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Henry James's Principles and Practice as a Craftsman of Fiction

Wesley Francis Amar
Loyola University Chicago

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HENRY JAMES'S PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE
AS A CRAFTSMAN OF FICTION

BY

WESLEY FRANCIS AMAR

A THESIS
Submitted to the Faculty of the Loyola University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of
English

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VITA

The author was born March 10, 1913, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was graduated from Notre Dame Grammar School in that city in 1926, and from Mount Carmel High School in Chicago in 1930. He was awarded a teacher's certificate by Chicago Normal College in 1934. Undergraduate work leading to a Ph. B. was completed at Loyola University in August, 1936. He fulfilled the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in English at the same University in June, 1941.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY:

THE PROJECT OF THIS THESIS

I have attempted to trace James's theory of fictional craftsmanship from its inception, as evidenced in his early critical reviews, to the point of development reached in his later critical writings. From this point, I have examined his novels and tales in the light of his critical and stylistic ideals, and have then attempted to show just how far James succeeded in applying these artistic principles in his own work, as reflected in his Prefaces to the New York Edition of his own works.

Most of the early critical reviews have been taken from Notes and Reviews, and from Views and Reviews, and I have also consulted Cornelia Kelley's The Early Development of Henry James, Morris Robert's Henry James's Criticism, and Percy Lubbock's Letters of Henry James. Since James's work was much influenced by his views on the social contrast between America and Europe, it is necessary to explain his attitude on this question, and in the first chapter, one must also consider his principal influences, his scope of fictional criticism, and defects and merits in his critical opinions. In James's advice to other writers may be seen his devices and techniques for the use of Character, Description, Plot, and Action: and his views on Morality, on Women as Writers, and on the use of Evil and the Supernatural in the novel are likewise evidenced in his critical writings.
Most of James's maturing and later critical reviews have been taken from his own works, French Poets and Novelists, (1878) Hawthorne, (1879), Partial Portraits, (1888), Essays in London and Elsewhere, (1893); A Small Boy and Others, (1913), Notes of a Son and Brother, (1914), Notes on Novelists, (1914), and The Letters of Henry James, (1920). The list of James's early views and techniques are considered in the light of his development, and to this list are added further artistic principles which James held, as he grew in skill. His importance in the field of criticism, and his maturing views on the subjects of Use of Dialogue, The Relation of Art to Life, Endings of a Novel, Style, Tone, Form, Point of View, Scope of Subject Matter in Fiction, and the Relation of the Author to the Reader are considered.

I have included for study only those novels and tales which are included in the New York Edition, and have attempted to discover the manifestations of his artistic principles applied in the works. In order to find what others thought of James's achievement, I have consulted principally J. W. Beach's The Method of Henry James, C. P. Kelley's The Early Development of Henry James, Elizabeth Cary's The Novels of Henry James, Van Wyck Brooks The Pilgrimage of Henry James, Pelham Edgar's Henry James: Man and Author, Rebecca West's Henry James, Ford Madox Hueffer's Henry James, Percy Lubbock's The Craft of Fiction, Edmund Wilson's The Triple Thinkers, Stephen Spender's The Destructive Element, Yvor Winter's Maule's Curse, and six articles appearing in the Memorial Edition of the Hound and Horn of 1934.
The works of fiction have been set in somewhat ambiguous separate classifications, since it often happened that one work might fit into several of the divisions. The novels and tales are divided into the following classes, for purposes of more rapid comparison with the works arranged in the same order in the last chapter: The Problem of the Artist, The International Problem, Criticism of Social Conditions, The Theme of Ambiguity, The Violation of the Innocent, Characters who are Maladjusted to Life, The Theme of Renunciation, The Money Question, and Intense Awareness of Characters. In this study of the fictional works, an attempt was made to recognize the various means which James used to apply his knowledge in his own works, and so attention is paid to the methods he followed in developing character, in using description, in foreshortening, in treating the International Situation, in employing his Point of View technique, in depicting Evil, in employing humor and ambiguity, in his indirect method of presentation, and in the way he secured a unity with Form and Subject.

One must consider the forces that played on James throughout his career, if one is to proceed intelligently from an understanding of his early works to his Later Manner. The periods of his development may be considered as dating from the first period (1875-1885)—from *Roderick Hudson* to *The Bostonians*; the sec-
ond period (1885-1901)--from The Princess Casamassima to The Sacred Fount; and lastly from (1902-1917)--from The Wings of the Dove to the end of his writing. The results of his evolution may be traced to such diverse things as his attraction to the French Naturalists, his New England conscience; his experience in writing for the stage, to the times in which he lived, and to his own personal experience.

James believed that nothing he wrote before 1890 would stand critical inspection, and it is true that the work of his later manner has aroused more adverse comment than had his earlier. James was immensely drawn to the tradition of Europe, but he was dissatisfied with their moral codes. However, important the influence of Europe was on James, it does not seem that his milieu is ever localized. The lure of Europe was precisely that it had more tradition, and the reason it figured so prominently in his tales was that he sensed the drama in the conflict. James speaks of this struggle: "The battle of the old and the new, the past and the future, of the ideas that arrive with the ideas that linger. Half the tragedies in human history are born of this conflict."

His rejection of his own moral world led James to invent one of his own, and in this world, the selection of Art is always present. All that is demanded of the characters is that they be in-

tensely aware. With James, passionate activity is intellectual activity, and if one had the ability to appreciate exquisitely, he would live intensely. All of his characters respond immediately and freely to the pressure of experience. James was among the first to realize that no two people see the same thing alike, and this recognition led to his "point of view" technique. Whether or not the resultant complexity was due to his limited experience or to his limited contacts made necessary because of his moral sense and his demand of intelligence, the fact remains that his character portrayal through revelation is most complete, and his indirect method of presentation in his later works, in the last analysis, is a miracle of economy and straightforwardness.

The novels and tales are set forth in the same classification in the last chapter as they are in the preceding one. I have attempted, insofar as possible, to state what James felt were the merits and defects of his work, and have then judged his work in the light of his own artistic principles as revealed in his critical writings.
CHAPTER II

JAMES'S BEGINNINGS AS A CRITIC; HIS EARLY REVIEWS;
THE ORIGINS OF HIS LITERARY TASTE AND IDEAS

In this chapter, I shall attempt to trace the early critical beliefs of James, as evidenced principally in his early reviews, written largely between the years 1864 and 1872, the period of James's apprenticeship. My quotations, numerous inasmuch as I am attempting to show his critical beliefs from his own utterances, are confined to those reviews which are included in his early works, Notes and Reviews, and Views and Reviews.

I have included opinions of other men on the adequacy of James as critic, and have attempted, after comparing his early aims with his evaluation by others, to show how far he succeeded in reaching his artistic goal. It has been necessary in this chapter to consider his principal influences, his scope of fictional criticism, his defects in technique and judgment, and even such an extra-literary consideration as his attitude to America and Americans, since this last element had much to do with his production throughout his career as critic and writer. My plan has been to enumerate his views on matters of artistic technique and group them together so that we may compare these views with those later views outlined in my third chapter. We may then determine how his views were adhered to, modified or discarded.
James was much influenced in his early work by the particular time in which he lived, and by his early training. His many visits to Europe in his youth are convincing proof of his extreme awareness of the artistic inadequacy of America, and testify to his youthful search for culture, which drew him in spirit to the settled traditions of Europe. Despite his traveling James was not far removed from the Hawthorne type of Provincial, and his New England conscience was in eternal conflict with his attraction to the French Naturalists. Consequently, he is out of sympathy with many American writers, and while he believes the French writers artistically superior, he decries their lack of moral sense. It was this perpetual struggle in his nature that later posed his own artistic problem, and determined his theme. Roberts remarks: "For his own part, he would try to combine the worldliness and artistic cunning of the French with a richness of an altogether different kind, the spiritual or moral richness which he felt was the inestimable heritage of the English-speaking community."\(^1\)

Perhaps James was never as cosmopolitan as he appeared to be to his readers at that time. At that period, French writers were little read and little discussed, so his remarks were often

allowed to go unchallenged, thereby denying him those elements which produce great art—discussion and dissension. One writer maintains that he had a Teutonic rather than an English type of mind, and this made it difficult for him to speak of French writers, and caused him to miss much of what he wrote. "But it must be said that in his criticism—there alone, and the inconsistency is remarkable—he makes the very English mistake of denying seriousness and some other kindred qualities, when they are only implied and not experienced."²

It was in his treatment of the French that the "...struggle in him between these reserves and his feelings for art, between English wholesomeness and his artistic subtlety,"³ militated against his personal judgment. This Puritan strain was reflected in his condemnation of some French writers, despite his unbounded admiration for their attention to Form. Roberts says of his treatment of French Literature: "He talks rather too much about the uncleanness of French Literature, and we are forced to remind ourselves that the moralist is not afraid of uncleanness, or of anything except the failure to recognize things for what they are."⁴

James, therefore had difficulty in evaluating the worth of

³Morris Roberts, op. cit., p. 221.
⁴Ibid., p. 46.
the French, since he was unable to divorce himself from his personal views. He seemed temperamentally unfit to judge Gautier, Balzac, Whitman, and he had a decided antipathy to Swinburne and Hugo. He found himself torn between admiration for Sand and a distaste for her private life. One writer insists, however, that he never discriminated purposely: "Punctiliously fair as a rule, when he misrepresents there is a temperamental reason for it; it is never mere injustice." 

From the first, James was aware of the difficulties in America for a man of letters, yet he believed that an artist writes, regardless of his surroundings, because he must. He believed that direct experience was not necessary for the artist, and that his artistic imagination would compensate for any lack of such experience. Certainly he was not the first to find America inadequate, and many of the others who had rejected America met with failure. Josephson tells why so many others had left America: "In the United States one of the most striking events, underneath the prosperous surface of things, has been the emigration of talent to countries of an older civilization where some quantum of individual liberty is still to be enjoyed..." 

Art was too much regarded in America as a luxury for the 

5 Annie Macdonell, op. cit., p. 221.

few, and those practicing it were distinguished by virtue of their oddity. Josephson says of the position of art in America at that time: "And it strikes us how precarious, how untenable, despite all effort, the foothold of art has always been in America..." Many left America and never returned. After the Civil War a generation was exiled—Melville, Whistler, Hearne, Crane, Pierce, Henry Adams, and Frederick and Marion Crawford, among others: "It is simply an exodus, a general expulsion of the civilized type—whether deliberate or unconscious, it matters little— from a country which above all needed ornament and civilization." Read maintains that since art is original and thus innate, it is independent of social categories. He believes that the artist moves apart from social changes: "Neither a deep soil nor a long history is a condition essential for art..." James himself in an early work, in speaking of Sedley's *Marian Rooker*, minimizes the importance of a national heritage: "What is New England to him or he to New England that he should thus rack his ingenuity in her behalf?"

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James was influenced by many writers—among them, Howells, Merimee, Balzac, Sand, Eliot and Turgeneiv. Howells influenced James in his first choice of romantic short stories; James acquired the knack of analysis from Sand, which trait grew more noticeable as his work matured. But it was from Turgeneiv that he borrowed most. James learned from Turgeneiv that a character as a failure could be as interesting as any other. He also learned from him the method of starting with an idea in the form of a character and then evolving the plot to suit.

Though James was under the spell of Flaubert and Maupassant, Turgeneiv remained his idol, both as man and writer. Van Doren says of this relation: "The informing imagination absent from Flaubert, the substantial texture absent from George Sand, the charm absent from Balzac—all these James found in his great master and favorite, Turgeneiv."

To James, criticism was a completely workable technique, and not that which dealt in abstract principles. Far from being remote, it was the business of criticism to clarify. In his early work, he constantly advises the critic to leave his feeling out of account, and to depend solely on reason for his conclusions. James says of criticism: "Its business is to urge

the claims of all things to be understood. Criticism is interested only in what it can do to urge truth. "Great truths are carried aloft by philosophers and poets; the critic deals in contributions to truth." In a passage Roberts quotes from *Nation*, (April 6, 1868), James says: "In a work, the critic's function is to expound the philosophy of art, to guide public taste, and to enlighten erring authors."

James was so exacting he would have been dissatisfied with standards of criticism in any country, but he found them particularly inadequate in America. He asserted that the art of criticism was much neglected here, and that its development was disproportionate. Much of the matter written seemed to him idle and superficial, and the fault lay with the critics themselves: "... but even the critics themselves would probably not assert that criticism is anything more than an agreeable luxury..." This plea for seriousness foretells his forthcoming plea in "The Art of Fiction", for the need for dignity in the novel. James was always to be preoccupied with matters of technique, and he seemed to overlook merit, particularly in his early reviews, if the work he judged did not meet his standards. Roberts thinks James

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13 Henry James, "Matthew Arnold's Essays", *Views and Reviews*, (Boston, 1908), p. 94.

14 Ibid., p. 89.


16 Henry James, "Whistler vs. Ruskin", *Views and Reviews*, p. 214.
was misguided early in his career because of his dedication to his artistic principles: "Insofar as James was led astray, it was not by a theory of criticism, so much as by the partial and rigid application of a theory." 17

It is true that the early reviews were pleasant reading—perhaps that was their greatest fault—they were too pleasant, too flippant and too patronizing. If James believed, as he said, that criticism was a serious function with a sacred mission, one should expect from his work a more serious approach. One should derive truth, and ideas, and stimulation to thought. However fluent James's style, there is not enough substance in them. Roberts finds his critical reviews inadequate as literary studies: "Graces of form, human observation, and eloquence are not enough." 18

Two considerations may cause one to doubt James's early sincerity in his artistic conviction—his inclusion of some inferior material as that meriting his criticism, and his seemingly desperate attempt to write more than he had time for. Cantwell says his apprenticeship was principally distinguished by his remarkable industry and his quick success. 19 It was this

17 Morris Roberts, op. cit., p. 15.
18 Ibid., p. 17.
paste with which his early work was written, that probably led to leniency in his critical judgment. This desire to secure a footing in the field of letters perhaps influenced him, as one writer put it, to let people off too easily. This writer believes it was not his judgment that was faulty, but the very bulk of his production: "Perhaps, in proportion to the bulk of his miscellaneous writing, he has reprinted too much good-natured comment on what approves itself to him little enough."21

It is obvious if one considers his range of subject matter, where his interest lay. More than half of his reviews were on novels, and one third were on French writers, but the novels he treated were often decidedly second-rate. Considering the mediocrity of much of his selected material for reviews, and his antipathy toward the French writers, one can find little in some of his early work except lucidity of style.

Even his style sometimes beclouded the artistic questions being discussed. His early reviews are written with an easy urbanity, an indirectness of approach, and a desire to cover every shade of a subject until the reader has been invited down too many avenues of thought. Buchan finds James particularly vague:

20 Annie Macdonell, Op Cit., p. 220.
21 Ibid., p. 221.
"Trimming, finessing, explaining, blaming, excusing, till the poor puzzled reader exclaims in despair, 'O this superfine young man! What does he mean? What does he feel!'" Buchanan finds James, as a young man, had little courage and fewer opinions, and he says that James was immune to violent emotions or anything that would upset his poise... "and he who is neither bitter, nor florid, nor brutal, nor shrewish, but is in all respects perfectly well-behaved, we are not amused or edified. We are bored."

Higginson also finds the inadequacies of James are many. His essays on Balzac he finds repetitious, and in need of condensation and method. He says those on Sand and Turgenev, are sketchy, and mentions that in the essays on Turgenev, James says nothing of Turgenev's masterpiece Terres Vierges. "Through all these essays he shows delicacy, epigram, quickness of touch, penetration; but he lacks symmetry of structure, and steadiness of hand."

One almost wonders whether it was the brashness of youth, or the desire for attention that caused James to disregard literary reputations, and led him to attack savagely such recognized novelists as Trollope and Dickens. Why else did he go to such lengths as to say that the women writers were immoral or...

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23 Ibid., p. 357.
24 T. W. Higginson, Short Studies of American Authors, (Boston, 1880), p. 53.
With his intolerance and heavy irony, he must have aroused as much indignation as he attracted favorable notice. Cantwell says of him: "...he was breezy, malicious, and he had a developed talent for sarcasm; he was well-informed about contemporary fiction and apparently had full confidence—when he began— in his own judgment."25

One can take much pleasure in reading these early reviews. Their lively epigrammatic style is highly entertaining, and if one can overlook James's smugness, and his too-absolute summary judgments, they will prove worth perusing. James was too much given to generalities—too often uttering absolutes when they should be relatives; not until much later did James learn to couch his remarks on Art and Life so carefully as to defy contradictions. Roberts does not find James too reliable in his conclusions. He says, "... they are a mixture of the true and false—the mingling of a capacity for generalizing with a frequent perversity of judgment."26

Our prime concern here is to see what some of James's artistic tenets were, so that we may look for evidence of these beliefs in his later critical works, and discover to what extent they were modified. There were certain fundamental beliefs to which James constantly adhered, and there were others which suffered radical change as James grew in wisdom. Some fundamental beliefs

might be cited here which remained constant in his fictional and
critical work: He showed an immense preoccupation to form; he
insisted on freedom for the artist, and he insisted that the
novel must always represent life—that being the only reason for
its existence.

Concretely I have dealt with certain definite subjects in
the ensuing part of the chapter, on which James expressed himself.
These subjects will be taken up in the following order, and for
purposes of clarity, I shall enumerate these subjects.

They are Character, Truth of the Novel, Author Manipulation,
Morality, Women Writers, Use of Description, Tragedy, Evil, and
the Supernatural, Verbose, and James's personal Experience.
The topics of the third chapter have been necessarily more nu-
merous, since James has views on more subjects in his later criti-
icism, and has greater power to elucidate them.

James insisted that characters in a novel must be believable,
true to life, and above all, they must be felt through revelation
and not through description. Let them be firmly

CHAR-
ACTER
grounded to reality, and have them connect with the
experience of the reader. Lasting fictions are: "...thos
which have introduced him to an atmosphere in which it was
credible that human beings might exist, and to human beings with
whom he might feel tempted to claim kinship."27

27 Henry James, "Prescott's Azarian". Notes and Reviews, p. 22.
If characters are to be interesting, they must possess weaknesses and passion, but they must not be, on the other hand, too well equipped with these failings. A man is never completely good or completely evil, as he was so often depicted by novelists who were James's contemporaries.

A character has many possible modes of conduct dictated to him largely by the condition in which he finds himself. James finds the weakness in one of Eliot's characters is that this character, Bede, is too stiff: "He lacks that quality making him interesting to others--the capacity to be tempted."28 Characters are never completely good or completely evil, and neither do they ever completely change their personalities. This act of negating their personalities--failing to be true to their natures--is the height of villainy in either fiction or reality. Let any changes come gradually from a slow deepening of insight, and let them be incomplete. Then the characters will act as they do in life, and will not act to suit the author's convenience to further the action, or to point a moral. James says: "These feelings, which constitute a man's real substance, his affection, his aspiration, never change. The nearest approach they make to it is to develop by a strictly logical process."29


29 Henry James, "A French Critic", Notes and Reviews, p. 100.
James wanted his characters to be immensely aware, to be alive to perceptions, and to act rationally. If characters undergo a spiritual change, it should be for a worthy purpose. He says that we can sympathize with women who love less wisely than well even if we do withhold our approval of their actions.--"but a woman who indulges in a foolish passion, without even the excuse of living well, must be curtly and sternly dismissed."30 This reasoning would seem to show that James considered it more moral to be intelligent than to be virtuous. If characters are to get the interest of the reader, they must be people of substance who are worthy of consideration. If they are to appeal to the intellect, they must be intellectual, and the less their interest in physical concerns, the more intellectual our appreciation of them will be. James asks in one of Trollope's works, "Why should we follow the fortunes of such people? They vulgarize experience and all the other heavenly gifts."31 A character with whom we feel sympathy, and to whom we can respond with the proper emotions, must be alive, alert and sensitive. If he is not aware of the problems surrounding him, there are no problems for either him or the reader. The physical description is not important; it is the personality of the character that matters. James says, "Given an animate being, you may readily clothe it

30 Ibid., "Emily Chester", p. 44.
31 Ibid., Trollope's Miss MacKenzie", p. 75.
in your mind's eye with a body, a local habitation and a name... 

James was not in sympathy with Dickens because he believed his characters had no correspondence to reality: "But among the grotesque creatures who occupy the pages before us, there is no one whom we can refer to as an existing type." James never softened to Dickens as he did later to Trollope. He called him the "greatest of superficial novelists" and asserts: "He has added nothing to our understanding of human character."

The characters are always more important than any details. Character is far more important than plot, and James complained that it was plot that dominated the novel. Description also was given too much prominence: "There is surely no principle of fictitious composition so sure as this,—that an author's paramount charge is the cure of souls, to the subjection, and if need be to the exclusion of the picturesque."

Chaignon La Rose in the Preface to Notes and Reviews finds this insistence on the technical problems of fictions sometimes militated against James's thorough appreciation of the work he reviewed: "His preoccupation is with its dramatic technique, with its ineffectually solved problems of "characterization, movement, 

33 Henry James, Views and Reviews, p. 155.
34 Ibid., "The Limitations of Dickens", p. 159.
35 Ibid.
36 Pierre DeChaignon La Rose, Preface to Notes and Reviews, p. xiv.
or what you will."36

James apparently chose his own milieu with confidence, since he believed the lower classes were less known and their representation would not be criticized so competently as would a portraiture of the more educated. He speaks of one of Trollope's works thus: "In the case of an attempted portraiture of a lower order of society, a series of false representations will not be so likely to prove fatal, because the critics and the reading public are not so well informed as to the facts."37 This statement seems to justify those who accuse James of snobbishness, or else they testify that he was extremely naive about this matter.

James always insisted that the novel was as liable to tests for truth as was history, and its only salvation lay in its taking itself seriously, acknowledging, thereby, a mission other than to entertain. In his very first essay, he decries the facility with which novels were being written: "And indeed to write a readable novel is actually a task of so little apparent difficulty, that with many popular writers the matter is a constant trial of speed with the reading public."38

James accuses Scott of lacking the right attitude to his-

37 Henry James, "Trollope's Lindisfarne Chase", Notes and Reviews, p. 34.

38 Ibid., "Fiction and Sir Walter Scott", p. 8.
totic truth, and this lack proved to be the reason for his medi-ority. "He has the same indifference to historic truth as an epic poet, without, in the novels, having the same excuse." 39 James disparages Scott because Scott would never have invited any curious investigation of his works, which fact convinced James that he must have written without conscious technique.

Writing was not a leisure activity to be indulged in by the dilettante of life or of fiction, when the amateur had nothing else with which to be occupied. It was a most serious task requiring immense labor. The best novelist was the busy man, and he who suffered in creation would benefit in keener insight: "It is as you say, because I 'grind out' my men and women that I endure them. It is because I create them by the sweat of my brow that I venture to look them in the face...The pains of labor regulate and consecrate my progeny." 40

James held that the omniscient author, as well as the omnipotent character were fatal to illusion. It is not that the author is not everywhere present in the development of a story—it is rather that the presence of the author never intrudes on the story, and thus is never noted. Only the inept author is unable to establish these relations. James says that Kingsley is

39 Ibid., p. 12.
40 Ibid., p. 5.
never caught alone with his reader. "For to be left alone with his audience, or even to be forced into a prolonged tête-à-tête with one of his characters, is the giant terror of the second-rate novelist." 41

James was aware even then that the use of the reflector figure was a very convenient device to convey information to the reader. He comments on the importance of this device: "In every human imbroglio, be it a comic or tragic nature, it is good to think of an observer standing aloof, the critic, the idle commentator of it all, taking notes, as we may say, in the interest of truth." 42

Although James had an implicit faith in conduct and in tradition, he preferred that if the reader were to draw a moral from his tales, he would arrive at such conclusions from his own reasoning. He says that "Religion without imagination is piety..." 43 Imagination is the only saving grace, so that emotion, virtuously inspired or not is unreasonable without it.

James acquired a distaste for the use of children in fiction, probably because of the objectionable way in which they were presented in his youth. It was not until later that he

41 Ibid., "The Noble School of Fiction", p. 62.
42 Views and Reviews, p. 135.
saw the artistic possibilities of the young and inexperienced as figures in tragedy. He had also decided the English novel, with its false standards of morality, was writing down to the level of the juvenile mind. James says of Alcott's work, "We are utterly weary of stories about precocious little girls. In the first place, they are in themselves disagreeable and unprofitable objects of study and in the second, they are always the precursors of not less unprofitable middle-aged lover." James was always concerned with the adult mind with keen sensibilities, and at this stage of his development, he considered children inadequate reflectors. It was this very naivety of children pitted against evil that the later James came to use as an aid to dramatic intensity in his tragedies. James reasons that the children could not be used as good characters, since they become good as they grow wise, and they can only be wise when they have grown to adulthood. "To make them good before their time is to make them wise before their time which is a very painful consummation." If we are to retain profound impressions from a novel, the novel must deal with great themes, and have in it great characters. James asks that the theme be compatible with its actors: "But if we desire to learn the various circumstances under which love-making may be conducted, let us not repair to

44 Ibid., "Miss Alcott's Moods", p. 50.
the nursery and the schoolroom."\(^{46}\)

In his early work, James found that women lacked the gift of selection. A superfluity of fact was always to be distasteful to him, and he found that the majority of women writers, among them Mrs. Browning, Sand, and Mrs. Stowe possessed the "fatal gift of fluency".\(^{47}\)

James found description used far too much. At one point he says wistfully in speaking of Prescott's *Azarian*, "...we have often wished that some legal penalty were attached to the use of description. We have sighed for a novel with a dramatic personae of disembodied spirits."\(^{48}\) Some believe, that in his later works, James no longer had occasion to sigh.

James cites the use of description in *Eugenie Grandet* as a perfect example of good description, because it never halts the action, and our sense of human interest of the story is never lost. The description is excellent: "because these things are all described only insofar as they bear upon the action, and not in the least for themselves."\(^{49}\) He is very clear as to the rule for using description: "All writing is narration, to describe is

\(^{46}\) Ibid., "The Gayworthys"; Mrs. Whitney, p. 96.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., Prescott's *Azarian*, p. 28.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., " " p. 20.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p. 24.
simply to narrate things in their order of place, instead of events in their order of time."

James would prefer that in the mystery story the suspense center around the moral repose of the criminal; the action should not revolve around the possible apprehension of the criminal. He finds it unfortunate that the interest in crime stories is due to the fact that the criminal's personal safety is in danger—which is of minor importance. If we have a story of the supernatural, let it be anchored to reality. If we have tragedy, let it come about by other means than the actions of others. One's true undoing is when one loses modesty, faith, honor, virtue. Let tragedy come from within—and make the theme large and significant: "We can have charity and pity only for real sin and real misery. We trust to novels to maintain us in the practice of great indignations and great generosities."

James had no patience with those who adopted an anomalous style, and he could, at that stage of his career, see no reason why anyone should write obscurely. Our vocabulary is more than sufficient to express any possible thoughts. He says on this point: "He must have something very original to

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50 Ibid., p. 27.
51 Henry James, "Miss Braddon", Notes and Reviews, p. 111.
52 Ibid., p. 187.
53 Ibid., "Trollope's Can You Forgive Her?" p. 86.
say if none of the old vehicles will carry his thoughts." He regrets that Harriet Prescott cannot find the words that we have, enough for her use—words instinct with the meaning of centuries. Swinburne is verbose and many of his phrases mean nothing. James believes that: "one half of his sentence is always a repetition for mere fancy's sake and nothing more, of the meaning of the other half—a play upon its words, an echo, a reflection, a duplication." This criticism is significant considering that this same accusation was to be levelled at James very much in the years to come.

Despite the numerous rules James laid down for writing of fiction, he was not didactic. He realized that each man must write as he must, and each must solve his own artistic problems. The "Figure in the Carpet" was largely an individual matter, and was only accessible to those with the keenest artistry. One cannot lay down rules arbitrarily to say what must or must not be done in writing, and one cannot be too positive in his evaluation of a work: "It is a great mistake in speaking of a novel to be over-positive as to what ought to be and what ought not." It is the imagination alone, that saves a work of art. This gift

54 Henry James, "Mr. Walt Whitman", Views and Reviews, p.105.
55 Henry James "Prescott's Azarian", Notes and Reviews, p.29.
56 Henry James "Swinburne's Essays", Views and Reviews, p.58.
57 Henry James, "Can You Forgive Her?", Notes and Reviews, pp. 62-63.
coupled with artistic design will produce work of merit. Life itself, without design, is a monstrosity—until the imagination and intelligence have conferred method on it, and given it meaning.

Many critics regret that James did not live a fuller life, and did not engage in more direct experience. James would have had scant sympathy with these views, when one considers that both in his youth and in his later life, he always insisted—"It is one of those rudimentary truths that cannot be too often repeated, that to write a novel it is not necessary to have been a traveler, an adventurer, a sight seer; it is simply necessary to be an artist."58 One can only ask why it was, believing this, that James convinced himself that Europe was his only possible artistic inspiration?

Many have tried to explain and define style in the Jamesean sense. Whatever it was, James always maintained that one of the most important things to do, if a writer is to be successful, is to get the reader to do his share of the task—to deduce for himself. However much the artist had labored in writing, his efforts would be futile, if the reader did not enter into the act of creation. This task of forcing the reader's interest was as important as it was difficult, and it was largely an individual

mutter with the artist. James says: "I hold that there is a way. It is perhaps a secret: but until it is found out, I hold that the art of story telling cannot be said to have approached perfection."59

In the entire accumulation of the opinions James held on the subject of art, one thought recurs constantly in his philosophy—the insistence on truth in the novel—which must also be the chief concern of the critic as well as the author: "The critic, in a work who has, a priori, no rule for a literary production, but that it shall have genuine life."60

59Henry James, "The Novels of George Eliot". Views and Reviews, p. 18.

60Ibid., "Mr. Kipling's Early Stories", p. 227.
CHAPTER III

JAMES'S MATURING CONCEPTIONS OF FICTIONAL PURPOSE.

CRAFT AND STYLE

James's artistic beliefs on various subjects are set down chronologically in this chapter, proceeding from the critical work of his Middle Period, French Poets and Novelists (1878), and Hawthorne (1879), to the later critical works, Partial Portraits (1888), and Notes on Novelists (1914). His critical beliefs on Character, Truth, Author Manipulation, Morality, Women Writers, Description, and Tragedy are listed in the same order as in the second chapter, and to this list have been added additional subjects about which he wrote. These later views, gathered from his transitional and late critical writings, are on the following subjects: The Use of Dialogue, The Relation between Art and Life, The Endings of the Novel, Style, Tone, Form, Point of View, Experience of the Author, and James as an Expatriate. As a final phase, I have considered the Functions of Criticism, and the Merits and Defects of James as a critic.

As James matured, certain changes are manifested in his critical beliefs and in his style. In his later work, one can detect an increase in sympathy and tolerance in his viewpoint, a lessening of irony and patronization, fewer prejudices, and
wider interests and views. He is now more intent on doing his critical work well, and is less concerned with winning the favor of the public; this led to certain reversals in his judgment, and to a more rigorous selection of subject matter for his criticism.

In an early transitional work, *French Poets and Novelists*, James is attracted to Turgeneiv and Balzac, because of their method in handling character. James believed that characters should be revealed rather than described. He admires the definiteness with which these two French writers presented their figures: "With Turgeneiv as with Balzac, the whole person springs into being at once; the character is never left shivering for its fleshy envelope." ¹

James believed that a character can never be interesting to the reader unless he is interested in himself. The reader cannot be expected to be more interested in the problem than is the character, who must meet the problem. Not only must the characters feel intensely, but they must convince us that they feel. James praises De Musset in this respect, and says that the merit of his tales and comedies is..."that of spontaneous feeling, and of putting people before us in whose feelings we believe."²

² Ibid., p. 29.
James finds that Sand is deficient in her character presentation. The usual objection to her novels is that they contain no living figures—no people who stand on their feet. He has not changed in his unfavorable opinion on Dicken's characters. His impression of Dicken's figures is that it is like "... a silhouette in cut paper, in which the artist has allowed great license to his scissors." He has little interest in economic matters, and it is as much because Balzac dwells in these matters, as it is because he describes his figures too much, that James finds his method objectionable: "He rarely introduces a person without telling us in detail how his property is invested, and the fluctuations of his rentes partially divide the writer's attention with the emotions of his heart."

In spite of the fact that James has a great admiration for Hawthorne, he feels that Hawthorne presents people who are representations of a single state of mind, rather than characters. It is because of this, that our interest is in the situation alone, and not, where it should be, in the characters.

3Henry James, ibid., p. 156.
4Ibid., p. 96.
5Ibid., p. 71.
When Daudet neglects to show the spiritual portraiture of his characters, the characters are psychologically blank. If the emotions of a character are interesting, the form of the emotions should be definite. James cites as an example of a weak character, Madame Autheman, in Daudet's *L'Evangéliste*. Her weakness lies principally in the fact that—"one does not see the operation of her character." If a character lacks awareness and keen perception, he cannot properly become a tragic figure. James finds another of Daudet's figures weak because of this: "Eline Ebsen is not a victim, inasmuch as she is but half alive, and victims are victims only in virtue of being thoroughly sentient. I do not easily perceive her spiritual joints."

James's disapproval of Trollope has now softened, and he believes that it was Trollope's interest in character that saved him from mediocrity. This same emphasis on characterization is the great point of excellence which Turgeneiv possessed. "The germ of a story, with him was never an affair of plot—that was the last thing he thought of; it was the representation of certain persons." It was from Turgeneiv that James later borrowed

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7 Ibid., "Alphonse Daudet", p. 236.
8 Ibid., "Ivan Turgeneiv", p. 314.
the trick of evolving the plot to follow the idea in the form of character.

If characters are destined for tragedy, they must be of sufficient substance to bear this extra burden of interest. Pulcheria says of the character Gwendolyn, in Daniel Deronda: "She has made her at the outset too light, too flimsy; tragedy has no hold on such a girl."9

Our interest in a character is proportionate to our knowledge of that character, and the method of revealing the necessary information must be an individual problem of the author.

"Character, in any sense in which we can get at it is action, and action is plot, and any plot which hangs together, even if it pretends to interest us only in the fashion of a Chinese puzzle, plays upon our emotions, our suspense, by men of personal references. We care what happens to people only in proportion as we know what people are."10

If characters are to have dramatic possibilities, they must be neither too strong nor too weak. They must encounter situations that will change them to an extent, if they are to be real. One of D'Annunzio's characters is inadequately portrayed because he is too strong, and remains too unchanged: "But for Andrea Sperelli, there is not only no march, no drama, there is not even a weakness to give him the semblance of dramatic, of plastic material;...His erudition, his intellectual accomplish-

10Ibid., "Anthony Trollope", p. 106.
ments and elevation are too easily spoken for; no view of him is given in which we can feel or taste them."11

James in a late work of criticism addresses the same remarks in censure at Flaubert, which were later hurled at James: Why does Flaubert ignore whole sides of life—whole vistas of experience? Because of this limited range, Flaubert cannot present the complicated and finely civilized character. James's own limitations in milieu made him unable to portray the primitive type of character, but he would not have done so had he could, since he thought it a mistake to register in so mean a consciousness so mixed a quantity of life. Flaubert's tragedy was one of awareness—not that Flaubert missed something in life—but that he never knew he had missed it.

Many of Flaubert's characters are not sufficiently drawn to carry the artistic burden of tragedy because they are limited reflectors and registers. James says of one character: "Frederick is positively too poor for his part, too scant for his charge."12 Balzac's characters are often excellent because the conditions in which they find themselves have simplified them to a singleness of motive, passion, and interest.13 This method,

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12. Ibid., pp. 82-82.  
which was James's system in establishing his later milieu, contributes greatly to unity of tone, and singleness of purpose.

In none of James's writings has he made a more eloquent plea for dignity in the novel than he does in the "The Art of Fiction" in Partial Portraits. He finds that the period in which Dickens and Thackeray wrote saw "... a comfortable good humored feeling abroad that a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding, and that our only business with it could be to swallow it." 

The theory of art is as interesting as its application, and it is only through discussion, experiment, and variety of attempt, that the novel may be rescued from dullness. The writer is likened to the painter, both having the same inspiration, the same process, the same successes, the same causes, and the same honor. The novel must be as answerable to tests for truth as is history. The novel's only reason for existence is that it attempts to represent life. Actually the novelist has a harder task in collecting his evidence, than has the historian--"consisting as it does in his having more difficulty in collecting his evidence, which is so far from being purely literary." Trollope's admitting that the novel is only "make believe" is

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14 Partial Portraits, "The Art of Fiction", n. 376.
15 Ibid., p. 378.
16 Ibid., p. 380.
particularly distasteful to James, since it denies the truth in the novel, and it also emphasizes the element of the omniscient author.

Though the selection of art must be practiced on life to give it meaning, it must not be obtrusive. If we see life without rearrangement, we are near the truth; but if we feel we are seeing life with arrangement, we are being put off with something less than the truth.17

Lubbook believes the reader should subject the novel to a test for its reality: "A novel is a picture of life, and life is well known to us; let us first of all "realize" it, and then, using our taste, let us judge whether it is true, vivid, convincing--like life, in fact."18 James would not have consented to this test; he would advise us to test for beauty and artistic truth rather than for reality.

Author manipulation is a problem each artist must solve in his own way. It is always better to leave the author's voice out of the story, but it does sometimes happen that it cannot be left out. "There is always at the best the author's voice to be kept out. "It can be kept out for occasions, but it cannot be kept out always."19 Much later, James came to know that it could always be kept out, after he had mastered the devices used in his late novels.

17 Ibid., p. 398.
19 Notes on Novelists, p. 442.
Although James disdained outright moralizing, the moral sense dominated his work. He recognized as serious lacks in an artist either a lack of moral sense, or an over-developed moral sense. De Bernand remained second-rate, he tells us, because he had no morality. Morality is not that which may be put in, or taken from a work of art. It is simply a part of the richness of the inspiration. It is an integral part of life, art and man. The more a work of art has this moral sense, the more artistic it will be. James maintains that—"to count out the moral element in one's appreciation of an artistic total is exactly the same as it would be (if the total were a poem) to eliminate all the words in three syllables, or to consider only such portions of it as had been written by candle-light."20

Evil is as much a part of reality as is Good, and is as inevitably to be accepted. Baudelaire's vision of Evil is faulty because Evil for him begins outside and not inside. Balzac is not nearly so skillful in handling virtue as he is in handling vice: "...when his superior people begin to reason they are lost—they become prigs and hypocrites or worse."21 It would seem that in James's own works, his most fascinating and interesting

20 French Poets and Novelists, "Charles Baudelaire", p. 64. 
21 Ibid., p. 84.
Characters are the weak, or those inclined to evil. Balzac, like De Bernard, lacked the moral sense, and this resulted in weakness: "He had no natural sense of morality, and this we cannot help thinking a serious fault in a novelist."²²

Characters and action must be properly motivated if they are to be credible. "It is as difficult to describe a motive without glancing at its motive, its moral history, as it is to describe an action without glancing at its practical consequence."²³ Emerson's sense of morality is much too limited for artistic purposes. Although both James and Emerson were products of the New England tradition, James had in a measure escaped its limitations. Emerson's views of evil was narrow--"...he had no great sense of wrong--a strangely limited one, indeed for a moralist--no sense of dark, the foul, the base."²⁴

Although James recognized that the French were superior to others in their attention to Form, he believed that the English writers were far superior in their moral sense. The English leave many avenues of experience untouched--they are poorer in acuteness of perception, and intellectual vivacity--"...but they have been more at home in the moral world; as people say today they know their way about the conscience."²⁵

²² Ibid., p. 89.
²³ Partial Portraits, p. 256.
²⁴ Ibid., p. 31.
²⁵ Ibid., p. 124.
This awareness of morality may help or harm a work of art. James thinks that it helped Stevenson's work, but Eliot, who has her figures and situations evolve from her moral consciousness, and only indirectly from her observation, has the religious idea cloud her vision, and mar her art—"the sense of moral responsibility, of the sadness and difficulty of life, was the most inveterate part of her nature." Hawthorne was interested in the manifestations of the conscience, but the way in which he saw the problem helped his work: "Man's conscience was his theme, but he saw it in the light of a creative fancy which added, out of its own substance, an interest, and, I may almost say, an importance." "

James believes that Sand was remarkably gifted with great instincts of expression, but her preoccupation with morals, and her extreme sense of delicacy forced her to withhold material that was relevant to the work—"George Sand is too inveterately moral, too preoccupied with that need to do good which is in part often the enemy of doing well." Material in fiction can be neither proper nor improper. "There is only one propriety the painter of life can ask of his morsel of material: Is is, or is it not, of the stuff of life?"

Zola lacks intellectual modesty, as well as a sense of the ridiculous, and the finer vision of human experience; but his

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26 Ibid., p. 169.
27 Ibid., p. 42.
most serious failing is that he lacks taste—the element which clarifies and intensifies the imagination of the artist, and which governs the moral sense. "There is simply no limit, in fine, to the misfortune of being tasteless; it does not merely disfigure the surface and the fringe of your performance— it eats back into the very heart and enfeebles the source of life." 31

Hays believes that it was this sharp moral sense which James possessed that made him the great artist he became. "What he did perceive at the outset of his career was that the highest drama, tragedy in short, demanded the ability to accept all the material of reality, an ability to see values of good and evil in order to bring them into conflict." 32 James, aware of the drama in the representation of evil, knew however that it required greater artistry to deal with the good and virtuous in such a way that they would be believable without being overly-modest. The virtuous characters in French novels are rare, and those in the English novels are usually pitiful. One critic says that it was James who portrayed the virtuous in an inter-

29 Notes on Novelists, p. 179.
30 Ibid., p. 295.
31 Ibid., p. 49.
ating way: "...James has conferred on virtue, on purity of heart, the service of making it interesting, distingue, even subtle and keen." 33

Truth and Beauty are almost synomomous to James. Randall believes that James was always conscious of the artistic duty to present the beauty of the spirit: "He quietly insisted upon the unfailing simplicity and beauty--not always, be it noted, the beatific happiness--of the clean life of the spirit and the spirited intellect." 34 Hoare believes that James's moral sense is directly attributable to the age in which he lived: "I would say that the Jamesean insistence on a personal morality which very often is not the conventional one indicates his awareness of the insecurity of his social world and may be taken as an indirect criticism of it." 35

Beach thinks that it was not that James objected so much to immorality, as much as that he objected to inept treatment of it: "In his own fiction his care was not to eschew adultery but to keep it out of sight, to keep it above all from seeming gross." 36

33 Bruce Clark, "Henry James", The University Magazine, XVIII, p. 50.


An extraordinary reversal of judgment occurs in James when he comments on the sense of morality in Sand. In the earlier French Poets and Novelists, he accuses her of "a startling absence of delicacy, of reticence, of the sense of certain spiritual sanctities and reservation:" In a later work, however, in a passage previously quoted, (Footnote 29), he finds that her preoccupation with the moral sense and her extreme delicacy spoil her art.

James believed that women writers had very definite faults, and he thought that they always acted from a personal motive. He finds them careless in their handling of Truth: "Women, we are told, do not value the truth for its own sake, but only for some personal use they make of it. My present criticism involves an assent to this somewhat cynical dogma." Women tend to let the events shape up as they would like them to, and not as they would culminate in reality. James says that Eliot's conception of the novel was not a picture of life, but a moralized fable, endeavoring to teach by example. In his late work, James has not altered his views on

37 French Poets and Novelists, p. 158.
38 Ibid., pp. 109-110.
39 Ibid., p. 155.
40 Partial Portraits, p. 50.
this subject. It is due to the "sex comparatively without a
feeling for logic,"\textsuperscript{41} that the English novel still retains its
old technique.

Description must be used sparingly, and it must be preceded
by observation and a free curiosity. The thing described can

\textbf{USE never be better than the impressions received by the}

\textbf{OR}

\textbf{DESCRIPTION recorder.} James has humorously wished that a penalty

be attached to indiscriminate descriptive writing,

when he spoke of it in an early work. Its function is not too

important: "Descriptive writing, to our English taste, suggests

nothing very enticing--a respectable sort of padding, at best,

but a few degrees removed from downright moralizing."\textsuperscript{42}

Balzac and Poe lacked a strong moral sense, and were therefore incapable of presenting the tragic or supernatural theme.

\textbf{TRAGEDY James found more inherent drama in the manifestations of this treatment of Evil: Duplicity is more pictur-

\textbf{EVIL AND THE SUPER-}

\textbf{NATURAL} escue than honesty--just as the line of beauty is the
curve and not the straight line."}\textsuperscript{43} A character must share

traits of both good and evil, if he is to be believable. One of

his few criticisms of Turgeneiv is on this point in criticizing

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Notes on Novelists}, pp. 297-298.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{French Poets and Novelists}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 91.
\end{footnotes}
Madame Polosoff in *Spring Torrents*. "Her quite peculiar cruelty and depravity make a large demand on our credulity; she is perhaps a trifle too extravagantly vicious." 44

An early recognition that characters could be strengthened through suffering was used to great advantage in his later novels. He mentions the folly of all youthful spontaneity which makes us grow to wisdom by the infliction of suffering." 45 It is as necessary for the artist to be ready to welcome any experience that may be transmitted into art, as it is for his characters. No pains and no mistakes are too great to be converted into art. If the author lacks some weaknesses, he can never hope to be any more than "...large and cheery and imperturbable." 46

James had, in an early work, praised Balzac in his handling of dialogue, 47 and thought him superior to Dumas in this respect. Although he still believes that Balzac is the master of the technique, he finds him, strangely enough, inordinately weak in conversation. 48 Weakness in the handling of dialogue is characteristic of the Age, and James does not see much hope for the correction of the faults.

44 Ibid., p. 240.
46 Notes on Novelists, p. 183.
47 French Poets and Novelists, p. 76.
48 Notes on Novelists, p. 442.
that are rife. He says of this ostensible report of spoken words: "...this abuse is so general a sign in these days as to deprive a challenge of every hope of credit." 49

A problem that was to engage James's attention increasingly as he grew older, was the relation of Art to Life. One of his most widely quoted phrases: "It takes certainly a great deal of life to make a little art," 50 shows that from the very earliest stages, he was aware of the selection of Art, which must be applied to Life, to make it meaningful.

James advises the artist to shun no experience—to embrace all reality. Without this attitude, the artist will never have the background to write convincingly. If the characters in a novel lack this habit of receptivity, they can never be interesting to the reader. James admires Sand for her faithfulness in following this advice: "Madame Sand's plan was to be open to all experience, all emotions, all convictions." 51 It was not that James did not believe in following the advice he gave to others in this respect. In choosing his own milieu, he was aware of the neglected avenues of life, but he was also aware that he could work better with a class whom he understood, and with whom he had most sincere sympathies. He knew also that his story would be more integrated if his characters were drawn from

49 Ibid., p. 441.
a class which was largely exempt from such petty, confining limitations demanded by conventions, and from economic restrictions on the action.

Once the artist has embraced experience, he must apply the selection of Art to his findings, and he must abstain from subjective judgment and moralizing. Let him know what he has seen—let him possess "...that tender appreciation of actuality which makes even the application of a single coat of rose-colour seem an act of violence." One must not be too faithful in representing either events of characters with exact correspondence to reality, since this would militate against the principle of selection of Art. Just as James derived an idea for a novel from a hint or suggestion in his later work, so he urges that in representing a character, one should take hints from the original, but he should also import new elements into the picture.

A novel cannot be great, if the author's sensibilities are dull, or if he fails to admit them because of his faith to a false ideal, as was the case with Eliot. He urges: "Let us then leave this magnificent art of the novelist to itself and to its perfect freedom, in the faith that one example is as good as another, and that our fiction will always be decent enough if it

50 French Poets and Novelists, p. 30.
51 Ibid., p. 173.
52 Ibid., p. 185.
53 Hawthorne, p. 130.
be sufficiently general."\textsuperscript{54}

Brown shows that it is necessary to impose the selection of Art upon Life, if one is to present a believable novel: "Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing, and emasculate."\textsuperscript{55} However important Art is to Life, the reverse relations of Life to Art is even more important, in James's opinion. He believes that in Life without Art, one can arrive at something, but in Art without Life, there is only futility.\textsuperscript{56}

A novel can never be greater than the mind which produced it. The artist must have the ability to receive straight impressions, and he must possess the ingenuity to project them. His medium admits no limits and no boundaries. His province is "all life, all feeling, all observation, all vision."\textsuperscript{57} Even before James became acquainted with dramatic technique borrowed from his experience in the theatre, he was enhanced with the possibilities in the novel. He says: "It is capable of a rare trans

\textsuperscript{54} Partial Portraits, pp. 286-287.

\textsuperscript{55} R. W. Brown, The Writer's Art, (Cambridge, 1921), n.237.

\textsuperscript{56} Partial Portraits, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., n. 399.
parenely--It can illustrate human affairs in cases so delicate and complicated that any other vehicle would be clumsy."58 Fullerton calls the art of fiction the most complete device for the representation of life."59 The artistic duties are few and definite--Let him see his subject and render it. If the reference and application be sufficient, the story will be illustrational of life. "The question for the artist can only be of doing the artistic utmost, and thereby of seeing the general task."60

James's secretary maintains that his conception of art remained unchanged throughout his career. "From beginning to end his view of art was exclusively aesthetic; and his growth as an artist was not an alteration but a heightening of consciousness, the principle which his consciousness must cherished being that a work of art must primarily deal with the supremely "workable", and must, above all, be superlatively worked."61

Not long before his death, James in a letter to H. G. Wells, (1915) mentions this subject which so occupied him throughout his life. He writes to Wells: "It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, for our consideration and application of these things, and I know of no substitute whatever for

58 Ibid., p. 174.


60 Notes on Novelists, p. 102.

the force and beauty of its process."  

As would be expected, James was impatient with "conclusive endings", so currently popular in his day, because life itself lacks this conclusiveness. Life was indefinite and haphazard, the conventional endings, even from the first reviews, accepted Eliot's views: "in which a story must have marriages and rescues in the nick of time as a matter of course."  

In his maturing works, James had more numerous and more definite views on style and form. In an early work he insists that what makes a work of art is not, as was thought, style so much as form. He cites Sand as an example of a writer who had style, but lacked form. One must not be like Trollope and want only to have as little form as possible. One must not, however, be too aware of style—else he will, like Stevenson, have a manner for manner's sake:—"Mr. Stevenson delights in style, and his own has nothing accidental or diffident: it is eminently conscious of its responsibilities, and meets them with a kind of gallantry."  

Style and Form, however

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63 Partial Portraits, p. 53.  
64 French Poets and Novelists, p. 160.  
65 J. W. Beach, (on "Robert's Criticism") Modern Language Notes, XLV (1920), pp. 253-255.
such an integral part of a work of art, are after all only a means: if they are made the ends, the work will be artificial and the reader's attention will be on them alone. This is in line with James's beliefs that anything that is groped for, and lacks spontaneity, is sterile.

James believes that Emerson's works survived despite their lack of form. It has been before mentioned that there were certain writers who held no meaning for James, because of his beliefs. Beach says that James was unable to understand Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Hardy, Baudelaire, Maupassant, and Whitman, simply because he could not appreciate their form: "There were so many subjects that he shrank from, and he had such limited ideas of "form" and the possible variety of its manifestations."66

However much James disliked Flaubert's handling of character, (Footnote 12), he believed that Flaubert knew the importance of style--never seeking it, and consequently never missing it; conferring form on vulgar elements. Flaubert was weak because, although he cared immensely for the technique involved, he was unable, as was Scott, to say why he did.67 It is not enough to do a task artistically; one must know why he does it and tell


67 Notes on Novelists, p. 67.
how he does it. James says in one of his letters: "I hold the artist must (infinitely!) know how he is doing it, or he is not doing it at all." 68

James believed the form is the essence of the subject and idea, and cannot stand alone. As Roberts says on the subject, "Nothing in a novel is subject which is not also treatment: the idea and the form are inseparable, and neither by itself has the slightest reality for the critic." 69 The subject is not important as the treatment, for it is the treatment with which we are critically concerned. Yet James knew that the general reading public, the "jolly barbarians of taste", considered the subject first. Though James regrets Balzac's fatal break of tone--"the one unpardonable sin of the novelist," 70 he has sufficiently overcome his prejudice to Zola to applaud his awareness of his problem, and his unity of tone. 71 Emphasis on style will lead to a general looseness of work as found in the work of Sand. James points out that the thing presented intentionally "is never the stream of the artist's inspiration: it is the deposit of the stream." 72

69 Roberts, op. cit., p. 60.
70 Notes on Novelists, p. 118.
71 Ibid., p. 34.
72 Ibid., p. 192.
James finds that Sand is deficient in her handling of the "point of view" technique, because she injects her own sense into the point of view adopted. James, influenced by Turgenev, sanctioned the shifting point of view, but he insisted that the reflector be morally interesting. He must be capable of taking the widest possible view of the situation, but he must not reflect something that is outside the sphere of his own consciousness. James writes to his brother and speaks of this matter: "Make that consciousness full, rich, universally prehensible and stick to it—don't shift and don't shift arbitrarily." This advice to stay away from the shifting point of view is inconsistent with James's own work. Forster finds it symptomatic of the power to contract and expand perception. It is "one of the great advantages of the novel-form and it has a parallel in our perception of life." Without the point of view technique, James finds that characterization is not complete. James finds Madame Arnoux, in Flaubert's L'Education weak, because she is offered to us wholly through the vision of one character. Frederick is weak in the same book, because he is presented not only without the aid of

73 P. Lubbock, op. cit., I, p. 322.
75 Notes on Novelists, p. 86.
a sympathetic character of consequence, but even without the aid of one with whom we can directly communicate. Emma, in Madame Bovary on the other hand, is interesting despite her dreary life because of the nature of her consciousness and the play of her mind."

Whether or not the artist must have much direct experience will always be debatable. For James, however, there was no question. The only requisite was to be thoroughly receptive. As he writes to his brother (1888), he exclaims: "The great thing is to be saturated with something—that is, in one way or another, with life."

Brown believes the artist will write with more gusto and effect of those things that he has only wished to do, and not those which he has done. James believed, however, that saturation was not only on the plane of direct experience—one can be saturated with impressions, and even with experience encountered indirectly. James himself had a limited milieu, yet in his criticism of Flaubert, he admitted such a condition was

76 Ibid., p. 84.
77 Ibid., p. 84.
78 Lubbock, op. cit., I, p. 42.
79 R. W. Brown, op. cit., pl 239.
It was obviously his strange predicament that the only spectacle open to him by experience and direct knowledge was the bourgeois, which on that ground imposed on him successively his three so intensely bourgeois themes."80

De Bernard went nowhere, but still knew life. James says "He guessed what he did not see; he heard what he did not listen to. He had this mark of a man of genius—he divined."81 and knew life first-hand, and it was this experience turned to economical account that saved her.

In his work on Hawthorne, James maintains an artist must first get impressions before he can give them—let him multiply his relations and points of contact with society. Because of Hawthorne's failure to do this, there is in his work little psychology or description of manner. If there were no impressions, the work will be inspired solely by the imagination, and will be cold and lifeless. Eliot suffered because of her life. "If her relations with the world had been easier, in a work, her books would have been less difficult. 82

In his autobiographical works James says his expression is

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80 Notes on Novelists, p. 95.
81 French Poets and Novelists, p. 192.
82 Partial Portraits, pp. 46-47.
due to the tenacity of his impressions, and much less to the extent of his actual experience—"the fact that I have lost nothing of what I saw." 83 He was not only willing to suffer, but, (like Isabel in Portrait of a Lady.), wanted to defend his right to. 84 It is not sufficient to have knowledge without life, one is useless without the other. 85

The word "experience" meant more to James than it does to most people. Experience as he knew it may occur anywhere, under any stages of culture. To him it was "The power to guess the unseen from the seen, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it. " 86 Lack of desire for all experience weakens both the artist and his characters. James could never understand why De Musset neglected to take advantage of the opportunity of going to Spain when he had a chance. James finds Gwendolyn weak in Daniel Deronda because she had no opportunity to embrace life. 87 This is a major theme in James's fiction--the desire of

84 Notes of a Son and Brother, (New York, 1914), p. 32.
85 Ibid., p. 27.
86 Partial Portraits, p. 389.
87 Ibid., p. 89.
a character to embrace life--and its corresponding tragedy is to have this opportunity refused. One must be saturated with experience before he may possess it. James advises the artist to learn the courage of his convictions--to abound aggressively in his own sense, and express fully his own saturation. 88

It was Zola's lack of experience that caused him to write "the most extraordinary imitation of observation that we possess." 89 James thought Zola inexpressibly presumptuous to write of Lourdes, Paris and Rome when he had never possessed them. James says, "One thought of one's own frequentations, saturations—a history of long years, and of how the effect of them had somehow been to make the subject too august." 90

It is not even sufficient to possess both keen sensibilities and a good imagination in order for one to write well. Although James accomplished artistic work because of his sensibilities without the benefit of much experience, he believes few others will find it possible. He speaks of "the strange process of waste, through which nature and fortune may deal on occasion with those whose faculty for application is all and

88 Notes on Novelists, p. 370.
89 Ibid., p. 60.
90 Ibid., p. 47.
only in their imagination and in their sensibility."\(^{91}\)

Too much has been written attacking and defending James for his finding America inadequate for the expression of his Art for additional remarks on this subject. However, the sub-
ject is so closely connected with his entire career as man and artist, it cannot be ignored. It is true and to be expected that James found America, lacking as it did a fixed tradition, sterile compared to the older culture of Europe. Abroad there was a place for a man of letters—there were the very qualities he most admired in literature—a smooth, subtle scheme of life. Josephson describes the America of that time as lacking stimulating example and competition.\(^{92}\) Brought up as he was to accept no single standards, how could James help but find Hawthorne provincial, and Poe fatuous? How could he help but find Emerson's Concord Hymn laughable?

The question would seem to be whether or not the artist works independently of his surroundings. Although James had always insisted that he did, he says of Trugenev: "His work savors strong, of his native soil, like those of all great novel-
ists."\(^{93}\) James, whom no country could legitimately claim, is

\(^{91}\) Henry James, A Small Boy and Others, (New York, 1913), p. 10.


\(^{93}\) French Poets, p. 220.
certainly a great novelist, yet he cannot claim these qualifications. Perhaps the lack in America he found most serious was the lack of history—the need for an accumulation of customs—the dearth of types and complexity.

In a sense, James was certainly a product of his environment as much as any man of letters ever was. It was the precise time in which he lived, and the attitude of Americans, with their newly acquired richness and snobbish desire for Europe, that presented to James his artistic inspiration, and made him aware of the possibilities of conflict. Perhaps James was as fortunate as Dumas, the younger, in the time he was born, in which he says of Dumas: that he was born at "the moment exactly when he could see the ends of one era and the beginnings of another and join hands luxuriously with each." 94

James believed we could not understand a man before we could understand the time in which he lived. We must know his society, and before that, we must know its manners. "This is especially true of a man of letters, for manners lie very close to literature." 95 It was perhaps a lack on the part of James that he could not appreciate the fact that, considering his in-

94 Notes on Novelists, p. 370.
95 Partial Portraits, p. 3.
interest in individualism, that that very individualism has risen
with the advance of democratic society. 96

James had none too high an idea of the reading public, and
believes that both Gautier and Baudelaire owe some of their pop-
ularity to the fact that their work was considered
indecent. Considering this, it is amazing that this
"great gossiping vulgar-minded public" is deserving of
all facts, artistic theories and intellectual tenets of an
author. 97

There is much dissension among the critics in evaluating
the worth of James in the field of criticism. One man calls
him "a critic who took up the most haphazard of literary forms
and turned them into the most ordered and finished." 98

Another regrets that he lacked the gift, which "is
noble beyond all others" of being essentially imper-
sonal. 99 One asserts he has written charming literary studies,
but lacks the impassively critical voice. In Sainsbury..."one
may see a real artist handled with respective fearlessness, not

96 Higginson, op. cit., p. 53.
Another finds only charming talk or gentle condemnation, and his valuable work is produced out of his own experience, and not in judgment of the subject. 101

Roberts maintains that his faith in the logic of art, the discipline of form, an intellectual toughness, and keen sensibilities remained unchanged throughout his work. 102 Any change that occurred "took the form of a complete logical fusion in him of a faith in art and a faith in conduct. His artistic consciousness took charge of everything, and from a supervision so alert and sensitive morality could have had little to lose, and art much to gain perhaps." 103

James, in a late work, tells the effect or prime office of criticism: "...to make our absorption and our enjoyment of the things that feed the intellect as aware of itself as possible, since that awareness quickens the mental demand, which this in turn wanders further and further for pasture." 104

100 "Critic and Author", Living Age, (1903), p. 63.
102 Roberts, op. cit., p. 105.
103 Ibid., pp. 119-120.
104 Notes on Novelists, p. 315.
La Rose asserts James was never a great critic. The thing that prevented this was his preoccupation with form and technique: "his steady preoccupation with problems of technique rendered that ultimate philosophical eminence unattainable (a constant, tragic paradox in all art)."\(^{105}\)

\(^{105}\)Pierre Chaignon La Rose, *Notes and Reviews*, p. viii.
CHAPTER IV

THE NOVELS AND TALES IN THE LIGHT OF HIS CRITICAL AND STYLISTIC IDEALS

The Novels and Tales which are included in the New York Edition of James's works are to be studied in this chapter, to see how he applied his artistic beliefs in his own fiction. Although such novels as The Bostonians, The Europeans, The Sacred Fount, Washington Square, and many short stories, are not included in the Edition, the fiction to be considered forms a representative section of James's work through the years. Since the fiction embraces many topics, and considers many problems, it was necessary to divide the work into some kind of classification, however artificial, and however much the work under consideration might overlap into two or more possible divisions. In some instances, a novel may be pertinent to all of the classifications, and in this case, I have put the novel in the class to which it most strictly refers.

These classifications into which the works of fiction most readily fall are: The Problem of the Artist, (also involving the question of artistic appreciation), The International Problem, The Theme of Ambiguity, Criticism of Society, The Violation of the Innocent, (on both the adult and child mind), and Certain Characters who are maladjusted to life. The later three novels,
The Wings of the Dove, The Ambassadors, and The Golden Bowl, are concerned with the Problem of Wealth, The Theme of Renunciation, and Intense Character Awareness. The Novels and Tales within their own classification will be treated chronologically whenever possible. Since my presentation of the fiction does not follow the plan to which James adhered in The Art of the Novel, I shall present the fiction in the same order in the last chapter, which concerns the Prefaces, as I have followed in this chapter.

Roderick Hudson, James's first attempt at a novel of length, has many characteristics which later disappeared in his more mature works. This novel has plot, melodrama, much action, simple dialogue, and very simply presented analysis. It lacks the metaphors and images which are so prevalent in his later work, and much of the elucidation comes about through description—a technique used later only for purposes of establishing atmosphere and mood. Long speeches often give information to the reader that would have been far more effective if it had been disclosed through gradual revelation. Roderick is ostensibly the hero and central character, and his weakness both as man and character is plausible, only if one considers James's own views of the artist's plight—that it is fatal for an artist to be divided nature. Art cannot be conciliatory with anything, and the artist must therefore be too strong and secure in himself to desire worldly affluence. Hud-
son's downfall came when he neglected his art, and succumbed to the lure of Europe. His life ended when he realized the paucity of his talent—illustrating the Jamesean idea that one has no problem, until he comes to realize his problem.

The inclusion of the "Spectator" type of character, Rowland Mallett, proves to be one of the book's greatest weaknesses, since Mallett was the only possible witness of events, and his aloofness weakened his point of view. James bears a certain resemblance to both Roderick and Rowland, yet he is more in sympathy with Rowland, and he considers him the better artist. It is only James's similarity to Rowland, in holding himself apart from life, that possibly prevented his sharing the fate of Roderick, since James too was stifled by a New England city, was irresistibly drawn to Europe, and in his own apprentice period was saved a like disillusionment only by his cultivated indifference. To some, Rowland can only be ridiculous by his presumption in believing that he can shine in the reflected light of the artist, by virtue of his patronization. Roderick is perhaps the more sincere of the two, since he actually believed in his genius, whereas Rowland believed in nothing but the efficacy of money. Kelley believes the two characters present the two sides of James's own nature: "In Roderick is the artistic temperament without the power to realize itself in production; in Rowland is the power, the will to do, coupled with financial
means and regard for others, but without the inborn ability."

The characters are not well drawn. Mary Garland cannot emerge from passive anonymity, and she betrays no sign of intelligence or passion. What will forever remain a mystery is how she interested both Rowland and Mallett in her dubious charms. The development of Rowland's affection for Mary is as absent as its motivation. One feels that neither had the capacity for love; Mary was too colorless and phlegmatic, and Roderick was too interested in himself. Rowland, in his own role of spectator, seemed also incapable of emotion. Since James believed that duplicity is more interesting than forthrightness, he must have known the reader would have his interest centered in Roderick and Christina, and would remain comparatively indifferent to the fate of Rowland and Mary Garland. Christina further completely obliterates Mary by virtue of her background, her emancipation, and her sophisticated world, in which Roderick unsuccessfully tries to enter. Considering also that the dubious circumstances of her birth makes her goal of marriage necessary and dangerous, it is not surprising that James came back to her in a later book.

The novel is simply told with no sense of unrelated events playing around each other. There is the obvious presence of

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coincidence, and there is the ever-present element of author manipulation. One becomes aware that Europe is not brought in as milieu but serves purely as scenery. The glaring weaknesses are due to the inclusion of Rowland not only as spectator, but also as interpreter and dictator to its weakly drawn characters, such as Mary Garland, and Cecelia and to James's determination to write a novel obviously schemed to be a test case. Mary Garland and Christina have their prototypes in later works, however undeveloped they appear here. Mary is a forerunner of such creatures as Milly Theale, in The Wings of the Dove, Nanda, in The Awkward Age, and the girl, in In The Cage, all helpless, beautiful, and seemingly destined for tragedy because of some lack in their nature; Christina Light, on the other hand, is like Kate Croy, in The Wings of the Dove, and Madame Merle, in Portrait of a Lady, who bring evil to others, and because of the force of their personalities, are always more colorful than their paler sisters. More space should have devoted to the development of the character of Mary instead of giving so much importance to Cecelia, who has no part to play. Stronger characterization would have resulted if James had not bestowed on each character the same conversational tricks which blur their individuality.

"The Author of Beltraffio" (1884) presents the case of the wholly dedicated artist, Mark Ambient, who writes as he must,
Despite the fact that his wife so misunderstands his work that she permits their son to die, so that he would never live to be like his father. His wife is representative of the general hostility of the public, due to a misguided sense of morality, to the sincere work of the artist. Mark is unlike Hudson in that, as a true artist, he will let nothing deter him from his work, and the proper rendering of his material. Because he is an ideal character, James depicts him sympathetically, although in other works he has presented the artist comically and satirically. The teller of this short story is an American, but since the narrator does not become involved in the situation, the conventional point of view is rendered. It is told in the first person, and has the disadvantages of that technique. There is no hint of the International Situation.

In "The Aspern Papers" (1888), the question arises if it is ever justifiable to investigate the private life of the artist. James had said that if a literary fact of value is to be uncovered, there could be no objection, but in this tale, he hints that the investigator is often eager to secure facts but is unwilling to pay the price. The Spectator Type of character is again present, but unlike the narrator in "The Author of Beltraffio", he is involved in the tale, and figures prominently in its unfolding. This narrator, a typical Jamesean character,
is somewhat comparable to Mallett, in his capacity as critic and patron of the arts. He is willing to resort to such deceptions as entering a home under false pretenses, and is even guilty of attempted theft—all for the sake of art; yet, he is not willing to marry the tragic Tina, when this is the only possible means of securing his prize.

James is no longer the reporter of local events. He is no longer the expert sight seer—but a master to set the milieu. Although Aspern was formerly an American, and the action occurs in Venice, there is no complication of an international nature. There is high suspense and great dramatic interest.

There is presented here, as in many other tales, an ambiguity and duplicity in moral terms. James was always aware of the irony in the case of the plotter having his schemes lead to his own undoing, and here by the original manipulation of Juliana, the duper is duped. However pathetic the plight of Tina, the principal interest is neither in her nor in the fate of the Papers, but in the plight in which the Narrator finds himself. James always planned that the nouvelle be kept on a plane of straightforwardness, and so the plot is not complicated, and the action is straightforward. No intense characterization is attempted, although Tina is much better done than was Mary Garland, and Juliana is a force to be reckoned with.
The Tragic Muse (1890) is a transitional work having features of both the old and the new style of James. As in Roderick Hudson, the conflict is between the Life of Art and Worldly Interests. In this struggle are involved the parallel cases of Nick Dormer, who is torn between desire for the material comforts and security of a career in politics, and his love of Art; and the problem Peter Sherringham has to solve—choosing between his career and his love of the theater. The story is full of action and fast moving events. Many things transpire, yet the style is clear, lucid and simple, and the novel abounds in satire and humor. James had many impressions at this stage in his career, and he obviously was determined to include as many of them as he could in this novel. The subjects represent his interests at that time, in politics, aesthetics, and the Drama. This was the period in which his theater writing began, and was, before his disillusionment resulting from his unsuccessful plays, and he has many ideals still intact. He was to lose much of the interest later in both the subjects and in the book itself, for he says in a letter to Williams: "...for my mind is now a muddled, wearied blank on the subject."²

Perhaps its greatest weakness is that there are too many centers of interest—too much action—too many characters, and too many problems that clamor for attention. As in Roderick Hudson, the attention centers on the wrong people. Nick, who is supposedly the hero, becomes nothing dramatically but the reflector of the fortunes of Miriam. Nick's mother, Julia, and Mr. Carteret all represent the hostility to art before evidenced by Mrs. Ambient, but here, Nick, the representative of Art, does not deserve such armed hostility; his sincerity is as doubtful as his love of Painting. Nick is even more impersonal in his relations with Miriam, since James had always avoided the love element whenever possible; thus Nick is cold and austere, and Miriam does not have an opportunity to show the warmer side of her nature.

James had before complained of the conventional happy endings in which all the characters were disposed of satisfactorily, and all problems were disposed of; however, he assuredly blunders here in that respect, even to the extent of affronting actuality. At the end, everyone is paired off, and Julia seems ready for a reconciliation, (a thing difficult to believe possible in one of her strength of character), although it must be admitted that in the end, no one is completely happy. This book does not show an advance in technique over the other works.
Beach believes that it shows a recession from the point reached in *The Portrait*, and *The Princess Casamassima*. It is weak because it has no unity of plot; actually it has a double plot, inferior ideas, and incomplete elucidation. Despite these many weaknesses, it has redeeming features, and its sharp satire and humor, and its keen characterization are much superior to the earlier fiction. One of the best characters is Lady Julia. James was always concerned with the relation of Art and Life, and in this book, he makes many observations on this subject. The following passages illustrate his thoughts on this, and also evidence his views on morality:

...and application was of necessity a vulgarization, a smaller thing than theory.  

(Nash to Nick) We must recognize our particular form, the instrument that each of us—each of us who carries anything—carries in his being. Mastering this instrument, learning to play it in perfection—that's what I call duty, what I call conduct, what I call success.

(Biddy concerning her mother) She has inherited the fine old superstition that Art's pardonable only so long as it's bad.

(Nash to Nick) but that's the delightful thing about art, that there is always more to learn and more to do;

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5 Ibid., II, p. 23.

6 Ibid., I, p. 16.

7 Ibid., I, p. 154.
(Madame Carré) The only conduct that concerns an actress, it seems to me, is her own, and the only way for her to behave herself is not to be a stick. I know no other conduct. 8

To do them well is virtue enough, and not to make a mess of it the only respectability. 9

The book of life's padded, ah but padded—a deplorable want of editing! 10

Genius is only the art of getting your experience fast, of stealing it, as it were; 11

James was a master of sly humor, and his keen sense of observation, and subtle touches of humor are shown here:

When Mrs. Dallow put her elbows on the table, one felt she could be trusted to get them off again. 12

The spirit of mirth in some cold natures manifests itself not altogether happily, their effort of recreation resembles too much the bath of the hippopotamus; 13

(Peter concerning Mrs. Rooth) He made, indeed without difficulty, the reflection that her life might have taught her something of the real, at the same time that he could scarcely help thinking it clever of her to have so persistently declined the lesson. 14

(At the Carterets) Everyone left it to some one else to ask another question; and when by chance some one else did one was struck with admiration at any one's being able to say anything. 15

"The Lesson of the Master" (1891), deals with the relation of Art and Life, but here the theme is treated satirically.

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8 Ibid., I, p. 110.  
9 Ibid., I, p. 111.  
10 Ibid., II, p. 23.  
11 Ibid., II, p. 112.  
12 Ibid., I, p. 87.  
13 Ibid., I, 87.
George tells Overt that his own work is suffering because of his social life and outside activities, and advises him, (as James would have done), to relinquish all outside interests. This was the very weakness of Roderick Hudson—the inability to follow this advice—as the strength of Ambient was in his dedication to it. This was the advice Madame Carre gave Miriam—the advice Nash gave Nick. What makes both St. George and Overt ridiculous is that St. George did not believe in his own counsel—and if Overt were a true artist, Miss Fancourt's marriage would have been no tragedy for him.

"The Figure in the Carpet" (1896) concerns discovering the pattern in artistic writing, and the futility of searching for it when one lacks the intellectual equipment. Although Corvick had discovered Verecker's secret, Gwen will not divulge the secret to her husband because of his mediocrity, and lack of sensibility. The irony in the work is the consideration that had Dean been able to find the secret, he could neither have described it nor used it in his own work. James advised each writer in The Art of Fiction to find his style for himself. One cannot be too positive as to what to do and what not to do in writing. As Nash had said to Nick, one has to learn to play his own instrument to perfection. There is no hocus-pocus device.
possible to master this secret. One has to have the artistic
talent, and nothing else will do.

"The Spoils of Poynton" (1897) is written in the Later Man-
ner, and as a consequence, is harder to read, because it re-
quires more concentration by the reader. The conversation is no
longer centered around a dramatic situation; it may actually
serve to conceal the true situation. There is much left to the
imagination because James is now probing into the depths of
human nature--into the subconscious lives of the characters.
The elements of biography, of simple action and of author man-
ipulation have disappeared. This story involves the appreciation
of and social responsibility for Art rather than its creation.
Mrs. Gereth and Fleda Vetch are the high priestesses of Art, and
Mona Brigstock represents the typical avidness for something
artistic, not because she appreciates its value, but because
possession of it is considered evidence of culture. Its theme--
of guarding such treasures--and its ending--in which Poynton
is burned--are paralleled in "The Aspern Papers", and in both
cases there is the element of duplicity and ambiguity--the fam-
iliar case of the duper being duped with the result that no one
enjoys the prize. Fleda, though poor and unattached, is strangely
unencumbered economically, so that her attentions might be
centered on the problems. She is in somewhat the position as
Laura Wing in "A London Life"—a morally pure girl meshed in baser motives; like Isabel Archer, she is victimized by Mrs. Gereth as Isabel was by Madame Merle; Fleda resembles Isabel again, in the fact that she comes to her undoing because of her adherence to her ideals—her insistence that Owen first tell Mona of their love. Fleda has certain deficiencies in her characterization. One cannot believe that Fleda loved Owen for himself, anymore than one believes Owen could love anyone who didn't dominate him. This avoidance of passion in James often leads to weakness in characters. Actually Fleda was more concerned with saving Poynton than she was with marrying Owen. Had she considered happiness, she would have known he could not be happier with her, with whom he had nothing in common, than with Mona, under whom he could have felt the necessary luxury of being dominated.

The true villainess is Mrs. Gereth, who would willingly sacrifice anything to save Poynton. The evil lies in the unscrupulousness in the deluded aesthete (reminiscent of the Narrator in "The Aspern Papers") to attain her artistic ends. Quinn and Edgar both observe that though Fleda and Mrs. Gereth are supposed to be refined, their first mutual act is to ridicule their hostess and her home, although it must be admitted this scene was done with brilliant humor. Van Doren wishes for more intelligence from Fleda, and more solicitude: "Fleda Vetch, though
Owen Gereth loves her and not Mona Brigstock, renounces him without lifting a hand, and condemns, along with herself, son and mother and doubtless wife to pain—and all seemingly with James's approbation. 16 The difference in the treatment of evil is now apparent. Very different are Mrs. Gereth and Mona Brigstock from the obviously immoral characters of earlier stories—Osmond, the Bellegardes, Madame Merle—who were almost completely evil. Mrs. Gereth sinned in having too much artistic appreciation; Mona was evil only insofar as she had no artistic appreciation, and to James this was the mortal sin of Art. Owen has much in common with Merton Densher in Wings of the Dove, since both are weak and easily dominated, both have potentialities for either good or evil, but under the spell of a stronger personality, they may become active contributors to evil. Owen may be compared also to Chad Newman in The Ambassadors, and to the Prince in The Golden Bowl, of a later period. It is as difficult to explain his attraction for Fleda, as it was to explain Mary Garland's for Roderick and Rowland. Fleda was as guilty as was Mrs. Gereth in wishing to save Poynton, to the exclusion of saving Owen or anyone who opposed them.

This was originally intended as a short story, and but for
Heda's interpretation of it, it would have been. It is an ex­
ample of the rarest economy. The dialogue is everywhere highly
relevant, and the work has a beautiful unity. James believed
that Art can never be measured directly, and consequently Poynt-
ton is never described concretely. It is not the value of
poynton that mattered, but the values represented. Money to
James is a corrupted tradition, and to its importance and misuse
can be traced much evil. Cary says: "It is not important in a
world of acts and motives that people have money; it is greatly
important what they do with it, and how they think of it, how it
influences their lives and the lives of others."\(^{17}\) One needs
only to remember the Ververs in *The Golden Bowl*, Newman, Isabel,
and many others who had their problems originate only when they
acquired wealth.

"Broken Wings" (1903) concerns two unsuccessful artists who
are able to find happiness in their mutual disillusionment. Al­
though Stuart Straith and Mrs. Harvey supposed each other to be
successful writers yet on their discovery of the truth, they
were able to find as much happiness in failure together, as they
would have found in success singly.

\(^{17}\)E. L. Cary, *The Novels of Henry James*, (New York, 1905),
pp. 120-121.
In "The Birthplace (1902)" Morris Gedge, a man who is capable of appreciating artistic treasures and memories, is forced by financial reversals to negate completely his aesthetic tenets. He finds that he can no longer show his revulsion at the sham apparent at the supposed birthplace of a literary artist, since his employer insists that the public get the exhibition and ballyhoo they expect. His friends, the Hayes, find to their sorrow, that Gedge has forcefully sublimated his finer feelings, and is "no longer giving away the show."

The International Question is the most discussed problem in the entire career of Henry James. The stories which deal with this situation usually depict the naive American seeking culture in Europe. The conflict seems however, to rise above questions of nationality, and resolve itself in the struggle between opposite natures of entirely different stages of culture. The Americans, on the whole, are presented more sympathetically than are the Europeans, but in either case, any evil in the actors is due to lacks in their own nature, and Europe merely acts as a catalytic agent. James's own New England conscience often confused his sense of values in the question of morality, with which the International Problem was essentially concerned; the conflict he so eagerly sensed in the pitting of two diverse cultures was slight, com-
pared with the conflict raging within himself, between his attraction for the tradition and sophistication of Europe, and his revulsion with certain standards of conduct in practice there. Some of the Americans in James's works became completely degenerated by the influence of Europe, and often in these cases passed as Europeans, having renounced America as their birthplace--such people as Madame Merle and Osmond are examples of this type. Other Americans are so constituted that they could never be influenced by Europe--Henrietta Stackpole, Caspar Goodwood, George Flack--whether they are presented satirically or otherwise.

Perhaps it was his final realization that his beloved Europe was too much lacking in morality, and America too much lacking in Art, that resolved his Later Manner, and forced him to create his own society. Spender believes that throughout his career--from his immersion in European Society--through his experience in writing plays--and finally to his final world of inner experience, his subject was immorality--a morality misguided because of his own circumstances of birth--"this morality is fogged and confused by the fact that a very great deal of his work is about nothing except that he is a New Englander who has spent his life trying to reconcile a Puritan New England code
of morals with his idea of the European Tradition."

"The Passionate Pilgrim" (1875) was the earliest story James cared to perpetuate, although he had written for sixteen years previously. It has the marks of an early work; it lacks point of view and dramatic element. Unlike others, it is a motif story, and it illustrates the immense attraction of Europe for the American, Clement Searle, and his cruel disillusionment in England. At this stage in his career, James was irresistibly drawn to Europe; and the breathless admiration of England, as reflected in the description of English life, is evidence of James's own emotions. In spite of the fact that Searle undergoes a powerful emotional shock in England, after having spent his life dreaming of the beauties of Europe, there is no attempt by James of character reaction. There is a suggested love theme in the relations between Searle and Richard's daughter, but it is not carried through. Again we have the case of the demoralized Richard failing to keep his treasures because of his selfishness, (somewhat like Mrs. Gereth's like failure in "The Spoils of Poynton". Searle, with his fine sensibilities, is much like Ralph Touchett, and like Ralph, his poor health makes him an entirely sympathetic character.

"Madame de Mauves" (1875) illustrates the completely degenerate European in conflict with his originally American wife. Madame de Mauves anticipates Isabel Archer, except for the fact that her coldness and imperfect characterization make her colorless in comparison with Isabel. James does not seem to place the blame on the shoulders of Richard de Mauves for his inconstancy, and his indifference as to whether or not his wife is faithful to him. He, like Amerigo, in The Golden Bowl was not evil, according to his own European standards; the tragedy was rather directly traceable to the marriage of two people of such opposite cultures. To prove that Richard was not essentially evil, it is only necessary to point out that his sister is not only willing but anxious that Richard's wife have an affair with Longmore. There is a very unexpected ending, and it would seem, a rather unwarranted one. The ironic turn of events so occur that the very thing that would have solved the difficulty in the first place, (Richard's falling in love with his wife), is the reason for his murder. To complicate the theme further, Richard found that he loved his wife because of the very fact that her sense of morality insending Longmore away, showed him her essential fineness, and her great difference from him. It is interesting to know here that in a similar situation in "The Portrait of a Lady", Isabel does not take the
comparatively easy way out of murder, but goes back to the fate which her conduct had sealed.

"Four Meetings" (1877) continues the idea of the lure of Europe for the spinster, country-school teacher, Caroline Spencer. As had been the case with Clement Searle, Europe represented to her a romantic wonderland, and this promise of escape from her prosaic surroundings, taking the place of physical love, dominated her life. This has been called one of the most perfect things James ever wrote because of its crystalline perfection and verbal flawlessness. It represents an advance in technique over "The Passionate Pilgrim", in that the situation is felt through Caroline's own nature, and is not seen through the eyes of the author, as it had been in the previous work.

The tale is very simple and straightforward, and is told by the familiar spectator type. Its one weakness is that its rudimentary episodic structure is initially artificial, and the reader knows the first meeting is engineered, the second and third are coincidental, and the fourth is deliberately arranged. One felt the same weakness in Roderick Hudson; that the characters and situations were made to accommodate the idea of the story. The humor is bitter and is spent on portrayals of the minister's wife, and of the countess. The irony at the end of the story is as important as any other element to the charm of the tale--the fact that Caroline had wished all her life to see
Europe, and now, saddled with the "Countess", she would see it for the rest of her life.

The American (1877), unlike Roderick Hudson, was written completely from James's imagination, and not from his experience, and he had at that time, as little knowledge as the Bellegarde type as he had of the average American. James had said that anything written from the imagination alone would be cold and lifeless, (as was, he contended the case with Zola), and although The American is not completely inert, it breathes somewhat artificially. Although there is an advance in technique in that the reader is close to but one central character, and that everything is seen through his eyes, and measured in their effect on him, the characters are not well drawn. Newman is an insufficient reflector for many events, since his character demands that he be naive, trusting and idealistic. Like Maisie Farange in "What Maisie Knew", he is incapable of believing much of what he sees, because of his fundamental nobility. James believed that true tragedy came from one's realization of his own undoing, yet the reader cannot take Newman too seriously either in his mediate stage of refinement, or in his infatuation with Claire. His American habits --extravagance, ornateness and thirst for culture--are overdone, and he is essentially gauche and vulgar. Having money meant to him that he could se-
ure both culture and a wife who was far superior to him; and one feels that in his failure to marry Claire, he was not so disappointed at losing her, as he was surprised to find that his wealth failed him in this ambitious enterprise.

If one does not believe Newman loved Claire, one believes even less that she cared for him. For deepness of feeling, she is not far removed from Mary Garland, and her permitting herself to be bundled into a convent does not add to the dignity of her character, despite the fact that women in her position at that time obeyed their parents without question. The weakness of Claire's portrayal may be laid to James's "point of view" technique that was as yet undeveloped. Newman, not by nature romantically inclined, lacked the Roman attitude to romance—consequently, as we see Claire through his eyes, she lacks substance. The Tristams, a kind of Greek Chorus, was a useful device to prepare the reader for coming events, and for the appearance of Claire, but the indifference of Bob Tristam to coming events, told him by his wife, was often echoed, it is to be feared, in the sentiments of the exhausted reader.

The story is weakened by adding to the melodrama, intense action and coincidence, which were also present in Roderick Hudson, the outmoded themes of murder, duelling, divorce, thwarted marriage, and retirement to a convent. James had
learned from Turgeneiv that two lovers who failed to get what
they want are more interesting than two who face a happy marri-
age—but the weakness here is that there is no spiritual dilem-
ma—there is no real problem; Newman failing in his project has
other alternatives—he may add to his personal property, or bet-
ter yet, he may do what Mallett had done before him—finance
some budding artist and thus reestablish his belief in his pow-
ers. The beauty of the story should lie in Newman’s spiritual
adjustment to failure—but the failure is not intense—and if
it were, Newman is not believable enough to carry the burden.
It should be remembered that his discovery of the crime pre-
ceded his determination not to avenge himself, which fact de-
tracts even more from his attested nobility and superiority of
the Bellegardes.

The noble character in the novel is Valentin, and his no-
bility is attested by the fact that on his deathbed, he was
more upset by the fact that his family had broken their word,
than he was by his approaching death; Again, to believe in his
fineness, one must overlook the fact that he planned to betray
his own mother to one with whom he could not possibly have had
much in common. James did not follow his advice he was to give
in French Poets and Novelists to have some good in the villain,
and some evil in the hero, and consequently in his portrayal of the Bellegardes, the Marquise is not believable. He has not the complete detachment he always advocated. James liked Newman and Valentin too much, and his disapproval of the Bellegardes is too clear. James was obsessed with the importance of plot to character in this work, which was adverse to all his teachings, and he allows nothing to mar his original idea of a trusting American who is too noble to avenge himself over people who are supposed to be in a higher social position and who are yet inferior to him.

"Daisy Miller" (1878) is concerned with the American pitted against the unlike traditions of Europe, and Daisy, like Newman, lacks the necessary sophistication and knowledge to cope with them. The theme of exposing innocence to intrigue is present here, and in both The American and this tale, the Americans prove themselves far superior morally to the Europeans, however inferior they prove to be on other scores.

Quinn finds that Daisy, like Newman, was a caricature, because James, despite the fact that he was an apostle of realism, had confused his values: "It is unfortunate that caricature so often makes a wider popular appeal than a well rounded portrait. Bessie Alden, the heroine of "An International Episode", is much
more truly representative of American girlhood than Daisy Miller, yet she has been relatively forgotten."\(^{19}\)

The European background is most essential to the story, for if Daisy had not gone to Europe, there would have been no problem. However the blame can not be placed on Europe or Grandioni, but on her own brashness, her refusal to adapt herself, and her defiance of conventions through disdain rather than through ignorance. This disdainful attitude mars her portrayal of unworldliness and innocence. Daisy is not seen by means of Winterbourne as narrator, but it is through him and his consciousness that she is portrayed. Winterbourne is the conventional passionless spectator type, who having blamed Daisy often before suddenly discovers that she was essentially finer than her critics. This of all of James's works seems to be the simplest told, and it has the charm found nowhere else in his works.

In "An International Episode" (1879), Bessie Alden is also portrayed as being immensely superior to the Royalty in Europe, and she realizes their deficiencies to such an extent that she is not sad at the failure of her marriage to Lambeth. This tale shows the European distrust of American title and fortune seek-

ers, but it also shows, as in Daisy Miller, that the comparatively crude Americans are often superior to those who are above them socially.

Portrait of a Lady (1880) has the recurrence of the International Theme—the American victimized by the demoralized American in Europe, and it also has the theme of the Violation of the Innocent. Tilley finds that this story, and Howell's A Modern Instance, are remarkably alike in that both have the same type of marriage—the presence of the weak admirer—and the same ending; he finds that it has an even more striking resemblance:

It lies in the elaborate analysis of character, in the absence of plot, in the sparing use of incident, in the studied realism, in the conscious subordination of the artist to his art, in the acute process of observation, and in the humor, which never forced or obtrusive, seems to exist, not because the writer's own gifts lie specially in that direction, but because, as a healthy and impartial observer of human life, he cannot fail to take note of its humorous side.20

This book is unique among James's works in that it can be read by the casual reader, who reads for plot, and by the serious reader, for there is enough striving toward a method—new devices in dialogue and in characterization and point of view.

as to warrant serious study. Beach says: "It is the first of his compositions entirely free from crudity and the last to show the unalloyed charm of ingeniousness." The book has many types of Americans in all stages of immersion of European life; there is Isabel, almost allegorically pure National type; the Americans, fine enough to remain unchanged by Europe (Ralph Touchett and his father); the type presented humourously as being militantly American and incapable of receiving anything from Europe (Henrietta Stackpole); and the Americans who had become debased through Europe (Osmond and Madame Merle).

Certain features of the old style of writing remain, and there are long passages devoted to Isabel's past. Much of the work in the first volume would have been excluded from James's later work. This narration of Isabel's previous history, which James would later have considered unnecessary, is done by explanation, and not as he would have done later, by dialogue and reminiscence. A change is noted in the work after the appearance of Osmond. Whereas before, almost a third of the book is spent in describing Isabel, the description now lessens and more is told through revelation—such as the depiction of the contrast in the natures of Osmond and Isabel; particularly is art-

21 J. W. Beach, op. cit., p. 211.
interest evident in tracing the changing of her admiration for him into horror. The description is more closely allied to narration, and the author's comment on characters is making way for the gradual revelation by reflected perceptions and comments of the characters.

The book is devoted to Isabel, and the interest centers around her gradually changing point of view, (as is the case with Strether later, in The Ambassadors). Considering her function, it is therefore necessary to characterize her completely, at the expense of any other figures. Her eagerness to embrace all reality is the theme, and the story of how she was deprived of her "right to suffer" by virtue of her own trueness to her nature, is the tragedy; the fact that her own plight was attributable to Ralph's kind gesture only adds to the pathos of her situation. Because of James's aversion to happy endings, Isabel is not permitted to realize her own nature, and this may be a weakness—the fact that the reader is denied both the right to see her nature expand, and the right to see, in the other case, her recovery of strength through suffering.

Isabel's point of view was hampered in much the same way as was Newman's, because she was unconscious of the planning about her. Consequently, although everything centered in her consciousness, James was forced to use the method of direct approach.
and felt it necessary to add the spectator type--Ralph--to present the picture. Isabel is a peculiar mixture of innocence and intelligence. She, unlike Newman, is given to introspection. Without this intense awareness her character would have been weak, and her problem would have been petty. As noble as she was, she was as unfair to Osmond in her marriage, as he was to her, for certainly she did not marry for passion, and the success of her marriage would have negated the theme of the book.

It is also surprising that she could have been attracted to Osmond, for although it is said that he is clever and charming, it is never proven. Quinn finds Isabel's gullibility makes her less interesting, and less rational. He says: "The result is that our opinion of Isabel's intelligence is lowered. It is not fatal for us to hate the leading character. It is dangerous for us to become irritated by her." 22

Despite the weaknesses, it is a work of art, and it marks a great step in the development of James's new style. Incident, dialogue, and description are all perfectly blended. The development and action are now almost purely spiritual, and the coarse physical plot and action are noticeably absent.

"A Bundle of Letters" (1880) is significant in its theme,

22A. H. Quinn, op. cit., p. 288.
and in the fact that represents James's own beliefs about the various nationalities. James attempted to tell this story by the medium of letters, and consequently, he achieved many points of view; his characters presented are too typical, and they are not free to express their individuality sufficiently. There are types in this to be found in many other of James's works: The French aesthete, Louis Leverett of Boston; the provincial, Miranda Hope (similar to Caroline Spencer), and the charming young Englishwoman, Evelyn Vane. James's own conclusions on nationalities seem to be reflected in the thoughts of the German Dr. Staub: that the English are intolerant of everyone—that there is hope for Germany—and most significant—that the Americans had skipped the mediate stage in their evolution, and consequently, though they were at the ultimate stage of their evolution, they would never reach maturity.

In "The Siege of London" (1883), the plight of the much divorced and incredibly vulgar Mrs. Headway is considered, and her attempt to marry the English Lord, Sir Arthur Demesne, forms the suspense. Her marriage occurs, despite the refusal of her friend Littlemore to sanction her past to Arthur's mother. This character is a far cry from most of James's Americans, and her character is considerably overdrawn. One feels that nothing is accomplished, since the marriage can never last.

"Lady Barbarina" (1884) stresses the fact that however much
Americans and Europeans try to bridge the gap, there will always be a barrier to perfect understanding. In this, James has reversed his procedure, since this is not the case of the unadapted American in England, but the presence of the English woman in America. The case of the American, Jackson Lemon, is presented more sympathetically than is that of Lady Barbarina, and his characterization makes hers seem weak, and makes her seem phlegmatic more than unadaptable. There is less intensity in the theme, and more artistic detachment in this than there was in a similar case in The American.

"Pandora" (1885), like "Daisy Miller", presents the case of the American girl, but in this case, Pandora is far better suited to watch out for her interests; she is the example of the emancipated, free, self-made American girl, and she was a source of amazement to the Count in her position, as she would have been to any Europeans. Her marriage to Bellamy which gave her social prestige, typical at that time, was much on the mind of James, since he freely commented on the habit of Americans who would sacrifice anything for a title.

"The Reverberator" (1869) is simply told, and abounds in local reference and humor. As in the Portrait of a Lady, there are many types of Americans in the story: George Flack, somewhat like Henrietta Stackpole, in his militant Americanism; Young Probert, who would be little affected in any country: Mr. Probert
who has shed his nationality with its traits, and one of James's best known characters, Francie Dosson. Francie, like Daisy Miller, was ignorant of European conventions, but her breaches of confidence would have violated any moral code. Mr. Dosson is to appear in different guise in later stories, as the kindly disposed man whose problems begin when he brings his wealth to Europe.

"Flickerbridge" (1903) presents the case of the artist, Frank Granger, who finds after his living in the charming world of England, that he can never have happiness with his fiancée Addie, since he knows now she could never appreciate its beauty, nor understand its customs.

The element of ambiguity is seldom absent from any works of James, and this was in accord with his idea that life is haphazardly arranged, and events to appear real, must agree with reality, with the selective power of Art remaining unobtrusive. Nowhere is this element better presented than in "The Two Faces" (1903). Despite the contrast in the appearances of two women, Shirley Sutton is able to see that Valda is immeasurably more beautiful by virtue of her pathos and innocence. A similar situation in "Mrs. Medwin" (1902) provides an unexpected ending, when the wastrel, Scott Homer, completely charms the only person who will not sanction Mrs.
Medwin in society, Lady Wantridge.

"The Beldonald Holbein" (1903) treats not only the unexpected turn of events, but also shows the plight of Louise Brasher, who after her brief fame, can no longer live without it. The idea prevalent, also, is that character can be more beautiful than plain perfection of features. The reappearance of Lady Beldonald with a very pretty companion, for her next sitting, is an example of perfect irony.

The Princess Casamassima (1886) may be considered the first work in James's second period, and by now, he has discarded the CRITICISM International Problem for a time. It becomes more apparent that his interest was always stronger in the conflict of classes and traditions, and the element of nationality was only accidental. As in "Daisy Miller", he is here criticizing social conditions more than he is considering traits of any particular nationality. This work is unique because James deals with problems decidedly out of his ken and interests. His revelation of the problems betray he had a hazy idea of the situation facing the working classes, but he was never interested in the physical side of the story; he was rather tracing the evolution of character, conflict, and the relations of Hyacinth to the Princess. There is an improvement in the grouping of characters. The minor characters are not described so
fully nor made so important as they were in *The Portrait of a Lady*. They are held more strictly to account in their function to the progress of the story. James has, however, still allowed author interference in the story (as he had done in tracing Isabel's early life), and the early chapters are almost pure biography.

Hyacinth and the Princess are the important characters, although the inclusion of Lady Aurora, Millicent Henning, Miss Pynsent, Mr. Vetch, Paul Muniment and M. Poppin vie for attention, and lessen the interest in the central figures. The influence of the Princess on Hyacinth is comparable in a measure to that of Osmond on Isabel, but Hyacinth does not much resemble Isabel, and it seems he is more concerned with his exclusion from the rich, than he is solicitous for the poor. A weakness in the characterization of Hyacinth is the fact that his sudden change of mind in his mission is not properly accounted for. He is a creature of a dual personality—with leanings toward the rich and the poor—yet belonging to neither. James was somewhat like him, in the fact that he was drawn toward both America and Europe, and knew he could never be completely happy in either milieu. Both Hyacinth and the Princess are extremely unpredictable and volatile. The Princess is not fully revealed, although she is the most important character. Her weakness is that she is
not given to self-analysis, and her observers are either prejudiced for or against her. Edgar prefers the old-fashioned character portrayals of Miss Pynsent and Mr. Vetch to those of Hyacinth and the Princess. One can only assume that the Princess's interest in Hyacinth was that of a specimen of the working classes, and her interest in him was due originally to boredom.

In "The Chaperon" (1893) James presents the case of the notorious Mrs. Tramore, in much the same situation as was Mrs. Headway. Because of the standards of society, she is unacceptable, and it remains to Rose to launch her properly before she can herself be married. The problem confronting Rose, concerning the mothering of the mother by the daughter, is similar to Nanda's care of her mother in The Awkward Age, and Kate's concern with her father in Wings of the Dove.

The Awkward Age (1899) is almost as involved as The Sacred Fount, but it has real problems, and the problems are settled with the characters remaining consistent throughout. However, the intensity and concentration demanded of the reader would discourage all but the confirmed Jacobit. James denied himself the legitimate devices he had before used; the "going behind" characters; the almost complete disappearance of description; the exposition of characters by self-revelation. The work is a result of his knowledge of the dramatic technique gained from
his work on the stage, and it is a test for the function of dialogue—a technique he believed that should be strictly accountable to the rules of furtherance of action. With the exception of his alter-ego, Longdon, he rarely injects himself into the book.

There are two problems—the outcome of a girl who is coming out into society, and the changes wrought in her by the manners of a new age; there is also the consideration of keeping her innocent in the midst of intrigue, and though Nanda is fairly innocent at the end of the book, it is not her lack of knowledge, but her purity of mind that accomplishes this miracle. Nanda is incomplete—and James felt he must add the character, Aggie, to help discharge her duties. In spite of these two characters, the best done, in James's own estimation, was Mrs. Brook. Mrs. Brook is much like Mrs. Gereth in her shrewd scheming for her own ultimate good. She will never discard one idea until she is convinced that either it will not work, or that there is a better solution. She would not allow her own love for Van to interfere until she knew that Nanda would get the dowry whether or not she married; further, the differences in Longdon's and Nanda's ages never deterred her from approving

the union, anymore than it would have changed Mrs. Gereth, had Owen been in a similar position. Like Owen and like Newman, the reader finds it difficult to believe in the trueness of Van, whom Nanda so much admired. Potentialities for love were relatively absent in Van, and his regard for Nanda remained extremely slight. It seems that his refusal to marry her was not because his honor would be sullied because of his gaining the dowry; it was not even because he resented her knowledge of evil—rather it was just the very weakness of his character, and the indefinite turn of his mind—his characteristic reluctance and inability (like Owen) to make decisions and accept responsibilities.

Because of the multiplicity of complex relations, the reader is never close enough to any one character; their motives cannot be properly appreciated, and the reader knows no more about any character than do the participants. This is perhaps true of life, but it is very difficult in fiction. Because of the lack of author direction, the reader does not know in what direction the characters are going, nor does he know if his last impression will, or will not have to be modified shortly. This incomplete characterization makes the figures shadowy. Wilson asserts that Nanda is surrounded by "creepy creatures", and attributes it to the newer manner of James: "James is ceasing to sus-
tain the objectivity which has kept the outlines of his stories pretty definite up through his middle novels; he has relapsed into a dreamy inner world, where values are often uncertain and where it is not even possible for him any longer to judge the effect of his stories on the audience." Wilson is dismayed to find James was pleased with this novel, and believes that James could never have known how the reader feels with the "gibbering disemboweled crew who hover around one another with sordid shadowy designs" in the book. In this work, we must accept James on his own terms, and accept his personal morality. Whether or not the problems seem petty to us, if they are treated as tragedy in the drawing room they must be considered tragic. It does not seem true or complimentary to such English characters in such works as "A London Life", "The Tragic Muse", "What Maisie Knew", and "The Sacred Fount" that they always be either immoral and eager for money, or dedicated to the proposition of drawing room pettiness. Edith Wharton believes the work would have been superior if presented in the standard form of the novel. She says: "...had it been treated as a novel instead of a kind of hybrid

25 Ibid., p. 403.
play, the obligation of "straight" narrative might have compelled him to face and elucidate the central problem instead of suffering it to lose itself in a tangle of talk."

This is a work of art, but it is noteworthy principally as a test case; James had always written with consummate skill and then hidden his tools—in this work, he has destroyed most of them. Grattan says: "He has reared his edifice without bricks or mortar, and has proved that, other resources failing, the spoken work is tough and malleable material that may be wrought into form to withstand the pressure of superimposed weight."  

James knew the difficulty of the work, and in one of his letters, he describes the scenic form he has adopted: "...of presented episodes, architecturally combined and each making a piece of the building, with no going behind, no telling about the figures save by their own appearance and action and with explanations reduced to the explanation of everything by all the other things in the picture."  

There is much sharpness of humor in the book, and the tone is particularly useful in character revelation. Edward's char-

ater is admirably shown:

(Edward to his wife) Oh, the things you expect me to feel, my dear! 29

(Mrs. Brook concerning Edward) Edward never 'imagined' anything in life. 30

Van's inquiring mind, his selfishness, his general state of bewilderment, and his Jamesean love for paradox are shown here:

...In a deep consciousness and the absence of a rag of illusion. 31

(to Nanda) You can't leave anybody with nobody--exposed to everybody. 32

We don't in the least know where we are. 33

(To Longdon) Whom haven't I observed? 34

(To Nanda) The thing is, you see, that I haven't a conscience. I only want my fun. 35

30 Ibid., p. 69.
31 Ibid., p. 28.
32 Ibid., p. 323.
33 Ibid., p. 29.
34 Ibid., p. 121.
The unworldliness of Aggie, and the character of the Duchess are well presented:

"Aggie's emphasized virginity." 36

(The Duchess to Aggie) Don't understand, my own darling--don't understand! 37

(Concerning the Duchess)... and thoroughly aware that if she didn't look well she might at times only, and quite dreadfully, look good. 38

"A London Life" (1889) introduces the theme of an innocent idealistic person surrounded by evil and intrigue, for which he lacks the capacity to understand. These people, however moral and pure, are always seemingly slightly provincial, and to Laura Wing's view of things, anything would be preferable to having a scandal occur in the family. When Selina does go off with her lover, the shock is so great that she goes back to America, leaving behind the man who loves her, because she believed she was no longer worthy of him.

One must not only accept James's personal sense of morality, in reading tales of this kind, but what is more important, he must understand the social conditions under which the action

36 Ibid., p. 77.
37 Ibid., p. 80.
38 Ibid., p. 43.
happened. In our American eyes, Daisy Miller committed no great fault in her rendezvous with Grandon; no more was Nanda evil because she was familiar with a certain French book. Although Claire de Cintré acted, in our eyes, without much strength of character, we must remember how these events appeared to the participants at that time. Until we do, many tragic domestic problems in James will seem insignificant.

In "The Pupil" (1891), Morgan is victimized by his parents, but in the way the story is presented, it appears that the Moreens are not evil, despite their unscrupulous scheming and evasion of debts; the cause of their actions was the social world in which they lived which demanded they live up to a certain scale of opulence in society. However, as in most of James's characters who are disposed to evil, the Moreens lacked strength of character, and it was this very lack opposed to the fineness of idealism that Morgan possessed that heightened the conflict.

"What Maisie Knew" (1897) shows the effect of moral debasement on an innocent child, a theme which is carried much further in "The Turn of the Screw". Its uniqueness lies in the fact that the action is seen by a child who cannot understand its significance—and the reader is the one who is best informed about the situation. Again we are in doubt where to place the blame; Claude and Ida have few admirable traits, but is is ac-
ually the custom of divorce that is being condemned more than they. James had early in his career warned against making a child good before her time, and this is the weakness in the story—the fact that he made the story visible only through Maisie, and she is not equipped to have the full vision. Consequently, there is no true story, and there is no serious subjective experience.

There are too many events happening in the story that vie for the attention of the reader. The rapid shifting of housekeepers is difficult to follow, to say nothing of the number of the lovers of Ida and Beale. Because of the space devoted to pure narration of events, the characters are not well done as they might have been, and their later actions are often unaccounted for. One can understand how Maisie, in her loneliness, and in her desire to bring happiness to others, would be attracted to Claude, but one cannot understand her voluntary separation from Claude—her sudden development of the moral sense—which sense Mrs. Wix had been so anxious to impose upon Maisie, without explaining its nature. The exact effect the evil had on Maisie is not known. Just what the change was is not made clear, and yet, if she is not supposed to have been affected by the corruption all around her, there can be no hint of tragedy. Lubbock believes that she remained entirely unchanged: "At the
end of her childhood her atrocious world has been able to tell nothing but to make her sweetness more perfect. "39 If this be true it negates the theme--how much differently the children in "The Turn of the Screw" were affected by evil!

Claude is extremely enigmatic--he alternates between stages of kindness and baseness; his association with the repulsive countess was repugnant even to Maisie, and although his finer nature must have rebelled, it was his weakness that drew him to her. His last grand gesture, represented as an act of magnanimity, in renouncing Maisie, was actually a confession of weakness. The book ostensibly shows the beautifully pure spirit of the child but the memory of the evil of her adult associates is a more lasting impression. The atmosphere of the book is misty--the characters are shadowy, and the general effect is of mood rather than reality. Maisie is unlike any other child in her habits, and her character betrays that James may have overcome his dislike for children in novels, but had never overcome his ignorance of them. Maisie has no toys--and her only companion is the elderly Mrs. Wix who talks solely of her dead child. James has succeeded in portraying evil so well that one does feel the terrible effects it may have. Preston believes that the novel is as full of suggestion of foulness as the worst French
novel of the last forty years.\textsuperscript{40}

Although the book is in the Later Manner, it may be read with pleasure by any reader, since its narration is smooth, and the element of suspense is always present. James is very much in sympathy with his heroine, but he does not let this alter his artistic rules in presentation of character. The action is a history of the relations of one person to another, but the relations are meaningless unless they affect Maisie. The relations of Claude and Maisie are perhaps the brightest part of the book. The bewildering situation in which Maisie finds herself is presented in such lines as the following:

Life was like a long, long, corridor with rows of closed doors. She had learned that at these doors it was wise not to knock--this seemed to produce from within such sounds of derision.\textsuperscript{41}

So the sharpened sense of spectatorship was the child's main support.\textsuperscript{42}

She had never been safe unless she had also been stupid.\textsuperscript{43}

She was trained to keep her eye on manual motions.\textsuperscript{44}


\textsuperscript{41}Henry James, "\textit{What Maisie Knew}" , (London, 1922), p. 32.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 97.

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., p. 199.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., p. 198.
These lines admirably describe Claude with his twisted ideals:

(To Maisie on his marrying Ida) Fear, unfortunately, is a very big thing, and there's a great variety of kinds.45

Concerning Claude) ...with the exception of Mrs. Wix the only person she had met in her life who ever explained.46

...the man who wanted thoroughly to be reasonable, but who, if really he had to mind so many things, would be impossibly hampered.47

"The Turn of the Screw" (1898) marks the introduction of the terror theme—afterward combined with phantasy in "The Jolly Corner". Never before has the element of ambiguity been so present; the reader is not told what the nature of the evil is; he is in much the same position as the governess who is trying to save the children from an unknown danger. Whether or not Miles was dismissed from school for an act of evil is not told. This uncertainty of the nature of the dread evil heightens the suspense of the tale, and the fact that the children are not upset by the appearance of the evils only shows how deeply they are within the power of evil. This problem would have been horrifying to adults, and James realized that such evil exposed to child minds would be unspeakably infernal. This Violation of the Innocent theme is almost allegorical in its simplicity here. Un-

45 Ibid., p. 103.
46 Ibid., p. 123.
47 Ibid., p. 298.
like Maisie, or the child in *The Other House*, or Nanda, the evil confronting the children cannot be coped with by ordinary means, and the children will not make any effort to save themselves.

It is the governess who is in the position of the author to divine, and probe the mysteries of human behaviour, but unlike the investigation in *The Sacred Fount*, this does not concern problems of unfaithfulness, but the salvation of souls. The theme, the treatment, and the vague presentation of events, make this tale extremely hard to read, but at the end, when Miles realizes that Quint is Evil Incarnate, even though he dies, the reader recognizes immediately a powerful victory. James knew that to specify the evil would be to weaken its effect, just as Poynton would have been weakened by description. It was only necessary that the effect of evil be presented with enough intensity, and the reader would supply the missing data. Wilson has a possible interpretation: the theory that the governess imagined that she saw the ghosts, and this was due to sex repression--her sublimated love for her employer; he points out that no one but her had ever seen the ghosts, and there is no proof that the children do.48 Another writer says it is not a

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ghost story at all, and that there is no mystery about Quint: the ghosts are merely a literary expedient for portraying the characteristics of the early corruption. He says: "The story is not prejudiced: it does not deal with the "involuntary suppressed" memories of infancy: but with experience (common in this country, where children are in charge of domestics) which are deliberately hidden from parents and relatives."

When character in James meets a problem in life with which he is unable to cope, he has many possible modes of action—he may completely evade life—he may sublimate his desires—he may resort to hatred of others—or he may adjust to life relegate himself to the familiar role of spectator.

In "Brooksmith" (1891), the butler of Oliver Offord was so attached to him, and so used to the atmosphere of the Art Salon, that at Offord's death, he was no longer able to find an interest in living.

"The Altar of the Dead" (1895) deals with the sense of death and the meeting of life: in it, Stranson's spiritual life has been crippled through hatred of Hague, yet the woman has the same cause for hatred, but because of her forgiveness, she has found peace. Stranson had done spiritually what Millie Theale had done physically—turned his face to the wall, but his defeat

took the form of immersion in a spiritual void, and hatred of an individual. The most remembered feature of the tale is the description. The foggy scenes in the cemetery are pure poetry, and the meeting draws from pure mood. The problem of rescuing the souls is the same in "The Turn of the Screw", but Stratsom's desolation is heightened by contrast with the peace that the woman had found. James's confusion of values--his false ideas about money, despite his belief that it was a corrupt tradition, resulted in the one false note in the picture. Stratsom could no more have leased an altar in a Catholic Church than Newman could have purchased culture: had he been able to buy the altar, he would not have sanctioned it but desecrated it.

"In the Cage" (1898) has a heroine anonymous not only in name but in her relations. Although she actually meets Everard, she never becomes more than a spectator; she is nameless to her friends; she tells no one of her infatuation, and she never knew the nature of the service she rendered Everard. She is detached and becomes involved sympathetically, (as did Touchett), and she is the Trapped Spectator. The viewpoint is hers and never changes, (unlike the viewpoint of Maisie), and it is chemically pure.

It is through the person of Mrs. Jordan that James has an agent in the story, so that the poor operator, to whom nothing ever happens, could be kept informed; Mrs. Jordan serves the further purpose of gaining the operator's point of view, since the
purpose she serves is that of confidante. The operator's tragedy is intensified, since the very frugality of her life had intensified her imagination, and would make her decision to marry the grocery clerk fatal to her happiness. It is even denied her the privilege of discovering for herself the true relations of Everard, which convinces her of her unimportant role in life. Her fate is as unimportant to the world as was Maud's hopeless infatuation for Colonel Voyt in "The Story in It".

"The Beast in the Jungle" (1903) has for its principal character, Marcher, who has as prototypes, Winterbourne, Mallett, and strether, in that they have all refused to become active participants in life, through fastidiousness, inertia, or—in Marcher's case—self-obsession. James had always regarded one's missing life as the supreme tragedy. It was Marcher's fear of life, and dislike of accepting responsibilities, that led to his life of emptiness, as truly empty as was Stransom's. He came to know at last that the beast he feared was nothing but his own empty meaningless existence that was to confront him in the end. This work like "The Figure in the Carpet" and "The Altar of the Dead" is in allegorical form, and its meanings has largeness of reference. This element leads to more direct dialogue and extremely poetic quality of phrasing. "The Bench of Desolation" is too realistic to be allegorical, but the same element of
irony is in it: --here, the fact that Dodd now has the money that would have saved him, and has no use for it--just as Marcher was beloved by the woman, but never realized it until it was too late. However, as in "Broken Wings", Dodd is more fortunate than either Stranom or Marcher, and he finds a degree of happiness in joining someone who is also desolate. This spiritual adjustment to failure represents to James something greater than victory over misfortune.

"Wings of the Dove" (1902) is the first of James's three great novels. It has left the direct dramatization practiced in The Awkward Age behind, and this is resolved into a highly tenuous, psychological novel, with little conventionally plotted action. It is told in the deceptions and ambiguities that victimized Millie and Densher. James here delves into the web of human consciousness. The novel has only seven characters, which makes for a unity of interest, and the chief characters do not appear until the second book. Lord Mark is obviously for purposes of pure background, and it is Mrs. Lowder who brings about the state of affairs, through her own selfish interests. Densher is the familiar, weak character who can contribute to evil, when forced to accept responsibilities by one stronger than himself. Ostensibly, he is the pawn of Kate, but it is his own weakness that decides
his failure.

Millie is drawn to Kate, because Kate has everything she lacks—firmness, health and confidence; and though Kate genuinely likes Millie, she cannot, because of her nature and her desire for security she had so long lacked, let that affection thwart her purpose. Kate is as much the victim of her environment as is Mark, since she must accept her Aunt's demand that she marry a wealthy man. We have against the situation of the duper, duped since though Kate accomplishes her purpose, she knows Densher will always think of Millie's superiority to her, and will remember her in much the same way as Winterbourne was destined to remember Daisy Miller. The idea in James was that greed will always destroy what it succeeds in getting. The relations of Kate and Densher are only hinted at, and Spender attributes this to James's squeamishness on this score: "Whenever James approaches the physical side of life he seems to draw on his gloves, and his nouns draw on their inverted commas."50

Millie is pure spirit, and unlike Isabel Archer, she is naive artistically, and she is not intellectual. Her fear that life is passing her by culminates in her atmosphereically beauti-

hope of redemption. At the end, she no longer has illusions about honesty or scruples, and if she had been more cunning, one would think she would realize that her gift, (like Touchett's), would bring only unhappiness. Because of her ill health, and her shadowy portraiture, she is more pathetic than Isabel. The shifting points of view give the reader insights into the consciousness of Kate, Densher and Millie; Beach thinks this fact makes the work weaker than *The Ambassadors* or *The Golden Bowl*, since it results in the reader's confusion as to whether the experience is that of Kate, Densher or Millie. 51

*The Ambassadors* (1903) marks the reappearance of the International Theme after an absence of fifteen years, but its true message is that one should not deny his own nature. The consciousness of the reader is kept to a single point of view—that of Strether's—and as in Isabel's point of view, it undergoes a gradual change, to such an extent, that Strether finds when he again sees the Pooocks, he no longer has anything in common with them. In the purely dramatic method tried before by James in *The Awkward Age*, one point of view is not possible, and there is a strain between the point of view and the dramatic presentation. The change in Strether's purpose is due to his change of vision.

51 J. W. Beach, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
and this slow process could not be followed unless the reader shared his vision, since his outward appearance and talk could not truly express it. Strether has often been compared to James in his habits of life. Strether would never have known that he had missed living, if he had not seen Chad, and known that Madame de Vionnett had improved him. James had only hinted at the relations between Chad and Madame de Vionnett, but James's scheme of morality—that any evil in the guise of good is possible, and that the good wrought in Chad compensated for their relations—is clearly presented. Even Strether comes to realize this, to the extent that he sanctions their actions. Strether had also betrayed his benefactress, but James was not concerned with Chad's body, but with Strether's soul, and since he had found it, the ultimate good was realized.

If Strether had not undergone a change, there could have been no story. Everything depended on his meeting the situation and recognizing it. Cantwell says—"The climax is at the moment of awareness or of discovery, when the individual recognizes his predicament and sees his own blindness in relation to it."52

52 Robert Cantwell, "No Landmarks". Symposium, IV. (1933), p. 536.
suspense and complexity are derived from James's technique of leading the character away from the realization for a while, and in urging the reader on. The minor characters have all been done in earlier works; Chad is the Owen Gereth type—the easily led character; Marie Gostrey is similar to the earlier Henrietta stackpole; Madame Vionnet is the essence of Europe in a high sense—that stage to which the Princess Casamassima had aspired but never reached. The Pococks, with the exception of Mamie, are much overdone. Mamie is comparable to Mary Garland—as a realizer of a man's destiny—but she is much more human and likeable.

There is noticeable in this novel, and in The Wings of the Dove and in The Golden Bowl, better character work, fewer irrelevant characters, less description, and great economy of action. When description is employed, it is used almost solely for purposes of mood. Perhaps the greatest mark of superiority to the earlier works is that the centers of interest are reduced and the action is cut down for deeper intensity.

The Golden Bowl (1905) deals solely with the Prince in the first book, and not until later does Maggie become involved; it is with her gradual awareness of the problem that the reader becomes concerned, and this actually proves more interesting than her solution. The change in the center of interest makes for a better understanding, and the change in Maggie is believable,
since it comes about gradually through repeated impressions. The complexity in the work is due to the fact that the characters not only fail to tell the truth to each other, but go to great pains to conceal the truth.

There are only five characters in this--two less than in the compact *Ambassadors*; there is no need for foreshortening, since the action occurs within a short time. There is little action and little change of scene--and this gives James more time for development, building atmosphere, and for gradual revelation. The Assinghams proved to be an indispensable device in the unfolding of the story, and they had much more connection with the story than had the Tristams, or Mrs. Lowder, who were implicated in the other novels. They all had knowledge which the others lacked, and their manipulation helped mold the plot. Bob has a great deal of similarity to Edward in *The Awkward Age*, and their matter of factness helps to intensify the developments brought about by their wives. Wharton finds the Assinghams very objectionable: "This insufferable and incredible couple spend their days in espionage and elation, and their evenings in exchanging the reports of the eaves-dropping with a minuteness and precision worthy of Scotland Yard." 53

Since Amerigo must be presented sympathetically, so that the reader may be interested in his salvation, James solved this prob

1em by making him weak rather than evil, and by showing that his
vagaries of conduct were not objectionable in his own social
world. With such themes of infidelity and deception, it required
great art to include them in a novel without making the book ob-
jectionable; but James's idea of morality was that one should
act according to forms, be true to himself, and above all to
avoid vulgarity. The platonic, almost unnatural affection be-
tween father and daughter, pitted against the shameless adultery
of the second "marriage" is all depicted through suggestion and
indirectness. This is the only time James has ever allowed him-
self to permit the heroine to choose to live, and to save the
marriage; formerly, James would have had the heroine die, or per-
haps go to a convent, in order to avoid the question of sexual
complications.

Quinn says that James avoids strong emotions and passions
and so his studies are monsters of coolness and proceed too in-
tellectually—and what is worse, we are kept out of the confi-
dence of the characters and fail to understand what they think
about each other, since they are determined to conceal their own
emotions.54 This is less true in this than in any of the other
works, since the dawning of awareness on the part of Maggie dis-

54 A. H. Quinn, op. cit., p. 302.
closes to us the true natures of the other characters. James felt, as did Maggie, that the sin she was striving to correct was not adultery, but deceit; and the resultant plot, in this highly developed sense of plot, is merely the occasion of gradually exposing one character to another, and to the reader.

It is true that the novel is both verbose and complex, yet the problem demanded that it be solved in an indirect manner, since the whole theme considered imperceptible impressions, and intimations from such circumstances as would occur in real life. The average reader is too used to having his fiction presented in an un-real manner, instead of happening, as in life, incompletely, and often meaninglessly. A great explanation for the verbosity is that it would be fatal to suspense or realism to permit one character to have an usurping consciousness; and it would destroy the dramatic value and the objectivity of the action.

The relations of one character to the others require immense attention; Maggie is forced to humor Adam, Amerigo and Charlotte, and she must further keep the knowledge of the affair from her father. The element of irony and misplaced intentions are present: Mrs. Assingham tries to liberate Amerigo, and succeeds only in ensnaring him in a binding marriage—just as she had done to Charlotte, Maggie and Adam; Adam marries Charlotte, so that
Maggie may feel free, and yet Maggie marries Amerigo for her father's sake.

The following passages demonstrate the essential sweetness of Maggie, and show her similarity to Isabel Archer:

(Mrs. Assingham concerning Maggie) That's what a creature of pure virtue exposes herself to when she suffers for pure virtue, suffers her sympathy, her disinterestedness, her exquisite sense for the lives of others, to carry her too far. 55

It was the first sharp falsity she had known in her life, to touch at all, or be touched by; 56

--So powerless for vindictive flight. 57

...bitterly practiced on, cheated and injured. 58

She wasn't born to know evil. She must never know it. 59

...and they're really so embroiled but because, in their way, they've been so improbably good. 60

The Assinghams are much like Edward and Mrs. Brook, in that both couples serve the same purpose of revealers in the novels, and the characters of the men are similar as are the women:

With time, however, Fanny could brilliantly think anything that would serve. 61

56 Ibid., II, p. 243.
57 Ibid., II, p. 337.
58 Ibid., II, p. 130.
59 Ibid., I, p. 89.
60 Ibid., I, p. 403.
(Bob to Fanny concerning her rambling meditations) It did take some following. 62

The following passages reflect James's idea of morality, and strengthening of character through suffering:

One's punishment is what one feels, and what will make ours effective is that we shall feel. 53

She doesn't seem to think so much about their being wrong—wrong, that is, in the sense of being wicked. 64

Just so what is morality but high intelligence? 65

"The Jolly Corner" (1910) presents no external international problem, but is concerned rather with the struggle of the inner spirit. Considering even Strether in The Ambassadors, Spencer Brydon most nearly depicts the conflict that raged within James concerning his personal life. The apparition that Brydon faced is the problem of meeting the issue, and the figure he faces is the symbol of a warped life—due to denying himself the privileges that Brydon took. Like Stranround, Marcher, and Strether, and the other characters that denied themselves the privilege of living intensely, the apparition represents Brydon's other self—the one, who through caution and fear, refused to accept responsibilities, and as a result, was maimed spiritually as well as physically. James's propensity for analysis led him to consider not only what was said and done, but what might have been said and done under dif-

61 Ibid., II, p. 118
ferent circumstances. He considered not only external action, but all possible ramifications that might result from ambiguous relations. As in *The Sacred Fount*, where the problems were largely mythical, the obsession that seized Brydon forced his imagination to dictate to his intelligence.

Certain characteristics of an author must inevitably be mirrored in his works, but the autobiographical method of attack is treacherous at best. It is strange that Brooks could have based his book on the thesis that James sacrificed his genius by forsaking America: James explains in "The Jolly Corner" how he felt about this question—because Brydon had the courage to leave America to seek his artistic salvation, he had returned a fuller individual, whose superiority was dramatic in its intensity to that alter-ego who had wealth and position, but who was spiritually dead. Mr. Brooks is too much concerned with James, the man. This futile search for the abandonment of America as the explanation of James's writing may be even more fruitless, if one considers Nash's remarks to Peter in *The Tragic Muse*: "You never find the artist—you only find his work, and that's all you need find." 66

62 Ibid., I, p. 378.
63 Ibid., II, p. 141.
64 Ibid., II, p. 268.
65 Ibid., I, p. 90.
CHAPTER V

JAMES'S CRITICAL PREFACES TO THE NEW YORK EDITION OF HIS OWN WORKS; HIS OWN EVALUATION OF HIS ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT: AN INTERPRETATION

In the Prefaces, James is objectively critical, and he impartially examines his own works, to judge whether or not they meet the artistic standards which he has imposed on other writers. Far from hiding his own "Figure in the Carpet", he spends untold energy in analyzing his works and in demonstrating their merits and defects, so that those who possessed the intellectual curiosity to discover his own techniques might benefit. Both his Prefaces and his Later Manner have been criticized as being unnecessarily obscure and verbose; if this is true in a measure, it may be explained by the fact that he is intent on tracing all relations, and in presenting to the reader every possible side-light and point of view, so that the problem may be clearly appreciated.

Critics of James's literary style have laid the blame on various things, asserting that his indirect presentation was due to such diverse things as his shyness and self-consciousness—to an injury he suffered in his youth—or to his creation of a dream world, due to his disgust and resultant rejection of his
own world. What most of them do not see is that their failure to understand James is due to the fact that James possessed keen sensibilities and powers of perception, which they have not the power to match. Critics diverge sharply in their opinions of the Prefaces: Williams, seemingly more intent on style than content, says that the process of reading the Prefaces..."is to be drawn insensibly into long rumbling meditation, broken by ingenious parentheses, into immense beatings of rather diminutive bushes, and into straining conversational metaphors through a hair-sieve with the air of producing marvelous essences."¹

Fullerton says: "The lesson is deeply instructive, though it may be questioned if it makes the process completely intelligible."² Gosse does not deny the worth of the Prefaces, but he objects to their manner of delivery, and calls them "dry, remote, and impersonal to a strange degree."³ Wilson does not believe that the Prefaces help to elucidate the work at all. He says: "he was actually able to raise a vapor of uncertainty about the stories which had formerly seemed simple."⁴

Cantwell finds the weakness lies in the fact that James was

¹ Orlo Williams, Criterion, VII. (1928), p. 49.
too much given to uttering generalities which might be applicable to any novel, and thus, particular reference is hard to establish.\(^5\) It remains to Beer to place the blame on James's lack of experience, which threw him back solely on his reading for his impressions, which resulted in his being in a constant state of bafflement and bewilderment. He adds: "When he ran from the laboratory and the brothel, from the detachment of the complete investigator, shielded himself from the spectacle, in his misty pursuit of an impossible civility, he fully prophesied the disastrous tone of his last Prefaces in which one sees him gaze from the past to the terrible future."\(^6\)

James was handicapped by deficiencies in the language, since his probing mind demanded that he express himself constantly in nuances, shades, and inflections that could not be transmitted: it is this that led to the abundance of parentheses and commas, and to the use of foreign words both in his later novels, and in his Prefaces. Not only do his observations deal in intangibles and essences, but the fact that there were no previous standards set up for this type of writing, made it difficult for him to express himself simply. Aiken admits the Prefaces are often diffuse and repetitious, employing too often the dragged-in and obligatory metaphor, --"but for all that they are the

\(^5\) Robert Cantwell, "No Landmarks" [In M. D. Zabel's Literary Opinion in America, (New York, 1937)], p. 534.
most fascinating critical adventure of our time, and the profoundest.” He calls it the most important single book of English criticism since Arnold, and perhaps, Coleridge and Hazlitt. Another critic calls the Prefaces the most profound manual of the art of fiction in the language.

Blackmur states that James felt that his Prefaces demonstrated an artist's consciousness and the character of his work, and made an essay in general criticism aside from his own work, and constituted a reference book on the art of fiction. He shows that James's explanation of any fictional piece—the "story of a story", has many things to be satisfied, before its center in life is captured: there is the feature of autobiography, how the story took root and developed, and the account of the way in which the author built up his theme as a consistent piece of dramatization—this last aspect being divisible into the aspect of the theme in relation to itself as a whole—and the aspect of the theme in relation to society. There is lastly the technical exposition—the devices he uses which are given by definition and example.

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8 Ibid., p. 9.
9 Nation, CXI (1935), p. 82.
For the purposes of comparison and contrast in the Novels and Tales, the works are presented in the same order as they were presented in the preceding chapters, and fall into the previously set classes.

James's fondness for Rome and Florence does not excuse the abundance of local color and description in Roderick Hudson, although he admits that he regrets that he named the locale of the book, since specifying always involves representation, and he had need only for the type. Even in this early work, he believed that he realized the necessity of exhibiting the relations of figures and things, and states that the greatest difficulty is in determining when exactly these relations ceased to be indispensable to the interest.

James believed his problem was to give the sense of disintegration without all of the substance—his salvation being to have the center of interest through another character, who would have sufficiently acute sensibilities, but who would not be omniscient. The story would then be the sum of what happened to him, and what he felt of things happening to others. James believed the essential weakness in the book was that the disintegration of Roderick occurred too fast. It seems rather that the weakness lay in this very point of view mentioned—the fact that Kallett's point of view was limited, and was therefore detrimental to the action. James sensed the weakness in Mary Garland as
a character, and showed that her inclusion was due to the fact that he needed her as an antithesis to Christina; what he does not see is that Roderick and Christina succeed in becoming more interesting than Mallett, as well as Mary Garland, and that Mallett, as the spectator who is involved, cannot abide his position of being an antithesis to Hudson. James has no word of explanation as to why he described Cecelia so vividly, considering she had no part whatever to play in the novel.

James is concerned primarily in his Preface to The Aspern Papers, in tracing the history of the writing, rather than in discussing the tale proper. He demonstrates his immense fondness for Florence, and his preferment for the barely discernible past. He covets, as inspiration for his stories, the minimum of valid suggestion rather than the maximum, which preferment demonstrates his idea of the "fatal futility of fact."

James explains in The Tragic Muse Preface why he so persistently insists on telling the circumstances which caused him to write a particular story. He must know the impressions he had when he first conceived the idea—"because without them comes no clear vision of what one may have intended, and without that vision no straight measure of what one may have succeeded in do-
he believed that the conflict between Art and the world was one of the half dozen great primary motives.

James believes that Miriam was well done in the book, yet he lists several problems her case presents. He was restricted in never going behind her; unlike the others, Miriam is seen only through the bewildered eyes of others; it proved therefore exceedingly difficult to portray Miriam's theatrical rise to success, and this process suffers in development. James admires over all other features in the book, the sustained tone. He realizes his greatest fault was that he required three general aspects to be portrayed—Miriam's, Peter's and Nick's; it is strange this should have been true, when one considers his horror of including two stories in one novel. If the discriminating reader is as "fabled as the phoenix", it is difficult to explain why James goes to such lengths to explain his motives.

James realizes that his habit of considering the first half of the book as a device to lay the stage for the second, can cause the novel to be unbalanced, and can result in a cramped, huddled, second half, which he maintains, is a result in this book. The relations of Nick, Miriam, and Peter to each other, are the important elements in the book. Peter is an artistic

\[1^{11}\] Henry James The Art of the Novel, (New York, 1934), p. 79.
hypocrite in his demands on Miriam. Although Nick was intended to be the principal character in the book, James does not regard him as being well done. James spends no time on Lady Julià's characterization—which was so brilliantly done in the novel--; neither does he seem aware of the awkwardness of the ending, in which everyone is accounted for satisfactorily.

In the Preface to *The Spoils of Poynton*, James again dwells on the question of Life in its wastefulness, and Art in its gift of selection. Fleda and Mrs. Gereth are the main agents of the tale, and although the real center of the story is Poynton, it is Fleda who becomes the capable center because of her intelligence, her artistic appreciation, and above all her freedom. Whereas Fleda is intellectual and not particularly able, Mrs. Gereth is clever and not intellectual, and because of this, she is not so true a character as is Fleda.

James felt that the ultimate fate of Poynton was as vulgar an issue as estimating the actual worth of Poynton. James is not aware that however much Fleda may have had to qualify her for the position of heroine, she lacked passion and depth of emotion in her human relations. James, as much as Mrs. Gereth, evidently considers the outcome of Owen's fate unessential, as he makes no mention of him in his discourse.

James classifies *The American* as pure romance, and for once
he admits he may have missed something pleasurable in his writing, with his constant attention to rules and laws. He says:... "I lose myself at this late hour, I am bound to add, in a certain sad envy of the free play of so much unchallenged instinct."

He sees this novel primarily, as a work of his youth, and believes it to be capable of much improvement. James's dominant idea in this book was to have a person suffer at the hands of others who were supposedly superior to him, and in his denying himself the means of revenge thus prove his nobility. He says that his obsession with this idea led him to disregard reality, and to fit all the action into this scheme, regardless of its falsity. Because of the necessity of presenting Newman as ill-used, he did not portray the development of Newman properly.

James defines the romantic as the things we can never directly know, and the real, as the things we cannot know. These romantic characters in a romantic situation are overdrawn; the Bellegardes would have acted in just the opposite manner. Newman is weak in his position as center of interest, and consequently the other characters are vague; Claire is done poorly, and this fact is intensified by the falsity of her position—the fact that her loyalty would eventually turn to shame. James does not mention Noemie, and strangely ignores his most sympathetic character, Valentin. Although he realizes he depicted the
French unfairly, he evidently considers that Newman is typically American. He is aware that the weakness in the book may be traced to his obvious intention to shape everything around the situation in which Newman finds himself, and his necessary self-denial.

James's dominating interest in The Portrait of a Lady was to have the center of the subject in Isabel, to have her view the only one that mattered, and to make the other characters merely contributory to her development. James approaches the subject most indirectly, and in the first part of the writing, he brings up his old argument about the immense scope of fiction—the fact that one should never criticize the subject, but only the treatment. He again shows his impatience with the popular opinion that Art may be moral or immoral.

James still retains his aversion to Dickens and Scott, and he has added Stevenson to the list of those who would not attempt to portray a center of interest in such a character as Isabel. James believes that this novel is most perfectly proportioned, after the The Ambassadors, because of its architectural symmetry—and the way in which the consciousness of Isabel is presented. He does not mention why he included so much of Isabel's past life in his narration, and evidently does not consider that this biographical element harms the value of the book.
James thinks that Henrietta Stackpole is poorly done, yet he defends her position as being that of a light figelle—one who is not directly connected with either the main agents or the minor characters. He believes that he first included her to inject liveliness and humor into the story, and also admits he was attracted to her because of his awareness at that time with the International Problem.

James's belief that characters can be interesting only in proportion as they feel, resulted in his making Hyacinth a character in *The Princess Casamassima*, one of keen sensibilities. To heighten the dramatic struggle, Hyacinth is condemned to see, and be perfectly aware of all those things which he is capable of appreciating, and yet be caught in the web of his own sordid social world. The drama was then to show what his real world and his imaginary world made of him, and what he made of them. Christina was brought in as a disposable, since James required a character to introduce to Hyacinth the world which he might know. The fact that Christina's chief characteristic was her hatred of the banal, would make her an efficient agent for such a task.

James betrays his impatience with the average reader who wants relations presented without their being made intelligible. They feel that intelligence endangers, and assert that if less space is taken up for feelings, they may have more for doings.
James believes that Hyacinth's sudden change of mind is believable, although it seems that this unpredictable occurrence is not properly traceable.

It is difficult to find any Preface which is written with such a sense of satisfaction as that written for *The Awkward Age*, for James expostulates at great length on the difficulty of the job he had done, and how well he had mastered it. Despite its immense bulk, James believes that the novel has wondrous unity of substance of form. He explains that the central object is the situation in which Nanda is placed, and that each phase of the book is an episode—a single social occasion in the history and intercourse of the characters. He has treated such a social problem (which would have existed differently in countries other than this) with light irony—without which, the problem could never have existed. *The Awkward Age* was an experiment in the efficacy of dialogue, and in this case, James recalls every instance of its development, and assures the reader the subject does not, as might be expected, suffer from over-treatment.

James discounts the theme of International Relations in his tale, "A London Life". He maintains that a person of Laura's make-up would have acted as she did in any country. He recognizes that it was a defect to have unnecessarily three sharers in the general bewilderment that characterizes the participators:
but he is most distressed with the inclusion of the inartistic interview episode between Wendover and Lady Davenant. He feels that this scene had no relation to the tale as a whole, yet he had no alternative, since he would scorn breaking the center of consciousness, by informing the reader directly of the situation.

James does not mention that the tale is told in the first person, yet this is important, for while this method is workable in a short story, it has many possible awkward limitations. The first person narrator, for instance, is exceedingly clumsy in the opera scene, and in the meeting at the museum, which last scene also included the element of coincidence, which James heartily disliked.

In "The Pupil", the fact that it is Morgan's conscious vision that keeps the charm of the book consistently to the end, is the best part of the book. James does not consider the Moreens essentially evil, and actually refers to them in affectionate terms.

James brings out in his Preface to "What Maisie Knew" that the themes which reflect the confusion of life are most human; it is this belief that accounts for James's wide use of ambiguity and irony in his works, and in this work particularly, we see that Maisie is used as a pretext for misbehaviour, and actually contributes to evil indirectly. The story is seen through the uncomprehending eyes of Maisie, and James felt it necessary that
her expanding consciousness must be saved rather than coarsened. One wonders how Maisie, at her degree of immaturity, came to possess such keen sensibilities. James tries to explain this phenomenon by asserting that her "faculties were well shaken up", but this does not answer the question.

James, in his early criticism, had maintained that readers cannot be interested in base people with sordid motives, but he explains that in this case, these characters are made interesting because they are seen through the eyes of Maisie. James always wished to dispense with too particular a perversity in his characters; consequently, Ida and Beale are, like Amerigo, not so much evil as selfish—and this selfishness—the willingness to defraud someone else of the right to live, is the supreme evil, although it is not the most obvious. The true charm of the book is the "ironic center" of consciousness—the fact that Maisie is shedding light far beyond her comprehension. James does not dwell on the relationship between Maisie and Sir Claude, and what is more strange, he neglects to mention the important character of Mrs. Wix. The reader is still left in doubt at the end of the book as to what was the change wrought in Maisie.

James regards "The Turn of the Screw" as a work in which the imagination had absolute freedom of hand, with no outside control. The author could improvise freely, within certain prescribed limits, and thus the work is filled with pure and simple ingenious—
ness. He explains he has attempted the story only as seen through the eyes of the governess, because if the author attempts to portray all the characters, he succeeds in doing none of them. Because the theme of the story centers around the evil that was exposed to the children, it was necessary to make the evil great, but all that was necessary to make it great and infamous was to make the reader think the evil for himself, and not resort to having the author define the nature of the evil. The evil must take the form of some diabolic force in action, and the misconduct of the pair would be intensely shocking, if it affected children. Unless James is insincere, he had no intention of presenting this tale as a study in morbid abnormal psychology; Edmund Wilson is far afield in his near-Freudian explanation of the tale, if it was considered by its author to be pure phantasy.

James asserts that from the first, the theme of an individual who had a great capacity to live, and was doomed to die, had held his attention; he points out, however, that in The Wings of a Dove, the illness is no more a draw-back to Millie than it was to Touchett. This story was not meant to be a record of her collapse, since we are interested in her struggle to live, not her meditations on death. James is most severe in his judgment of this work. We are not saturated with the personalities of the various characters--although the image of Kate's father per-
vaded her whole life, we are given meager information about him. There is the evil of the changing reflectors, and the displacement of the general center of interest. Although James finds the first half of the book faultless in execution, he thinks the second half is deformed, and might serve as an object lesson to the budding author. James has great admiration for the indirect presentation, which is practiced in this book, and asserts that contrary to the general opinion, that this is a roundabout method of attack, it is in reality, the most direct and economical procedure. He stresses that strict attention of perusal is required by the reader in both the novel and his Prefaces, although he realizes that that degree of concentration is to be expected from the very few.

The whole case in The Ambassadors is presented in Strether's advice to Little Bilham to live all he can. The novel has only one center, and the reader can only know things through Strether's groping, and by this groping, he comes to know him intimately. James knew that to use the first person process in a novel was a technique that led to looseness, and his difficulty in telling the story through Strether, was that his only way to describe him was to make the others tell about him through implication. Since he would not use referential narrative, as he had done earlier, he was forced to employ the ficelles, Gostrey and Waymarsh, in their capacity as friends.
of Strether's.

Although it is commonly believed that the story depended largely on the Parisian influence of Madame de Vionett upon Chad, James asserts that the locale of Europe was not necessary—all that was needed was a scene that could logically bring forth changes. The novel centers completely around Strether's point of view, and is concerned only with his changing vision; the climax comes when he at last sees his position. If he had realized it at first, there could have been no story.

James admits that there are degrees of merit in a subject, but once the subject is found, it remains for the artist to interpret it properly. Of all of his works, James believes *The Ambassadors* is the most perfectly done; he finds it divides itself into two parts throughout the book: the parts that prepare for the scenes, and the scenes which are the fusion and synthesis of pictures. Because of its perfect center of vision, and because of his supremely workable main character, this work has achieved admirable unity.

The Preface to *The Golden Bowl* is unsatisfactory, inasmuch as James is too much addicted to generalizing; he spends half of the essay discussing the frontispieces for the Edition, and in commenting on his revisions. He explains that the use of the Spectator character in the novels is that they do the work the
author finds impossible to do, if he is to present the problem artistically, and if he is to eliminate author manipulation. James explains that there is the consciousness of only two characters, with the Prince "opening the door to half the light upon Maggie", and Maggie "opening the door to half the light on herself"; the rest of the reader's impressions are derived from the action itself. Due to the small number of characters, James has ample time and space to treat them all adequately.

James does not tell of the immense value the Assinghams were to the story, and how without them, the story could not have been told within the center of consciousness of two characters. It was only through this "Greek chorus" that he was able to tell the story with little shifting of the Point of View. With characteristic evasiveness in treating physical relations, he neglects to mention the exact nature of the evil Maggie had determined to correct. James is much like our modern stream of consciousness novelists, in such works as this and The Ambassadors, except that even within the consciousness of the Prince, he has censored his thoughts, and in all of his late works, he has reduced external action to the barest minimum.

The Prefaces are highly instructive, but despite James's system of rigid economy, it is to be feared that much is included which is not relevant to the fiction. James believed that the
events that led up to the writing of a story are important to an appreciation of the story, since they afford a clearer vision. However, more space could have been spent advantageously in analyzing the various works as to technique, and less devoted to the generalizations that abound in the book. His seemingly entire preoccupation is with the "Point of View" technique exemplified in the characters, and because of this he neglects to treat adequately many minor characters, and often actually avoids discussion of the theme of the novel he is considering.

The Prefaces may claim as their special merit the virtue that they propound general artistic rules that may advantageously be followed in the whole field of fiction. There is little with which to compare the Prefaces in this endeavor, and in saying that they form the most revealing project of its kind is to give them insufficient praise.
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for

HENRY JAMES'S PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

AS A CRAFTSMAN OF FICTION

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The thesis, "Henry James's Principles and Practice as a Craftsman of Fiction", written by Wesley Francis Amar, has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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