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The Jamesian Journey

by

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INTRODUCTION

I evoke the archetypal Edenic myth as the basic idea for this essay, and in so doing have some sanction from James himself, who, in writing of his own "fortunate fall" said, "Very special and very interesting to catch in the fact the state of being of the American who has bitten deep into the apple of 'Europe' and then been obliged to take his lips from the fruit."[1] In quoting this statement Leon Edel says that James came to regard himself ironically, as having left his own Paradise to venture forth to Europe. In his novels James often represents the innocence/experience bifurcation in terms of America and Europe. Edel says, "In James's fiction Americans are often treated as if they still possess the innocence of Eden; and in their unawareness of evil they are shown as highly vulnerable once they venture outside their American Paradise."[2]

James's use of the myth is both universal and American. The Edenic myth is significant in American cultural and creative thought. R.W.B. Lewis in his The American Adam says of Henry James, Sr., "In drawing up his definition of human experience /he/ frequently employed the metaphor of Adam and Eve." He also states that the elder James "suggested how the drama of Adam should proceed, or how, to put it differently, the young culture should

finally achieve its maturity. . . . In order to enter the ranks of manhood, the individual (however fair) had to fall, had to pass beyond childhood in an encounter with 'Evil', had to mature by virtue of the destruction of his own egotism."[3] Henry James Jr. uses the Edenic myth in his art and dramatizes the limited perception of the innocent in a world he seeks to understand.

America did not provide, for James, sufficient material which he could utilize as social experience. His own Transatlantic journeys to Europe and his residence there gave rise to the image for the dialectical encounter which he could best relate to "experience" in the widest sense. The ascetic/aesthetic, American/European dichotomy contains contrasting systems of value, and by bringing these systems into confrontation with each other James dramatizes the individuating process which is depicted as the Fall. It is the fall into knowledge and self-awareness, and paradoxically, it is also a rising up from the darkness of ignorance.

James applies the Edenic myth in dealing with the fundamental aspect of the individual's development, i.e., the growth towards maturity, through the integration of experience. The initial error which characterizes the state of innocence is that experience will conform to presupposition. When events expose the fallacious assumptions, the central character experiences a supreme

dislocation, one wherein a portion of his being is confuted. A betrayal of the self takes place. Overcoming the anguish of this betrayal is the struggle. The integration is manifested in internal adaptation.

James renders this process as a journey from a prior state of innocence into a realm of experience. The condition of innocence is a mental state which is fixed, and wherein all of the categories have been firmly established, but remain untested. The journey into experience is a confrontation with another set of categories, another way of seeing, and consequently a testing of the values and beliefs hitherto unquestioned. It is a movement from a world of certainties into a world of flux. During this movement a dialectic between unexamined assumptions and experience ensues within the Jamesian character. Out of this encounter he creates a new and tentative set of categories with which to confront experience. And, since he has entered the world of process, the testing will and must continue. The dénouement of James's novels is not one of stasis for the traveler. Once he enters the world of process the illusion of the "happily ever after" ending dissolves. The journey of change and accommodation, the journey towards self-knowledge, continues until one dies. While the mode of passage for each protagonist is different, the act of passage is the same, in the sense that there is a movement from a previous state to a new condition.

The principal character's symbolic beginning and subsequent movement are often figured in garden imagery. As well, his travels are significant either as relating directly to an advance in knowledge, or, ironically to an imitation of change.

The reader is able to participate in the journey from Eden into the world through the consciousness of the central character in each novel. Travel and seeing, rather than travel and doing, are closely connected in James, as "seeing" and "knowing" are markedly related. In the Preface to The Ambassadors James says, "the business of my tale and the march of my action, not to say the precious moral of everything, is just my demonstration of this process of vision."[4] Thus James neatly fuses the notion of seeing with process and with movement. In speaking of James's technique, F.O. Matthiessen says, "What distinguished him from French naturalists and English aesthetes alike was that he never forgot the further kind of seeing, the transcendent passage to the world behind appearances and beyond the senses."[5] Leon Edel comments that "At every turn James invites us to look: and through sight we are asked to charge our other senses."[6] Lyall H. Powers contends that "The sign of maturity in the Jamesian protagonist is clear vision--the ability to see and know the truth about things as they really are."[7]

To transcend the limitations of one's given set of

values is a great triumph of sight in James. In order to do that all of the experience we may encounter must be assimilated, indeed welcomed. Only by such assimilation may we achieve the inner movement which is the true life's journey. The purpose of the journey is to gain illumination, and experience is the vessel or the coach which carries the mental traveler.

While it is the contention of this essay that the basic idea of James's novels of innocence and experience is the Edenic myth, the controlling metaphor is that of the journey. I have cited, where applicable, the principal images of travel in the novels under discussion. James himself speaks of his minor characters as "wheels to the coach" in his Preface to The Portrait of a Lady: "each of these persons is but wheels to the coach; neither belongs to the body of that vehicle, or is for a moment accommodated with a seat inside."[8] It is interesting to note James's concept of the main character as a coach, thus emphasizing the image of travel. In every novel under discussion, furthermore, the central characters embark on significant journeys.

I believe that a fair chronological sampling is contained in the works under discussion, spanning the years 1877 to 1904. I have selected the following five novels to represent the growth and development of James's art: The American, The Portrait of a Lady, The Spoils of Poynton,

The Ambassadors and The Golden Bowl.[9] With respect to an understanding of James's work, T.S. Eliot has said: "One thing is certain, that the books of Henry James form a complete whole. One must read all of them, for one must grasp, if anything, both the unity and the progression. The gradual development, and the fundamental identity of spirit are both important, and their lesson is one lesson."[10] Certainly there is an identity of spirit, as I hope to demonstrate, but it is not possible to explicate the entire corpus of James's work to discover it. As well, I hope to depict James's expanding vision, his "progression" as Eliot so aptly names it, in the delineation and increasing depth of his chief characters as the process and progress of his art unfolds.

The first chapter of this essay describes the limitations and the possibilities of each central character as that character is constituted at the outset. Each one possesses a potential for self-knowledge, psychological insight, which in James is the true knowledge. From our introduction to the protagonist we thus obtain an idea of his capacities. Experience will be the agent and the power of his true potential. This initial description is the point of departure on the journey of discovery for the Jamesian protagonist.

The second chapter deals with the response of each protagonist to the destruction of his old certainties, and

to the recognition that events shatter expectations, and destroy complacency and security. Moreover, he discovers, his assumptions about others have stemmed from his own beliefs and categories, and have not been based on clear understanding. As events unfold in the mind of the protagonists so do they illuminate the protagonists to the reader. The movement inward is rendered in terms of the manner in which each central character deals with experience. This is the mid-passage of the journey.

The third chapter describes the efforts of the protagonists to adapt to a world which is different from the world of their preconceived ideas. In order to do so they must effect a dramatic shift in perspective. The direction of that exertion is towards a re-evaluation of definitions. The old categories are inappropriate, and the central character feels their insufficiency as a refutation of old certainties. A new system of values must be created. Each character succeeds in achieving this goal to the extent that he is capable of re-arranging his perspectives. Every new accommodation, however, is tentative. Though journey's end lies in death, while one lives each journey's end is a new accommodation.

Each chief character is generously endowed with energy of the spirit, and though each manages his energies differently--sometimes in initiation of activity and

sometimes in response--it is through the consciousness of the central characters that the action which makes the novel move is generated.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Leon Edel, The Conquest of London (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1962), p. 33.

2. Ibid.

3. R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 55.

4. Henry James, The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James ed. R.P. Blackmur (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 308. Further references to this work will be to AN.

5. F.O. Matthiessen, Henry James: The Major Phase (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 32.

6. Edel, p. 55.

7. Lyall H. Powers, Henry James's Major Novels: Essays in Criticism (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1973), p. xv.

8. James, The Art of the Novel, p. 54.

9. The American, introd. J.W. Beach (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1949); The Portrait of a Lady, ed. by Leon Edel (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963); The Aspern Papers and The Spoils of Poynton, introd. by R.P. Blackmur (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1959); The Ambassadors, ed. by S.P. Rosenbaum (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Inc., 1964); The Golden Bowl, ed. and with an afterword by John Halperin (New York: Popular Library. Reprinted by arrangement with the World Publishing Company. No date given.) All further references will be to the editions cited and will be incorporated into the text of the thesis. The textual notes will adopt the following abbreviations of the titles: The American: American; Portrait of a Lady: Portrait; The Spoils of Poynton: Spoils; The Ambassadors: Ambassadors; The Golden Bowl: G.B.

10. Dorothea Krook, The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 1.

CHAPTER I

Possibilities and Limitations: The Departure

In the earliest James novel under discussion The American, the protagonist's name tells us something significant. In speaking of Christopher Newman's name, William J. Maseychik says, "Christopher for the explorer, adventurer and discoverer, Columbus; and Newman for the innocent Adamic man."[1]

When we meet him at the beginning of the book he is taking his ease while "staring at Murillo's beautiful moon borne Madonna." (American, p. 1).[2] His is the position of a vigorous man temporarily ceasing from activity. He had "flung down beside him . . ." (p. 1) his guide book and glass, and "he was not a man to whom fatigue was familiar." (p. 1) Also, he is looking at a representation of man's desiring, at the picture of one of his most compelling myths, the Madonna. Without mentioning his name James invokes a strong sense of power in the physical presence and actions of Newman, and tells us that he is clever and competent as well: "His physiognomy would have sufficiently indicated that he was a shrewd and capable fellow." (p. 1) However, even though he is able to work all night "over a bristling bundle of accounts" (p. 1) he

is tired by Titian and Rubens. Newman is shown as a kind of archetypal American, sprung full blown from the continent of America, without known antecedents, with a name which is symbolic. His intelligence and his confidence, as well as his vast riches are the means by which he hopes to reach out for, explore and acquire, the goods of Europe. Mrs. Tristram calls him 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." (American p. 31)

But the masters weary him. The only personal datum given in the early description of Newman is that he was "inspired . . . for the first time in his life, with a vague sense of self-mistrust." (American, p. 2) Thus James confronts us with a type rather than an individual. We know by his description how very American Newman is, almost a stereotype. Viola Hopkins, in commenting on this scene in her article "Visual Art Devices in Henry James," says, "In one sharp visual image the theme of America confronting Europe is presented with immediacy and economy."[3]

Obviously Newman is attempting something completely new for him. He is endeavoring to understand something not by way of the rational faculty, which serves him so well in understanding accounts, nor by way of the methods of business which involves bargaining and keen judgment, but by means of the eye, by "seeing", which encompasses aesthetic

knowledge and appreciation, and the reflective faculty as yet new and untried. Newman is used to acting, not meditating. His ventures into the Louvre are the beginning of feeling, and he says, "'The fact is I have never had time to feel things. I have had to do them, to make myself felt.'" (American, p. 30)

Newman is entering a new realm of experience. He is hampered in his efforts to understand it because he is "guilty of the damning fault (as we have lately discovered it to be) of confounding the merit of the artist with that of his work . . . for he admires the squinting Madonna of the young lady with the boyish coiffure because he thinks the young lady herself uncommonly taking." (American, p. 3) At the beginning of his journey we find that Newman is undiscriminating. He will buy Noémie Nioche's execrable imitations of the masters because she is pretty. Thus, when we first meet him his standards of value are determined by superficial and inappropriate criteria. He wants to see, in order to know the world, but he is not interested in the values which belong to the world of inner sight. He wants to learn, but not change, not to be dislocated by knowledge. In fact, "He had not only a dislike, but a sort of moral mistrust, of uncomfortable thoughts, and it was both uncomfortable and slightly contemptible to feel obliged to square one's self with a standard. One's standard was the ideal of one's own good-humored prosperity, and

prosperity which enabled one to give as well as take." (p. 61)

It is Christopher's eye which sets the tone for his story, "an eye in which innocence and experience were singularly blended." (p. 30) Appropriately, his mentor in Paris is Mrs. Tristram who bears the same name as the young knight who suffered lust of the eyes.[4] Leon Edel considers that "James's mature belief [is] that life is a process of seeing, and through awareness the attaining of understanding."[5] Though Edel here refers to The Ambassadors, a much later work, we can see in The American the early connection, the notion of "seeing" and "understanding" being one and the same.

F.O. Matthiessen writes, "An interesting chapter of cultural history could be written about the nineteenth century's stress on sight. When Emerson declared that 'the age is ocular,' and delighted in the fact that the poet is the seer, he was overwhelmingly concerned with the spiritual and not the material vision. But concern with the external world came to mark every phase of the century's scientific achievement."[6] James's metaphor is both immediate, in terms of his times, and universal in the sense that we understand what it means to see beyond the surface and into the meaning of things. His use of ocular imagery extends to other characters in the work. Claire's eyes were "at once brilliant and mild," "soft and luminous,"

(American, p. 59) and finally, towards the end "like two rainy autumn moons." (p. 271) The Marquise has cold, blue eyes, of course. Newman begins by desiring all that is pleasing to his eyes. But what the eye sees also enters the mind as an image, and works its own influence there.

Newman has become dissatisfied with his own world and apprehends that there is another way of living. His intimation of this knowledge comes to him when he is no longer interested in avenging himself on a business competitor who has injured him. The very act of travelling to Europe is the Jamesian way of describing Newman's wish to change his state, to seek new givens. While Newman, as all of us, is not readily able to analyze of just what his own world of "donnees"[7] consists, he is perceptive about the world of others. Of the Marquise he thinks, "her world is the world of things immutably decreed. But how she is at home in it, and what a paradise she finds it! She walks about in it as if it were a blooming park, a Garden of Eden; and when she sees 'This is genteel,' or 'This is improper,' written on a mile-stone she stops ecstatically, as if she were listening to a nightingale or smelling a rose." (American, p. 127) The Marquise de Bellegarde, in her Garden, sees even more than Newman realizes. She sees the comfort of an order, a timeless hierarchy, a "place" for everyone and everything. She does not wish to change the stillness of her world; indeed

she is immured in the world of the immutable.

Newman does seek a change, albeit a comfortable one. He has begun to move out of his former patterns of response and action. During his travels in Europe he has found a world of beauty which somehow corresponds to his beautiful action in eschewing revenge: "It had come back to him simply that what he had been looking at all summer was a very rich and beautiful world, and that it had not all been made by sharp railroad men and stockbrokers." (American, p. 71)

Being a man ready for a wife, he establishes a woman for his focal point in this new world. His approach is business-like but unsophisticated. Prior to touring the continent he has spoken to Mrs. Tristram of a wife in terms of a purchase, "'I want to possess, in a word, the best article in the market.'" (American, p. 34) S. Gorley Putt comments in this context that "With all his mercantile shrewdness, there is in this careful first presentation of Newman a sense of the inappropriate skills of a fish out of water, which in the Parisian world he now sets out to conquer do indeed reduce him to an unconscious 'guileless integrity'."[8] Yet, he is also a romantic, perhaps something of a knight errant, for when he speaks to Valentin of his sister, he says, "'She is my dream realized.'" (American, p. 109) This modern knight errant quests after his dream so that he may purchase it, not earn it in the old ways.

It is interesting in this context to note that young Valentin is described as "a page in a romance," a suitable adjunct to the squiredom of Mrs. Tristram. Thus the conventions of knight errantry are signalled by James.

As Newman travels through Europe, counting the places he visits, he might be investigating and cataloguing a new garden which he hopes to enjoy. And all the while he thinks, "If he wanted to see more of the world might he not find it in Claire de Cintré's eyes?" (American, p. 70) Newman's idea of Europe comes to be embodied in Claire, in the beauty of her eyes, while in actual fact the garden of forms which is the Europe of Madame de Bellegarde is also an aspect of Europe with which he will have to deal. His readiness for new experience is expressed in his journey from America to Europe and in his travels throughout Europe. He wishes to enter and possess this world, and this desire to make himself felt, to penetrate this world, will come into conflict with a society which values the changeless, the everlasting, and which evicts intruders. Experience for Newman will be an enlargement of the orb, the orb of the eye and of his world which he encompasses with the faculty of sight. As he travels in the realms of experience his inner eye will be opened.

Newman wishes to make himself felt. Indeed he is used to it. In The Portrait of a Lady, Isabel Archer has no conscious idea of altering others' lives, though she

wishes to aggrandize her own. At the beginning she enters the first garden as a stranger come only to enjoy it as long as she may. The name "Gardencourt exudes a mood of mellow reciprocity between the civilised and the natural," says Tony Tanner in his essay on Portrait entitled "The Fearful Self."[9] There is, however, an anomaly in first seeing Isabel, whose surname Archer suggests the chaste Diana, and who is clothed in black, entering the Eden-like atmosphere, complete with animals and a would-be Adam in the person of Lord Warburton. Isabel is no daughter of the morning, for she enters after the light has reached its height, and she is clothed in darkness. J.C. Rowe, in his discussion in Henry Adams and Henry James totally denies any element of irony or paradox in this scene by stating that "Mr. Touchett has purchased a dead little world. The waning afternoon reflects not only the old bankers' impending death, but Ralph's fatal illness."[10] Rowe's analysis leaves out the whole question of the chief character in the work, Isabel herself. Isabel wants to move in "a realm of light," (Portrait, p. 53) and in her depths "lay a belief that if a certain light should dawn she could give herself completely . . ." (Portrait, p. 55) But it is part of Isabel's struggles that this image is, for her, "too formidable to be attractive." (p. 55) At the outset of her journey there is a sense of discrepancy and contradiction accompanying Isabel. James maintains this dissentience

throughout, creating a tension between Isabel's proclaimed desires and the reality of her action. J.A. Ward says of her, "Though Isabel is more innocent than Eve at the beginning of her adventure, her innocence is ambiguous; it combines a false notion of personal independence with an obliviousness to evil. In this sense her original sin is simply innocence, but an innocence coordinate with pride."[11] James compresses the conflicting motives which Isabel carries within herself in a few closely related passages: "Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of self-esteem." (Portrait, p. 53) Her vacillations between superiority and self-abasement are further delineated:

> she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; she treated herself to occasions of homage. Meanwhile her errors and delusions were frequently such as a biographer interested in preserving the dignity of his subject must shrink from specifying. In matters of opinion she had her own way, and it had led her into a thousand ridiculous zigzags. At moments she discovered she was grotesquely wrong, and then she treated herself to a week of passionate humility. After this she held her head higher than ever. . . . Of course the danger of a high spirit was the danger of inconsistency . . . But Isabel flattered herself that such contradictions would never be noted in her own conduct. (Portrait, pp. 53-4)

The little rushes of introspection always end in a failure of real self-knowledge. Her concern with the external appearances, the presentation of herself to the world, tend to obscure genuine perception. It is her

external manner which is impressive, and in consciously cultivating her style, she misses knowledge. Some of this style is shared with the mass of American girls who had been encouraged to express themselves. James says, "her remarks had been attended to; she had been expected to have emotions and opinions. Many of her opinions had doubtless but a slender value, many of her emotions passed away in the utterance; but they had left a trace in giving her the habit of seeming at least to feel and think." (Portrait, pp. 56-7)

We begin to see that Isabel's mind is the terrain through which she travels, and which is as yet an unknown country. Isabel's egotism is described by James as he describes the processes of her mind in images of a garden, "Her nature had, in her conceit, 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 spirit was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses." (Portrait, p. 55) Naomi Lebowitz speaks of "the general garden imagery of the novel itself."[12] Garden as mind is the versatile image James continues to use in describing Isabel's mental movements. There are places which Isabel does not want to enter, experiences she does not wish to have. The garden image is again evoked when Lord

Warburton proposes to her in the park of his house: "These words were uttered with a breadth of candour that was like the embrace of strong arms--that was like the fragrance straight in her face, and by his clean, breathing lips, of she knew not what strange gardens." (Portrait, p. 99)

She cannot let him enter the garden of her mind because there are places there she does not want to be explored, and she wants to retain the pristine areas, and to remain untouched by another consciousness. Too close contact is frightening to her, and to be drawn into another's will or feelings causes her to feel trapped. To her, Lord Warburton's mind is a "vast cage," and she like "some wild, caught creature" in it. Because it is no struggle to refuse, Isabel wonders at herself, if she is not "cold, hard, priggish" and this thought makes her "really frightened at herself." (Portrait, p. 101) At the brink of knowledge, at the brink of feeling, Isabel typically evades it by claiming that she seeks knowledge of life and that a relationship would only deflect her from her fate. She tells Lord Warburton that to marry him would be an attempt to escape her fate, and her fate is to "know and suffer." (Portrait, p. 118) There is little to indicate that Isabel understands the meaning of the words. For her at this point, knowledge and suffering are abstractions. Indeed, they are almost in the category of opinions, which, as James has pointed out, girls are expected to have, for

when Ralph says to her, "'You want to drain the cup of experience,'" she answers, "'No, I don't wish to touch the cup of experience. It's a poisoned drink! I only want to see for myself!'" And Ralph tells her then, "'You want to see but not to feel.'" (Portrait, p. 132) Ralph is right. She is engaged in a solitary journey at the level of carefully selected exploration, wide-ranging intellectually, but containing little, if any, emotional substance.

Here Isabel shares with Newman the wish to see and do, but not to be pained by knowledge, or to suffer as a result of action. Newman does not want to square himself with a standard. Isabel, for her part, does not, cannot, enter into an emotional state in conjunction with another person. They both hold off from a commitment. They both want to remain in control of any situation they encounter. This wish to control assumes the mask of freedom for Isabel. She says, "'If there's a thing in the world I'm fond of it's my personal independence.'" (Portrait, p. 140) Tanner acutely points out that "To see everything in the world as sheer barrier, hindrance, is also dangerous. For without any limits the self cannot take on any contours, cannot become something real."[13] Isabel's sense of superiority is evident when she asserts, "'I wish to choose my fate and know something of human affairs beyond what other people think it compatible with propriety to tell me.'" (Portrait,

p. 141) There is some ambiguity in the expressed statement of the desire for independence and her emotions at the exercise of power, "She sat down. . . . She leaned back with that low, soft, aspiring murmur with which she often uttered her response to accidents . . . and yielded to the satisfaction of having refused two ardent suitors in a fortnight. . . . It appeared to her she had done something; she had tasted of the delight, if not of battle, at least of victory." (Portrait, p. 143)

James here opens a region of her mind to us, a somewhat surprising enclave, an area which contains implications that might shock Isabel if she understood them. She appears to have confused love of freedom with the exercise of power. But it is a power exercised negatively, to rebuff and decline. As Tony Tanner expresses it, "her most characteristic response in the real world is one of refusal and rejection."[14] And all of this is done in the name of independence, that is, independence of spirit.

She does not begin with financial independence, however, and it is her cousin Ralph who is instrumental in providing that. "'I should like to put a little wind in her sails,'" he tells his father. (Portrait, p. 158) The "wind" is of course money. Thus Isabel's cousin launches her career with the only means he can command, or rather request, the power of wealth. Though possessed

of more insight than Isabel in most matters, Ralph succumbs to her own interpretation of her motives because he loves her. "'She wishes to be free and your bequest will make her free,'" he says to Mr. Touchett. (Portrait, p. 158)

The freedom which is linked to personal independence is what impresses Isabel about Osmond when she first meets him.[15] For Osmond, "It was her present inclination, however, to express a measured sympathy for the success with which he had preserved his independence. 'That's a very pleasant life, to renounce everything but Correggio.'" (Portrait, p. 223) The contrast between Osmond's life-denying tendencies and Henrietta Stockpole's affirming inclinations is brought out in their mutual admiration for Correggio which only serves to heighten their difference in approach to art as well as to life. Viola Hopkins says, "One is rather surprised at first that Henrietta Stockpole's favorite painting should be the tender, almost sentimental Virgin Adoring the Child by Correggio in the Uffizi. But on second thought, doesn't this unexpected preference of hers reveal that for all her crisp, official feminism she has a more personal feminine side, that side which is expressed in her loyalty to Isabel?"[16]

Obviously Henrietta understands something which Isabel does not. Ward, speaking on the ties of marriage in the work says, "There is the marriage of the American

Henrietta and the English Bantling, both comic figures, whose union is an ironic counterpart to Isabel's, for it gives all indications of being the only successful marriage in the book."[17] We must remember, too, that it is Henrietta who has the last word in the book. Matthiessen says of it, "that what was being expressed was no sure promise about Isabel, but rather Henrietta's optimism, which refuses to accept defeat."[18] As well, it is her compassion speaking.

But for Isabel the quality she most admires is Osmond's cultivated aestheticism. The lacing of intellectual snobbishness with a detached manner is what makes him interesting. He produces the exact effect he intends upon her, a refinement simply too good for this world. Perhaps this picture appeals to Isabel's notions of her own superiority. She says of him to Ralph: "In everything that makes one care for people Mr. Osmond is pre-eminent. There may be nobler natures, but I've never had the pleasure of meeting one. Mr. Osmond's is the finest I know; he's good enough for me, and interesting enough, and clever enough. I'm far more struck with what he has and what he represents than with what he may lack." (Portrait, p. 285) Indeed, when James says that "Isabel's thoughts were a tangle of outlines," he demonstrates it here. (Portrait, p. 53) She does not understand her own motives, and for this reason cannot follow through a line of reasoning or

establish a logical sequence of thought. On this point, Leon Edel, in his introduction to the novel, says that Isabel Archer, typifying the new American woman, might be the "helpless victim of her self-assurance--and her innocence."[19]

James allows his readers to observe more than Isabel can see, since the reader is privy to private conversations between Osmond and Madame Merle, and so to instances of Osmond's thinking and behavior. However, in his speech, Osmond is patently a poseur, and a self-centred snob. It is not necessary to have prior knowledge or to be a sophisticate to recognize him. Edel says of Isabel: "When she makes her choice, it is to marry the one man who in the end limits her freedom most--an American dilettante, fastidious and fussy, who 'collects' her--and her money--as he collects his objets d'art."[20] In his introduction to the work, Edel says, "His fastidiousness has been but a mask for a private dream of power. A collector of bric-a-brac and objects of art, and a subtle and cruel manipulator of persons as well as things, he has made his daughter a part of his 'collection,' and he tries to add his wife to it as well."[21] That Isabel is taken in is less a tribute to his art than a commentary upon her dangerous innocence and her eagerness to shine. Above all she wishes to be keen and sensitive, and to that end she exerts herself mightily: "A part of Isabel's fatigue

came from the effort to appear as intelligent as she believed Madame Merle had described her, and from the fear of exposing--not her ignorance; for that she cared comparatively little--but her possible grossness of perception." (Portrait, p. 221)

Isabel endows Osmond with her own notion of his qualities--he is a creation of her imagination, the knowing aesthete who renounces the coarse world in order to cultivate arcane but innocent tastes. James says of her, "She had never met a person of so fine a grain . . . He was certainly critical. His sensibility governed him." (Portrait, p. 220) Osmond is someone beyond her ken and seems to possess some esoteric lore associated with "this appearance of thinking that life was a matter of connoisseurship." (p. 220) The worlds of Warburton and Goodwood are too easily accessible, too open, too obvious to be interesting. Isabel wants to know something different but not to know it too deeply or too thoroughly. "The love of knowledge coexisted in her mind with the finest capacity for ignorance," James says of her. (Portrait, p. 171) And he also says she was "deficient in the sense of comedy." (Portrait, p. 207) For that reason she cannot see the element in Osmond which is slightly ridiculous. Ralph says of him, "'he looks like a prince who has abdicated in a fit of fastidiousness and has been in a state of disgust ever since. . . . He has a great dread of vulgarity; that's

his special line; he hasn't any other that I know of.'" (Portrait, p. 210)

Certainly Ralph does not lack a sense of comedy. His sense of the ridiculous repels Isabel, his mockery of Osmond estranges her from him. Because her sense of comedy is deficient she has a tendency to treat her impressions as considered judgments, and will not tolerate any invitations to probe them. She is unable to see beneath the surface, nor does she wish to.

I have previously quoted James's description of her forays into introspective thought. He says, "a visit to the recesses of one's spirit was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses." (Portrait, p. 55) She must return from the garden of her mind with roses; she is incapable of seeing further to the thorny parts. Osmond makes a strong impression on her and in so doing excites her desires to be good, as well as her desires to be better than anyone, her striving towards the ideal as well as her sense of superiority. In order to give shape to her journey and to come to understand herself Isabel will have to learn first to understand and then to integrate, or somehow soften, her conflicting tendencies. Humiliation and arrogance do not live well together. To what extent she will move towards the "realm of light" where oppositions are reconciled remains to be seen.

A realm of light also figures significantly in

The Spoils of Poynton. James refers to Fleda Vetch, the chief character in this novella as a "light lamp" and speaks of the treasures of Poynton as "radiant, shedding afar, with a merciless monotony, all their light."[22] This is how he visualizes the treasures in his Preface to the work. Light is knowledge, and James works towards this point. The Spoils is an early work in his later style, and about one third the size of Portrait. Because of its brevity the incidents are compressed, and greater pressure is put upon the action. In short, it does not unfold at the leisurely pace of his longer works, nor is there the scope for gradual delineation of character.

The name Fleda Vetch is harsh and has a rather ugly sound. Yet, Fleda herself is pretty. Her first name suggests an image of flight or fleeing, which relates to the notion of a journey; and the more interesting surname "Vetch" refers to leguminous plants, mostly climbing herbs, which suggests they need a support to grow, and seems to contradict the spirit of her first name, since plants may not be moved if they are to live, or at least must be carefully transplanted. There is a suggestion of conflicting tendencies and another play on the word "Vetch" is the possibility of "vex".

Fleda's journey begins at Waterbath where she meets Mrs. Gereth, a woman as discontented as she with the vulgarity of the surroundings. Her journey will take

Fleda about a restricted territory, a triangle that encompasses Poynton, Ricks and her own London. At the start of her journey she and Mrs. Gereth are unhappily located at Waterbath, home of the Brigstocks. She is first seen through Mrs. Gereth's eyes in the grounds of the house and she is "dressed with an idea." (Spoils, p. 128) Mrs. Gereth is drawn to this manifestation of taste, and upon discovering their mutual pain at the adornments and ornaments of the place, engage in a merciless dissection of these crimes committed against taste by their hosts. Mrs. Gereth is the more dramatic in describing her reactions but it is Fleda who suggests that the "acres of varnish" were applied "by their own hands and hilariously shoving each other," and "was the amusement of the Brigstocks on rainy days." (Spoils, p. 130) Her affinity with Mrs. Gereth is established from an external viewing of their encounter. The first-hand introduction to Fleda comes as she walks beside Owen to church. We learn that Fleda considers Owen "absolutely beautiful and delightfully dense . . . it was of a pleasant effect and rather remarkable to be stupid without offense--of a pleasant effect and rather remarkable than to be clever and horrid . . . She was herself prepared, if she should ever marry, to contribute all the cleverness, and she liked to think that her husband would be a force grateful for direction." (Spoils, p. 132)

Fleda travels a long way in her thoughts at this first meeting with Owen Gereth. Given her stated modesty and delicacy (Spoils, p. 132) it is surprising that she allows herself to go so quickly and so frankly. Clearly, some great event has taken place and James goes on to tell us that "On that flushed and huddled Sunday a great matter occurred; her little life became aware of singular quickening. Her meagre past fell away from her like a garment of the wrong fashion, and as she came up to town on the Monday what she stared at in the suburban fields from the train was a future full of the things she particularly loved." (Spoils, p. 132)

In the next chapter we discover that among these "things" are the "things" at Poynton about which Mrs. Gereth has told her. Why Fleda sees them as figuring significantly in her future is not immediately apparent since if it is through marriage to Owen there is no reason to expect it. But they are related to the rapport between herself and Mrs. Gereth. Fleda's role is that of full participant in their quickly developed relationship: "She had a sense partly exultant and partly alarmed, of having quickly become necessary to her imperious friend." (Spoils, p. 134) Mrs. Gereth declares that nobody else understands her as Fleda does. To what effect this "understanding" will lead remains to be seen.

There are conflicting views regarding Fleda's role

in the work. Robert C. McLean says, "Although largely responsible for the awkward predicament in which she finds herself--as a false confidante and advisor for both Mrs. Gereth and Owen--Fleda is also the victim of Mrs. Gereth's machinations. Intoxicated as she is by Mrs. Gereth's idea that she can allure Owen away from Mona Brigstock, Fleda is nevertheless an inadequate villainess on several counts. She is, for example, amazingly naive about and considerably repelled by sex. . . . Rather she sees her function in the heroic, magnanimous performance of 'some high and delicate deed' which would arouse even Owen's dulled wit."[23] Sister M. Corona Sharp offers quite another interpretation: "Fleda has the power which James adverts to again and again in his work: the power of insight and knowledge. From the very beginning she gauges the other characters accurately, because her insights are the author's only means of communication with the reader."[24] These assessments of Fleda are widely disparate. My own position is closer to that of F.W. Dupee who supports the notion of Fleda as an essentially moral being: "However casual her origin, Fleda Vetch is central to The Spoils of Poynton and, in what she represents, to the novels that follow. She embodies what another character describes as 'the moral sense'; and the fate of the moral sense in a corrupt or obtuse world is the common subject of the Spoils, What Maisie Knew, etc."[25]

Fleda's is the developing moral voice, and in her lies the potential for insight and knowledge. But she must first encounter the realm of experience, and for Fleda the entrance is through Poynton.

Fleda's reaction upon first seeing the beauty of Poynton draws her and Mrs. Gereth even more closely together, "and the two women embraced with tears over the tightening of their bond--tears which on the younger one's part were the natural and usual sign of her submission to perfect beauty." (Spoils, p. 140) There is a puzzling ambiguity hidden beneath the innocent surface of this observation. Fleda's tearful obeisance to the beauty of Poynton is not in question. But why "perfect?" James does not often use this word except, to describe a type, and then it is generally ironic in its application. Mrs. Gereth's great talents for arrangement are related to the talents of the artist. And here we pause for a moment to speculate on the relationship between the artist and his work. Is the beauty not "perfect" because the means by which Mrs. Gereth got the things are often considerably less than honorable? Mrs. Gereth details her questionable methods herself, and here James seems to be gently suggesting the necessity of using appropriate means to gain desirable ends. But no, for in art the work itself must be considered as a distinct and separate moral entity, apart and removed from the personal morality of the artist. Then, in evaluating art

we must not introduce the ethical problem of means and ends. But that is precisely the problem of the Spoils. Then where does the artist fit when moral problems of action are at issue? The ironic use of "perfect" is made more apparent when we consider that perfection is what Mrs. Gereth and Fleda each hold as an ideal; the former seeks to create aesthetic perfection and the latter moral perfection. Each aspires to a different half of the ideal, and while not categorically mutually exclusive, they generally do not meet in the fallen world. Fleda is an appreciator and Mrs. Gereth comes close to being an artist. James gives Fleda the moral precedence when he states the essential difference between them in these terms: "Almost as much as Mrs. Gereth's her taste was her life, but her life was somehow the larger for it." (Spoils, p. 143) While Fleda retains sensitivity and a moral view despite a certain amount of confusion about her desires and motives, for Mrs. Gereth all considerations are subsumed by her obsession. James seems to be troubled by the subordination of ethical values to aesthetic values and he expresses the imbalance in this way: "The truth was simply that all Mrs. Gereth's scruples were on one side and that her ruling passion had in a manner despoiled her of her humanity." (Spoils, p. 152)

The works of art at Poynton become the focal point for the struggle between Mrs. Gereth and Owen/Mona.

Wiesenfarth believes that "By allowing the appeal of Poynton to affect this group, James sets in motion somewhat more than a family squabble. James, in fact, represented the struggle for the spoils as a small-scale internecine war."[26] Fleda's part in the struggle and its effect upon her begins after Owen and his mother quarrel over his engagement to Mona. Owen tells Fleda that "'Mother must come round,'" (Spoils, p. 155) and Fleda obligingly answers "'Only give her time.'" James shows at this point, that "She had advanced to the threshold of the door thus thrown open to her and, without exactly crossing it, she threw in an appreciative glance." (p. 155) Until this time Fleda, who had hitherto been Mrs. Gereth's companion, friend and ally, begins a passage from her previous state to a new and unknown situation. Her movement is adumbrated when she first realizes that she loves Owen and wants to cherish him: "She would cover him, she would protect him, and beyond thinking her a cheerful inmate he would never guess her intention, any more than, beyond thinking her clever enough for anything, his acute mother would discover it. From this hour, with Mrs. Gereth, there was a flaw in her frankness: her admirable friend continued to know everything she did; what was to remain unknown was the general motive." (Spoils, p. 145)

Fleda has reached the point of her departure. Her motivation has gone beyond concealment of her love from

Mrs. Gereth to actual partisanship on Owen's behalf. Her loyalties are now split. The effort necessary to maintain her inner balance while compartmentalizing her desires involves a change from being acted upon, an observer, to becoming an actor in the drama of her life. Even then, she does not act solely on her own behalf but divides herself between the two opposing camps. Clearly, the camps are within. As James says, "Our young lady's spirit was strangely divided." (Spoils, p. 159) On the one hand she and Mrs. Gereth share a love of beauty and she admires Mrs. Gereth's willingness "to be faithful to a trust and loyal to an idea." (p. 159) But her "tenderness for Owen" is the great attachment of her heart, and thus her admiration for the mother is counterbalanced by her love for the son. S. Gorley Putt is less sympathetic to Mrs. Gereth than is Fleda. He says, "we draw from James the novelist a wonderful sense that the basic coarseness of Mrs. Gereth's refinement must debase her as a person. . . . To be clever meant to know the 'marks'."[27] Of Fleda, he believes with James that she "has an independent moral sense also by 'direct inspiration.'"[28]

The boundaries of action and internal struggle are greatly extended and deepened in James's first work of the major phase, The Ambassadors. Before discussing the beginning of the journey I should like to comment on the name of the chief character. Lambert Strether's name is

an interesting one. "Lambert" and "lambent" are similar in sound and except for one letter identical in spelling. "Lambent" means, among other things, softly bright. And certainly in James, it is light as knowledge towards which the human journey is directed. The first syllable of the Christian name is "lamb", and the surname is almost an anagram for "tethers". "Lambert" in itself is a word related to light which may either amplify the "lamb" or suggest yet another order of meaning. However, it is in that first name, whatever context we may wish to give it, that he carries his beginnings and his possibilities. Certainly he begins in innocence.

Strether's modesty about his achievements is illustrated in his self-effacing attitude: "He was Lambert Strether because he was on the cover of the journal published in America, whereas it should have been, for anything like glory, that he was on the cover because he was Lambert Strether." (Ambassadors, p. 62) He is somewhat passive and a receiver of impressions rather than an effective agent of giving them. This tone is struck in the first paragraph of The Ambassadors which Ian Watt has analyzed. Watt deals with the use of verbs, stressing the "preference for non-transitive verbs; many abstract nouns . . .and the presence of a great many negatives and near negatives."[29] In contrast to Newman who moves with such decision, Strether's strengths are not those which

reach out to grasp or fling away, nor does he plunge into situations. He does not register forcefully, but he absorbs, and he is capable of introspection and reflection. He is diffident where Newman is courageous, and he goes forth to meet Europe under a different mentor than a Mrs. Tristram.

It is Maria Gostrey, (once again the Lamb and Mary), who takes his education into her hands. And it is in a garden that Strether's sense of a journey is made explicit: "Nothing could have been odder than Strether's sense of himself as at that moment launched in something of which the sense would be quite disconnected from the sense of his past and which was literally beginning then and there." (Ambassadors, p. 20; italics mine) In this passage he is with Maria in his first garden in Europe, the garden of the English hotel. And we are told that he is a traveller as well as a receiver. The "launching" heralds the journey he will take. That journey is into society, into experience; and a "woman of fashion was floating him" (Ambassadors, p. 38) into that society.

That Strether is a timid traveller is suggested frequently at the beginning of the work. Not for him is the inward conviction of superiority of an Isabel Archer. On the contrary, he considers that he had "failed in everything." (Ambassadors, p. 61) He feels foolish with Chad, as James shows when he describes "the vivacity of

Strether's private speculations as to whether he carried himself like a fool. He didn't quite see how he could so feel as one without somehow showing as one." (Ambassadors, p. 91) Yet, withal, he is a social being, a civilized man who hungers for good talk, discursive argument, an atmosphere of self-expression and receptivity. Strether's as yet undeveloped potentiality to engage in process manifests itself in his desire for the dialectic of conversation: "Strether had never in his life heard so many opinions on so many subjects." (Ambassadors, p. 109) These thoughts come to him at Chad's home in the company of his friends:

> There were opinions at Woollett, but only on three or four /subjects/. The differences were there to match; if they were doubtless deep, though few, they were quiet--they were, as might be said, almost as shy as if people had been ashamed of them. People showed little diffidence about such things . . . in the Boulevard Malesherbes, and were so far from being ashamed of them--that they often seemed to have invented them to avert those agreements that spoil the taste of talk. No one had ever done that at Woollett, though Strether could remember times when he himself had been tempted to it without quite knowing why. He saw why at present--he had but wanted to promote intercourse. (p. 109)

Strether's discovery of a re-made Chad has startled him considerable. F.C. Crews remarks that in Strether's view "Chad is perfectly adapted to his environment, and the environment in question appears to Strether, at his present

stage of awareness, as a whole universe of wonders."[30] He has not found the rather cut-and-dried situation he came to discover--Chad dissipated and in the arms of a bad woman who is keeping him in Paris by means of mysterious sexual spells. Now he is perplexed by just what it is that keeps Chad from obeying his mother's wishes, and just what the exact sexual nature of his relationship may be. Strether's definition of "innocent" attachments still holds, although the original purpose of his journey has somehow shifted. From having come to deliver an ultimatum to Chad he now believes he must first discover certain facts. His decisive launching upon this journey takes place in another garden--Gloriani's garden. The stirrings of change make themselves felt in his envy of Gloriani, and next of Chad; for Gloriani James uses animal imagery: "Yet it made him admire . . . made him envy, the glossy male tiger magnificently marked. These absurdities of the stirred sense, fruits of suggestion ripening on the instant." (Ambassadors, p. 133) Strether feels the artist's sexuality, and is moved by it. He envies Gloriani, but in the next instant sees Chad near the young Mademoiselle de Vionnet and decides "it was that rare youth he should have enjoyed being 'like'." (p. 133)

Strether decides that it is the young woman to whom Chad is attached and not the mother. Later, when Strether meets Madame de Vionnet and is impressed with her bearing

and beauty, Chad confesses his indebtedness to Madame de Vionnet and his consequent reluctance to leave because "'I owe her so much.'" (Ambassadors, p. 142) This veiled reference to money is one Strether can grasp: "He was indebted for alterations, and she was thereby in a position to have sent in her bill for expenses incurred in reconstruction. . . . What was it that had suddenly so cleared up? It was just everybody's character; that is everybody's but . . . his own." (p. 142) Strether is eased by being able to fit the situation into a pattern he can understand. Now Strether and Chad strike a bargain. Chad will do whatever Strether wants if Strether will "'surrender myself to Madame de Vionnet'" (Ambassadors, p. 143) But Strether must clear up his moral scruples regarding this lady and he asks Chad, "'I must really--know where I am. Is she bad?'" And he further clarifies, "'Is her life without reproach?'" (Ambassadors, p. 144) Chad replies, "'Absolutely without reproach. A beautiful life. Allez donc voir!'" (p. 144) And it is from this garden that Strether makes his departure--to see and to know. Dupee observes of Strether that "his fate as a man is bound up with the fate of his ideas. The garden party has marked a turning-point in the history of his mind. . . . At his age he can live more adventurously only in his mind, but even this is dangerous. Any access of new life means the death of the old life, or a substantial part of it."[31]

Of the perplexing relationship Strether faces, Lebowitz says, "In James it is not social law but the quality and metaphysic of love as it lives in the social world that save and condemn. . . . It is, after all, the fullness of relationship, not its technical legality that determines Jamesian morality, and Madame de Vionnet and Chad had a 'virtuous attachment,'"[32]

Where Strether's journey will take him is not clear at the outset. He is a complex man. James has told us at the beginning that "He was burdened . . . with the oddity of a double consciousness. There was detachment in his zeal and curiosity in his indifference." (Ambassadors, p. 18) He will not "simply" fall in love with Madame de Vionnet and be led by her. The forces within which are, within the work, represented by Mrs. Newsome are not easily overpowered. Ward says of Strether's moral problem in regard to his Woollett purity "To achieve self-fulfillment he must cast off the American evils of prejudice, intolerance, narrowness, and smugness. . . . In the beginning his fault is simply his ignorance and his prejudices; he accepts without serious consideration the Woollett view of Paris and of Chad."[33] (Ward does not dwell on American evil to the exclusion of the European variety. But at this point in the work Strether has not yet discovered what he must deal with in Europe.) But Strether is more than a battle-ground for conflicting moralities. He has

a self which will finally assert itself. It is to this development and emergence of the self that we look forward as the action of the novel progresses.

In The Golden Bowl, one of James's last and most beautiful works, some of the themes mentioned earlier are drawn together and harmonised in a richly textured novel.

With respect to earlier characters and themes we see in Adam Verver a combination of Mr. Dosson of James's tale The Reverberator with a seasoned Christopher Newman, the adventurous American. Matthiessen considers that "The character most comparable to Adam Verver in James's earlier work is Christopher Newman, in The American. . . . The first names of both men call attention to the quality that James was most concerned to endow them with: both are discoverers of new worlds. . . . What Newman and Mr. Verver also have in common is their newness: it would hardly seem accidental that both syllables of the latter's surname suggest spring. Both too have had their moments of vision in which the mere amassing of money came to seem futile."[34] The human being as work of art (which is an aspect of Osmond), "the elegant complicated medal struck off for a special occasion" (Portrait, p. 194) has been metamorphosed into the Prince. Maggie says to him, "'You're a part of his [Adam's] collection. . . . You're a rarity, an object of beauty an object of price.'" (G.B. p. 7) The thoroughly corrupted Osmond has become the

somewhat corrupted Prince, though the latter is infinitely more decent and likeable. Still, each is purchased for his imagined or real qualities. The great "things" at Poynton, the altar of art, have been moved to the Verver collection, and the passion of the collector lives on in Adam. The individual of good will and sensitivity, Lambert Strether, has been merged with another character in his story, Mamie Pocock, the American princess, and the felicitous result is Maggie Verver, heiress of all the ages. Mamie has become Maggie and "Po-cock" is vivified, revived to become a name denoting life--Verver. (The Prince refers to Adam as the natural bird in contrast to himself, cooked and smothered in a sauce.)

When we first meet Maggie we do not enter her mind at all. Rather, she is seen through the eyes of the Prince and the Assinghams. We only know that she is preparing for a journey--a rite of passage--her marriage. Through the mind of the Prince Maggie is portrayed as typically Anglo-Saxon in her inability to speak frankly of one's needs and pains. The Prince reflects that "any serious discussion of veracity, of loyalty, or rather of the want of them, practically took her unprepared, as if it were quite new to her. He had noticed it before: it was the English, the American sign that duplicity, like 'love' had to be joked about." (G.B., p. 9) There seems to be an intimation here of such a protected life that any

possible hurt may have been anticipated and deflected. Colonel Assingham says of her, "'She's very nice, but she always seems to me, more than anything else, the young woman who has a million a year.'" (G.B., p. 54) And Fanny Assingham observes that "'There are things . . . that no one could tell Maggie. She wasn't born to know evil.'" (p. 154) All of these assessments create an atmosphere of a young and rather shallow woman, innocent and ignorant. No one is prepared to disturb her state. Indeed, it is preserved. In this context the Prince tells Mrs. Assingham that he depends upon her to "see him through" his marriage into the Verver family, and Mrs. Assingham tells her husband that Charlotte will "see Maggie through'". For the Prince there is a definite sense of an ordeal. For the rest, supportive action would seem to be merely a euphemism for keeping Maggie ignorant of the fact that Charlotte and the Prince were once lovers, and that everyone surrounding the Ververs is well aware of it. Moreover, Mrs. Assingham has as good as arranged the marriage between Maggie and the Prince by introducing them to each other. (Shades of Madame Merle!) The "seeing through" seems to refer to a rite of passage for both the Prince and Maggie as indeed it is. For the ultra-sophisticated Charlotte, the Prince and the Assinghams it is in the nature of a difficult social period to be got through. For Maggie it is the most important step in the journey of

her life. It is the rest, who speak so glibly of "seeing through," who miss the great significance of the occasion.

When we finally do enter Maggie's mind it comes as a refreshing surprise to find a different person there than we had expected. We find there a great deal of sensitivity to her husband, though there is a large area in which she is still blind, and that is in the belief that she has "surrendered herself to her husband without the shadow of a reserve or a condition, and yet she had not, all the while given up her father by the least little inch." (G.B., p. 290) Her self-deception is shown in her reflection that both she and her father had acquired something more without losing anything they held originally. From the beginning she says to the Prince, "'we've never lost anything yet.'" (G.B., p. 8) In Maggie's changeless world loss is irremediable, final. But she thinks that "What had moreover all the while enriched the whole aspect of success was that the latter's /Adam's/ marriage had been no more measurably paid for than her own. His having taken the same great step in the same free way had not in the least involved the relegation of his daughter." (G.B. , p. 154-5) Where there is process there is loss and gain and change, but for Maggie in the Edenic dream she shares with her father, a loss would be the disarrangement of that world. Maggie thinks that she and Adam had got a bargain in their marriages. They had obtained spouses but had not

paid the price of their own separation. They had acquired and had not been in any way diminished as a couple. They had purchased consorts to enrich their lives, works of art to quicken their own sleeping imagination. Sometimes these acquisitions get out of hand but the Ververs are tolerant: "There were plenty of singular things they were not enamored of--flights of brilliancy, of audacity, of originality, that, speaking at least for the dear man and herself, were not at all in their line; but they liked to think they had given their life this unusual extension and this liberal form, which many families, many couples, would not have found workable." (G.B., p. 291)

Maggie thinks of her father and herself as the family, the couple. They are the original pair, the pair who have smugly made an adjustment to everyone's benefit, particularly their own. And they have not even paid for it.

Yet Maggie is uneasy as she examines the "situation" which has been occupying "the very centre of the garden of her life." (G.B., p. 289) Thus James introduces again one of his major symbols, the garden, to denote a condition of being, a state of mind. She envisions the new situation as a pagoda "in her blooming garden." (G.B., p. 290) Maggie wonders how to gain entrance into this pagoda, and feels herself "moving for the first time in her life, as in the darkening shadow of a false position." (G.B.,p. 291)

Something profound is taking place in Maggie's consciousness. She is readying herself for a major shift in perspective. She is about to make an effort of the imagination. And because she will labor James uses birth imagery to convey the fundamental change which will occur in Maggie:

> She could at all events remember no time at which she had felt so excited, and certainly none--which was another special point--that so brought with it as well the necessity for concealing excitement. This birth of a new eagerness became a high pastime, in her view, precisely by reason of the ingenuity required for keeping the thing born out of sight. The ingenuity was thus a private and absorbing exercise. . . . I should compare her to the frightened but clinging young mother of an unlawful child. The idea that had possession of her would be, by our new analogy, the proof of her misadventure, but likewise, all the while, only another sign of a relation that was more to her than anything on earth. (G.B., p. 291)

For the first time in her life Maggie has begun to think and to probe--she endeavours to initiate mental process. And because her change takes place at the very roots of her being, James introduces animal imagery. As she ponders and reflects she finds herself in a "little crouching posture there, that of a timid tigress." (G.B., p. 29) She does not care for that aspect of herself and tries to banish it, but the memory lingers. The image of the tiger, symbolizing ferocity and sexual passion[35] is the key to Maggie's ability to act. She is aroused into passion. She will fight for her marriage and stalk her

prey when the time comes. Walter Wright, in his article "Maggie Verver: Neither Saint nor Witch," says "It is only by internal upheaval that the old world can be reshaped into a new; and the upheaval must be induced by the very worst, the most shocking, experience that Maggie can suffer. James did not invent such a concept of plot; it is ancient in literature because it is true to life."[36]

Maggie's sleepy garden has been rudely invaded, changed. And she prepares to leave the old equilibrium, which was stasis, for the new world of change. Dorothea Krook calls this work "a great fable--one of the greatest in modern European literature--of the redemption of man by the transforming power of human love. The instrument of the redemptive act is Maggie Verver; its ultimate source her father; the principal recipient of the grace, her husband the Prince. But the fourth principal, Charlotte Stant, also enjoys its beneficent influence in ways accommodated to her needs and capacities."[37] S. Gorley Putt disagrees with this interpretation. He states that "Henry James was a thorough-going humanist. . . . the misnamed 'redemption' of The Golden Bowl which is in effect Maggie's valorous resolve to cut emotional losses and preserve what may be salvaged for civilized adjustments after the havoc wrought by primary feelings wrongly thought to have been lying dormant . . . all these gestures are unsanctified by anything recognizable as religious faith."[38] Each point of

view seems to be rather extreme: Krook's making the work a religious fable, and Putt's settling of an annoying domestic problem.

Maggie is self-serving, but she is not callous; she expects a great deal as her due, but she is kind. Walter Wright says, "Maggie is selfish, but her selfishness is normal. We have no right to ask whether down through the years, as a rich girl, she should have learned to think more of others. We do not imagine either Eve or Venus as a child. . . . What matters is that the evidence about the selfishness of both father and daughter comes early from Adam, later mainly from Maggie's own self-analysis."[39]

Though Maggie has hitherto been unable to discuss openly the very basis of her existence, largely because it has never been in question, she will learn that she can talk about anything, if she has to. After that day and evening of intense introspection Maggie's life is altered forever. She departs from her garden to create her new consciousness. F.C. Crews speaks of Maggie's power as "a power for self-redemption as well as for the redemption of others. . . . Maggie is involved in a dilemma for which she herself is partially responsible, and however much she may be working to save the others, she is primarily saving herself."[40]

Ward offers a balanced view of moral responsibility

when he states that "In The Golden Bowl James achieves a resolution of the Europe-America antithesis principally because he is hesitant to place the burden of evil on the Europeans. It is the human situation itself which produces the intense moral evil of the novel. . . . It is a gross over-simplification to assume that the only evil is the adulterous relationship between Prince Amerigo and Charlotte Stant. James stresses the equally grave, though less sensational, moral defects in the wealthy American art collector and his daughter. . . . Unlike most American innocents, the Ververs are not taken advantage of because of their ignorance; rather they help create evil because of their ignorance."[41]

Each chief character, either knowingly, as in Maggie's case, or all unwittingly as in Isabel's case, will move into a new phase of the journey, a recognition that life has changed for him, that the first assessment was based on ignorance. This new knowledge is brought about by the confrontation with experience.

NOTES

CHAPTER I.

1. William J. Maseychik, "Points of Departure from The American," in Modern Judgements: Henry James, ed. by Tony Tanner (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 116.

2. There is something vaguely reminiscent here of Michaelangelo's Adam in James's description of Newman "with his head thrown back and his legs outstretched."

3. Viola Hopkins, "Visual Art Devices and Parallels in the Fiction of Henry James," PMLA, 76 (1961), 561-574.

4. In Spenser's Faerie Queene it is the young Tristram, Arthur's squire, who first sees a picture of Iseult on the glittering shield of his foe, and who longs to possess that shield.

5. Leon Edel, Henry James (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960), p. 32.

6. Matthiessen, p. 32.

7. Henry James, "The Art of Fiction" in Henry James: Selected Fiction, ed. Leon Edel, E.P. Dutton & Co. New York, 1958, p. 599.

8. S. Gorley Putt, The Fiction of Henry James: A Reader's Guide (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1968), p. 97.

9. Tony Tanner, "The Fearful Self: The Portrait of A Lady," in Modern Judgements: Henry James, ed. by Tony Tanner (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 153.

10. J.C. Rowe, Henry Adams and Henry James: The Emergence of a Modern Consciousness (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 145.

11. J.A. Ward, The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 47.

12. Naomi Lebowitz, The Imagination of Loving: Henry James's Legacy to the Novel (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), p. 65.

13. Tanner, p. 152.

14. Ibid., p. 136.

15. Mrs. Touchett, who is the very embodiment of complete personal freedom carried to its absurd logical conclusion does not make any great impression on Isabel. Henrietta Stackpole is another version of the struggle for freedom. Both Mrs. Touchett and Miss Stackpole achieve freedom at the level of action, at the personal in the former and at the social in the latter. Isabel attempts to journey further than her countrywomen and over different territory. She does not recognize that both women are legitimate representatives of certain aspects of her own declared aspirations. Both women are honest and so do not stress the element of renunciation which Osmond embraces so charmingly.

16. Hopkins, p. 567.

17. Ward, p. 44.

18. Matthiessen, p. 181.

19. Edel, Portrait, p. vii.

20. Edel, Henry James, p. 24.

21. Edel, Portrait, p. xii.

22. A.N., p. 129.

23. Robert C. McLean, "The Subjective Adventure of Fleda Vetch", in Modern Judgements: Henry James, pp. 206-7.

24. Sister M. Corona Sharp, O.S.U., The Confidante in Henry James (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), p. 99.

25. F.W. Dupee, Henry James: His Life and Writings (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), p. 162.

26. J. Wiesenfarth, F.S.C., Henry James and the Dramatic Analogy (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), pp. 44-45.

27. Putt, pp. 214-5.

28. Ibid., p. 215.

29. Ian Watt, "The First Paragraph of The Ambassadors: an explication," in Modern Judgements: Henry James, p. 287.

30. F.C. Crews, The Tragedy of Manners: Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James (Hamden, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press, 1971), p. 44.

31. Dupee, p. 211.

32. Lebowitz, The Imagination of Loving, p. 95.

33. Ward, The Imagination of Disaster, p. 111.

34. Mattheissen, p. 88.

35. Ward, The Imagination of Disaster, p. 117.

36. Walter Wright, "Maggie Verver: Neither Saint nor Witch," in Modern Judgements, p. 321.

37. Dorothea Krook, The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 240.

38. Putt, p. 316.

39. Wright, p. 320.

40. Crews, p. 88.

41. Ward, The Imagination of Disaster, p. 139.

CHAPTER II

Confrontation with Experience: Mid-passage

In the first chapter I have demonstrated the confluence of character and circumstance which serves to send forth each central character on his journey of self-discovery. This journey is a process by which experience transforms old beliefs into new awareness. The result is a confrontation with the self, an epiphany of recognition which lays bare a knowledge hitherto concealed or latent. While the form of the journey which each central character takes varies according to his circumstances and inclinations, the physical act of travelling often corresponds to the mental effort of understanding the world and finally understanding previously unknown aspects of the self.

Christopher Newman, in his desire to encompass and somehow integrate his beautiful action (the rejection of revenge on his dishonest competitor) with the beauty of the world which he sees and admires, counts the churches he visits. He makes his secular tribute to the manifestation of his own awakening by accumulating beautiful sights in church architecture and by piling sight upon sight as if the action of seeing many things will become qualitative by the mere fact of being quantitative. There is a glory

of being and of seeing which Newman wishes to merge. However, he does not journey only as a humble seeker after beauty, for "He believed that Europe was made for him, and not he for Europe."[1] (American, p. 60)

To Newman the splendor of Europe is distilled in Claire, and in courting her successfully he believes he will obtain a portion of the beauties of the countryside and architecture he has so admired in his travels. She is, for him, one of the great artifacts which represent Europe, and "he had already begun to value the world's admiration of Madame de Cintré, as adding to the prospective glory of possession." (American, p. 125) Indeed, Newman idealizes his own inner stirrings towards beauty and form in the person of Claire de Cintre. Mrs. Tristram not only instigates but encourages his interest in Claire. Sister M. Corona Sharp speaks of "the romantic picture of Claire de Cintre drawn by Mrs. Tristram. . . . Her urgent appeal to his sense of justice is to rescue Madame de Cintré from her terrible family."[2] He does not love Claire as an individual, an end in herself, as much as he loves the idea of Claire. As Ward says of all of James's innocents, "The innocents themselves err in holding an impossible ideal--their faults as well as their merits are idealistic."[3] Still, during the period of Newman's acceptance by the Bellegardes as a candidate for Claire's hand a gradual change takes place, showing

that even those ideals can, and often do, give way to experience. After having acquired Claire to satisfy his longing for a symbol, he comes to know and love her as a person: "What he felt was an intense, all-consuming tenderness . . ." (American, p. 162) James goes on to speak of this tenderness in an image of protection and possession, bringing out Newman's sense of Claire's vulnerability, and perhaps his own, as well: "Madame de Cintré pleased him so, exactly as she was, that his desire to interpose between her and the troubles of life had the quality of a young mother's eagerness to protect the sleep of her new born child." (American, p. 163) This image further intensifies our sense of development in Newman himself of his burgeoning ability to love, his serenity at having discovered and integrated a very important portion of himself in the person of Claire.

Newman has sought an ideal which he thought existed wholly outside of himself. His yearning, prefigured in his untutored gazing at Murillo's Madonna, finds its object in the person of Claire. She is the objectification of his loving, creative anima figure. In these halcyon days his joy is complete, his garden is internalized. The numbers of sights he had been accumulating and listing were not significant in a real sense, but were a dark monument to an unrealized idea. As love grows in Newman quantity falls away and quality emerges as light.

Newman's thoughts about Claire are that "She was a woman for the light, and not the shade; and her natural line was . . . frank, joyous brilliant action." (American, p. 165) As Newman proposes marriage to her, he sees her as "a golden sunrise." (American, p. 181)

Because the Bellegardes' consent to the marriage is so obviously reluctant, their reaction arouses in Newman the desire to make some impression on the cold impassivity of their facade: "He wanted for once, to make the heads of the house of Bellegarde feel him; he knew not when he should have another chance." (American, p. 188) Newman's pride cannot easily accept their indifference to his effectiveness. They simply do not "see" him--he is inconsequential to them. He is, as Valentin has said of Madame Dandelard, "nothing at all." (American, p. 101) Newman is very sure of himself because he has never met with failure. So he must leave the garden of his content, pressing the senior Bellegardes in order to make himself "felt". When Valentin asks him about the future Newman says, "'What should I be afraid of? You can't hurt me unless you kill me by some violent means.'" (American, p. 202) Because of Newman's prosperity and success he believes he is proof against all but the obvious ways of being hurt. His pride coupled with his innocence gives him the illusion that he is invincible.

Newman's achievement is seemingly celebrated at the

party which the Bellegardes give to announce his engagement to Claire. It is at this party that Mrs. Tristram quotes the opening lines of La Belle Dame Sans Merci to Valentin who has been bewitched, and these lines are a clear foreshadowing for Valentin; they are prophetic with respect to Newman as well. Newman pushes his luck too far by walking about with Madame de Bellegarde until she can no longer bear it. This walk is a further portion of Newman's journey, and whilst he takes it in all confidence, he takes Madame de Bellegarde beyond the bounds of her patience. He over-advertises his victory. Leon Edel says of this incident "He is guilty of one serious error and it is his undoing. . . . His failure in tact has been complete. From this point on, Newman's good fortune goes into decline."[4] The senior Bellegardes decide to break off the engagement and to foist Lord Deepmere upon Claire. Newman's descent begins with the fete that has so strongly appeared to mark the pinnacle of his success.

When he goes to the Bellegardes some days later and finds a coach at the door and signs of preparation for departure he is "perplexed and alarmed". (American, p. 241) As he enters the room where Madame de Bellegarde and Urbain are with Claire "He felt, as soon as he entered the room, that he was in the presence of something evil; he was startled and pained as he would have been by a threatening cry in the stillness of the night." (p. 241) Newman is

here confronted with a development which is out of his control. There are wills here opposed to his, and resisting the progress of his hopes. Once again, the confrontation of innocence is felt by the innocents as the confrontation with evil. Suffering and pain lie in wait for them. The sunny imagery which James uses in describing Newman's consciousness in connection with Claire has given way to the imagery of darkness associated with the Bellegardes. Their house which Newman first found "vast, dim and cold" makes its frightening presence felt. Though Newman feigns more confidence than he actually feels, "Madame de Cintré's strange intensity had in fact struck a chill to his heart; her face, still impressed on his vision, had been a terribly vivid image of renunciation." (American, p. 249) Just as in America he had reached a turning point in his refusal to ruin a double-dealing competitor, so here a new dimension has entered his life. His journey has brought him to gaze at the face of loss. And he is reduced almost to pleading with the Bellegardes: "'Come, think of what this must be to me and let her alone! Why should you object to me so--what's the matter with me? . . . What if I am a commercial person? What under the sun do you mean? All I want is not to lose her.'" (p. 249)

Still, his emotions are as much of anger as of sorrow. We see the fall of Newman here, from the high point of his pride. One has almost a sense of a slap across

the face: "He had a burning, tingling sense of personal outrage. He had never in his life received so absolute a check. . . . And he found the sensation intolerable." (American, p. 250)

Newman has come some distance from the man who wanted a woman to be a monument on his pile of money. (American, p. 34) In loving Claire he has been able to convert the statue into a live woman. His love has conferred the breath of life upon an abstract ideal and made it flesh. And now he is faced with the loss both of an idea and of a person. Yet even here his understanding is incomplete because he still fails to identify the locus of what he calls "change". "Poor Newman had a terrible apprehension that /Claire/ had really changed." (American, p. 250) In fact he has been warned by Claire that she is not as he imagines her to be. (American, p. 206) Newman does not yet really know what she is. He cannot bear to have her influenced by her mother and brother, though that is the custom in her class and country. She has been the object of his yearning, first for the capture of glory and then for the warmth and delight of love. In each case he has wanted to possess her wholly.

The two worlds of Europe and America have come into collision and Claire is the focal point, the prize of their contest. The lovely garden which was the embodiment of Europe in Claire has become a battleground between

conflicting orders. Newman has journeyed to Europe to find beauty and to appropriate it. Mrs. Tristram has called Newman a Barbarian swooping down on the Old World (American, p. 31) and R.L. Gale further amplifies the notion of siege when he points out that James says "Newman watches while the Marquis /Urbain/ walked up and down in silence, like a sentinel at the door of some menaced citadel of the proprieties."[5]

Newman encounters an order which will not yield its possessions to him. The frustration of his desire leaves him at a loss. He has undergone an alteration in consciousness; otherwise he would never have suffered the kind of affliction he now experiences. It is this very alteration in sensibility which makes it possible to feel pain which he never envisioned. For the first time he knows the fear of loss, and this is what he perceives as evil. His "dream realized" will be taken from him. And only now is he really ready for the transforming effects of real love.

In The Portrait of a Lady Isabel Archer, like Newman, seeks an ideal. At the outset her goal has been one of complete personal independence. She has been preparing herself at home in America, and when she reaches Gardencourt she will set out from there to attempt to realize herself. Isabel envisions a life of freedom of choice and freedom of action. She tells her aunt that she

wants to know all the alternatives so that she may choose her course of action. (Portrait, p. 67) When she is, at length, faced with this opportunity Isabel does not like it very well. To Osmond's profession of love she says, "'Oh don't say that, please,'" and "with an intensity that expressed the dread of having, in this case too, to choose and decide." (Portrait, p. 258) Isabel's inconsistency is pointed up here because she has been consciously journeying towards this particular choice: "What had happened was something that for a week past her imagination had been forward to meet" (Portrait, p. 260) Still, she hears Osmond's declaration with a sharp pang "that suggested to her somehow the slipping of a fine bolt--backward, forward, she couldn't have said which." (Portrait, p. 258) Though there is a definite foreshadowing of Isabel's prison-house here, there is a strong sense throughout that any commitment is felt by Isabel as confinement.

Interestingly, it is just prior to her departure that this event takes place. Her subsequent voyage is a significant voyage, in her estimation: "She had ranged . . . through space and surveyed much of mankind, and was therefore now, in her own eyes a very different person from the frivolous young woman from Albany who had begun to take the measure of Europe on the lawn at Gardencourt a couple of years before. She flattered herself she had

harvested wisdom and learned a great deal more of life than this light-minded creature had even suspected. (Portrait, p. 265; italics mine) In speaking of Isabel's consciousness, James does not describe a mind made more open, more sensitive, more knowledgeable by travel. She is merely doing more of the same: "She was very observant . . . of what was good for her, and her effort was constantly to find something that was good enough." (Portrait, p. 267) In this journey Isabel does not really move more deeply into herself--it is a journey of only surface significance. She mistakes the image of the action for the action itself. The result of her travels has been that "She only felt older . . . as if she were 'worth more' . . . like some curious piece in an antiquary's collection." (Portrait, p. 270) If there is movement it is toward the static, the fixed, as Osmond wants her to be.

When told of her engagement Ralph Touchett further invokes the prison metaphor which has sounded intermittently: "'you're going to be put into a cage.'" (Portrait, p. 282) After Isabel's continual talk of liberty and independence it is small wonder that Ralph is utterly astonished: "'you must have changed immensely. A year ago you valued your liberty beyond everything.'" (p. 282) Ralph's mistake is in taking Isabel absolutely literally, and he does not really understand the mysteries

of her inner workings. Being pragmatic by nature Ralph cannot comprehend the theorizing of the absolute idealists, or their self-centredness.

Surely Isabel's choice of Osmond is a choice for the immutable world of the ideal over the personal world as represented by Goodwood or the social world which she rejects in Lord Warburton. In rejecting these men Isabel has refused the concrete in favor of the abstract. She repels the world of choice, the world of encounter and change--the world of process and development--in her partiality for the ideal. N. Lebowitz says, "Osmond was able to use her, to court her in terms of the picturesque, and in terms of a false romance, only because she was willing to see the relationship romantically and picturesquely instead of realistically."[6] Process involves choice and Isabel does not really care to choose. Tanner says, in this connection, that "She wants to exist at the heights of sheer communion with ideal beauty."[7] Indeed, Isabel <u>is</u> a prisoner, but she is her own jailer, for she is a prisoner of philosophy, idealism. Her preference for art over life is echoed by Osmond. And perhaps she sees in him a reflection of herself, and that is what draws her to him. With him, she believes, there will be no assault upon her self, no violation of her self-command. She does not perceive Osmond as a force curtailing her freedom. His very stillness, his lack of forceful action is not

interpreted by her as the obverse of a will which cannot bend. Unlike Goodwood, who impinges upon her sensibility, Osmond does not penetrate her personal orbit. The importunities and the urgency of Goodwood seem to smother her. Tony Tanner points out that "her most characteristic response in the real world is one of refusal and rejection. . . . Much of her energy goes into avoiding any commitment which might serve to define and arrest her."[8] It is the elements of activity and movement which offend Isabel when they are directed at her. Her real journey is a reluctant one, for her inner world, however much she may travel, seeks to be still. Rowe says, "Isabel has been caught in the fiction of a self complete in its own right, remote from the destructive elements of time, change, and social relation."[9] Though she is afraid of the demands of others, circumstances eventually bring her to the necessity of assessing her own situation. This evolution comes at a crucial point in her journey, the mid-passage, where she is impelled to look into the meaning of her marriage and her life because of the misery in it.

As she reflects on the failure of her marriage she thinks of the circumstances which brought her to it: "A certain combination of features had touched her. . . . That he was poor and lonely and yet that somehow he was noble . . . that he was helpless and ineffectual. . . . She would launch his boat for him; she would be his

providence." (Portrait, p. 351) Also, in seeking the best for herself, she thought she had found it. (p. 351) Dorothea Krook seems to have taken Isabel's own word for her motives in choosing Osmond. She says: "The first [reason] is her ardent desire to enlarge and enrich her experience of life, to grow in wisdom and virtue under the guidance of this most superior of men. The second is her desire, equally ardent, to serve. More specifically, it is the desire to do something with her money that will be at once useful and imaginative." However, Krook does go on to say that "there is a further and deeper aspect of Isabel's culpability. . . . This is to be discovered in the fatal aestheticism that she herself is tainted with; and it is this . . . that was from the beginning the real common ground. . . . In her it is never, of course, as vicious as it is in Osmond yet not so innocent as not to be culpable, and therefore doomed to earn its own retribution."[10] Krook maintains that aestheticism seeks to substitute appearance for reality, taste for truth, and is therefore highly immoral.[11] Isabel's search for beauty has come up with what Ralph terms "a sterile dilettante." Her own lack of knowledge of herself contributes to her gullibility.

We are reminded of our first look at Isabel in the fresh outdoors of Gardencourt. That first scene foreshadows the problems and the sorrows of the lady.

She enters after the light has begun to fade. Now, as her mind journeys more deeply and truly into herself, her thoughts are no longer a "tangle of vague outlines;" (Portrait, p. 53) She sees better than she has ever seen:

> She could live it over again, the incredulous terror with which she had taken the measure of her dwelling. Between those 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 mock at her. . . . He took himself so seriously; it was something appalling. Under all his culture, his cleverness, his amenity, under his good nature, his facility, his knowledge of life, his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers. (Portrait, p. 353)

The exertion of Isabel's thoughts are felt as a moving force. While hitherto in all of her travels there has been no sense of leaving the same spot, now in her physical stillness her psychic activity runs to pursue the truth. The "house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation" is the grave. The "incredulous terror" is the panic of one who has been buried alive. There is a sudden flutter as the final, most dreaded object is revealed, "his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers." Here is the final destroyer. We recall that Isabel liked to return from her mental journeys with a "lapful of roses." (Portrait, p. 55) R.L. Gale

points out that The Portrait of a Lady has more than forty flower images.[12] The serpent lies in the heart of the rose, even though Isabel does not wish to see it. This sharp juxtaposition of beauty and danger, of ecstatic desire and death brings to mind Blake's poem "The Sick Rose". The image of her death is the serpent, symbol of knowledge, and of sexuality as well.

As with Christopher Newman, experience comes as evil to the innocent, because it shatters the presuppositions of his world, or, as in Isabel's case, smothers it to death: "she seemed shut up with an odour of mould and decay". (Portrait, p. 355) There has been an earlier intimation of knowledge, a half-remembered occurrence. Its significance is dormant but it will become an evil epiphany when Isabel awakens to the true nature of Madame Merle's involvement in her life. This recollection is the momentary imprint on her mind of the polite Osmond sitting in Madame Merle's presence while she stands. Sister M. Corona Sharp says, "The novel is a study of knowledge: Knowledge gained through experience; knowledge hidden by deceit; knowledge distorted by prejudice. Isabel's tragic irony is the loss of happiness through knowledge."[13]

Isabel has gone from the natural light and fresh air exemplified in Gardencourt to living in a "livid light" (Portrait, p. 356) with Osmond. With respect to Isabel's soliloquy Naomi Lebowitz remarks that "When the

characters of major consciousness themselves explore their relationships, they can make moral judgments based on the contrast between honest and full communion and the communion that is built on secrecy, on information without love, or on the influence of unchanging objects and pictures."[14] Lebowitz makes this observation in a more general context, yet is seems to me to be particularly applicable to the passage I have cited.

Still, Isabel deals with her spiritual immolation in the only way she knows. She tries to keep it from everybody, particularly Ralph. Her pride is such that she cannot bear to have been wrong, and Ralph in particular must not know, for he has warned her against Osmond. Her rationalization of her inability to admit error is typical. She explains her reluctance to herself by attributing it to a concern lest Ralph be pained: "She didn't wish him to have the pain of knowing she was unhappy: that was the great thing, and it didn't matter that such knowledge would rather have righted him." (Portrait, p. 357) She cannot repudiate what she considers to have been "the most serious act--the single sacred act--of her life . . . They had attempted only one thing, but that one thing was to have been exquisite." (Portrait, p. 379) Isabel's prison house is built with the bricks of her blindness and she is detained there by the chains of her pride. Some time must pass in yielding to the knowledge of her fate before

she can move again to integrate it and to make something of her life.

In these first two novels the innocents move into conflict with groups or individuals whom the reader can objectively regard as dishonest and who practice upon them. The Bellegardes renege on their promise to Newman. And one may well sympathize with someone who wakes up to find she is married to an Osmond. There is objective evil to be encountered here. As James's work continues the camps are not so easily identified, and distinctions between objective good and objective evil become blurred.

In The Spoils of Poynton sympathies may veer from camp to camp, and one cannot always clearly identify each camp or be sure of who belongs where. James works towards some synthesis between the movement of the work and Fleda's internal journey, and the clarity of his purpose emerges as the work and the journey become co-ordinated. The synthesis between experience and moral development is intensified in this middle work. James says, "the progress and march of my tale became that of her understanding."[15]

A sensitive analysis of her own motivation is necessary to Fleda if her integrity is to develop in her confrontation with experience. The enormous moral effort involved is such that Fleda delays the process. She continues to day dream about how she would treat Owen if he were hers, marking time until circumstances should indicate

a more active role, and all the while taking discomfort in her false position with Mrs. Gereth, feeling both critical of that lady and disloyal to her: "it was just on the ground of her not liking him that Mrs. Gereth trusted her so much." (Spoils, p. 162) Though Mrs. Gereth is not in Fleda's confidence, Fleda is very much a recipient of Mrs. Gereth's ideas and wishes, and this burden of trust causes Fleda disquiet and hampers her in her own resolution of the conflicting forces within. Fleda's journey to Ricks is significant in terms of what she finds there and acts as an impetus in her own development. She finds it to be a household which was, as well as Poynton, lovingly assembled, though inferior in taste and grandeur. The things at Ricks "told her they had been gathered as slowly and as lovingly as the golden flowers of Poynton. She too, for a home, could have lived with them!" (Spoils, p. 164) There is a certain identification as Fleda envisions Ricks, notably the home of a maiden aunt, as an alternative. She conceives of the former occupant as having been "sensitive and ignorant and exquisite." (p. 164) In her thoughts Fleda moves between Poynton, great storehouse of experience, and Ricks, a melancholy haven, but a refuge, nevertheless, from the sadness of experience. The houses symbolize alternative styles of life, and Fleda wonders "if it didn't work more for happiness not to have tasted, as she herself had done, of knowledge." (p. 164) There is a shrinking

here from experience. The maiden lady at Ricks presumably never knew love and desire as Fleda does. The knowledge of alternatives is a difficult lesson to assimilate, and with alternatives come choices, and with choices some basis or standard from which to make these choices. Both Poynton and Ricks are representative of possibilities in Fleda's life as well as descriptions of contrasting states of being. At Poynton Fleda's imagination had soared and the intoxication of the great things caused her to become Mrs. Gereth's acolyte at the altar of beauty. At Ricks she is infused with meditative reflection, and reminded of her limitations. But now Poynton is no longer a delight to her: "She grew impatient of her situation at Poynton; she privately prenounced it false and horrid." (Spoils, p. 168) We may assume that she has resumed her internal moral journey which is manifested externally by her travelling to London. She feels that neither place is her home and when she returns to London to "dress" her sister for her marriage, she is for the time being on her own original territory, dismal though it is. Ward, in The Search for Form says, "Fleda Vetch's characteristic movement is the effort to withdraw herself from the lives of the Gereths; she is frequently seen running away--to her sister, to her father, to any possible escape--and always being seized by one of the Gereths."[16] When Owen meets Fleda in London they walk in the Park near the Marble Arch.

The garden background is explicit, since they walk to the southwest corner of the Gardens, where, finally, Fleda feels she must take her leave. Being with Owen and delighting in her love is like being in a garden of first innocence. She knows she cannot remain there, because though whenever she meets Owen she tends to think of what her life might be with him, she remembers that "She was on his mother's side, she belonged to his mother's life, and his mother, in the future, would never come to Poynton." (Spoils, p. 172) And "it seemed suddenly to rise before them that this was a real separation." (p. 172) By insisting on leaving Owen she is ritually separating herself from her dreams and her desires, and she does it from the Gardens. She makes a hurried exit, almost running, "every jerk of which hurt her." (Spoils, p. 173)

But this flight is not the end of Fleda's movement through the symbols of meaning represented by the various houses and locales. When she returns to Ricks after her sister's marriage she finds Mrs. Gereth has practically despoiled Poynton, and taken its loveliest treasures to the small house. Now meanings tend to blur and merge. Poynton without its greatest treasures is only a grand house formerly occupied by Mrs. Gereth and now owned by her son. This act of open warfare between mother and son further intensifies Fleda's predicament. J. Wiesenfarth stresses the war images which are present throughout the work and

says "James defined and emphasized the conflict in Poynton by presenting it as a war. Through his consistent use of the war matrix the conflict achieves a degree of representational intensity."[17] Fleda's loyalty is to Mrs. Gereth, yet she longs for Poynton as she first knew it and Owen to be hers in it. Each person has been going toward his own desire, bumping and shoving against the other, seeking personal satisfaction, and all except Fleda willing to sacrifice larger considerations to that end. The movements of each character seem to have as the only purpose a self-fulfillment within a self-seeking framework, one in which morality does not figure. But the moral question of means and ends is the over-riding consideration in Fleda's movement towards her personal resolution. Wayne C. Booth in The Rhetoric of Fiction says, "Fleda Vetch, the reflector in James's The Spoils of Poynton, come/s/ close to representing the author's ideal of taste, judgment, and moral sense."[18] Leaving Poynton empty means leaving Owen without his fiancée, since his plans to marry are contingent on whether Poynton is restored to its former glory. Fleda knows that if she leaves things as they are she will gain Owen by default, for he is attached to her already.

It will remain for Fleda to take some decisive action in the moral realm, since neither Mrs. Gereth nor Mona is guided by ethical considerations. Owen tries very hard to do the right thing but he is in strange

country. As R.L. Gale points out in noting a musical image, Owen Gereth had "no more sense for a motive than a deaf man for a tune."[19] Fleda "with her sense of danger and trouble . . . now for the first time knew her temptation." (Spoils, p. 200) The temptation to gain her desire without considering any other referrent points of value must certainly not be dismissed out of hand. If there were no temptation there would be no struggle, and if no struggle then no development. Fleda rejects the temptation thinking: "She could never be the girl to be drawn in, she could never lift her finger against Mona. There was something in her that would make it a shame to her forever to have owed her happiness to an interference. It would seem intolerably vulgar to her to have 'ousted' the daughter of the Brigstocks." (Spoils, p. 202) At this point Fleda expresses values in terms of taste. It is morally vulgar to engage in an open contest with Mona Brigstock. Her sensibility is offended at the notion of a psychic pushing and shoving. That is the style of the Brigstocks, not the style of Fleda Vetch. Dupee says, "For Fleda, testing him [Owen] fairly means not testing him at all but simply dissociating herself from the entire business as inconspicuously as possible. This she does, and the rightness, the fatal rightness, of her decision is confirmed in the sequel; for Owen, removed from Fleda's presence, promptly returns to Mona."[20] For Fleda, to "be straight" is as

important as anything else, and without a sense of "rightness" about an act she cannot rest.

Unlike the previous two works and the two which follow, The Spoils of Poynton contains no particular flash of knowledge or light which illuminates the meaning of past experience or present discovery. The journey is not along a continuum. Rather there is a movement back and forth, hesitations and resolves. But Fleda will find her way and change her perceptions from the instinctively aesthetic point of view to the developed moral vantage.

The structure of The Ambassadors, on the other hand, is such that there is a definite sense of movement towards a revelation of reality, together with a steady development in Strether's consciousness which prepares him, in a psychological sense, for that reality.

The movement of Strether's personal journey is of particular significance in the contention of this essay. James's use of water imagery both renders the idea of movement and enhances the sense of flux. We note that Strether is "launched" and "floated" and during Madame de Vionnet's visit with Sarah "under Sarah's eyes had pulled him into her boat." (Ambassadors, p. 228) Early in the novel Strether is submerged in the "fathomless medium" (Ambassadors, p. 108) of Chad's manner. William M. Gibson, in his essay, "Metaphor in the Plot of The Ambassadors", says "Strether's voyage will indeed end in

shipwreck for his listening to this sea-nymph's singing."[21] But the sea of experience is navigable, and Strether, while drowning in it initially, eventually comes to guide his own craft. Ward says, "There is something in Strether's European experience like that of a shipwrecked man tossed about in the waves, sometimes falling under, finally being drawn into a boat and drawing others into his boat."[22] The process in the sea imagery is towards self-mastery. But the actual initiations which lead to significant experience take place in the garden imagery. The juxtaposition of water and garden is James's. Strether's sense of being launched takes place in the first garden depicted --the English garden. William M. Gibson says, "The four major garden scenes of the novel (in Parts First, Second, Fifth, Eleventh) constitute crucial stages in Strether's eating of the fruit of the tree; and his enrichment in knowing of things of the world, of good and evil, is certainly one of the 'values infinitely precious' sealed up with the 'old Paris garden' which James speaks of in his Preface when he is revealing his donnée".[23]

In the early pages Strether is "launched" by Maria Gostrey in an ordered English garden. A few days later, resting in the Luxembourg gardens, "He had never expected--that was the truth of it--again to find himself young." (Ambassadors, p. 60) Later, in Gloriani's "queer old garden" he sees the "medal-like Italian face" of the artist.

Italy in the Jamesian world is the very heart of Europe --its art and its corruption. The assault on the senses in Gloriani's garden is overwhelming to Strether--and he is dazzled by Gloriani himself, by "the deep human expertness in Gloriani's charming smile--oh the terrible life behind it!" (Ambassadors, p. 121)

In reacting to the atmosphere Strether admonishes Bilham not to "miss things out of stupidity", and to "Live!" (Ambassadors, p. 132) And we realize that there are a number of factors converging in Strether's consciousness. He feels discomfort with the lushness of the garden: Strether feels "smothered in flowers," and is angry with his "odious ascetic suspicion of any form of beauty." (Ambassadors, p. 118) Young ladies ready for marriage are often likened to flowers, says Gale; Jeanne de Vionnet has "pale pink petals . . . folded up . . . for some wondrous efflorescence in time."[24] We think of Pansy Osmond and Daisy Miller, other jeunes filles en fleurs in James. Strether, watching Gloriani's guests, decides that there is "something in the great world covertly tigerish . . . as a waft from the jungle." (Ambassadors, p. 132) Intimations of sexuality are evoked in Strether by his excitement, by Gloriani and the sensuousness of the entire scene. And Strether perceives sexuality as part of the trap which is Europe.

Strether rapidly moves through envy of Gloriani

for obviously being a sexual creature, to forgiveness because he is an artist and a man, to a sense of life missed. The culmination of this movement is the exhortation to Bilham to "Live!" At the same time his Woollett values come to the fore in checking his arousal, and he fixes upon Jeanne de Vionnet as Chad's "virtuous attachment." Rushing along that trail he does not stop to think that if that were so Chad might have very easily and openly spoken of it to his mother's ambassador. He is experiencing some intimations of knowledge, but it is below the conscious level and it manifests itself in a general anxiety. Thus, while in theory Strether embraces an affirmation of life, he is held in check by his doubts about the moral limits of the experiential world.

The secret nature of relationships becomes sharply focused in the final garden, which is, as Gibson phrases it, "a garden within a garden." Gibson comments: "the garden of a village inn at the heart of rural France. In this richly pictorial, climactic book, Strether feels freer and younger than he ever will again. The softly colored French countryside he views all day as through the frame of a small painting by Lambinet which he wanted to buy, but could not afford in the Boston of his youth."[25]

Strether's feeling of youth accentuates his innocence, as does the pastoral setting. The comment on the painting he could not afford reminds one of the money

image in terms of "paying for things." The idyllic scene is Eden before the Fall. Chad and Madame de Vionnet's boat glides along the serpentine river (again water and garden and sexual imagery) and the world is darkened. When Strether realizes that they would have cut him had he not gestured to them he feels a sharp sense of betrayal. It is a pang of ultimate rejection; it was a "sharp, fantastic crisis," a "quite horrible moment." (Ambassadors, p. 308) Though he knows now for certain that Chad and Madame de Vionnet are lovers, the betrayal is compounded because he would not have been acknowledged by them had he not insisted upon recognition. He would not have existed for them. That is "what darkened his vision for the moment." (Ambassadors, p. 309) To have been so used and so betrayed is his horrible knowledge. This is what destroys the world Strether had so anxiously built--the world which had sexual purity as its centre. Ward observes, in commenting on this scene that "Strether sees that the life of the senses . . . is far from innocent; passion and deceit lie hidden beneath the charm and beauty. And as Strether eventually understands, this ambiguity is central to the nature of Europe itself."[26]

When that day is over he recognizes that his expectations of Madame de Vionnet were that she be both Paris and Woollett, fascinating and beautiful, yet Woollett-pure. He has rejected the narrowness and rigidity

of Woollett values in the persons of the female Newsomes, but he has not rejected his own New England absolutism. Recognizing the inadequacy and short-sightedness of the Woollett evaluation, he has tended to regard the beauty of art, and of graciousness and style in living as a morality in itself. Strether has deliberately dissociated the sensuality of Gloriani and his garden from the de Vionnets. The day he met them the mother was dressed in black and was correctly chaperoning her daughter. Moreover he could not accept and did not wish that she should participate in the passionate life. Strether has idealized the aesthetic life of Europe in almost all of its forms, without accepting any ramifications displeasing to his legalistic moral sense. This old-new world that Strether finds expressed in Madame de Vionnet is beautiful; ipso facto it would be, must be, "good."

Thus at the scene of the death of his innocence, Strether realizes that the world he has created in his mind has, in part, been an evasion of the element of reality which he finds most unacceptable. His idealization of Paris and the people in it (even unto Chad) is an impossible standard for them to affirm. He has wanted them to be as perfect as his subjective vision has dictated. They were to meet his conditions. Crews sees Strether's problem in much the same way: "What this self-deception had signified was an effort to reconcile Woollett and Paris by means of

the 'virtuous attachment' theory; if Madame de Vionnet were truly disinterested, she could deserve the approval of Strether's chaste New England moral sense."[27]

Now he knows conclusively that he cannot impose his values on others, and, further, he comes to question his values as well. Madame de Vionnet was to have been super-human. Strether still looks to her; "he could trust her to make deception right." (Ambassadors, p. 318) In this context Crews goes on to say: "This is Madame de Vionnet's saving grace, and it is not so immoral as it may sound. Strether now has it clearly in mind that the essential human relationships are not much different in Paris than in Woollett. The real difference is that whereas Woollett has refused to admit their existence, Paris has learned how to clothe them acceptable and live with them."[28]

Strether still wants Madame de Vionnet's support. But he finds that it is he who is needed: "She clung to him, Lambert Strether as to a source of safety she had tested, and, generous, graceful, truthful as she might try to be, exquisite as she was, she dreaded the term of his being within reach." (Ambassadors, p. 322) His dependence upon her to make things right is ended when he realizes this, and the last veil of his illusion is drawn when he finds her so vulnerable: "With this sharpest perception yet, it was like a chill in the air to him, it was

almost appalling, that a creature so fine could be so exploited." (Ambassadors, p. 322) Now Strether must come to terms with this felt knowledge, the knowledge of all human frailty. On this point, Ward says, "To achieve self-fulfillment, he must cast off the American evils of prejudice, intolerance, narrowness, and smugness. . . . James equates the New England fear of experience with evil."[29] Now Strether must re-evaluate the nature of evil in new terms.

In this work, certainly, the nature of American evil is more frighteningly rendered than that of European evil. We see the contrast in terms of animal imagery, for instance. The animal imagery of Gloriani in his garden as a glossy male tiger is a fine natural image, and if ferocious in its implications at least does not carry the silent malevolence of the description of Mrs. Newsome and her daughter. It is given to Jim Pocock to convey, in the American idiom, the full force of Mrs. Newsome and Sarah: "'They ain't fierce, either of 'em: they let you come quite close. They wear their fur the smooth side out --the warm side in. . . . They're about as intense as they can live . . . They don't lash about and shake the cage, and it's at feeding time they're quietest. But they always get there." (Ambassadors, p. 215-6)

The spiritual cannibalism conveyed by this description is more baleful than the lush and crumbling

atmosphere of Gloriani's garden. And if Mrs. Newsome is to represent New England Puritanism and Madame de Vionnet European decadence, the chill of the iceberg ("She was all cold thought") is the iron in the soul of America. Edel sees Mrs. Newsome as an American emblem: "America is Mrs. Newsome, an implacable, immobile force, intransigent and exigent: she is there, in Woollett, or a hundred cities where values are unambiguous, and where everyone pays a price--the price of muffled feeling, the conventional, the prescribed."[30] If Madame de Vionnet, or Europe, is doomed, at least she is gracious and loving, and will destroy with softness and elegance. She has the charm of the powerless.

Strether's attempts to find a workable synthesis between both worlds, the components of his very self is the story of The Ambassadors. In both cases he has mistaken the nature of evil. In the first case the evil is one of the fear of experience, and this fear manifests itself in the exercise of tight moral control, which is Woollett self-righteousness. Austen Warren says of The Ambassadors that "its real theme is the inadequacy of the famous New England conscience. Strether--and apparently Mrs. Newsome . . . both hold inflexibly to the conception that all adultery is a sin and that happiness is dangerous --if not indeed evil."[31] Warren does believe that Strether is educable and views the work as a novel of

initiation. To the Puritan consciousness sexuality is the essential threat, and the substitute for its manifestation is the exercise of power through the medium of money. In the case of European evil, the second case, the charm and delight of Parisian culture, its mellow traditions, conceal the rigidity of its institutions, as well as the evil of a world gone to seed and hanging on through intrigue and manipulation. Madame de Vionnet uses Strether to try to hold Chad. She will destroy Strether with his Woollett friends if necessary, if that will keep Chad with her. Europe is not only experience, it is the meaning of experience. And though it must be absorbed into oneself, one dare not be absorbed into it. The ethical sense must create new values and a deeper morality.

Problems of morality at a fundamental level are not at issue in James's sophisticated later work, The Golden Bowl. Ward believes that "it is a gross oversimplification to assume that the only evil is the adulterous tie between Prince Amerigo and Charlotte Stant. James stresses the equally grave, though less sensational, moral defects in the wealthy American art collector and his daughter."[32] The apportioning of moral defects is not the purpose of this essay, but Ward's view is in contrast to what Walter Wright cites as the two extremes of interpretation of the novel: "There have been two types of oversimplification of the novel, depending on the

dominant myth or literary convention chosen . . . .The extreme of one makes Maggie, the heroine, virtually a saint or even the personification of Divine Grace." And Wright goes on to quote Joseph Firebaugh as an advocate of the other extreme: "Maggie is an all but unmitigated tyrant. . . . Life terrifies this Machiavellian creature not at all. She manipulates it to her purpose. . . . Marrying him /Adam/ to Charlotte is a symbolic incest."[33]

Since this essay deals with the growth from innocence to knowledge, and deals with the character of central consciousness, further discussion regarding Maggie's character will be limited. It is interesting, however, to observe the extent of the controversy it has evoked. Maggie's passage, which begins with her marriage, is from an innocence which is pre-moral, a sheltered beauty-filled life wherein all of her wants have been anticipated by her doting father. In her passage from girlish innocence, Maggie, unlike Strether does not carry with her a ready-made code of morals. During her journey she develops a pragmatic law, one which suffices for her particular situation, and she thinks of what is happening to her in non-absolute terms. Dupee observes, in this context:

> And Maggie's final success with her marriage would seem to mean that solutions for the gravest problems may be found within the private life itself, without recourse to the courts or the church or even to any

> established morality. It is significant that the Prince and the Ververs are Catholics, and a priest appears briefly at their table. Yet the point is distinctly made that Maggie consults him not at all but settles everything for herself. . . . As she is her own priest so she coins her own ethic out of her particular needs.[34]

Maggie is "animated by an heroic lucidity" (G.B., p. 438) which does not develop until she has need of it. In this work, because the stress is not upon contrasting sets of values there is little talk of "saving" but there is a great emphasis on "seeing through." The movement in this novel is towards the humanization of the aesthetic sense. Krook, in speaking of the work says, "Yet (we learn as the story advances) it is these two, the aesthetic and the moral, though intimately bound up with each other . . . yet not the same . . . /that/ can in certain circumstances be mutually exclusive."[35] The little rich girl whose life has been filled with beauty will travel from the surface of a purely aesthetic sense to the deepest recesses of the self in order to discover and affirm the values of love and relationship in a realistic way.

Since the aesthetic is the great thing for the Ververs, Maggie engages in an inspection of the mind in images of art. Matthiessen says, "To a much greater extent than even James had previously sought for, entire scenes are centered around pictures and objets d'art."[36] It is a pagoda, "a structure plated with hard, bright porcelain,

coloured and figured and adorned . . . with silver bells that tinkled, ever so charmingly, when stirred by chance airs," which is the alien intruder in the "garden of her life". (G.B. p. 289) Maggie's concern at this juncture is for her father and the "precious equilibrium" of their lives. The notion of equilibrium is a static image, and one that will have to be dissolved when life enters.

Maggie has a sense of bewilderment, and she feels that unanswered questions are "like a roomful of confused objects . . . which for some time now she had been passing and repassing along the corridor of her life." (G.B. p. 297) There is an air of confinement and repetitious movement in the way Maggie envisions the boundaries of her existence. Crews says, "Maggie's test arrives in a dilemma from which there is no completely satisfactory exit, and this is precisely because the dilemma is a factor of her own narrow world, hers and her father's."[37]

As Maggie strives to understand the basis of her unease, the return of the Prince from Matcham offers her the first tangible clue to follow: "he had come back . . . visibly uncertain . . ..What had made the particular look was his thus distinguishably wishing to see how he should find her (first)." And Maggie goes on to wonder "Why first? . . ..The question dangled there as if it were the key to everything." (G.B., p. 298) When one is a prisoner only a key may provide freedom, and the idea of a key

further augments the impression of confinement. The Prince's refusal of Maggie's assistance in dressing to go to dinner increases her awareness that something of significance is taking place: "She was to remember afterwards something that had passed between them. . . how he had looked, for her, during an instant, at the door . . . how he had met her asking him, in hesitation first, then quickly in decision." (G.B., p. 300-1) This moment recalls Isabel's impression of something wrong when she sees the polite Osmond sitting while Madame Merle stands. In Maggie's case, "Such things . . . were to come back to her--they played, through her full after-sense, like lights on the whole impression." (G.B., p. 301)

The quickening of Maggie's mind corresponds to her real journey, and immediately following this scene the coach image is used by Maggie to describe the family. Charlotte has been added as a necessary fourth wheel and in her mind Maggie sees that "Amerigo and Charlotte were pulling it while she and her father were not so much as pushing." (G.B. p. 304) Within the metaphor of the journey Maggie experiences a realization of how she and her father have used their spouses. They have simply sat while "the exertion was all with the others." (G.B., p. 304) After visualizing herself in this position Maggie paces "in the manner of one for whom a strong light

has suddenly broken. . . . She had seen herself at last, in the picture she was studying, suddenly jump from the coach." (p. 304)

Maggie has left the coach that goes nowhere, but the others do not know it. Maggie herself does not know what to do or where to go next. Her field of darkness is illuminated by a remark of Charlotte's out of which a light comes to Maggie: "a light flashed for her like a great flower grown in a night." Maggie realizes that she is being "treated." "The word for it, the word that flashed the light, was that they were <u>treating</u> her. . . . It was not from her that they took their cue, but . . . from each other; and with a depth of unanimity, an exact coincidence of inspiration." (<u>G.B.</u>, p. 316)

Maggie has entered upon the seas of experience and her journey continues in earnest as she seems to find herself at some "strange shore to which she had been noiselessly ferried and where, with a start, she found herself quaking at the thought that the boat might have put off again and left her." (p. 316) She realizes that she is being handled by Amerigo and Charlotte, and "the dismissed vision of Amerigo . . . in arrest at the door" returns; "Then it was that this immense little memory gave out its full power." (<u>G.B.</u>, p. 317) William Maseychik says: "James created an aesthetic of crystallizations and 'impressions', important stillnesses and revelatory moments. His

is an aesthetic of the trouvaille, the bon mot, and the apercu, moments when something new is glimpsed and found in a detail, caught in a word, perceived and apprehended through the surface of a still scene before the elements in that composition shift and all fades."[38]

In the great flux of life there are moments of insight and knowledge, moments when we understand the meaning of our experience. Maggie has thought that she was the one responsible for the felicitous arrangement of the foursome, but it is not as she imagined: "Of course they were arranged--all four arranged; but what had been the basis of their life . . . precisely, but that they were arranged together? Ah! Amerigo and Charlotte were arranged together, but she--to confine the matter only to herself--was arranged apart." (G.B., p. 318)

The great arrangement that she and her father have worked out has been altered. We recall Ward's statement that it is the Ververs' ignorance that creates their own peculiar brand of evil.[39] Maggie now being immersed in the waters of experience, "It rushed over her, the full sense of all this, with quite another rush, from that of the breaking wave of ten days before; and as her father himself seemed not to meet the vaguely clutching hand with which, during the first shock of complete perception, she tried to steady herself, she felt very much alone." (G.B., p. 319) The seas of experience are the waters in which

sight is felt, and recognition comes in waves of shock. As well, we have seen that James uses images of burgeoning growth, as in the blooming of flowers, and great flashes of light. In every case there is a sense of movement and dislocation accompanying knowledge.

Maggie has indeed left the static world which Adam had arranged for her, and in which she has played so willingly. At this point in her journey she has some understanding of the visible but "her grasp of appearances . . . out of proportion to her view of causes; but it came to her then and there that if she could only get the facts of appearances straight . . . the reasons lurking behind them wouldn't perhaps be able to help showing." (G.B., p. 324) The question here is one of real sight. Maggie feels her sight to be insufficient to understand "the facts" let alone the deeper levels of motivation. Thus her sheltered life has enclosed and isolated her.

Maggie's struggle is complex in that in striving to become her own person she must not only emerge from her self-centered, protected life, but must also contend with the sensuous power of the Prince. Krook describes Maggie's emotional response: "She is terrified, to begin with, of the Prince's 'sovereign personal power' as she calls his sexual power."[40] And Crews further observes that "At several points in the novel he uses Maggie's attraction to him as a means of controlling her thoughts."[41]

When he embraces her he exerts his mastery over her:

> Yes, she was in his exerted grasp, and she knew what that was; but she was at the same time in the grasp of her conceived responsibility, and the extraordinary thing was that, of the two intensities, the second was presently to become the sharper. . . . Strange . . . she saw that if she did give it up she should somehow give up everything for ever. And what her husband's grasp really meant, as her very bones registered, was that she should give it all up: it was exactly for this that he had resorted to unfailing magic. . . . She should have but to lay her head back on his shoulder . . . to make it definite for him that she didn't resist. To this . . . every throb of her consciousness prompted her--every throb, that is, but one, the throb of her deeper need to know where she "really" was. (G.B., p. 327)

And all the while this inner struggle takes place during the time she is in a carriage, travelling, travelling. This struggle takes place in a moving vehicle which accentuates the journey metaphor and provides the reader with a sense of movement towards some resolution.

Each new development brings illumination, but all of the light returns to the moment of illumination she experiences that first time. And, throughout, she is accompanied by a sense of isolation: "She was to feel alone again, as she had felt at the issue of her high tension with her husband during their return from meeting the Castledeans in Eaton Square." (G.B., p. 341) When Maggie discovers the history of the golden bowl and the Prince appears as Fanny breaks it, almost as if by magic, Fanny

departs. Left with the Prince, Maggie does not speak, but "she only felt, on the spot, a strong, sharp wish not to see his face again till he should have had a minute to arrange it. She had seen it enough for her temporary clearness and her next movement--seen it as it showed during the stare of surprise that followed his entrance. Then it was that she knew how expert she had been made, for judging it quickly, by that vision of it, indelibly registered for reference, that had flashed a light into her troubled soul the night of his late return from Matcham." (G.B., p. 418)

The illumination has been one of true knowledge; instead of shattering her already altered world, the breaking of the flawed bowl frees her, in the light of the truth, to feel compassion and a new understanding of her husband: "There was even a minute, when her back was turned to him, during which she knew once more the strangeness of her desire to spare him. . . . The responsibility of freedom . . . was the possibility, richer with every lapsing moment, that her husband would have, on the whole question, a new need of her." (G.B., p. 421) Crews says of this passage, "From now until the end she sees her responsibility clearly. She has shown Amerigo that she knows the whole truth, and her retribution stops right there. Something has made her decide not to humiliate him and the others, but to spare them. . . . This is her

heretofore unnoticed love for her husband."[42]

Maggie has discovered a "precious truth. . . . By her helping him, helping him to help himself . . . she should help him to help her." (G.B., p. 422) The transactions between human beings are not of buying and selling, but of loving and helping. N. Lebowitz says, "James's realism needs no defense, for he is aiming at the realism he most cherished, one that featured the evolution of a character from innocence to full knowledge and love."[43] Maggie's existence will never be static again. Great deeds lie before her, and great sacrifices.

She offers Amerigo herself, under a new, re-worked arrangement: "Consider of course, as you must, the question of what you may have to surrender, on your side . . . but take in, at any rate, that there is something for you if you don't too blindly spoil your chance for it." (G.B., p. 422-3) Maggie has come a long way in her passage from innocence:

> It was wonderful how she felt, by the time she had seen herself through this narrow pass, that she had really achieved something--that she was emerging a little, in fine, with the prospect less contracted. She had done for him, that is, what her instinct enjoined; had laid a basis not merely momentary on which he could meet her . . . before he committed himself, there occurred between them a kind of unprecedented moral exchange over which her superior lucidity presided. (G.B., p. 423-4)

We see at the beginning of the foregoing passage that Maggie has "seen herself through." Her passage has been in part achieved. It will remain for her to effect a new arrangement, saving what she can from the wreckage of the old, flawed one. The new arrangement will never be the bowl as it was to have been. Innocence is shattered forever.

In each novel the chief characters come, in mid-passage, to a place from which they must take a new turn. Newman must deal with the effect on him of the Bellegardes and the thwarting of his desire. Isabel must find a way to deal with her life as Osmond's wife, if indeed she wants to continue to be his wife. Fleda must find a way to act in consistent accordance with her felt values. Strether must provide a new synthesis, create a new internal world to replace the one he has lost, and find a new meaning for what constitutes virtuous action. Maggie will take responsibility for her life instead of leaving that to her father. She will grow up to the extent of helping him to make decisions. Mid-passage takes place late in the chronology of the novel, but it is the climax to which the characters have been moving, the point at which crucial changes will be made. These changes will take them to their journey's end. As I have stated earlier, the end of the journey may herald the beginning of another one, for it is the entrance into the world, the world of experience.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

1. Speaking of the secularization of the religious sensibility there is an echo here of the old Hebrew saying that "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."
2. Sister Sharp, p. 7.
3. Ward, p. 37.
4. Edel, p. 90.
5. R.L. Gale, The Caught Image: Figurative Language in the Fiction of Henry James (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954) p. 90
6. Lebowitz, p. 70.
7. Tanner, p. 70.
8. Ibid., p. 69.
9. Rowe, p. 33.
10. Krook, p. 44.
11. Ibid., p. 59.
12. Gale, p. 43.
13. Sister Sharp, p. 69.
14. Lebowitz., p. 14.
15. Henry James, A.N., p. 128.
16. Ward, p. 46-7.
17. Wiesenfarth, p. 46.
18. Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) p. 159.
19. Gale, p. 141.
20. Dupee, p. 165-6.

21. W.M. Gibson, "Metaphor in the Plot of The Ambassadors" Modern Judgements, ed. by Tony Tanner, p. 306.

22. Ward, The Search for Form, p. 49.

23. Gibson, p. 312-3.

24. Gale, p. 47.

25. Gibson, p. 313.

26. Ward, Form, p. 49.

27. Crews, p. 53.

28. Ibid., p. 53-4.

29. Ward, Imagination of Disaster, p. 111.

30. Leon Edel, The Master: 1901-1916 (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1969) p. 76.

31. Austen Warren, "The New England Conscience", The Minnesota Review, Winter 1962, II, 1. (Minneapolis: Curle Printing Co., Inc.,) p. 157.

32. Ward, Imagination of Disaster, p. 139.

33. Wright, p. 316 and 326.

34. Dupee, p. 231-2.

35. Krook, p. 243.

36. Matthiessen, p. 82.

37. Crews, p. 111.

38. Maseychik, p. 118.

39. Ward, p.

40. Krook, p. 255.

41. Ibid., p. 103.

42. Ibid., p. 103.

43. N. Lebowitz, "Magic and Metamorphoses in The Golden Bowl," Modern Judgements, ed. by Tony Tanner, p. 329.

CHAPTER III

Journey's End: Accommodation to Knowledge

James, in delineating the mental processes of his protagonists, gives realism a new meaning. James E. Miller, Jr. writes; "James' ability to escape the conventional notions of realism of his time is rooted, I believe, in his complex awareness of the way human beings experience reality." This experience is closely related to the creative process. Miller goes on to say "Before we are through with James' reconsideration of the term experience, we have been thrust firmly into interior consciousness, and we are confronted with . . . imagination converting 'the very pulses of the air into revelations'. James has moved deftly from experience to consciousness to imagination. . . . Behind his vocabulary, his metaphors, his notions, so casually and fragmentarily and qualifiedly set forward, lies a unified conception of the creative processes of the human being in general and the novelist in particular."[1] For James, the act of creation is described as follows: "These are the fascinations of the fabulist's art, these lurking forces of expansion, those necessities of upspringing in the seed, these beautiful determinations, on the part of the idea entertained, to grow as tall as possible,

to push into the light and the air and thickly flower there."[2] There is a resemblance in this description to the process of expansion which his character of central consciousness undergoes. Again we see the importance of light, here used in his organic metaphor of vegetable growth, but flashing throughout these works as the illuminations of knowledge. His central characters thrust towards the light, and here the earth image ends, because they are human and not flowers, they must move towards enlightenment.

The Jamesian travellers embark upon a journey which is an act of imagination and which generates so much change in them that some of the satellite characters seem more stultified than ever by comparison. The sense of death in life is strongly conveyed when Newman enters the home of the Bellegardes as Claire is on the verge of leaving, in The American. He finds the Marquise buried in an armchair." (American, p. 247; italics mine). Newman has indirectly apprehended her immolation in her dead world when he reflected on her "blooming Garden of Eden." (American, p. 127) For the Marquise her life is in her forms and Newman has violated her forms beyond her endurance. She could not bear being walked about by Newman, shown off, her sense of form and of correctness flouted. To succumb is a term for dying, and she speaks of the experience in terms of death, "I succumbed to the scene." (American, p.247)

Newman's movement, herself carried along with it, an image of a journey away from her own mental territory, brings about the collapse of the word she has given that he may marry Claire. The Bellegardes know absolutely that they cannot accept Newman and it is that scene that "opened our eyes!" (p. 247) The opening of the eyes is an immensely ironic phrase. Actually the Bellegardes are preparing to sink back into their sleep which Newman has so importunately interrupted. And Madame de Contre's decision to become a Carmelite nun will bring her, in her words "peace and safety." (American, p. 279) She wants peace from the flux of life and safety from decisions. Earlier she has said to Newman, "'There's a curse upon the house.'" (American, p. 277) Indeed there is a curse of death. They are all buried within the remains of their tradition (Valentin literally so). It is a tradition which continues though it might sacrifice individuals within it; it resists the battering of the new world by withdrawal into the "religion /simply/ of the family laws, the religion of which /Claire's/ implacable little mother was high priestess." (American, p. 282)

Newman's belief in not making oneself unnecessarily uncomfortable limits his understanding of what motivates the Bellegardes. He believes he can discomfit them by exposing them, in the sight of the world, and that that possibility will move them to change their attitude. Not

making oneself unnecessarily uncomfortable has different meanings for Newman than for the others. It is he who is the unnecessary discomfort to them. Their imperturbability has been a wall against which Newman cannot make an impress. He cannot reach them, but he confesses to Mrs. Bread that: "I want to bring them down--down, down, down! I want to turn the tables upon them--I want to mortify them as they mortified me. They took me up into a high place and made me stand there for all the world to see me, and then they stole behind me and pushed me into this bottomless pit, where I lie howling and gnashing my teeth! I made a fool of myself before all their friends; but I shall make something worse of them." (American, p. 296)

At this point in his life Newman seems to be in the grip of two of the deadly sins, Anger and Pride. His revenge is all important to him. Even his love for Claire takes second place to his need for vengeance: "'Madame de Cintré is buried alive. What are honor or dishonor to her? The door of the tomb is at this moment closing behind her. . . . She has moved off, like her brother Valentin to give me room to work. It's as if it were done on purpose." (American, p. 296) These words are said to Mrs. Bread as they speak in an old ruin on a hill. (American, p. 286) His location on that hill and his language is the fury of fallen pride. The old ruin stands for the spent and depleted Bellegarde house. When Mrs. Bread tells him she

has the sheet of paper which will incriminate Madame de Bellegarde Newman says, "'I want to be the first; I want it to be my property and no one else's.'" (American, p. 396) And when he does receive the damning evidence he is Luciferian in his relish: "He was nursing his thunderbolt; he loved it; he was unwilling to part with it. He seemed to be holding it aloft in the rumbling, vaguely-flashing air, directly over the heads of his victims, and he fancied he could see their pale, upturned faces." (American, p. 311) Pride has completely overwhelmed his love for Claire. His vision of the vanquished Bellegardes' faces, "pale, upturned faces" echoes a Dantean note. Appropriately, Newman discovers that Claire's convent is in the Rue d'Enfer, the street of hell. Despite his pain at her removal from him he is more engaged by his feelings about Claire's family than by his feeling for her. What he feels about them is that they have become adversaries worthy to be crushed, unlike his feelings about the dishonest competitor in America. He wants to be in a position of power over them, and all else shrinks beside his engulfing desire.

Newman's confrontation with the Bellegardes takes place in the Parc Monceau Garden. The setting has two distinct significances, firstly for Newman, who is ignorant and innocent in regard to the meaning of his experience with the Bellegardes, who has reverted to his

original American Adamic pride; secondly for the Bellegardes, who are locked into their "blooming Garden of Eden", the garden they neither can nor wish to leave. They each behave characteristically: Newman threatens them with exposure and the Bellegardes refuse to react.

When Newman determines to proceed he first visits the comical duchess. Her social chit-chat, her manner and her conversation create a wall between them, and his perspective is dramatically altered: "He seemed morally to have turned a sort of somersault, and to find things looking differently in consequence. He felt a sudden stiffening of his will and quickening of his reserve. What in the world had he been thinking of when he fancied the duchess could help him, and that it would conduce to his comfort to make her think ill of the Bellegardes? What did her opinion of the Bellegardes matter to him?" (American, p. 338) This is a major alteration in his point of view, so reversing it, that a somersault seems best to describe his shift. Yet, when the duchess indicates that "'I had an idea you had something particular to say to me,'" he almost repeats his internal revolution: "Newman looked at her; he felt a little dizzy; for the moment he seemed to be turning his somersault again." (American, p. 339) But that somersault is not to be repeated. He has righted himself, and his attitude is now fundamentally altered by an act of imagination which has given him a new

moral perspective. He has been wounded but now he waits for his wound to heal. No longer does he seek to wound his enemies, to destroy them, in return. Now Newman searches for a new way to live: "He had a fancy of carrying out his life as he would have directed it if Madame de Cintré had been left to him--of making it a religion to do nothing that she would have disliked." (American, p. 351)

Though writing outside the framework of organized religion James recognizes the religious impulse, the human need for devotion and worship, for succor and sustenance. Rowe, in writing of Henry Adams and Henry James says, "Without a transcendental logos, without a readable social text, they are faced with the need to generate their own phenomenological texts to provide a livable context. They both experiment with different literary forms in an attempt to give symbolic shape and meaning to a reality and a self."[3] At this point in his life, Newman's self is in flux. He has lost his focus and his general alienation is expressed: "He took no interest in chatting about his affairs and manifested no desire to look over his accounts. . . . he was himself surprised at the extent of his indifference. . . . he tried to interest himself and to take up his old occupations. But they appeared unreal to him. . . . A hopeless, helpless loafer, useful to no one and detestable to himself--this was what the treachery of the Bellegardes had made of him." (American, p. 353-4)

His fancy of making a cult of Claire de Cintré obviously does not suffice him. His only talisman against despair is the incriminating little piece of paper which he retains. When he hears that Claire has taken the veil as Sister Veronica he returns to Paris to see where she is to live out her life: "the place looked dumb, deaf, inanimate. . . . This seemed the goal of his journey. . . . The barren stillness of the place seemed to be his own release from ineffectual longing. . . . He turned away with a heavy heart, but with a heart lighter than the one he had brought. Everything was over, and he too at last could rest." (American, p. 356)

Newman has caught a glimpse of greater dimensions to life than he had hitherto imagined. Now it has been snatched from him, and James no longer refers to eyes or to sight imagery significantly in the book after Newman loses Claire: "The magic of beauty had gone out of the world with Madame de Cintré." (American, p. 344)

With the "burial" of Claire a part of himself lies buried--the determinedly hopeful, youthful aspect of himself. A part of him has joined the Bellegardes, been taken over by them. He has journeyed a long way from his original innocence, and because he is so tired, he rests in the cathedral of Notre Dame, a church dedicated to the Madonna. This one church gives him an experience which not all of the churches he could count in his early travels

can provide. It is here he finds comfort:

> He was very tired; this was the best place he could be in. . . . He leaned his head for a long time on the chair in front of him; when he took it up he felt that he was himself again. . . . He gave a groan as he remembered what he had meant to do . . . the bottom, suddenly, had fallen out of his revenge. Whether it was Christian charity, or unregenerate good nature. . ..Newman's last thought was that . . . he didn't want to hurt them. They had hurt him but such things really weren't his game. At last he got up and came out of the darkening church . . . strolling soberly. (American, p. 357)

Newman's vision of beauty has become internalized. He has achieved a certain measure of moral ascent. He no longer stands on the hill of pride. The pendulum swing of injury and revenge, man's first, most elemental reactive process has been stilled. The somersaults are over. Claire has become a nun to escape experience (and persecution) but Newman has attained a portion of grace by enduring it and taking it into himself. Edel says, "The central irony of the book is that Newman has not been corrupted by his gold; he is still one of 'nature's nobleman' and he can, in the end, be as moral and therefore as noble as the old corrupt Europeans."[4] My contention goes further than this. Through the gaining of psychological insight, through the achievement of self knowledge, he has gained secular grace; he is not as he was, but more: he has realized his moral potential.

Newman has one last instant of regret when Mrs. Tristram dismisses the virtue of his act in destroying the evidence against them by telling him that the Bellegardes have read his psychology well enough to know he would not ruin them. He is momentarily deflated. But then, his Parisian mentor does not tend to bring out his most noble aspect. He has surpassed his teacher by far, not in worldly knowledge, though he has certainly gained some of that, but in loving and suffering. In terms of the physical journey, Newman will have gone full circle--from America to Europe and back to America. Still, his mental travels have probably not ended. A new journey lies before him. His awakening, which had begun in America, has been completed in Europe, and now he is indeed a "New-man."

An awakening in the spiritual sense is a manner of seeing. Isabel Archer, who longed for "a certain light" to dawn has also "seen." But her light which was to have been one of ideal inspiration proves to be a "livid light." (Portrait, p. 356) The sense of murkiness and sombreness imparted by that adjective suggests something hellish. There is an image of hell as well in her thinking: "There was something in Ralph's talk . . . that made the blasted circle round which she walked more spacious." (Portrait, p. 357; italics mine) Isabel attributes the darkness of her life entirely to Osmond's suffocating, self-absorptive

vanity. With all of her intelligence, Isabel lacks the moral clarity of self-knowledge. Her fear of publishing her mistake is actually the preference of appearance over reality. Krook says, "aestheticism seeks always to substitute the appearance for the reality, the surface for the substance."[5] What Krook calls "aestheticism" is Isabel's absolute idealism, the wish to be perfect, and to be seen to be so. Isabel's deficiency is emphasized by the innate capability for clear-sightedness existing in both Ralph, wise and somewhat worldly, and Pansy, sheltered and innocent, as well as Goodwood, single-minded and terribly earnest. Isabel "couldn't call him stupid; he was not that in the least; he was only extraordinarily honest. To be as honest as that made a man very different from most people; one had to be almost equally honest with him. She made this latter reflection at the very time she was flattering herself she had persuaded him that she was the most light-hearted of women." (Portrait, p. 404) The contrast between Pansy and Isabel is thrown into relief when Isabel speaks to the girl (at Osmond's request) on behalf of Lord Warburton. Pansy declares that there is no danger of Warburton proposing: "There was a conviction in the way she said this, and a felicity in her believing it, which conduced to Isabel's awkwardness. She felt accused of dishonesty, and the idea was disgusting." (Portrait, p. 386) Pansy knows that Warburton does not really

care for her: "Isabel was touched with wonder at the depths of perception of which this submissive little person was capable; she felt afraid of Pansy's wisdom. . . . There was something brilliant in her lucidity, and it made her companion draw a long breath. . . . Pansy had a sufficient illumination of her own, and Isabel felt that she herself just now had not light to spare from her small stock." (Portrait, p. 387) In this moral encounter between the two, Pansy's directness and Isabel's tendency to equivocate are contrasted. Pansy's moral path is small but straight and clear. Isabel's grounds have been the beautiful garden of her potential self, or a whole world of the mind, yet her way is dark and unknown. She has found that the "lapful of roses" with which she came away from her mental excursions contain a worm. Ralph's, Pansy's and Goodwood's thoughts are not confused; at least as they are presented by James, these characters carry illumination. Their thoughts are not obstructed by "tangles of outlines." Isabel must work her way out through deceptions of her thoughts, which have led her into a "blasted circle" towards open ground and a clear view. The grim reality of her plight in being married to Osmond is further augmented by her "strange visions" wherein she sees Osmond and Madame Merle in "dim indistinguishable combination." (Portrait, p. 396)

Now Isabel's thoughts take her back continuously

and her yesterdays come under constant review. Rowe says, "Isabel has been caught in the fiction of a self complete in its own right, remote from the destructive elements of time, change, and social relation. For her, knowledge is a means of going beyond the ambiguity of this world to a realm full of meaning and truth. . . . Throughout the novel Isabel's ideas suggest a blind innocence."[6] Now she seeks another kind of knowledge. She explores the importance of being "right" with herself, what that really means. It has generally meant not injuring her amour propre, and her inability to regard herself as being in the wrong is echoed in her observation on Osmond's relation to Pansy: "Even with Pansy he couldn't put himself the least in the wrong." (Portrait, p. 303) There is a wish operating here, gradually coming into being, of really being right, not just appearing to be so, She wishes to genuinely settle spiritual accounts. She is concerned and discomfited by her sense of having done some injury to Goodwood: "It had been horrid to see him because he represented the only serious harm that (to her belief) she had ever done in the world; he was the only person with an unsatisfied claim on her." (Portrait, p. 397)

This wish to settle accounts, the beginning of a true spiritual reckoning is firmly fixed in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. The Hebrew concept of "Heshbon a nefesh" is the stock-taking of the soul,usually,

though not always, in relation to God. But it is characteristic that Isabel, as yet, wishes to make her settlements at no loss to her pride. Isabel's refusal to leave Osmond causes Henrietta Stackpole to say, "'You won't confess that you've made a mistake. You're too proud.'" (Portrait, p. 400) There is the implication here that the choice of reality over appearance, i.e., "confession", may free an individual, while pride chains him.

Isabel's self-searching converges with her fear that Ralph's death will come before he can get home to Gardencourt: "Ralph must sink to his last rest in his own dear house. . . . There seemed to Isabel in these days something sacred in Gardencourt. . . . When she thought of the months she had spent there the tears rose to her eyes." (Portrait, p. 406) At the conscious level of thought Isabel is coming round to understanding the significant elements in her life as symbolically important. It is certain that particular events or places in one's life come to be invested with meaning beyond the immediately apparent. Gardencourt, the Eden-like place from where she started on her journey, is now the great good place in her mind. That place of beauty and safety must be reached by Ralph, for it cannot ever now be regained by her: "No chapter of the past was more perfectly irrecoverable." (p. 406)

Isabel has finally moved towards some knowledge, in all of her suffering, and knowledge is apprehended first

as evil. She begins to understand how she has collaborated with her enemies as she reflects on Madame Merle's intervention in her destiny: "More clearly than ever before Isabel heard a cold, mocking voice proceed from she knew not where, in the dim void that surrounded her, and declare that this bright, strong, definite worldly woman, this incarnation of the practical, the personal the immediate, was a powerful agent in her destiny. . . . The sense of accident indeed had died within her heart that day when she happened to be struck with the manner in which the wonderful lady and her own husband sat together in private." (Portrait, p. 420) Further, she reflects, "Mrs. Touchett was right. Madame Merle had married her." (Portrait, p. 423) Her introspection results in a summarizing question: "She asked herself with an almost childlike horror of the supposition, whether to this intimate friend of several years the great historical epithet of wicked were to be applied." (Portrait, p. 424)

Sister Sharp says of their relationship, "Madame Merle has shown herself an expert psychologist in estimating Isabel's need to confide. . . . Isabel is always lonely. Isolated in part by her romantic ideals, in part by her egotism, she naturally allows admittance to her heart only to those who appeal to the ideals or flatter the egotism."[7]

The flowers of fancy and the imagery of gardens have given way to the "desolate ledges" and the despoiled

areas of the Coliseum. We remember that in James's Italy, Rome, is the very source of Europe's art and her corruption. And corruption manifests itself often as aridity. Isabel feels "dry despair." (Portrait, p. 432) Yet, when she and Pansy encounter Rosier in the Coliseum, Isabel observes that in those "desolate ledges" the "wild flowers (when they are allowed) bloom in the deep crevices." (Portrait, p. 430) Pansy, so carefully named, is a little flower struggling to live among the crevices of her environment. It is to the protection of that fragile bloom rather than to her own illusory rich gardens that Isabel will devote herself. But before she can do that she must achieve some emancipation from her dependence upon Osmond's opinion and her fear of his displeasure. She is afraid to defy Osmond, for that would be the ultimate denial of all he stands for, and would jeopardize her own righteous position vis à vis their relationship. Osmond cannot be in the wrong before his daughter, and Isabel cannot be in the wrong before Osmond. Edel says, "Isabel and Osmond are then, for all their differences, two sides of the same coin, two studies in egotism." This is putting the case in an extreme way. In general, there is much to choose between Isabel and Osmond, but Edel in discussing Portrait as a power struggle makes a good point when he says: "Osmond tries to bend Isabel to his will. She cannot be bent. Her kind of power refuses to be subjugated:

it exerts its own kind of subjugation. His, more devious, returns perpetually to the assault. The impasse is complete."[8]

Isabel's need to be in the right fetters her in all of her actions. The circumstances which precipitate her escape, at least temporarily, from her moral prison can be none but the most compelling, and that is, of course, the news that Ralph is dying. Isabel's crossing of the Channel is now a rite of passage. Her understanding of her situation is now clearer than it ever was. And she is journeying to attend Ralph, the companion of her innocence at Gardencourt, in his death. Now when she understands the falsity of the premise upon which she built her marriage, now when she sees as she never saw before, James, whose irony is never absent, says of Isabel's "long journey from Rome" that "she performed this journey with sightless eyes and took little pleasure in the countries she traversed. . . . Her thoughts followed their course through other countries--strange-looking, dimly-lighted, pathless lands, in which there was no change of seasons but only a perpetual dreariness of winter." (Portrait, p. 457; italics mine) Dupee says, "she writhes in an old world that has turned into a sort of hell."[9] Now Isabel recognizes her internal landscape. In that place linear time is not important. James describes psychological time:

> The past and the future came and went at their will, but she saw them only in fitful images, which rose and fell by a logic of their own. Nothing seemed of use to her today. All purpose, all intention, was suspended; all desire too save the single desire to reach her much-embracing refuge. Gardencourt had been her starting-point, and to those muffled chambers it was at least a temporary solution to return. She had gone forth in her strength; she would come back in her weakness, and if the place had been a rest to her before, it would be a sanctuary now. (Portrait, p. 457)

Just as Pansy had seen "the truth of things" (Portrait, p. 454) and the reality, Isabel has been introduced to "The truth of things, their mutual relations, their meaning, and for the most part their horror." (Portrait, p. 457) Isabel's prison is much more complex than she had originally imagined. Her chamber is not only Osmond's suffocating egotism, but the inter-relatedness of everyone's actions, her own included which have been piled together to form a structure into which she herself has been built. The structure "rose before her with a kind of architectural vastness." (p. 457)

The sanctuary of Gardencourt is a dwelling place of the mind, an asylum against the terrors and consternations of life. For her uncle it had been a place of final rest. For Isabel it has been her starting-point. Gardencourt is the strength of a tradition as well as its formal ordering. "Nothing was changed. . . . the valuable

'pieces' grow in value and the owners lose . . . youth, happiness, beauty." (Portrait, p. 464) The form outlives the individual; and in Isabel's rejection of Lord Warburton she had been rejecting the tradition of social form and order in life in favor of an open-ended journey of exploration. There are many phrases Isabel uses to explain her sense of personal destiny--not wishing to escape her fate, choosing, seeing for herself. Instead, she finds a parody of the kind of life Gardencourt represents, Osmond does not represent a tradition, but rather an empty and self-centered conventionality. Osmond's carefully selected bargains in art reflect his attitude toward human encounters as well. He extracts the human element in his dealings and confers artificiality even upon the few "good things" he obtains, so that Ralph's denunciation of him as a "sterile dilettante" is farther reaching than a mere observation on his habits of collection, and is intended to be so.

In the end we see that there is more than one order of "reality." Gardencourt and Lockleigh are the solid, changeless things. At Gardencourt Isabel sees that "Nothing was changed; she recognized everything she had seen years before; it might have been only yesterday she had stood there." (Portrait, p. 464) Osmond's charm, intelligence, posing, corruption, are part of another reality, one which has overcome Isabel. And Goodwood is

yet another reality. When she sees him after Ralph's death she feels herself to be in "a mighty sea, where she floated in all fathomless waters . . . the confusion, the noise of waters, all the rest of it, were in her own swimming head." (Portrait, p. 481) Though she momentarily yields to his offer of strength in the midst of her internal chaos, Isabel, as Tanner has pointed out, cannot commit herself. Perhaps she no longer believes "in her depths . . . that if a certain light should dawn she could give herself completely." (Portrait, p. 55) Evidently Caspar Goodwood does not provide that light. When he asks her to leave Gardencourt with him, his kiss "was like white lightning, a flash that spread and spread again, and stayed." Isabel is repelled: "while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his face, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense identity and made one with this act of possession." (Portrait, p. 482)

Her indecision as to her future dissolves in this clash of wills, this act of possession. Goodwood's masculinity awakens an adversary in Isabel. His kiss was like "white lightning" and when that ended and darkness returned she was free. Sea and storm imagery subside and land imagery, Isabel's imagery, prevails: "In an extraordinarily short time--for the distance was considerable--she had moved through the darkness (for she saw nothing)

and reached the door. . . . She had not known where to turn; but she knew now. There was a very straight path." (p. 482) Her journey will be resumed in the direction of Rome. Once more she starts out from Gardencourt, dressed as she came, in black. (Portrait, p. 465) There is a certain kind of light she will never be able to bear, the lightning of passion, perhaps.

Her next journey will be towards Pansy, to release her from the convent, to comfort her, for she has no one else to love. There is a portion of experience which will be denied to Isabel because she is averse to it.

The convent, symbol of unearthly love, nourisher of spiritual, unfleshly passion, is the final escape from life for Claire in The American and the barrier to life for Pansy in The Portrait of a Lady. Both of these subordinate characters reflect an aspect of the chief characters, also denied a portion of experience: Newman because he tries too hard and is too sure of himself, and Isabel because her psychology and her idealistic pride regard a passionate relationship as permitting herself to be taken over, owned, possessed. Journey's end takes place for both of these individuals at the same place it began, but with a qualitative difference, and leaves the reader with a sense of further voyages to be taken.

In The Spoils of Poynton Fleda's journey is not suddenly illuminated by a flash of profound knowledge.

Her restless, driven movements are the representation of her flight from the pressure of others' wishes and also her quest for "rightness" in her own actions. The two seem to be closely linked, if not, in this case, identical. We remember that she was "in her small way a spirit of the same family as Mrs. Gereth." (Spoils, p. 132) This familial bond however, is the bond of taste and not of morality. For Fleda, means are much more important than ends. The difference in meaning to each character of the great art objects at Poynton come to signify the ultimate difference between Fleda's attitude to them and Mrs. Gereth's. Fleda Vetch's moral refinement is so extreme that eventually it overtakes her completely and comes to define her. Mrs. Gereth describes her as "clothed with an idea." (Spoils, p. 128) (Though Mrs. Gereth refers here to an imaginative way of dressing, it does refer to Fleda's raiment of the soul.) Her "idea" is of scrupulosity at all costs. That is what becomes her passion. If she loses her own sense of rightness she loses everything. Her temptation is to conspire with Mrs. Gereth, and to carry out her scheme so as to keep Owen Gereth and his fiancee from marrying. In that situation the significant weapon is, of course, the furnishings and trappings of Poynton, the "clothes," to carry on the metaphor, which make Poynton what it is. For Mrs. Gereth and for Mona Brigstock the things are "spoils." They are trophies of

triumph. For Fleda they are the beauty of man's works. It is for these works that they do battle. That Owen Gereth is involved seems only incidental to Mrs. Gereth and Mona Brigstock. For Fleda, it is for him, indirectly, that the battle is waged. Ward says, "In themselves, of course, the 'things' are neither good nor evil. Yet the possession of them and the means by which one gains possession of them may be evil. Only Fleda Vetch holds moral principles over acquisition; both Mona Brigstock and Mrs. Gereth injure others to gain the spoils."[10]

Mrs. Gereth's case for possession has merit. The injustice of British law which so suddenly deprives her of the beautiful objects she has spent a lifetime of effort and taste to collect is mindless and cruel. So far she is the injured party completely. But when she sees that through Fleda she might retain her possessions, and when she wants Fleda to manipulate Owen into marrying her, she transgresses the Jamesian code of ethics. The use of one person by another as a means is one of the greatest violations of right conduct in the moral world of Henry James. (Madame Merle expresses her fundamental immorality when she says: "'I don't pretend to know what people are meant for. I only know what I can do with them.'" (Portrait, p. 203) Tanner, in speaking of James's moral universe, says, "Kant asserts . . . in the realm of ends everything has either a value or a worth. What has a value

has a substitute which can replace it. . . . Whatever is, on the other hand, exalted above all values . . . lacks an equivalent . . . but has an inner worth, that is, dignity. Now morality is the condition in accordance with which alone a reasonable being can be an end in himself. Hence morality, and humanity, in so far as it is capable of morality, can alone possess dignity."[11]

The realization of one's true humanity is often obstructed by one's desires: "The truth was simply that Mrs. Gereth's scruples were on one side and that her ruling passion had in a manner despoiled her of her humanity." (Spoils, p. 152) In speaking of The Aspern Papers Wayne Booth has made an observation which is relevant here: "We have passed through a time when fidelity and honor have meant so little, in terms of literary convention, that it is easy to overlook what it still meant to James. But if one applies to the narrator of this tale the standards of integrity and honor that figure in, say, The Spoils of Poynton, if one judges the narrator, in short, by the standards of any one of James's really lucid reflectors, the antiquarian's immorality can only be seen as central to the effect."[12]

Mrs. Gereth is no innocent at all, while Fleda is something of a dangerous innocent. In her confusion between desire and right dealing she accepts two incompatible tasks--one of "bringing Mummy around" for Owen and the

other that of being loyal and partisan to Mrs. Gereth. Of this confusion, Sister Sharp says, "As Fleda is intimately committed to her friend, Mrs. Gereth, her emotional involvement increases with the progress of the story. Caught between two opposing forces. Fleda tries vainly to ameliorate her compromising situation."[13] Apart from being an act of naivete', it is an acceptance of one's own incongruity of behavior, one which implies a certain discordance of motive. Though Fleda thinks that she could never do anything to consciously bring Mona down, or gain her happiness by plotting against her, she cannot help but speculate on what might be gained were Mona to simply be very much herself. And by the end of her reverie:

> Fleda saw what might bring her out of the wood. Mona herself would bring her out; at the least Mona possibly might. Deep down plunged the idea that even should she achieve what she had promised Owen, there was still the contingency of Mona's independent action. She might by that time . . . have said or done the things there is no patching up. If the rupture should come from Waterbath they might all be happy yet. This was a calculation Fleda wouldn't have committed to paper, but it affected the total of her sentiments. (Spoils, p. 203)

Fleda runs between mother and son, stopping to rest with her sister and in her father's no less shabby and dreary quarters in London. In each case she is preoccupied with thoughts of Owen as well as the remembered beauty of

Poynton. Fleda's difficulty is the definition of her own problem in terms of her actions, the achievement of congruence between what she perceives as the issue and her procedure in the light of what is involved. Meanwhile, she belongs in no one place: "She had neither a home nor an outlook--nothing in all the wide world but a feeling of suspense." (Spoils, p. 230)

There is, as I have suggested earlier, primarily an ethical problem concerning means and ends. The complicating factor is an ascetic/aesthetic dichotomy which is stated in the comparison between the bare poverty, the enforced asceticism of Fleda's life with her father, the ugliness of their surroundings, or an existence like that of her sister, devoid of beauty, posited against the rich treasure of Poynton and a whole other, grander, style of living. Though the choice is ethical, the complicating factors are two, one her love for Owen and the other her love of beauty, and the wish to live in it. Lebowitz says, "The problem of the laboring, suffering, renouncing subject surrounded by the lures of the object world and its comfortable vision is materially obvious in The Spoils of Poynton."[14] But Fleda's is the moral nature, possessed of an instinctive aesthetic discrimination, and in her James attempts to unite the aesthetic/moral sense. (Mrs. Gereth thinks: "To be clever meant to know the marks. Fleda knows them by direct inspiration." (Spoils, p. 225) Wiesenfarth,

in speaking of the central moral and psychological problem of the work, says "The primary concern of the reader of The Spoils of Poynton is not what will happen to the spoils: they are not interesting for their own sake, but they acquire interest because their use or abuse will ultimately help to determine the degree of Fleda's excellence."[15]

After Mrs. Gereth's sending back of the things to Poynton she and Fleda have a bitter confrontation when she learns that not only have Fleda and Owen failed to arrive at an understanding, but Fleda does not even know where Owen is. Fleda says to her, "'You simplify far too much. You always did and you always will. The tangle of life is much more intricate than you've ever, I think, felt it to be." (Spoils, p. 289) There is a moral clash between the two in which Mrs. Gereth does not dominate Fleda as she is accustomed to doing. In being apprised of the strength of Fleda's feeling for Owen she says to her, "'Forgive me. Kiss me.'" And "Fleda, on the threshold, kissed her . . ." (Spoils, p. 290) Both the kiss and the crossing denote a move into another level of relationship, a foreshadowing of a connection in which both women will appreciate the other's pain.

Each woman has acted in a way true to herself. Mrs. Gereth's is all stir, bustle and activity. She makes things happen. Fleda's is in the realm of moral discernment.

Yet, bound together by a bond of taste their mutual disappointment and loss does not make them hate each other. All passion spent, or so it seems, Mrs. Gereth states her view of the situation in her letter to Fleda, "For action you're no good at all; but action is over, for me, forever. Moreover, with nothing else but my four walls, you'll at any rate be a bit of furniture. I've always taken you--quite one of my best finds." (Spoils, p. 305) Fleda shall be the only replacement Mrs. Gereth can get for the works of art she has lost. She is to be Mrs. Gereth's property, and Fleda senses that that is an indication Mrs. Gereth has not altogether given up on life. Fleda's departure for Ricks echoes for herself her first impression of that house and its "rightness"--"She remembered indeed that . . . she herself had 'liked' the blessed refuge of Ricks." (Spoils, p. 305-6)

When Fleda comes to Ricks it is she who teaches Mrs. Gereth about beauty: "'Ah, the little melancholy, tender tell-tale things; how can they not speak to you and find a way to your heart? It's not the great chorus of Poynton; but . . . This is a voice so gentle, so human, so feminine . . . It's your extraordinary genius; you make things 'compose.'" As James says, "Fleda took the highest line and the upper hand." (Spoils, p. 307) This is further confirmation of Mrs. Gereth's loss of dominance over Fleda. And Fleda expresses the meaning of Ricks in terms of her

own life. "The impression in which half the beauty resides . . . of something reduced, relinquished, resigned: the poetry, as it were, of something sensibly gone." (Spoils, p. 308)

But loss, though melancholy and gentle, is akin to the "gusts of despair" which Fleda felt when she first knew she loved Owen and had gone to her father's house. Loss is violent, too, and the violence is felt by Fleda at the fire which is destroying Poynton. She hears the "far-off windy roar" (Spoils, p. 320) which is the gale and mistakes it for the sound of the flames. It is as if Fleda is at the gates of Hell. But perhaps she is at the gates of the furnace of creativity, for she is met by a lame porter--a remembrance of the gait of Hephaestus, the god of fire, the creative god of artifacts. One does not know if the fires are the fires of the gods or of demonic origin. The station-master says of the things of Poynton, "'What can you call it, miss, if it ain't really saved?'" (Spoils, p. 320) That is a strange thing for a porter to say. Yet Fleda felt "herself give everything up." (p. 320) We are left with an ambiguity of meaning regarding lost and saved. Fleda has been both victim and victor in her relationship with the people and the things of Poynton. In speaking of the ambiguity of meaning in the novels of the 1896-1901 period, W. Berthoff says of the Spoils that "The concentration upon fineness of consciousness here

produces a certain forcing of natural emotion and natural probability, beyond the reach of irony."[16] Fleda has journeyed to witness the destruction of the disputed objects. She has come to witness the extinction of a dream of perfection in art, that of Mrs. Gereth's dream, and of perfection in life, her own. The things at Poynton were at the mercy of those who traded in them, and after their destruction remain the rancor and greed which their innocent presence excited. The aesthetic appreciation of their beauty becomes secondary to the gusts of greed and anger which operated among the Gereths. The fire represents the cataclysmic manifestation of their discord.

Fleda's loss is the truest since she loved the spoils for their own sake. To the extent that the treasures will no longer be pawns in the battle of wills between the Gereths they are "saved." We know that a part of Fleda's life is over, but Ricks waits for her, and one hopes that from there she will begin a new journey.

The end of one journey heralds the beginning of another. Lambert Strether, at the end of The Ambassadors, is coming to the completion of a long, personal pilgrimmage. His shift in perspective, the necessary movement, has been extensive. Most of his pre-suppositions have been proven wrong. His idea of morality has undergone an amplification, a deepening and broadening which brings him to new levels of understanding. Maria Gostrey sees the change in

Strether after he has become aware of the true nature of Chad's and Madame de Vionnet's relationship, though she does not, initially, know what precipitated it: "She knew his sense of his situation had taken still another step." (Ambassadors, p. 326) The journey metaphor is not only stated by Maria Gostrey, but by Strether himself as well, "He was well in port, the outer sea behind him, and it was only a matter of getting ashore." (Ambassadors, p. 327) We recall that previously "his sole licence had been to cling . . . to the brink, not to dip so much as a toe into the flood." (Ambassadors, p. 219)

Though Strether has come far in terms of experience, there is a constant and unshakeable factor in his makeup, and that is a sense of scruple in relationship which he still must satisfy before he can count his mission at an end: "There was a question that came and went. . . . as he rested against the side of his ship. . . . It was a question about himself. He wished not to do anything because he had missed something else, because he was sore or sorry or impoverished, because he was maltreated or desperate; he wished to do everything because he was lucid and quiet." (Ambassadors, p. 327)

The meaning of Strether's arrival at port centers around the knowledge about what is technical virtue and what is true virtue. And that rests upon the relationship between Chad and Madame de Vionnet. Strether says Bilham

had shown him how to lie like a gentleman; "'it was but a technical lie--he classed the attachment as virtuous.'" (Ambassadors, p. 330) Strether's attachment to the letter of virtue and not its spirit has been broken. The spirit of virtue, in this case, goes far beyond the technical impropriety of Chad's and Madame de Vionnet's adulterous relationship. Though Strether's values have not been reversed, they are now applied from another vantage point: the ending of the relationship would be the sin, not its continuation: "'It's not a question of advising you not to go but of absolutely preventing you, if possible, from so much as thinking of it. Let me accordingly appeal to you, by all you hold sacred. You'd be . . . a criminal of the deepest dye.'" (Ambassadors, p. 336) Strether tries to appeal to Chad in whatever way he thinks will be most effective: "'I feel how much more she can do for you. I remember you, you know, as you were. . . . Your value has quintupled.'" (Ambassadors, p. 337) Chad's joking suggestion that he could then live on his accumulations is coldly met by his older friend. Strether has been fighting for Madame de Vionnet's happiness, after which "he was as depleted as if he had spent his last sou." (Ambassadors, p. 339) Strether feels that strong appeals to Chad's sense of obligation may be unavailing, yet he cannot resist: "'You owe her everything--very much more than she can ever owe you. You've in other words duties

to her, of the most positive sort; and I don't see what other duties . . . can be held to go before them.'" (Ambassadors, p. 338) It is a Jamesian irony that those very words, indeed the whole tone of his exhortation, might be the tone he came to Paris to use with Chad on Mrs. Newsome's behalf. Dupee says of Strether's role, "In a profound sense he has actually played the father; and his reward, although it is not to be Mrs. Newsome's hand and fortune, is nevertheless considerable. He who formerly felt so isolated, so useless, is now confirmed in a modest sense of self-sufficiency."[17]

It is not that a reversal of values has taken place in Strether; it is simply that his standards of loyalty and decency are applied now in a different way. Ward says, "his final attitude . . . suggests the redemptive effect of his full and complex vision--of which evil is an essential component--upon his moral character."[18]

Now, in his new knowledge, he has sharpened his faculty of sight, but his point of view, his application has changed. Strether has, hitherto, simply accepted traditional ways of looking at behavior and relationships. He had never really seen the people with whom he was most involved. Now, in his new knowledge, he has sharpened his faculty of sight. It has become insight. Of Mrs. Newsome he says to Maria Gostrey: "'I do what I didn't before--I see her.'" (Ambassadors, p. 343) Based on his new-found

sight he re-affirms his standard of integrity. He refuses to stay behind in Paris and accept from Maria her offer which would mean "exquisite service . . . lightened care for the rest of his days." (p. 343) Maria concedes the rightness of the action but deplores "'your horrible sharp eye for what makes you so.'" (Ambassadors, p. 345) Matthiessen says, "Strether never loses his moral sense. James seems to have taken his own special pleasure in avoiding the banal by not making Paris the usual scene of seduction but instead the center of an ethical drama."[19] Austin Warren believes that Strether is a victim of his heritage, perhaps what Strether himself has referred to as the "mould" into which one is poured. Warren says, "Yet Miss Gostrey's question remains,--Why does Strether have to be so 'dreadfully right?' And perhaps not less her comment. Strether's emancipated conscience in judging others,--an emancipation painful to him in the process and hardly joyful in the end--has still left him pride--his pride in the supererogatory rigors of his own, his New England conscience."[20] The argument is persuasive, but we must not lose sight of the central issue, which is that if Strether did accept Maria's offer of herself, he would be doing so for the wrong reasons, because he was "sore or sorry or impoverished . . . or maltreated or desperate." (see above p. 129) He would be using Maria Gostrey to comfort himself, and not going towards her for her own

sake.

At any rate, Strether's mission is done. The purpose of it has been completely re-arranged. His material loss is considerable, as is his moral gain. Strether will return to America to live a new kind of life. Mrs. Newsome, whose name lends itself to many interpretations except that of rejuvenation, is still the same, and their paths will probably not cross. But the reader does have a sense of Strether's continuing journey. The other characters have pretty well reached their inner potential. In any case, they are not the reader's concern for they are only partly known and do not lend themselves to speculation. Crews seems to give the most balanced judgment when he says, "What really matters is that Strether . . . has found that neither of his potential homes is large enough to accommodate his sense of reality. . . . the central judgment of the novel is that both systems are inadequate. Neither Woollett's abstemious Puritanism nor Paris' amoral secularism can account for the sense of Life that Strether has achieved through the expansion of his social and moral awareness."[21] Strether will rest, and then move on in his new found moral strength.

The fate of each principal character in The Golden Bowl is intertwined with Maggie's. And in a sense they evoke some aspect of herself. Adam is the sheltering, protective father who defends the little girl in her. The

Prince awakens her womanliness, her passion, her aspiration for love and relationship. And Charlotte is an unknown aspect of her personality which develops as Maggie fights for herself, one which is capable of protecting her rights, and safeguarding what is hers. Until the bowl is broken the balance of forces in Maggie's character are in flux. The disarray has been caused by Maggie's knowledge that the Prince and Charlotte are in a mysterious relationship from which she and her father are excluded. The shattering of the bowl symbolizes Maggie's break with her past. At one time she has thought "so strikingly, she had been able to marry without breaking . . . with her past." (G.B., p. 290) But if her marriage is to be real it is essential that Maggie knowingly does disengage with the past. In the context of the bowl she and the Prince reach a tacit agreement not to discuss her knowledge with either Charlotte or Adam:

> for though he had, in so almost mystifying a manner, replied to nothing, denied nothing, explained nothing, apologised for nothing, he had somehow conveyed to her that this was not because of any determination to treat her case as not "worth it". . . . It had been . . . something in the depths of the eyes . . . the tacitly offered sketch of a working arrangement. "Leave me my reserve; don't question it--it's all I have . . . so that, if you'll make me the concession of letting me alone . . . I promise you something . . . grown under cover of it, even though I don't yet quite make out what, as return for your patience. (G.B., p. 443)

Maggie will be patient, and take her chances, and because she can, her power is on the ascendency. Though she would have wanted the golden bowl "as it was to have been" she will, eventually, settle for something less than perfection. "Perfection" is an infantile dream; it means having the best of every world, an impossible state, but one often characteristic of the desires of the uninitiated. Still, Maggie wants to attain a marriage which is not based on a fundamental flaw. For that she will have to undergo the inevitable encounter with Charlotte who is now her known adversary: "Charlotte had designs upon her of a nature best known to herself." (G.B., p. 447) James prepares for the fundamental nature of the confrontation between Maggie and Charlotte by his use of animal imagery. Maggie realizes that Charlotte is bewildered because of her ignorance of the source of the altered situation between herself and the Prince: "Even the conviction that Charlotte was but awaiting some chance really to test her trouble upon her lover's wife left Maggie's sense meanwhile open as to the sight of gilt wires and bruised wings, the spacious but suspended cage, and home of eternal unrest, of pacings, beatings, shakings, all so vain into which the baffled consciousness helplessly resolved itself. The cage was the deluded condition, and Maggie, as having known delusion . . . understood the nature of cages." (G.B., p. 449)

The evening that Charlotte selects is a quiet one, and their interplay begins during the course of a game of cards from which Maggie absents herself, and watches the players, Charlotte in particular, from outside the window. The game is bridge, that paradigm of war, where kings, queens and knaves are taken in battle. The game is played according to set rules, and is a confining framework for Charlotte who determines to break out of her bonds: "The splendid shining supple creature was out of the cage, was at large; and the question . . . rose of whether she mightn't by some art . . . be hemmed and secured." (G.B. p. 456) Maggie is afraid of Charlotte, of what she might say or do, of her old dominance over her. She thinks of her as "the creature who had escaped by force from her cage." (G.B., p. 458) Now it is Charlotte who watches her, and waits for her to approach, and it is she who (from Maggie's point of view) has the advantage, for Maggie feels a "sense of having been thrown over on her back, with her neck, from the first, half broken and her helpless face staring up." (G.B., p. 459) But Maggie's strength grows in the encounter, and her sustenance is drawn from the example of her husband. She lies because the Prince has chosen the way of silence. Matthiessen, in commenting on this passage says, "As Maggie watches Charlotte leave the card-table, she has the sensation that a caged beast has escaped and is coming after her. But in the final conflict

between them, the aggressiveness is all Maggie's. James makes her American self-reliance the equivalent of a religion. . . . His point is that the Church has failed Maggie, but that her love and her own will are enough."[22] However, the advantage is not all Maggie's by any means in the actual confrontation. Charlotte presses her and she deals with the pressure by lying to her. And Maggie completes the lie by consenting to kiss Charlotte in the garden, a kiss of deception which is witnessed by her father and her husband. An Eden built on subterfuge and ignorance is destroyed by another deceit, a Judas kiss. And, interestingly, the animal imagery gives way to lunar imagery and Maggie realizes "whereas Charlotte, though rising there radiantly before her,was really off in some darkness of space that would steep her in solitude." (G.B., p. 465) Loneliness is the state of being banished from Eden, and by his silence the Prince has banished her.

Still, Maggie must continue to move in order to pass out of her old, ignorant life. Lebowitz says, "The terrible loss of the first Eden does not necessarily, as some readers of The Golden Bowl have felt, make the second Eden false, empty, or impossible to face. In thinking of Maggie's future we must choose between a theory of fortunate fall and one of total cynicism. In this case, hope is deeper than despair."[23] With the new understanding of her own vulnerability comes an awakening into strong human

feeling which focuses on her husband as well as on her own state of being. She speaks of her fierce jealousy to her father: "'My idea is this, that when you only love a little you're naturally not jealous. . . . But when you love in a deeper and intenser way, then you are, in the same proportion jealous; your jealousy has intensity and, no doubt ferocity.'" (G.B., p. 473-4) Krook also finds this passage significant and worthy of comment:

> In an earlier section I suggested that the most interesting thing about Maggie Verver's love was that it was at once completely selfless and thoroughly selfish, and that the sense in which it was selfish yet not therefore the less selfless needed to be understood if we were not to miss what was perhaps Henry James's most original contribution to the anatomy of love. The selfishness, in one word, is all in Maggie's wanting of her husband the Prince. She wants him passionately, possessively, jealously . . . and the moral James perhaps means us to draw is that love by definition is grounded in and sustained by desire, and that, whatever else it may also have to be, it is not love at all if it does not spring from and is not perpetually nourished by want and wanting. [24]

During this crucial period in Maggie's life animal imagery winds in and out of the work. In this conversation Maggie claims her father as her victim. (G.B., p. 476) all the while realizing that: "He was doing what he had steadily been coming to; he was practically offering himself, pressing himself upon her, as a sacrifice . . . and where had she . . . planted her feet if not on

the acceptance of the offer?" (G.B., p. 478) In truth, Charlotte is more the sacrificial victim, being described by James as having "a long silken halter looped about her beautiful neck." (G.B., p. 492) And Maggie visualizes her father as thinking: "'Yes, you see--I lead her now by the neck, I lead her to her doom.'" (p. 492) Maggie listens to Charlotte and hears the overtones of a cri de coeur: "The high voice went on.. . . It sounded, for our young woman, like the shriek of a soul in pain." (G.B., p. 495) Charlotte's pain contains everyone's pain, agony for what is being lost. Adam feels her agony and the Prince must escape from it periodically. (G.B., p. 497) Wright says, "the silken halter with which Maggie sees Charlotte being led and the cage in which she imagines her confined are not objective evidence of Adam's callousness. The images show rather Maggie's awakening pity; and, viewed objectively, they characterize the pathetic circumstances into which Charlotte . . . has wandered. By the very act of marrying Adam she pledged herself to sacrifice."[25]

In the rite of passage from one state to another there is a large component of sacrifice; something must be lost in order for something to be gained. I have stressed the imagery of animal sacrifice to emphasize the basic nature, the elemental quality of the struggle which Maggie experiences.

The imagery for Maggie's separation from her father

goes no further in the animal world than ideas of him as a sacrificial lamb. But sea and water imagery figure materially in their last scene alone together. There is something of fantasy as Maggie thinks "it was wonderfully like their having got together into some boat and paddled off from the shore. . . . Why . . . couldn't they always live . . . in a boat?" (G.B., p. 468) The movement of their conversation goes from this kind of owl and pussycat childhood daydream to the sense of time passing and the wish to hold its flowing stream back: "She might have been wishing . . . to keep him with her for remounting the stream of time and dipping again, for the softness of the water, into the contracted basin of the past." (G.B., p. 471) In commenting on this passage, Lebowitz says, "She is tempted to sail off to that first, incest-tainted Byzantium. But, as so often in the major James . . . the boat trip, the shoving off from shore, represents the deepest, most energetic and fruitful engagement, and Maggie will not be lured by her father's phantom sail."[26]

As the frankness between father and daughter increases and Maggie confesses the strength of her love for the Prince to her father, the water imagery becomes the metaphor for sexuality: "The beauty of her condition was keeping him . . . in sight of the sea, where, though his personal dips were over, the whole thing could shine at him, and the air and the plash and the play become for him too

a sensation." (G.B., p. 474) Though Adam is impotent he can vicariously experience the sexual life in Maggie. At least, they are no longer Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Fain playing at coming to tea. Finally their conversation takes on the sense of a journey being completed. Maggie is now in command, the captain of their little boat:

> At this juncture, however--with the act of their crossing the bar, to get, as might be, into port--there occurred the only approach to a betrayal of their having had to beat against the wind. . . . His eyes met her own, suggestively, and it was only after she had contented herself with simply smiling . . . that he spoke . . . raising his face to her, his legs thrust out a trifle wearily and his hands grasping either side of the seat. They had beaten against the wind, and she was still fresh; they had beaten against the wind, and he, as at the best the more battered vessel, perhaps just vaguely drooped. (G.B., p. 475)

The crossing of the Atlantic, the physical act of travel by sea will now separate both families indefinitely. The major crossing, the spiritual crossing, has been achieved. There is no perfect justice in an imperfect world. Maggie's peace is secured at the cost of Charlotte's, and even so, it is not a simple trade, for it is gained at considerable loss to herself. For Maggie must give up the security of her father's presence. Edel says, "And Maggie . . . has learned that a revolution cannot restore the status quo ante. It was exactly this status that had ruined her marriage. By thinking she could live in a

fool's paradise of perpetual daughterhood--that is, be a perpetual child--she had lost her husband. By acquiring her maturity, she recovers him."[27] Her rite of passage from girl to woman is concretized by her father's departure, but the psychic journey has been her own.

The journeys taken in these works are sometimes long and sometimes short, in terms of distance, but great in terms of passage. They are journeys of separation and maturation, of growing up and growing old. James has drawn a magic circle of form around his characters' relations, defining and illuminating them to us. We are their constant companions, and by the end of each work we can trace with them their progress, for we have participated in their journey.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

1. James E. Miller, Jr., "Henry James in Reality", Critical Inquiry, Volume 2, Number 3, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Spring 1976) p. 591-2.
2. A.N., p. 43.
3. Rowe, p. 143.
4. Edel, Conquest of London, p. 55.
5. Krook, p. 33.
6. Rowe, p. 33.
7. Sister Sharp, p. 83.
8. Edel, p. 426.
9. Dupee, p. 98.
10. Ward, p. 80.
11. Tanner, Modern Judgements, p. 144.
12. Booth, p. 356.
13. Sister Sharp, p. 98.
14. Lebowitz, p. 81.
15. Wiesenfarth, p. 53.
16. W. Berthoff, The Ferment of Realism: American Literature 1884-1919. (New York: The Free Press, 1965) p. 115.
17. Dupee, p. 213.
18. Ward, p. 120.
19. Matthiessen, p. 38.
20. Crews, p. 55.
21. Warren, p. 161.

22. Matthiessen, pp. 98-9.

23. Lebowitz, p. 334.

24. Krook, pp. 282-3.

25. Wright, p. 320.

26. Lebowitz, p. 332.

27. Edel, The Master, p. 215.

CONCLUSION

James's chief characters have reached increasingly deeper levels in their capacity to love and suffer and re-construct their lives. Christopher Newman travels to Europe in order to discover and explore new knowledge and new ways to live, and in looking at the Janus face of experience and evil is routed from further explorations. Yet, withal, he is changed. His first innocence is lost, but unhappily he cannot, at the close of James's early major novel find a new, workable modus vivendi. Isabel Archer travels to the utmost limits of loss, and all betrayed, cannot reach out to a new life, but must go back to her ruin because she is motivated by her pride before the world. Fleda Vetch retains her sense of integrity, though she has lost the opportunity to have a love and a home which would belong exclusively to her, and because the methods by which she might have gained it are spurious, her sense of rightness militates against them. Lambert Strether reverses himself in order to properly fulfill his moral being. His journey is towards light, and the true knowledge of good and evil. Maggie Verver develops a moral sense in the realm of reality which hitherto barely existed because it had never been required to function.

She moves from her simple internal world, one where moral values are not a consideration, through the equivocal world of the Prince's realm towards a domain of moral lucidity where self knowledge reigns. In that sense does she truly become a Princess. Unlike Isabel Archer, Maggie Verver is not undone by her encounter with evil and betrayal. For her there is something to salvage. She accepts all there is, she "takes it" and is able to overcome her youthful delusions of perfect personal happiness. Unlike Lambert Strether she is able to take something for herself out of it all. Crews says, "Maggie's achievement is a moral one, and indeed a great one. She has taken the basically amoral power at her fingertips and turned it to the best advantage of which she is humanly capable."[1]

As James came to understand the possibilities of the power of love in human relations, and as his art developed along with his profound understanding of human complexity, so did his characters expand and intensify. What James knew, his characters learned. And so the artist's personal pilgrimage is reflected in the expeditions of his characters. All of our life's journey is an inward journey. And the purpose of it is to gain moral lucidity and to act upon it. In his article "Henry James and the Morality of Fiction," Robert J. Reilly says, "If there is one thing that is clear about Henry's protagonists it is that their moral attitudes are personal, deeply felt, and 'real' in the

sense of producing real work done. . . . If the case seems aberrant, seems to deviate from the norm--as with Fleda Vetch, perhaps--that is only because all norms are provisional. . . . Every moral attitude is 'a syllable in human nature's total message.' Strether's rejection is perhaps one such syllable, uttered from the depths of his being . . . where the meanings are."[2]

NOTES

CONCLUSION

1. Crews, p. 110.

2. Robert J. Reilly, "Henry James and the Morality of Fiction", in American Literature, XXIX (March, 1967) Duke University Press, pp. 1-30. Criticism: Some Major American Writers, selected by Lewis Leary. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1971) p. 187.

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