets of Paris, he feels himself rejuvenated. Conscious of being fifty-five, of being old and weary and bound to the identity Mrs. Newsome has shaped for him, Strether is delighted by the "difference" of being young (Amb, I, 81), of experiencing the possibilities for sensory pleasure and social freedom in the present moment. His earlier trip to Paris, however, had evidently brought only a frustrated sense of these possibilities; he had conceived the trip, however, in Woollett's terms, as the means for

acquiring a comprehension of "the higher culture." Yet then he had felt free enough to buy a dozen "lemon-coloured" volumes whereas, in his first hours on his second trip, he is able only to gaze at similar volumes through plate glass windows, as wistful and envious, even as "hungrily" (Amb, I, 86) as other Jamesian boys had looked at cakes in pastry-shop windows. Soon enough, however, Strether has the confidence to purchase seventy volumes of Victor Hugo, not in paper-wrappers, but bound in red and gold leather; he has in the meantime found the perfect fulfillment for his undeveloped youth, the perfect release from his joyless old age. In the circle surrounding Chad Newsome and in Chad himself Strether perceives his ideal.

Strether's well-known exhortation to Little Bilham--the exhortation which gave James both the central idea and the central character for his novel--springs from his own yearning to be young. Although he tells Chad's friend that for himself, "'It's too late,'" his rhetorical intensity almost seems to suggest that he admonishes himself as well as Little Bilham when he says, "'All the same don't forget that you're young--blessedly young; be glad of it on the contrary and live up to it. Live all you can; it's a mistake not to'" (Amb, I, 217).[13] The principal way in

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[13]Strether also compares himself to a man who has missed the train (Amb, I, 217); his association of the train, whistling down the miles, with his new view of Life is similar to the association made by Clifford Pyncheon on his flight away from the sin-ridden past in the house of the seven gables. As Clifford must take a train back to Salem,

which Strether lives all he can at first, however, is by seeing others in the roles he longs to assume himself. Not only does he seem to take it upon himself to advise Little Bilham to make up for his own errors, but when he explains to Maria that Chad and Madame de Vionnet are his youth, Strether's romanticizing appears manipulative and egocentric:

> "I'm making up late for what I didn't have early. I cultivate my little benefit in my own little way. It amuses me more than anything that has happened to me in all my life. They may say what they like--it's my surrender, it's my tribute to youth. . . . The point is that they're mine. Yes, they're my youth; since somehow at the right time nothing else ever was." (Amb, II, 51)

As he would shape Little Bilham in the pattern of the ideal youth in order to satisfy his own desires for youth, he similarly shapes the relationship between Chad and Madame de Vionnet according to his concept of the ideal youth in the ideal relationship--a Neo-Platonic, chivalric relationship; "a high fine friendship" (Amb, I, 280); "a virtuous attachment." Having taken his first breaths of pleasure and freedom, Strether is not ready to abandon Woollett, but his fancy has loosened the rigidities of Woollett's concept of sex. He calls Chad's opportunity to participate in Mürger's Scènes de la Vie de Bohème, to consort with his own Musette and Francine in the Latin Quarter, a "romantic privilege" (Amb, I, 90); he is envious of Waymarsh's adventures with Miss

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however, Strether, ultimately, must relinquish his romanticized view of Life and return to America.

Barrace and Gloriani's "fabulous" amours. Yet the tradition of chivalry rather than of gallantry provides the finer ideals. Rather than Waymarsh's adventures he chooses his intellectual discourse with Maria; rather than Gloriani's prowls in the jungle as "the glossy male tiger, magnificently marked" (Amb, I, 219), he chooses Chad's relationship with Jeanne de Vionnet, immediately seeing in it the virtuous attachment Little Bilham had cited as the reason for Chad's prolonged stay in Paris. Strether exonerates himself from having anything to do with the gallant romantic--"'I don't get drunk; I don't pursue the ladies; I don't spend money; I don't even write sonnets'" (Amb, II, 50-51)--for he is eager to deck out Chad and Madame de Vionnet in his personally prescribed garb of the romance of youth and chivalry. Convinced that they perfectly embody his ideals, he cannot allow their activities or their relationship to alter. Saving Chad has thus become synonymous with saving his own youth and his own romantic ideals. But Chad and his lady can neither be his to mold to perfection, nor can they resurrect the "pale figure." Strether goes astray in limiting his identity to the name inscribed on The Woollett Review and to the moral ideals of Mrs. Newsome, but he goes equally astray in limiting his identity to his romantic ideals of youth.

Strether's discovery of his romantic ideals and of Chad and Madame de Vionnet as their perfect fulfillment occurs gradually; although in his notes and his preface,

James describes his hero's "revolution" and his "volte-face," he more accurately explains Strether's adventures as "a process of vision." (My italics.) Chad and Madame de Vionnet become the hero and heroine in the romance of Strether's illusions particularly as Strether increasingly converts reality to romantic drama. Members of an entire troupe of actors, Chad and his lady, in Strether's eyes, stand out as the stars, and by identifying them as such, he himself becomes a member of the royal court of actors, if not as the faithful fool, certainly as the noble vassal, and finally as the master of the revels.

A visit to the theater in London with Maria causes him to consider that his mission will take place in "a world of types," a world contrary to the Woollett world where there had been only the two types--the male and the female with their moral variations. Observing the general human spectacle at the theater, Strether fancies himself standing before a glass case in which a variety of medals are displayed. A dissolution of the distance and the difference between the outside observers and the figures of greatness quickly occurs, however, as Strether makes all the world a stage:

> . . . the figures and faces in the stalls were interchangeable with those on the stage. He felt as if the play itself penetrated him with the naked elbow of his neighbor . . . he couldn't have said if it were the actors or the auditors who were most true and the upshot of which, each time, was the consciousness of new contracts. (Amb, I, 53)

On the occasion of his introduction to the Princess Casamassima, Hyacinth's fancies had also set reality behind the footlights.

At the theater in London the thought that Chad might belong to a type different from the Woollett idea--that he was male and bad--begins to germinate. He specifically identifies the hero of the drama--"a pleasant weak good-looking young man in perpetual evening dress" (Amb, I, 54)--with Chad, for he wonders whether the young man from Woollett will appear in perpetual evening dress. He also immediately identifies himself with his new conception of Chad by wondering whether he, too, would have to appear in similar costume. In Paris, where "the imagination reacted before one could stop it" (Amb, I, 96), Chad's actual appearance exceeds Strether's first tame fancies. Whereas he had questioned whether he might be able to take Chad to the theater, the young man's entrance into his and Maria's box at the theater in Paris turns reality into a drama more highly pitched than that transpiring on the stage. In his earlier theatrical experience in London, Strether had felt the audience included in the glow from the footlights, but he had nevertheless been conscious of a particular performance on the stage, concerning a particular relationship between a man and a woman. In Paris, following Chad's identification of his presence, Strether is oblivious to the action of the stage, for the unannounced and late arrival of the young man has the attributes of one of "the accidents of a high civilization"; as

Chad has appeared in the middle of the play, silence is necessary, but Strether feels that this "imposed tribute to propriety" resembles that which "kings, queens, comedians, and other such people," who lead "the life of high pressure" (Amb, I, 136), might experience. Strether thus not only seems irrevocably to fuse actors and audience, but he also seems to place himself in conjunction with the aristocracy, albeit perhaps, only as the comedian.

In the talk the two men have after the theater, the ambassador attempts to assess the lay of the land where he must perform his service. His method is to attempt to pigeon-hole Chad according to type; in the course of the conversation, however, Strether shifts from one theory to another. Although his astounding entrance into the box at the theater has nearly disarmed him, Strether feels the necessity to act initially according to the original Woollett conception of the young man--that is, to act as if Chad were indeed "monstrous" and "a brute." He determines to lead a "night-attack," to lose not another hour, "to advance, to overwhelm, with a rush" (Amb, I, 143). When he leads forth with the offensive, however, by explaining to Chad his purpose in being in Paris, he soon feels that "Chad's receptive attitude was that of a person, who had been gracefully quiet while the messenger at last reaching him has run a mile through the dust" (Amb, I, 147). Although he thus elevates Chad to Parnassus and reduces

himself from enterprising ambassador and commander to trembling errand boy, Strether continues to try to understand his situation by casting Chad in a variety of roles. With his prematurely grey hair, he becomes Age as well as Youth. Whereas Strether's own grey streaks stem from "the grey desert" of his drearisome personal past, Chad's seem to be the exterior manifestation of experience and knowledge. Strether feels young in comparison to Chad only as he considers his own ignorance and his insecurity. He also defines the young man as "a man of the world"; he is "smooth"--flawless in manners and appearance; he is consequently "a young man marked out by women" (Amb, I, 154); in sum he knows how to live all he can. Strether next attempts to account for his sense of Chad's "massive young manhood" by concluding that he is a "Pagan"--"the thing most wanted at Woollett" (Amb, I, 157). He winds up by wondering if Chad wasn't simply "a gentleman."

Strether persists in relying on romantic classifications to discover reality; his efforts to comprehend the reasons for Chad's happy transformation, however, are less satisfactory to him than his efforts to define the nature of the transformation. Maria assures him that a woman must certainly be behind the change, but contrary to Strether's expectations she may be "good" whereas Chad might not be as good as he now seems to Strether. Strether, however, still romanticizes, and if he is not to have "the definite adversary" of his and Mrs. Newsome's "fond theory," he will

nevertheless pursue "the fate that waits for one, the dark doom that rides" (Amb, I, 167) with all the excitement of Isabel in her four-wheeled carriage; although he misses the violence necessary for romance, his life has now become "a plot," and with a few more "clues" Chad's change can be unravelled.

The plot thickens at the garden-party of the distinguished sculptor, Gloriani, to which Chad brings his mother's envoy. Gloriani's house, set far back from the streets and approached by a long passage, to Strether's eye, is "a treasure dug up" (Amb, I, 195), surpassing Maria's pirate's cave in its aura of romance. Here the passions and violence of Treasure Island mingle with those of She, for "something . . . covertly tigerish . . . came to him across the lawn and in the charming air, as a waft from the jungle" (Amb, I, 219). But this is neither a deserted island nor the jungle, but the "great world" itself, and as at the theater, Strether feels himself surrounded by types--"types tremendously alien, alien to Woollett" (Amb, I, 199). Little Bilham describes the members of the "great world," who are present at the party, to assist Strether with his romantic classifications:

> There are always artists . . . and then gros bonnets of many kinds--ambassadors, cabinet ministers, bankers, generals, what do I know? even Jews. Above all always some awfully nice women--and not too many; sometimes an actress, an artist, a great performer--but only when they're not monsters; and in particular the right femmes du monde. (Amb, I, 199)

By the very act of observing this "great world," Strether considers that he might be related to it. After all, he, too, is an ambassador.

Gloriani, himself, is "a dazzling prodigy of type"; he is "the great artist," whose international success crowned him "with the light, with the romance, of glory" (Amb, I, 196). With his "medal-like Italian face," Strether might first have recognized him behind the glass case which he metaphorically gazed into at the theater in London. Now, however, the medals have come to life, and Strether is walking among them; consequently the confrontation with Gloriani's smile becomes for Strether a trial, a romantic "test of his stuff" (Amb, I, 197).

Jeanne de Vionnet, whom Chad leads forth to be introduced to Strether, he also sees as a "type"--"a maiden in her flower" (Amb, I, 221), a true jeune fille, "a faint pastel in an oval frame . . . the portrait of a small old-time princess" (Amb, I, 259). The Robert Louis Stevenson and the H. Rider Haggard romances of the jungle and the treasure-hunt are thus supplanted by the superior sentimental chivalric romance of the flower-garden as Strether shifts his envy from Gloriani and his liaison with his Duchess to Chad's "virtuous attachment."

But Strether is most curious about the type Little Bilham has labeled "femme du monde," particularly as the charming Madame de Vionnet, whom he also meets at Gloriani's, would appear to fall into this category. Like Chad, however,

Madame de Vionnet defies categorization; Strether can ascertain with some amusement at his own speculations that "she was neither Turk nor Pole," but to acknowledge her "as the usual thing," that is, "common humanity," he is not ready to do in spite of his inclination.

Miss Barrace helps him to classify her by proclaiming that "'She's various. She's fifty women'" (Amb, I, 265). By fusing these qualifications to Little Bilham's explanation of her as a femme du monde, Strether is able to pronounce Madame de Vionnet and the femme du monde, at least "in these finest developments of the type," as being "like Cleopatra in the play, indeed various and multifold" (Amb, I, 271). Specifically as Cleopatra and generally as an actress, Strether sees her as having

> . . . aspects, characters, days, nights--when in addition to everything she happened also to be a woman of genius. She was an obscure person, a muffled person one day, and a showy, an uncovered person the next. (Amb, I, 271)

Although he thus seems to fix her to his satisfaction, the very nature of his classification allows her to be elusive; yet he is always typing her infinite varieties. In a single moment she appears to him simultaneously as the princess of the Nile; as a mythological "goddess still partly engaged in a morning cloud, or . . . a sea-nymph waist-high in the summer surge"; and as an historical figure--the model for an "old precious medal, some silver coin of the Renaissance" (Amb, I, 270). Again, however, the glass in the case is removed, and Strether himself is circulating among the great,

who have served as models for medals, but whom he is able to comprehend only in terms of romantic ideals of greatness.

Unlike Mrs. Newsome in her black and white, unlike Maria whose appearance last impresses him in London, Madame de Vionnet always appears to Strether in a different guise with different ornaments. At Gloriani's she wears filmy black, and more "gold bracelets and bangles than he had seen a lady wear" (Amb, I, 210) clink beneath her sleeves; at Chad's she is bare-shouldered, and she wears a collar of old emeralds and a dress of silvery grey; at Notre-Dame she is veiled, and a dull wine-color gleams through "the composed gravity of her dress" (Amb, II, 9); for a boat-ride she carries a pink parasol; and in their final meeting Strether sees her in a simple white garment enhanced by a small black fichu. And each time he is conscious of the appropriateness of her costume for the setting and the circumstances. Maria had told him that in their school-days, Marie de Vionnet had "made a clean sweep . . . of every 'part,' whether memorized or improvised, in the curtained costumed school repertory" (Amb, I, 230). She continues to act, and yet Strether becomes oblivious to the possibility that she might be on stage and that he might have taken the stage with her.

As a result of his first visit to Madame de Vionnet's house, feeling self-conscious and slightly preposterous, he nevertheless mounts the proscenium in the train of the heroine. To his eye, her drawing room

seems to have been transmitted in perfect detail from the First Empire; here too are glass cases containing

> . . . swords and epaulettes of ancient colonels and generals; medals and orders once pinned over hearts that had long since ceased to beat; snuff-boxes bestowed on ministers and envoys; copies of works presented, with inscriptions, by authors now classic. (Amb, I, 246)

Again Strether translates himself into the "great world" behind the glass case, for with Madame de Vionnet he finds himself suddenly and surprisingly in a relationship which demands a greatness equal to that of colonels and generals, ministers and envoys. On this occasion Strether identifies Madame de Vionnet as

> . . . one of the rare women he had so often heard of, read of, thought of, but never met, whose very presence, look, voice, the mere contemporaneous fact of whom, from the moment it was all presented, made a relation of mere recognition; (Amb, I, 252)

she is also a "poor lady" in "deep trouble," and his recognition of her, then, as the classic noblewoman in distress establishes the basis for their relation. When Madame de Vionnet appeals to him, Strether hangs back saying, "'You count upon me of course for something much greater than it sounds,'" but she convinces him that the case is "great enough" (Amb, I, 249), and at the end of their conversation, Strether is able to rise to her demands. He agrees, at her prompting, to praise her to Mrs. Newsome and to credit her with Chad's improvement; he realizes that he himself is being delicately manipulated; but he is pleased to be able to respond to the exigencies of the role Madame

de Vionnet has conceived for him. Aware that his verb is "exorbitant," he nevertheless pledges himself to "save" her. Thus as Hyacinth Robinson had been costumed and set dancing by those whom he had costumed, so is Strether also made to play a part.

Shortly after pledging succor to Madame de Vionnet, he again encounters her alone, but in unexpected circumstances. The repeated note of surprise reinforces the romantic note in their relationship; such coincidences as his meeting Chad's lady in Notre-Dame do not form the stuff of real life. Strether had come to "the great dim church" to meditate, as Newman had also done at the conclusion of The American. Newman, however, is restored to himself through his visit whereas Strether, who has come with the stated purpose of seeking escape from himself, further loses himself. In wandering the nave he sees himself in several roles, any one of which he would be eager to assume; he sees himself as "a plain tired man taking the holiday he had earned"; he then sees himself as "a student under the charm of a museum" (Amb, II, 5). But his imagination is most deeply stirred by the figure of a woman worshipping before one of the cathedral altars "as he would only have liked to do" (Amb, II, 6). Terming himself a "wandering alien," he envies the lady, who is clearly "one of the familiar, the intimate, the fortunate for whom these dealings had a method and a meaning," and he immediately begins to place her as

the "heroine of an old story, something he had heard, read, something that, had he had a hand for drama, he might himself have written" (Amb, II, 7). With "nine-tenths of his current impressions [acting] as recalls of things imagined" (Amb, II, 6), Strether attempts to reduce "the lurking figure of the dim chapel" to "the convenient terms of Victor Hugo," whose works he had just purchased in seventy volumes.[14] When the woman identifies herself as Madame de Vionnet, Strether is sure no harm has been done by the intensity of his clandestine fantasies although by implicitly associating her with Hugo's pure heroines, he convinces himself of her innocence and her distress; he asks himself,

> If [her relation with Chad] wasn't innocent why did she haunt the churches?--into which, given the woman he could believe he made out, she would never have come to flaunt an insolence of guilt. She haunted them for continued help, for strength, for peace. (Amb, II, 10)

In the ensuing conversation, Strether is drawn deeper into Madame de Vionnet's drama; and as he acquires stage-presence in playing opposite her, he becomes proportionately less able to function as a critic of the drama. Seated with her before the déjeuner of omelette aux tomates and

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[14] James himself was highly critical of Victor Hugo, placing him irrevocably in the tradition of artificial romance when he writes in "Tennyson's Drama," Views and Reviews (Boston: Ball Publishing Co., 1908), p. 187, that with Hugo "the horrible is always the main element of the picturesque, and the beautiful and the tender are rarely introduced save to give it relief." This view is substantiated in "Hugo's Ninety-Three," Literary Reviews and Essays," pp. 138-44, where James finds him only occasionally dealing with "the really human and not with the mechanical and monstrous, aping the human."

"straw-coloured Chablis" by a window opening upon the Seine, Strether self-consciously describes himself as part of a well-composed tableau. He is amazed that Madame de Vionnet, heroine that she is, should be gratified by his presence in the picture and above all be concerned for his welfare. The confidence he gains in himself as a result of her interest in him, however, is as false-bottomed as the confidence the governess gains in her first days at Bly. As the governess discovers she can be a heroine, he finds himself with the makings of a hero. Bolstering his courage for forthcoming trials, he recalls "ancient proverbs" and injects his own stress into them: "It was clearly better to suffer as a sheep than as a lamb. One might as well perish by the sword as by famine" (Amb, II, 15). If he must fail in his mission for Mrs. Newsome, then he will go down with wisdom and a sense of his manhood, with glory, in his service to Madame de Vionnet. Before he parts company with her, he agrees that he cannot "in honour" not see Chad through, but he also agrees that seeing Chad through is synonymous with seeing Madame de Vionnet through, and in light of his earlier pledge to her, he cannot "in honour" not see her through. Although there are references made throughout the déjeuner to the lady of Woollett, in relation to the "strange and beautiful" Madame de Vionnet, whose conditions and rhetoric create an aura of romance, Strether can consider himself heroic, the noble vassal and the faithful fool combined into a taller and straighter Quasimodo. In

relation to Mrs. Newsome he had only been a lackey. With Madame de Vionnet, chivalry cannot be dead.

He later tells Maria that he imagines for once in his life he might be "magnificent" as a result of his dealings with Madame de Vionnet and the Woollett clan. Another exorbitant word! But his statement expresses both his desire and the daring of his new self-confidence, his ability to "toddle alone" (Amb, II, 39). His success is marked by his having convinced Chad to stay on in Paris, contrary to the young man's willingness to return to Woollett. Through his manipulating, Strether hopes for everyone's good, but he neglects to see not only his errors in idealizing Chad and Madame de Vionnet, but also the essential egocentricity of his ideals, which, after all, give him the opportunity to contemplate his "magnificent" deeds.

With the arrival of the Pococks--Mrs. Newsome's reinforcements--Strether is embattled. As Ralph Pendrel was to have the sensation of having his alter-ego perpetually observing his actions over his shoulder, Strether, when the Pococks' arrival is imminent, has the uncanny feeling of being in the presence of Mrs. Newsome's ghost (Amb, II, 47). As such Mrs. Newsome seems a Doppelgänger in the conventional sense. But from the moment he greets Sarah Pocock, he knows he is in the palpable presence of Mrs. Newsome and the Woollett frame of mind. Surprised at Strether's having encouraged his extended stay in Paris,

Chad had questioned the personal advantages for the older man in the change; Strether had replied that there would only be "a certitude that has been tested--that has passed through fire" (Amb, II, 34-35). During the Pococks' visit in Paris, Strether's sense of certitude and security undergoes its severest trials. He is challenged by Mrs. Newsome's party and Madame de Vionnet's party; but because Madame de Vionnet's party continues to allow him his idealistic illusions about himself, he permits himself to be pulled into her boat where he, then, of his own volition heroically pulls an oar. At Chad's dinner in honor of his relatives, Miss Barrace identifies Strether as "the hero of the drama" upon whom all eyes in Paris are fastened. Again the role is created for him, and again he takes it up; although he apologizes for his lack of heroics, he nevertheless accepts the cognomen and his opportunity to play opposite the heroine, Madame de Vionnet:

> "There positively isn't a sign of a hero to-night; the hero's dodging and shirking, the hero's ashamed . . . I've treated [the heroine] not a bit like a hero." (Amb, II, 180)

Madame de Vionnet's decision to arrange a marriage for her daughter, however, flies in the face of Strether's Woollett identity. Not only does the notion that the "virtuous attachment" could have existed between Chad and Jeanne de Vionnet explode, but the cruelty and the importance of mere convenience are exposed beneath the civility of the vieille sagesse. Not since he had sniffed something

"covertly tigerish" in Gloriani's garden had he actually felt "the dreadful little old tradition" of Paris.[15] Claude Frollo had not emerged in Strether's fancies, for when he had thought of saving Madame de Vionnet, his rescue work was not directed against a known evil; he saw only the good he might do both Madame de Vionnet and Mrs. Newsome.

Strether's reaction to this evidence of the evil inherent in the European system is to become a full-fledged match-maker himself. Although he had earlier recommended Jeanne to Little Bilham, he now recommends Mamie Pocock to to him. Not only does he feel that the path would be made easier for Mamie, who knows she is rejected by Chad, and for Chad and Madame de Vionnet, but he also reasons that he wants

> "... to have been at least to that extent constructive--even expiatory. I've been sacrificing so to strange gods that I feel I want to put on record somehow, my fidelity--fundamentally unchanged after all--to our own. I feel as if my hands were embrued with the blood of monstrous alien altars--of another faith altogether." (Amb, II, 167-68)

Strether's rationale seems a second volte-face, a re-conversion to the principles of Woollett. But in spite of his concern for Little Bilham and Mamie, he continues to manipulate to preserve his ideals; the element of convenience in his own plan gives it a touch of the vielle sagesse. Its exaggerated rhetoric also suggests that the plan itself,

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[15] Crews, p. 50, sees in Strether's shock at Jeanne de Vionnet's engagement his first recognition of the existence of evil in the Paris world.

the responsibility for which rests entirely on Strether's shoulders, has been conceived as a heroic as well as an expiatory gesture. Although Jeanne's arranged marriage has revitalized for him Woollett's insistence upon confronting evil, he no longer recognizes his fate in terms of an identity established by Mrs. Newsome. As he says to Little Bilham with a new burst of confidence, "'I must meet my fate alone, and I shall--oh you'll see!'" (Amb, II, 165). His statement carries the sense of conviction that he has, after all, met his challenges and can continue to do so. It also carries the tone of hubris.

When Mrs. Pocock departs, delivering her judgement of Chad's development as "hideous," Strether's battle to guarantee a peaceful co-existence between Woollett and Paris seems to be lost. Certainly, "She let fly at him, as from a stretched cord, and it took him a minute to recover from the sense of being pierced" (Amb, II, 205-206). But Sarah's parting shot does not kill Strether, as he had once joshingly speculated to Waymarsh might be her purpose. On the contrary her militancy makes a more convinced opponent of him as Olive Chancellor's had also made of Ransom; it allows his illusions to become certitudes. Visiting Chad's chambers at the "witching hour," Strether's illusions are in full charge. He now anthropomorphizes romantically, and his comparison of the ivory-knife athwart the half-cut novel on Chad's table with a dagger in a contadina's hair

seems a poetic excresence. Feeling the pleasure and freedom of simply being in the young man's rooms, he knows he was not mistaken in choosing to live vicariously in Chad, but he also knows he stakes his own identity on his conception of the young man:

> He didn't want, luckily, to prevent Chad from living; but he was quite aware that even if he had he would himself have thoroughly gone to pieces. It was in truth essentially by bringing down his personal life to a function all subsidiary to the young man's that he held together. (Amb, II, 231)

Nevertheless by reinforcing his illusion of Chad, Strether himself becomes youth. His trip into the French countryside reveals the absoluteness with which he has become convinced of the validity of his illusions.

Strether makes the trip alone. He had sought out aloneness when he had first arrived in Europe, but in avoiding his ship-board comrades and Waymarsh, Strether had felt a pang of guilt for his unsociability. On his excursion into rural France, however, he basks in self-satisfaction. This is the reward for having successfully met his fate alone. The experience allows him fully to revive his own lost youth and to indulge in the sensations of youth in general. The countryside of which he finds himself a part reminds him of "a certain small Lambinet that had charmed him, long years before at a Boston dealer's and that he had quite absurdly never forgotten" (Amb, II, 245). For the first time since he has been in Europe he is not haunted by Woollett and Mrs. Newsome, the losses and

failures of his own past; although he had been unable to purchase the Lambinet, the experience in the art dealer's "maroon-coloured sanctum" was an adventure in the annals of his youth. As he strolls along the river bank, lolls in the grass, takes a bock in an inn-garden, contemplates the kind of "virtuous attachment" he himself might now have with Madame de Vionnet, he fulfills his illusions of youth. He lives. The peacefulness of the countryside does not stimulate any need for heroics, and yet Strether feels himself brave. His courage is manifest to himself in the ease with which he discovers he is able to exercise his French accent and vocabulary. Thus at last able to embody his ideals in himself, he has the confidence of an identity. He no longer needs to rely on Chad. He no longer need envy others. When he exclaims that the countryside "was Tremont Street . . . was France . . . was Lambinet" (Amb, II, 247), he is proclaiming his personal fulfillment of his ideal. He is rejuvenated, but his existence, like Clement Searle's and Ralph Pendrel's, is completely contained by his romantic illusions, for he feels that he spends his day entirely within the "oblong gilt frame" of the Lambinet.

In "A Passionate Pilgrim" and The American, James' heroes had also wandered through quaint, picturesque European landscapes; but in his earlier studies of the romance-oriented imagination, James had described the picturesque countryside for its own sake as he had described

it in his letters to America. In The Ambassadors, however, where the qualities of the romance-oriented imagination receive their closest scrutiny, the country lends itself to Strether's most intense romanticizing. Prior to his trip, French ruralism

> . . . had been . . . but a land of fancy for him--the background of fiction, the medium of art, the nursery of letters; practically as distant as Greece, but practically as consecrated. (Amb, II, 245)

Not only does his day in the country satisfy his visual expectations, but it also satisfies the expectations his reading had given him; he is as delighted to find the resemblance between the poplars, the river, the white village, and the grey church of the actual scene and his memory of the Lambinet as he is to find the resemblance between the "stout white-capped deep-voiced woman" of the auberge, "the rustics" of the village, and a typical episode out of Maupassant. Although "the rustics," with whom Strether self-consciously "converses," do not apparently wear the "stiff clean blouse" and "knitted nightcap" he had anticipated they would and although they strike him as being more "men of the world" than he had expected, his concept of them is not altered; they have shown the necessary "genius of response." Thus in converting the countryside into "a land of fancy," he also converts its human inhabitants into types, into ideals, as he had done at the theater in London and at Gloriani's garden-party. And as he had done with himself on this particular day.

The perfect correspondence of his vision of the actual rural area with his romantic concept of the country convinces him that the countryside, even more than Paris, provides the right backdrop for the human drama with which he has been occupied. He has associated it with the Golden Age of Greece, and it surpasses the Latin Quarter in being closer to the original Bohemia. He consequently transplants Chad and his circle to pastoral conditions:

> For this had been all day at bottom the spell of the picture--that it was essentially more than anything else a scene and a stage, that the very air of the play was in the rustle of the willows and the tone of the sky. The play and the characters had, without his knowing it till now, peopled all his space for him, and it seemed somehow quite happy that they should offer themselves, in the conditions so supplied, with a kind of inevitability. (Amb, II, 253)

The appearance of a couple in a boat--obviously "expert, familiar, frequent"--represent the non-virtuous attachment his Woollett conscience and his romance-oriented imagination had always expected to discover in France. But Strether's moral hackles do not rise, for the appearance of "the coat-less hero of the idyll" and the lady with the pink parasol fill out his Lambinet, his "scene and stage." Although the gentleman in the boat pulls an oar for his lady in actuality--does what Strether had only been able to do for Madame de Vionnet in metaphor--although his attitude expresses one of social ease, James' hero is neither envious nor repulsed. His drama has room for both the virtuous attachment and the non-virtuous attachment although the tradition of chivalry

he has consistently ranked higher than the tradition of gallantry.

But the gallant couple in the boat suddenly emerge in three-dimension from the portrait as the hero and heroine of Strether's own personal chivalric romance. The pressure of the coincidence--"that their country could happen to be exactly his"--permits Strether to continue to romanticize; the romance, however, is brought to a lower plane, for the situation is now "as queer as fiction, as farce" (Amb, II, 257). Later he is able to recognize that "fiction and fable were, inevitably in the air" (Amb, II, 262), inevitably because of the romance which he had been encouraged to construct around Chad's and Madame de Vionnet's relationship, but which he had also eagerly embellished for his own sake. With their mutual acquaintances in Paris knowing that Chad's improvement was not the product of a Platonic friendship, he has been responsible for translating Madame de Vionnet into a high and lofty ideal. If he has been placed in a "false position" (AN, p. 315), he has also placed her in a false position. Like Ralph Pendrel with his ties in the present, Strether with his expectations of moral and aesthetic perfection has created a malaise in Paris. "The quantity of make-believe" involved in the affair does indeed upset Strether's "spiritual stomach" (Amb, II, 265); but the make-believe of Chad and Madame de Vionnet--the deceit and hypocrisy--

has only been precipitated by his make-believe--his idealization of them and vicariously of himself.

In reflecting on their dinner in the country, Strether admires Madame de Vionnet's "performance," a performance that "was on the whole easier to keep up than to abandon" (Amb, II, 263); as he had appreciated the diversified acts she had put on as a various but virtuous femme du monde, he appreciates her performance of gaiety and nonchalance, her attempt to sustain an illusion of "innocent, friendly Bohemia" in the face of the pain of reality.[16] He appreciates her performance particularly in light of his growing realization of Chad's and Madame de Vionnet's realization of the discrepancies between their actual situation and their roles in the pastoral romance. In spite of her role, Madame de Vionnet's costume does not remain in keeping with her setting; the pink parasol would do for the river, but as the evening turns chilly and as the lady persists in the pretense that she and Chad were on the river only for a day's outing, Strether becomes aware that garments more appropriate to evening must have been deposited at the spot where the charming couple were to have spent the night. For the first time since he has known her, Madame de Vionnet also speaks almost entirely

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[16] J. A. Ward, The Imagination of Disaster (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 123, notes that Madame de Vionnet's deception, which has preserved the beauty of civilized forms, has allowed Strether to have his Life.

in French; "fairly veiling her identity," Strether feels. Yet the identity her speech disguises is actually the identity Strether's romanticizing had given her, the identity of a rare personage made more rare by a unique English accent. She now seems reduced to being merely a member of a "voluble race and class." Since his introduction to her at Gloriani's part, Strether had not been able to see her as "the usual thing"--"common humanity."

On the day following his expulsion from his pastoral Eden, Strether goes out into the world, to the big telegraph-office on the Boulevard. As he writes his telegram, agreeing to a meeting with Madame de Vionnet, he feels:

> . . . something in the air of these establishments; the vibration of the vast strange life of the town, the influence of the types, the performers concocting their messages; the little prompt Paris women, arranging, pretexting goodness knew what, driving the dreadful needle-pointed pen at the dreadful sand-strewn public table: implements that symbolised for Strether's too interpretative innocence something more acute in manners, more sinister in morals, more fierce in national life. (Amb, II, 270-71)

He feels "mixed up in the typical tale of Paris" by answering Madame de Vionnet's note, and he goes so far as to consider himself as a performer again, to type himself as acute, sinister, and fierce, for he, too, drives the dreadful pen. Apparently, then, he continues to make-believe, to categorize and fictionalize; being disillusioned, he seems to turn from the romance of chivalry and nobility to low melodrama.[17] James qualifies Strether's innocence in the

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[17]Robert Garis, "The Two Lambert Strethers: A New Reading of The Ambassadors," Modern Fiction Studies, VII

passage as "too interpretative"; yet it is as if Strether had formulated the qualification himself, for no longer so innocent, he classifies "the types" and "the performers" in the telegraph-office, the rustics of the city, with himself as "poor things." The epithet is divested of any note of patronage and the scene of any guise of fiction as he recognizes: "They were no worse than he, in short, and he no worse than they--if queerly enough, no better" (Amb, II, 271).

Strether is aware, however, that for him "the typical tale" has been enacted in Madame de Vionnet's house rather than in the telegraph-office, and to this stage he must return if he is to throw off the "quantity of make-believe" and to see himself and the heroine of his romance as human. Strether has alternatives; he might have ignored Madame de Vionnet's summons or he might have requested that she meet him on "a stone bench in the dusty Tuileries or a penny chair at the back part of the Champs Élysées," that is, in circumstances where she would not have the advantage of romantic associations. Strether's decision to meet her on her own grounds suggests first that he is able to recognize his own penchant for romantic illusions, and that through this self-knowledge he has acquired a sense of security

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(Winter, 1961-62), 305-306, argues that Strether's vision, following his visit to the country, "produces . . . a sickening sequence of acts and attitudes devoid of imaginative energy but at the same time depressingly agile in both romantic and moralistic self-deception." Garis, however, fails to recognize the importance of Strether's having identified himself with the other telegraph-senders as human-beings as well as "types" not to mention the importance of his having seen beneath Madame de Vionnet's surface appearance to the fact of her passion and her suffering.

which will allow him to resist the temptations—to romanticize. Secondly his decision seems a testimony of his repugnance toward the idea of revenge. In thinking of the stone bench and the penny chair, Strether had contemplated revenge momentarily like his two predecessors, Christopher Newman and Isabel Archer; but like them he also refuses to use the weapons of melodrama to achieve his ends. In The Ambassadors, however, revenge is not the weapon of the Europeans, as it had been in The American and The Portrait of a Lady, but of the Americans. Sarah Pocock had let Strether know with her parting shot that for failure in his mission, marriage with Mrs. Newsome is out of the question. Strether's rejection of revenge consequently has been a more difficult matter than it was for Isabel and Newman, for he has had to denounce the very weapons he came to fight with, those of moral reciprocity. Finally his decision suggests his ability to accept his guilt in aiding and abetting the "lie in the charming affair." Because of his own culpability, therefore, Madame de Vionnet must be given "her own best conditions" (Amb, II, 271). Thus suffering himself as he goes to her, he remembers "that the state of the wrongdoer, or at least this person's happiness, presented some special difficulty" (Amb, II, 272). Strether's understanding seems to reflect James' statement of 1896, summarizing the theme of The House of the Seven Gables, the work of Hawthorne's which he finally considered most

satisfying: "Life is an experience in which we expiate the sins of others in the intervals of expiating our own."[18]

He finds that both she and her house appeal to his romance-oriented imagination as they had always done. The dark side of romance looms before him on this visit, however, as it had in the telegraph-office; once before he fancied he had heard "the faint far-away cannon-roar of the great Empire" from her salon, but it had always inspired his sense of the glory of the past. On this occasion, however, the suffering inherent in great historical moments, the distress of the poor lady, stimulates his fancy. A pending storm heightens his impressions of coming disaster as storms had also Gothically reinforced Isabel's sense of suspense at Gardencourt, Densher's sense of horror in Venice, and James' own conflicting emotions in the Galerie d'Apollon. The distant sounds from the streets of Paris coming through the windows of Madame de Vionnet's drawing-room remind Strether that:

> Thus and so, on the eve of great recorded dates, the days and nights of revolution, the sounds had come in, the omens, the beginnings broken out. They were the smell of revolution, the smell of the public temper--or perhaps simply the smell of blood. (Amb, II, 274)

And Strether's hostess is again dressed as if in compliance with his fancy: "as for thunderous times . . . in simplest coolest white, of a character so old-fashioned, if he were

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[18]"Nathaniel Hawthorne," p. 7057.

not mistaken, that Madame Roland must on the scaffold have worn something like it" (Amb, II, 275). In seeing her, Strether is conscious that the "tyrannies of history, facts of type, values, as the painters said, of expression "function in her favor. No longer in the show himself, he is ready now to let her be a great actress, to be "the perfection of art" (Amb, II, 276). Strether admires her performance as the noble but pathetic Madame Roland as much as he had her performance as the spontaneous lady of the pink parasol; there is always in her manners the "harmony and reason," the simplicity and naturalness which makes the ugly beautiful. Not even the ugliness of her deception can contradict her graciousness of manner, and because her way, unlike the vindictive way of Woollett, makes human relations still possible, Strether appreciates her.[19]

Although he has become aware of her human capacity for wrong-doing, as yet he comprehends her capacity for suffering only romantically, only in her role as Madame Roland. Both Strether and Madame de Vionnet recognize that in spite of her improvements and his appreciation of them, Chad is "none the less only Chad" (Amb, II, 285); but only when Strether becomes aware of Madame de Vionnet's own realization of this fact do the last scales of romance drop

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[19]Crews, p. 53, comments that the central difference between Woollett and Paris is that "whereas Woollett has refused to admit [essential human relationships] Paris has learned how to clothe them acceptably and live with them."

from his eyes. And from being a man of fancy, of the romance-oriented imagination, he becomes truly "a man of imagination"; his imagination penetrates the perfection of Madame de Vionnet's manners to see her passion and her consequent suffering and self-castigation. She is no longer Madame Roland, but "a maidservant crying for her young man. The only thing was that she judged herself as the maidservant wouldn't" (Amb, II, 286). Strether responds to her tears not with a display of heroic rhetoric; instead of the exorbitant "I'll save you," he now naturally and simply himself says, "'There's something I have in mind I can still do.'" He responds not to an ideal, not out of a longing to be other than he is; having judged himself and suffering himself, he responds to human suffering with human decency.

From the beginning of his European adventure, Strether had been beset by his sense of failure; his sense of failure, however, he had always judged in Mrs. Newsome's terms, in terms of reciprocity, of loss and gain, and in terms of the public image of success. Both before and during the Pococks' visit, he fears that his risk will bring him little gain. Although he has explained to Chad that "certitude" for his ideals was quite enough gain and although he tells Maria that he will always have the treasures of his imagination to jingle in his pockets, he nevertheless also has the perpetual sense of being left empty-handed; he feels that

> . . . he was for ever missing things through his general genius for missing them, while others were for ever picking them up through a contrary bent. And it was others who looked abstemious and he who looked greedy; it was he somehow who finally paid, and it was others who mainly partook. Yes, he should go to the scaffold yet for he wouldn't know quite whom. He almost, for that matter, felt on the scaffold now and really quite enjoying it. (Amb, II, 184-85)

In his final meeting with Madame de Vionnet, as the illusions of romance are rent, Strether's similarity to Madame de Vionnet seems apparent. Her final words, which expose the reality of her suffering, describe him as well as her; she bemoans her sense of loss, her loneliness, her age--"'I'm old and abject and hideous!" (Amb, II, 288). Strether has often enough accused himself in a similar vein. When she condemns herself for having always sought to take from the lives of others in order to make her own life happy, James' implication is evident; only Strether could so judge himself. In anticipating the comfort and security of a Woollett marriage and in living vicariously in Madame de Vionnet and Chad, he, too, had tried to take. And Strether, at this point in his life, can abide by the conclusion to which she comes: "'The only safe thing is to give'" (Amb, II, 283). But Madame de Vionnet is unable to accept her own advice, for her motives in asking Strether to stay near her in Paris are not disinterested. She would continue to use him in an attempt to retain Chad's affections. Being conscious of her predicament, of her unrequited passion and of her inevitable egotism, she expresses a bitterness toward herself

and life in her final words which is alien to Strether's outlook. On the scaffold himself, he will always be able to be amused; in his own tragedy, he will always see the farcical element.

Strether's romantic illusions had initially cast both Chad and Madame de Vionnet in roles antithetical to himself, but roles in which he increasingly saw himself vicariously fulfilled. At the conclusion of the novel, however, he remains Chad's opposite as he also must finally remain Madame de Vionnet's opposite. In his final meeting with Chad all of his attempts at typing him as an ideal become ironic, for his transformation has been only external; in his moral nature he remains "a brute." He is young and pagan, but consequently self-indulgent in his pleasure-seeking and irresponsible in his relationships; he is a man of the world, but his famous knowledge of life is not of human nature but of the ways to exploit others. As he had returned to Madame de Vionnet's home, Strether must also return to Chad's apartments. Climbing the stairs now, however, he knows himself again to be old and weary. Again he comes on a mission for a lady, but this time his consciousness of his age signifies his knowledge and his acceptance of himself, Lambert Strether, age fifty-five and this time, although his mission is still conducted in the name of righteousness, compassion is his primary motivation. He has no desire for vindication for his maltreatment; his

mission is his own. There is no question of loss and gain; he simply gives.[20]

Chad in his blithe, blind egocentricity and Madame de Vionnet in her bitter, conscious egocentricity stand finally in antithesis to Strether in his self-knowledge and self-acceptance. Sure of his own integrity, Strether is neither blind nor bitter. At the conclusion of The Ambassadors, his double consciousness has vanished, and his final identity and his final decisions represent a synthesis of his knowledge of the best of both the Woollett and the Paris worlds. Although his conscience and his fancy, his sense of morality and his sense of romance have been equally instrumental in helping him discover the unknown, he is no longer stretched between them. His consciousness is single, and his imagination is not distorted by romance. Because of his Woollett origins, he recognizes the necessity of confronting evil and error, but because of his Parisian experiences he has seen evil in himself and humanity at large--impossible to obliterate by the flash of a sword. Because of his Woollett origins he recognizes that the guilt which evil produces also generates suffering, but because of his Parisian experiences he has learned the

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[20] Caroline Gordon's point in "Some Readings and Misreadings," Sewanee Review, LXI (Summer, 1953), 387-88, seems valid as far as it goes; but she maintains that Madame de Vionnet's statement is a testimony of her growth from Eros to Agape without considering that her passion for Chad is yet unabated and that her charity to Strether is not disinterested. Rather, it is Strether alone in whom Christian love is born.

value of manners in sustaining human relations in spite of evil and suffering. Because of his Woollett origins he recognizes his responsibilities to others, but because of his own suffering, he does not demand compensation for their fulfillment.

Strether's vision of both Woollett and Paris has been as faulty as it has been correct, as Sancho Panza's and Don Quixote's have also been. In the renunciation of his ideals and in the acceptance of his errors, Strether achieves a tragi-comic awareness of himself and his circumstances similar to that which Don Quixote expresses in his final words:

> "Let us go gently, gentlemen, . . . for there are no birds this year in last year's nests. I was mad, but I am sane now. I was Don Quixote de la Mancha, but to-day, as I have said, I am Alonso Quixano the good."[21]

Strether, too, exchanges the rhetoric of romance for the more simple vocabulary; Maria's chambers, seen now through clear lenses, appear, not as a pirate's cave, but as ordered by the principles of "beauty and knowledge." But more important, Strether, like Don Quixote, having attained self-knowledge, has also attained confidence in his own goodness. His moral code is his own; it is not based on public dogma, but simply on a sense of his own goodness and his own desire to do good for its own sake.[22]

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[21]Cervantes, Don Quixote, trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 935.

[22]In writing of the special delight James took in the "ineluctable legendary element," in The Liberal Imagination, p. 65, Trilling comments that "so sophisticated a work as The

Thus James' hero also goes "gently." In one of their earliest meetings, Maria had claimed that for her services as "a general guide to 'Europe'" she receives--to Strether's surprise--no reward for her job. In the final scenes with Madame de Vionnet and Maria, Strether declines all reward. He renounces the compensation he might have had in the comfort and security implicit in the offers of both Madame de Vionnet and Maria to stay with them, as he has rejected the comfort and security Mrs. Newsome represented. Yet he must return to Woollett, as he has returned to Madame de Vionnet's house, to Chad's chambers, and to Maria's apartments. He does not, however, return like the Redcrosse Knight to reaffirm the Woollett way, but only "'To be right,'" and "'Not, out of the whole affair, to have got anything for myself'" (Amb, II, 326). But what Strether has gotten is the knowledge of how to live. His decision to return to Woollett gives him only the assurance that he may expiate his guilt by facing up to his errors in a report to Mrs. Newsome and that he may complete his ambassadorial responsibilities and thereby sustain his human relationships.

But his own dwelling finally cannot be in either Paris or Woollett. When Madame de Vionnet asks him, "'Where is your "home" moreover now--what has become of it?,'" he can answer her no more than he can answer Maria when she

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Ambassadors can be read as one of those tales in which the hero finds that nothing is what it seems and that the only guide through the world must be the goodness of his heart."

asks a similar question, for his home, like the Ancient Mariner's--like that of the typical nineteenth-century hero's--is in his individual moral perception and in the human community at large. He refuses the comfort and security offered by Madame de Vionnet and Maria as substitutes for loss, loneliness, and old age, not because such pleasures are wrong for others, but because they are wrong for himself. Not only are loss, loneliness, and old age his inevitable lot, as they are the Ancient Mariner's, but comfort and security would protect him from his own vision of life. Thus he takes his report back to Mrs. Newsome in his own identity, as a man of the best of all possible worlds--a fully conscious and fully civilized human society.

CONCLUSION

In his preface for The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne explains that in attempting to connect the past with the present in his work, he hoped to fulfill his definition of romance, to mingle "the Marvellous" with the mundane and yet not swerve from "the truth of the human heart." He then added an ironically self-depreciating note, permitting the reader either to ignore or nonchalantly to enjoy this element of romance:

> It is a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist, which the reader, according to his pleasure, may either disregard, or allow it to float almost imperceptibly about his characters and events for the sake of a picturesque effect.[1]

This "legendary mist," which Hawthorne projected about his characters and events, his sense of "the Marvellous," his renowned "shadows," his understanding of "the human heart," James increasingly appreciated as being the basis for real rather than artificial romance. In a letter written in 1904 on the occasion of the Hawthorne Centenary, James associated these qualities with "the quaintness or the weirdness, the interest behind the interest of things," which Hawthorne saw

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[1] Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, p. 14.

> . . . as continuous with the very life we are leading, or that we were leading . . . round about him and under his eyes; he saw [the quaintness or the weirdness] as something deeply within us, not as something infinitely disconnected from us; saw it in short in the very application of the spectator's, the poet's mood, in the kind of reflection the things we know best and see oftenest may make in our minds.[2]

James' appreciation of Hawthorne's method strips the older writer's comments on The House of the Seven Gables of any irony, for James recognizes the importance of the connection between the unknown and the known, the unseen and the seen; he is not the reader who takes Hawthorne's "legendary mist" as a merely "picturesque effect." For James, Hawthorne's works, because they sustain the connection, cannot be reduced to "the stalest stuff of romance."

Nevertheless in paying homage to Hawthorne's method, so soon after completing his portrait of Lambert Strether, James must have been cognizant of the difference between his method of seeking out "the interest behind the interest" and Hawthorne's. If Hawthorne's romances seemed to James to be "the kind of reflections the things we know best and see oftenest may make in our minds," in his own real romances and in his mature works, he went one step farther than Hawthorne. James recorded not only the reflection but also the reflector and the way in which he reflects. Thus James' characters, if not James himself, might have construed Hawthorne's mist as a merely "picturesque effect."

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[2]"The Hawthorne Centenary," p. 27.

In Hawthorne's romances the reflection is achieved through symbol and allegory whereas in James' fiction symbol and allegory belong to the fabric of his character's consciousness. Although early in his career James had admonished Hawthorne for his reliance upon symbols, not only does this judgement have no part in his later criticism, but also, as James' own critics have repeatedly noted, his later works are dense with symbols. For this reason F. O. Matthiessen and Elizabeth Stevenson finally classify James as a romance writer.[3] Richard Chase also associates James' work with the romance tradition because of its wealth of poetic symbols. By attempting to distinguish between allegory and symbol, as Miss Stevenson does not do and as Matthiessen neglects to do in his discussion of James, Chase points out the essential difference between the methods of Hawthorne and Faulkner and those of James. In Chase's terms, the characters in Hawthorne's and Faulkner's works are more readily understood as archetypes, and therefore their fiction can be categorized as allegory, whereas James portrays his characters--and the governess in "The Turn of the Screw" in particular--as making symbols of their own. He maintains that because James' "sinister romance"

> . . . deals with "meaning," with knowledge and its limits, with the symbolizing processes of the mind as it seeks to rationalize the world, it is symbolistic; and all the potentially allegorical elements are broken down into the subtler ambiguities of the poetic symbol.[4]

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[3]See Chapter V, footnote 3.

[4]Chase, p. 240.

As the symbols evoked by James' characters are so frequently drawn from their readings in the long and varied tradition of romance and from their appreciation of its manifestations in art and drama, I have chosen to call this "symbolizing process of the mind," the romance-oriented imagination. James himself might have termed it the "unbridled fancy" in contrast with the "potent imagination."

James consistently places his heroes and heroines in situations that encourage not only the reader but also the characters themselves to rely on the symbols of romance. Thus R. W. B. Lewis can interpret the experience of the Jamesian character allegorically, as following the essentially romantic pattern of the American Adam:

> . . . the form which life assumed in James's fiction reflected the peculiar rhythm of the Adamic experience: the birth of the innocent, the foray into the unknown world, "the fortunate fall," the wisdom and maturity which suffering produced. The longer James lived abroad, the closer he moved toward a classic representation of the native anecdote.[5]

But the unknown world which James becomes interested in leading his characters into is the unknown territory of their own consciousnesses. As his heroes and heroines are tempted to interpret their circumstances in terms of traditional romance, they invariably fail, like Don Quixote, to see them either steadily or whole. Yet because the symbols of the romance are associated with "the things we never can

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[5]R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 153.

directly know"--with the past and the supernatural, with forces of absolute evil and ideals of absolute goodness--the hero or heroine who attempts to understand his human environment in the symbols of romance puts himself in relation to the unknown. The romance-oriented imagination thus can be an essential means by which the individual may come to know himself; it may become the "potent imagination."

"The process of vision," the coming to knowledge, is what most absorbed James in his final works. As Dorothea Krook emphasizes, James was re-examining the idea that

> . . . metaphysics is antecedent to morality, that truth is the necessary condition of goodness, that knowledge is virtue, that no man can be good--really, successfully good--whose vision of reality is false or distorted, and who therefore does not know whether what he knows is fact or delusion.[6]

In his portraits of Ralph Pendrel and Lambert Strether he was able to demonstrate the role of the romance-oriented imagination in the discovery of the self as a moral and social being. Because of his romancing Ralph is able, at least in James' notes, to connect the past with the present, the dead with the living, and Strether, because of his romancing, is able to connect human goodness with human error and evil. The realization which both must come to is that if the symbols of romance and the illusions they generate do not define human reality in toto, they lead the individual into the under side of reality. For Ralph and Strether the symbolizing process is a means for attaining knowledge rather than an end

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[6]Krook, p. 134.

in itself; the connection is the end. For the governess of "The Turn of the Screw," however, the symbolizing process does become an end; self-consciously committed to the validity of her illusions, she severs her connections with reality. She loses herself; Strether finds himself.

The discovery which comes to James' characters after their journey into the unknown wilds of Europe and their own minds seems synonymous with the last stage in the myth of the American Adam formulated by R. W. B. Lewis. The romance of the Redcrosse Knight and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" can even more accurately be said to lie behind Strether's story. The conclusion of the American Adam's experience is often in death or in flight, but Strether, like the Redcrosse Knight, returns to society, and, like the Ancient Mariner, he returns with the knowledge of his own guilt, of his own suffering, and of the value of love. Strether's experience is an individual experience, and if we accept Richard Chase's and Donald Billiar's definition of the romance as concerned with man as an individual rather than as a social creature, James is a romancer.[7] Yet James' individual is never flung up against cosmic circumstances; he must always prove himself within a given social context, and although in his final self-knowledge, he stands apart from others, his knowledge also sustains him in the social context. And as he discovers himself to be neither just nor perfect, he

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[7]See Chapter I, p.20.

discovers society to be neither just nor perfect; yet his knowledge of the limitations of himself and his society does not preclude a knowledge of their goodness. Thus in James' mature works his hero, both because of and in spite of his romance-oriented imagination, confronts the things "we never <u>can</u> know directly," but he has brought them into harmony with "the things we cannot possibly <u>not</u> know." And James--one "of the men of largest responding imaginations before the human scene"--"by the law of some rich passion in him for extremes . . . remains therefore [in his own works] extraordinarily rich and mixed, washing us successively with the warm wave of the near and familiar and the tonic shock, as may be, of the far and strange."

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