THE REAL AND THE IDEAL: A STUDY OF HENRY JAMES'S USE OF ART OBJECTS AND ART IMAGERY IN THE DELINEATION OF CHARACTER

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to study Henry James's use of art objects and art imagery in the delineation of character. I have first endeavoured to briefly outline the basic concepts of art which James embraced and applied in his tales and novels, and have traced, in his literary and art criticism, his developing views of the "real," the "romantic," and the "ideal." James's change in attitude toward the "real" and the "romantic" has been noted in his own work published between 1876 and 1894, and the principal techniques of the painter which he employs have been set forth. In an analysis of three tales: "The Madonna of the Future," "The Liar," and "The Real Thing" I have attempted to illustrate James's view of the nature and function of art and the artist and the problems involved in achieving a satisfactory balance between the real and the ideal. The conclusions reached have been applied to two of James's major novels of his later phase: The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl in an attempt to demonstrate that, using the objet d'art and art imagery (as in the stories examined), James achieves reality of characterization and the complete realization of the ideal in the real.
No themes are so human as those that reflect for us, out of the confusion of life, the close connexion of bliss and bale, of the things that help with the things that hurt, so dangling before us for ever that bright hard medal, of so strange an alloy, one face of which is somebody's right and ease and the other somebody's pain and wrong.

—Henry James, Preface, What Maisie Knew.
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INTRODUCTION

To Henry James "the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is . . . complete;" both "attempt to represent life" in its closely commingled "bliss and bale." Because he believes that each may learn from and support the other, James combines their techniques in the creation of vital living characters. The old masters-- Michaelangelo, Raphael, Bellini, Giorgione, Giotto, Carpaccio, Veronese, Titian, Tintoretto, Correggio, Bronzino and others taught James lessons as important as those of Balzac and Turgenev. From them he learned the principles of line, form, movement, space, light and shade, colour--in brief, composition and style. He learned to recognize the difference between an illustration, a likeness, and a portrait; between the real and the ideal; and to appreciate the rare harmony when, as in the paintings of Tintoretto, the conflict is resolved and realism and idealism are interfused.

Portraiture, the art peculiar to humanistic periods when the focus is on man, is concerned with the truthful delineation of character. The principal interest is psychological, and the faithful artist maintains a fine detachment; he does not permit moral judgments to intrude. However, the mere portrayal of "scientific truth" guarantees only a good likeness. The portrait which is a work of art goes beyond the real to the ideal--it possesses a certain philosophic quality. The imagination of the artist gives it an added dimension--an intensity, an individuality which
cause us to exclaim: "It is life itself!" It was this intensity of "felt life" that James admired in the paintings of Tintoretto, the dramas of Shakespeare, the novels of Turgenev, and which he strove to achieve in his own work.

As James realized, the problem of the ideal and the real pervades all art, all life. The "ideal" has always been closely associated with "beauty," but what is beauty? Is it absolute or relative? Perhaps we can best define it as "the sense of pleasurable relations" while "the opposite sense is the sense of ugliness." Man instinctively responds to the "shape" and "surface" and "mass" of things; they continuously impinge upon his senses, but the sense of beauty is an uncertain fluctuating phenomena which varies from person to person, from age to age, from culture to culture.

James, like the painter and the sculptor, concerns himself in each of his works with relations and strives to achieve balance, rhythm, harmony—to realize the ideal in the real. The characters he paints on his canvas are seldom, if ever, symmetrical, and it is in precisely this lack of perfection that their humanity, their reality lies. If, as in certain of the tales, it is the "idea," the aesthetic which mainly concerns James, the figures will tend to become more symbolic. In the later works characters may function at two levels—the symbolic and the real.

Although James sought from the beginning to strike a perfect balance, his attitude toward the real and the romantic underwent a marked change between his early and his mature work, as may be seen by a brief study of his literary and art criticism and certain of his tales and novels.
To James the "real" consists of

... the things we cannot possibly not know, sooner or later, in one way or another ... The romantic stands, on the other hand, for the things that, with all the facilities in the world, all the wealth and all the courage and all the wit and all the adventure, we never can directly know ....

James asserts that the successful artist, regardless of his medium, will give to his subject a lucid, intelligible form. To do this, he feels, the artist must possess the sense of reality.

In his book on Hawthorne (1879), James is pointed in his criticism of allegory, the prevalent method employed in the American romance of the period. He accuses the author of *The Scarlet Letter* of "a want of reality and an abuse of the fanciful element--of a certain superficial symbolism." James declares that Hawthorne creates not "characters," but "figures," "representatives, very picturesquely arranged, of a single state of mind ..." Even more caustic charges are brought by James against Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd*. In an essay in *The Nation* (1874), James declares that Hardy lacks reality and

... rarely gets beyond ambitious artifice--the mechanical simulation of heat and depth and wisdom that are absent .... Everything human in the book strikes us as factitious and insubstantial; the only things we believe in are the sheep and the dogs.

In contrast, George Eliot wins James's approbation for her successful union of realism and romance. James writes of *The Spanish Gypsy*:

The author has not felt it necessary, because she was writing a picturesque romance, to eschew psychology and morals. She has remembered that she was writing a drama, and that she would have written in vain unless each of her leading figures was fully rounded and defined. They are very human ....
But realism per se often left James with a feeling of disgust. While he finds the French novelists, with few exceptions, the most adept in their realistic portrayal of life, he censures their frequent probing of the scabreux depths. James is scathing in his criticism of Emile Zola and Edmond and Jules de Goncourt who, though masters of visual observation, habitually choose to treat "the baser forms of suffering and the meaner forms of vice." He declares that Honoré de Balzac has "a sense of this present terrestrial life which has never been surpassed"—"a superb foundation for the work of a realistic romancer." He excels in portraiture; "the whole person springs into being at once; the character is never left shivering for its fleshly envelope . . . ." But despite Balzac's success as a realistic romancer, James finds him lacking in ideality. Like Turgénieff and James himself, his greatest achievement is his characterization of women, but Balzac characteristically emphasizes their physical, sexual quality. He is highly successful in rendering "profoundly simple people," "simple virtue, and vice simple or complex . . . . In superior virtue, intellectual virtue, he fails . . . ." He deals with all the passions and prefers "strong" feelings to "superficial" ones. But he is incapable of maintaining a sufficiently detached attitude; his philosophy is meagre, and "money" as a subject occupies too large a portion of his canvas. Yet his great power of invention and the sweep of his imagination win James's praise.

Unlike most of her French compatriots, George Sand is not a realist, but a romantic idealist. James asserts that her novels "contain no living figures;" they are "vague in outline, deficient in detail." She writes
"stories for the story's sake"—"improbable romances for initiated persons of the optimistic class." Madame Sand never describes the actual; she is too idealistic, and her idealism, or as James prefers to call it, "optimism," keeps her from truthful representation; instead, she embroiders the truth. She feels rather than knows human nature. Madame Sand is a "sentimentalist," not a "moralist," "contemplative," not "observant." James agrees that she celebrates "a single passion"—love, but he adds that "in depicting it she has incidentally portrayed so many others that she may be said to have pretty thoroughly explored the human soul." While she lacks discretion and moral taste, her novels display an "intellectual freshness," a "sentimental force," an "irresistible charm," a superb style, and "the disinterestedness of a great imagination." But James's finest tribute is reserved for the great Russian master. Of Turgeneff he writes:

No romancer has created a greater number of the figures that breathe and move and speak, in their habits as they might have lived; none, on the whole, seems to us to have had such a masterly touch in portraiture, none has mingled so much ideal beauty with so much unsparing reality.

"A searching realist" and "an earnestly attentive observer," Turgeneff views impartially, perceptively, "the great spectacle of human life." Nothing is missed; he takes careful note of every attitude, gesture, feature, peculiarity of character, and each takes its proper place on his broad canvas. Yet he has the discretion to avoid the exaggeration of representative types, and he never specializes his characters by
fantastic oddities as does Dickens. All Turgenieff's themes are Russian, his characters, true Muscovites; he feels the Russian ethos intensely and renders it faithfully and dramatically. He is highly intellectual, deeply sympathetic, finely aware. He looks deep into the heart of man with all its complexity—often with a profound sense of sadness. In his treatment of simpletons and idiots it is not merely their "quaintness" and "picturesqueness" which attract him, but "the opportunity of watching the machinery of character, as it were, through a broken windowpane."20 It is his women and young girls who exhibit the greatest strength in their power to will, to resist, to endure, to renounce, to sacrifice, to attain. Turgenieff's main purpose may be said to be his search for "psychological truth," and his finished portraits are evidence of the consummate skill of the true artist.

These essays in French Poets and Novelists (1878), together with those published in The Nation a few years earlier (and referred to above), indicate James's position at this stage of his career. Generally speaking, he distrusted romance because he believed it seldom provided a truthful, realistic, comprehensive view of life. He felt it to be superficial, often prompted by and acting upon the emotions to the exclusion of the intelligence. Romance failed to sound "the deeper psychology." James was attracted to realism, but, here too, there were serious limitations. Realism, particularly in the hands of the French, often degenerated into mere naturalism which dwelt on the sordid, mean, ugly side of existence. James was well aware of the dark underside of life, the ever-present abyss, the duality of human nature, the capacity for evil that exists in the best
of us—the "bale" as well as the "bliss." He once acknowledged: "I have the imagination of disaster—and see life indeed as ferocious and sinister." Yet beauty, to James, was essential to life. Just as much, perhaps more than ugliness, it formed a great part of experience, a part which could not be denied if the ideal consciousness was to be achieved. In almost all his reviews, and particularly in that on Turgenieff, it may be seen that he was aspiring toward idealism, but to an ideal that would embrace the real, strike a balance between life and art—give form and meaning to existence.

With the passage of time, James’s attitude toward romance underwent a decided change. In 1887 he declared: "The novelist who leaves the extraordinary out of his account is liable to awkward confrontations, as we are compelled to reflect in this age of newspapers and of universal publicity." He came increasingly to admire R. L. Stevenson’s tales of adventure and romance and said of Treasure Island that it not only "embodies a boy’s vision of the extraordinary;" it is also unique in its power "to fascinate the weary mind of experience. . . . There is a moral side in it, and the figures are not puppets with vague faces." In Kidnapped James recognized Stevenson’s "talent for seeing the actual in the marvellous, and reducing the extravagant to plausible detail."

James's art reviews reflect essentially the same change in attitude toward the real and the romantic as does his literary criticism. This change of opinion concerning the real can be clearly traced in his comments on the paintings of a single artist—James Abbott McNeill Whistler, the leader of the English aesthetic movement. Although Whistler, like
Degas, appears to have been more interested in arrangement and pictorial harmony than in the "scientific method" of the Impressionists, James associates his paintings with the Impressionist Movement, and John L. Sweeney declares that Henry James's initial attitude toward Impressionism was "dislike at first sight." Sweeney believes "the Impressionists raised for him a 'moral' question of subject and treatment which blurred his view of their technical experiment and pictorial accomplishment." 25

In his review of the 1876 exhibition of Impressionist paintings at Durand Ruel's James referred to the contributors as "partisans of unadorned reality and absolute foes to arrangement, embellishment, selection, to the artist's allowing himself . . . to be preoccupied with the idea of the beautiful." He declared: "The 'Impressionist' doctrines strike me as incompatible, in an artist's mind, with the existence of first-rate talent. To embrace them you must be provided with a plentiful absence of imagination." James further insisted: "The Impressionists . . . abjure virtue altogether, and declare that a subject which has been crudely chosen shall be loosely treated." 26

Why did James react so violently against this new form of art? To answer this question it is necessary to understand the principal aims and techniques of nineteenth century Impressionism.

In their attempt to render life scientifically, the Impressionists confined themselves to exact visual experience and attempted to record each impression instantly and dispassionately without (at least in theory) arrangement or selection. Reality was experienced as a "state of constant flux and transition," "a continuum in which everything coalesces and in which there are no other differences but the various approaches and points of view of the beholder." 27 There was a concentration on the instantaneous,
the fleeting, the unique; a breaking down of colour into its valeurs, a rendering of "reflected light" and "illuminated shadows," an emphasis on direct optical experience as opposed to the conception of reality which derives from logically organized sense impressions. By "reductions," "restrictions," and "simplifications" artists strove for a harmony of colour and light. Space was absorbed, solid structures dissolved, with the consequent blurring of outlines and the merging of objects into their surroundings. "Reality" was reduced to a two-dimensional surface; plasticity, design, spatial and linear form were abandoned to loose, abrupt brush strokes and shapeless dots. It was the "tones," not the subject itself which were important. Impressionism was an art based strictly on personal experience without reference to history or tradition—a photographic record of nature, influenced, perhaps, by the new discoveries in optics.

It is not difficult to see why James would be repelled by an "art" which eschewed selection and arrangement, refused to submit impressions to the "crucible of the imagination," reduced reality to two dimensions, ignored "form" (as James conceived it), showed complete indifference to the quality of subject, lacked a "sense of the past," and offered the observer a mere camera's-eye-view of life. Yet, was his criticism—the same censure he was to apply to Whistler, entirely just, or was he perhaps biased by the reported doctrines of this group of revolutionaries even before he viewed the 1876 exhibition at Durand Ruel's? Whatever the answer, James's opinions were later to moderate, perhaps because he gradually realized that, regardless of theory, the best of the
Impressionists did, in fact, continue to select and arrange and compose. However, many modern critics agree with James's assertion that: "A painting is not an 'Impression' but an expression—just as a poem or a piece of music is."29

It was this concern with impression vs. expression, the relation of art to life, the problem of the real and the ideal which drew forth James's comments on Whistler. In 1877 James wrote:

I will not speak of Mr. Whistler's 'Nocturnes in Black and Gold' and in 'Blue and Silver', of his 'Arrangements', 'Harmonies', and 'Impressions', because I frankly confess they do not amuse me. . . . to be interesting it seems to me that a picture should have some relation to life as well as to painting. Mr. Whistler's experiments have no relation whatever to life; they have only a relation to painting.30

A year later his opinion is basically unaltered. He says:

Mr. Whistler's productions are pleasant things to have about, so long as one regards them as simple objects—as incidents of furniture or decoration. The spectator's quarrel with them begins when he feels it to be expected of him to regard them as pictures.31

But in 1882 James admits that the lady in Whistler's 'Harmony in Black and Red' has at least "the appearance of life."32 However, it is Whistler's portrait of his mother which wins James's unconditioned praise. He regards it as "a masterpiece of tone, of feeling, of the power to render life."33 And in 1897 he declares that to turn from Whistler's portrait of Henry Irving as the Philip of Tennyson's "Queen Mary" to the other exhibits in the Grafton Galleries is "to drop from the world of distinction, of perception, of beauty and mystery and perpetuity, into—well, a very ordinary place."34 Although it is doubtful whether Whistler
actually intended to "render life," or merely used his mother and Henry Irving as figures in a total arrangement, it is obvious that Henry James's perspective had altered. But while he learned to appreciate (and eventually himself employed) certain of their techniques, James never modified his opinion of the Impressionist theory. He makes his position clear in an essay on John Singer Sargent.

To render the impression of an object may be a very fruitful effort, but it is not necessarily so; that will depend upon what . . . the impression may have been.35

And what the impression may have been will depend on the quality of the mind that receives and reproduces it. This accounts for James's opposite reaction to the works of Gérôme and Delacroix. He viewed the paintings of Gérôme, a leader in the Realist movement of the seventies, with disgust. Commenting on the 'Combat de Coqs', he declares that this painting is

. . . a capital example of the master, and presents in remarkably convenient shape the substance of his talent—the indefinable hardness of his work. The picture is equally hard in subject and treatment, in feeling and in taste. . . . There is a total lack of what we may call moral atmosphere, of sentimental redundancy or emotional by-play.36

James feels the picture is immoral because it is both insincere and ugly. The artist is clever, but superficial—intent solely on displaying his skill, not on rendering humanity. But Eugène Delacroix (1799-1863), the most eminent revolutionary in French art, and reputed to be the father of Romanticism in painting, commands James's admiration not only for his ability as a great colourist and composer, but for his sense of
beauty, his psychological insight, and his fine awareness of the complexity and mystery of life—the mingled "bliss and bale" of humanity. He is, James admits, an imperfect draughtsman, totally unconcerned with the "classical" emphasis on "line," but the quality of his imagination is such that it far outweighs his defects. James regards him as "a man who not only sees, but reflects as well as he sees." Although in many respects he falls far short of the great painters of the past, like them, he captures on his canvas the intensity of "felt life." Gérôme represents the surface, Delacroix, the substance. It is here the Romantic, not the Realist, who is most deeply aware of the "real." James sees in Delacroix "the presence of a high artistic ideal, untouched by the vulgar or the trivial."

But it is the old masters, James feels, who most nearly achieve the "ideal." He finds "Carpaccio delightful, Veronese magnificent, Titian supremely beautiful," yet their utmost strivings "leave a visible space in which Tintoret alone is master." He says:

Tintoret's great merit, to my mind, was his unequalled distinctness of vision. When once he had conceived the germ of a scene, it defined itself to his imagination with an intensity, an amplitude, an individuality of expression, which makes one's observation of his pictures seem less an operation of the mind than a kind of supplementary experience of life.

You get from Tintoret's work the impression that he felt, pictorially, the great, beautiful, terrible spectacle of human life very much as Shakespeare felt it poetically—with a heart that never ceased to beat a passionate accompaniment to every stroke of his brush.

It was this ideal rendering of "the great, beautiful, terrible spectacle of human life" which James strove to achieve in his own tales and novels. But between his early and his mature work there is the same
change in attitude toward the real and the romantic which we observed in his literary and art criticism.

Although James charged Hawthorne with "a want of reality and an abuse of the fanciful element," "The Last of the Valerii" (1874) is decidedly Hawthornian in its romantic theme and fanciful treatment. The figure of the Italian count is strongly reminiscent of Donatello of The Marble Faun—charming, but improbable, and decidedly two-dimensional. The only attempt at realism is in the picture of the young American bride, but even she can scarcely be regarded as a fully rounded character and might, quite easily, be patterned on Hawthorne's allegorical Hilda. In his book on Hawthorne, James spoke of "the passionless quality" of The Scarlet Letter, "its element of cold and ingenious fantasy, its elaborate imaginative delicacy," and this very criticism might also be applied to "The Last of the Valerii." It is "picturesque," "charming"—words James frequently used to describe the works of Hawthorne, but it does not "live and breathe." However, we have noted that when it is an "idea" rather than the delineation of character with which James is concerned, his tales and novels tend to become more symbolic and less realistic. Even in this early tale James is preoccupied with the nature and function of art and the artist (or collector) and the problems involved in achieving a satisfactory balance between the real and the ideal. Here he suggests that when art is worshipped to the exclusion of humanity, art can become a terrible master, dehumanizing the worshipper and disrupting his relationships with others. To achieve the ideal there must be a balance between art and life.

In Roderick Hudson (1876), James's first "acknowledged" novel,
he implies his distaste for the realist (Gloriani) who is completely lacking in idealism, the mere clever practical copyist who paints, with equal indifference, a beautiful subject or an ugly one. Rowland Mallet, on the other hand, represents the romantic idealist who fails to take account of reality until it is too late—the would-be artist of life who, with the best intentions, violates the freedom of another because of his own limitation of vision. The result is complete disillusionment and tragedy, both for the supposed benefactor and his protégé. Roderick Hudson's problem is similar—up to a point. He commences his career as a romantic idealist, but his little statuette of a naked youth drinking from a gourd is both idealistic and realistic in its simple beauty and truth. However, it is not long before the ideal and the real conflict. Hudson drinks too deeply of life, fails to remain disinterested, sees himself not as a part of the whole, but as an isolated, sharp-edged individual, and is finally destroyed both artistically and physically by his failure to strike a balance between life and art, to reconcile the real and the ideal. Both Rowland and Roderick are incomplete. Mallet possesses the will, the power of application, but not the talent; Hudson, the genius, but not the will to perform. James's attitude in this novel is essentially anti-romantic—the would-be ideal artist is destroyed by his confrontation with the real.

At this point in his career James is striving to create more fully rounded characters—to represent life, but, as he himself realized, he is not completely successful. Neither Roderick Hudson, Rowland Mallet, nor Mary Garland is entirely convincing; Mrs. Hudson, Sam Singleton, and Miss
 Blanchard are mere shadows; Mr. Leavenworth is purposely an almost Dickensian grotesque. It is Christina Light and a few minor figures (in particular Madame Grandoni), who are the most life-like. But even Christina, by her very surname alone, suggests a symbolic as well as a realistic role. Here again, it is the "idea," the "theory," if we may call it such, which predominates, although there is a definite gesture toward realism in the rendering of theme and character.

"A New England Winter" (1884), expresses the same criticism of Impressionism which we find in James's art reviews and points up his belief that no superior work can come from a superficial mind. He is contemptuous of the "artist" who prides himself on "a great deal of eye," but whose "execution" is "pretentious and feeble." Florimund Daintry is drawn with considerable wit and skill—a conceited, strutting little man, inflated by his illusion of originality and "rareness." James's mocking laughter may be heard as he describes the young Impressionist constantly shutting one eye, to see the better with the other, making a little telescope by curving one of his hands together, waving these members in the air with vague pictorial gestures, pointing at things which, when people turned to follow his direction, seemed to mock the vulgar vision by eluding it.

Yet, despite his distrust of the Impressionist theory, James gives his own "impressions" of Boston and Boston life, with its unique combination of distinctive fashionableness and marked practicality, through the eyes of the returned expatriot. But James's impressions have passed through "the crucible of the imagination" with a resultant evidence of careful selection and arrangement. He is still more attracted to realism than romance, but his characters are more rounded than those of his earlier
tales. They are marked by individual idiosyncrasies without becoming grotesques.

But as early as 1876 James had written in his preface to The American:

The balloon of experience is in fact of course tied to the earth, and under that necessity we swing, thanks to a rope of remarkable length, in the more or less commodious car of the imagination; but it is by the rope we know where we are, and from the moment that cable is cut we are at large and unrelated... The art of the romancer is 'for the fun of it,' to cut the cable, to cut it without our detecting him... There is our general sense of the way things happen... and there is our particular sense of the way they don't happen, which is liable to wake up unless reflexion and criticism, in us, have been skilfully drugged. There are drugs enough, clearly—it is all a question of applying them with tact; in which case the way things don't happen may be artfully made to pass for the way things do.

By the time he came to write The Aspern Papers (1888), James had chosen to "cut the cable" and make "the way things don't happen artfully pass for the way things do." There are many elements of the improbable in this story, but James attempts to lull our critical suspicions and draw us into the narrative by appealing to that most insatiable of human emotions—curiosity, love of mystery, the yearning to find out the truth, and he does so with great charm and interest. He is moving toward a fusion of the romantic and the real in his rendering of the humour and pathos of life, the "bliss and the bale," the unknown and the unknowable. Juliana is a strange blend of the romantic and the real--fantastic, yet, as James presents her, believable. Despite her naïveté, Miss Tina is a realist in her pitiful acceptance of the "bale" of life which is her inevitable lot. But the conflict between the real and the romantic is
never resolved by the narrator himself, although romanticism is the last note sounded. Both theme and characters are based on fact, but the imagination of the creator gives to history an added dimension when he admits romance. The figures live and breathe by the very reality of their emotions and drives. It is, in the final analysis, James's intense awareness of life which captures and holds our interest.

The central figure of "The Coxon Fund" (1894), like Juliana of The Aspern Papers, is based on fact, but James makes it clear in his preface that his character comes from the crucible of the story-teller's imagination a new creation, enters into "new relations," "its prime identity destroyed." This is consistent with James's belief in the absolute necessity for the artist to "render" life, not merely "copy" it. At this stage of his career James's concern with the problem of the ideal artist has in no degree abated, but his work is now marked by an increased complexity—a complexity which reflects the mingled "bliss and bale" of human life. It is now not the "idea" alone which principally occupies him, but also the delineation of character with its mixed motives and capacity for evil as well as for good. As a result, his dramatis personae become more fully rounded; they live and breathe, and, as in life, those with the most fully developed consciousness are often the most difficult to comprehend. It is not hard to "place" George Gravener and Mrs. Saltram as unqualified realists, the Pudneys as more realistic than romantic, and the Mulvilles, Ruth Anvoy, and the narrator as romantic idealists, but what about Frank Saltram? One thing is certain, Mr. Saltram is an artist in his own right—in his capacity to render life
beautiful (though admittedly he frequently renders it ugly). He knows how to "use" the world to enrich his own life without being unduly "used" in turn. He has the "genius," the detachment, but, like Roderick Hudson, he lacks the power of application, and finally saturation in the "real" quite quenches the "ideal." Is he a supreme realist who uses his superior intelligence to manipulate the romantic idealists for his own gain? Or is he too a romantic idealist who is destroyed when he sacrifices art to life? By James's tone of irony we must suspect the former, but there is, of course, "the possible other case."49

In this tale James again affirms the necessity for the artist to be in the world but not of it—to maintain the necessary detachment in order to preserve his art. He stresses the need to balance genius with application and, in the portrait of Frank Saltram, he suggests that life possesses few absolutes, that there is seldom a final, definite answer. The fusion of the real and the romantic in the ideal which James sought in Roderick Hudson is here achieved, principally through the use of operative irony.

In his portraiture James combines the technique of the painter with that of the novelist in the creation of living characters. We have seen that he learned from the old masters the principles of composition and style, the difference between an illustration, a likeness, and a portrait, between the real and the ideal, and that he strives to achieve balance, rhythm, and harmony in his own works. But there are certain specific methods which James employs that should be noted. Viola Hopkins outlines James's "framing" device—his
habit of seeing a landscape or figures 'composed' so that the scene appears to the spectator as a living picture perhaps recalling a real one or as a subject for a picture. Any scene or part of a scene may be considered framed if through visual imagery or description it is circumscribed and set apart from the rest of the narrative. Framing may serve various purposes: it may integrate description with action or with characterization, especially if the scene is presented through the consciousness of a character with a painter's eye; it may convey with great precision the particular tone of the setting or appearance of a character. Most important of all, it may symbolize relationships and underline themes.

The objet d'art (which frequently occupies the central position in James's pictures), is used in various ways: as a plot device, to reinforce theme, as a cultural symbol, and, most important, to reveal character. This is particularly true of the use of specific paintings by actual artists. The preference for a certain picture or school of painting may define character or evoke emotion which gives sudden insight into a person's state of mind, motivation, or possible action. When, as frequently occurs, the art object fuses setting with action and characterization, we see James's consummate skill in achieving, by a single stroke, a rich effective economy. In his later fiction James uses framing devices and the objet d'art more subtly and suggestively. The precise visual impression is merged with the feeling which this impression evokes. Description becomes more indirect and serves numerous ends, and "point of view" modifies what is seen. When, in moments of sudden recognition, sight and insight merge, the framing device is most effectively employed.

On the basis of this discussion of James's aesthetic criteria and the techniques of the painter which he employs in his characterization,
we may now turn to an analysis of three tales: "The Madonna of the Future," "The Liar," and "The Real Thing" where James's view of the nature and function of art and the artist and the problems involved in achieving a satisfactory balance between the real and the ideal are clearly set forth.
FOOTNOTES


5 The Art of the Novel, pp. 31, 32.

6 Henry James, Representative Selections, ed. with an Introd. by Lyon N. Richardson (New York, Cincinnati, 1941), p. 49.


8 Ibid., p. 287.

9 Ibid., p. 162.

10 French Poets and Novelists, pp. 89, 92.

11 Ibid., p. 97.

12 Ibid., p. 84.

13 Ibid., pp. 156, 157.

14 Ibid., p. 168.

15 Literary Reviews and Essays, p. 127.

16 French Poets and Novelists, p. 169.

17 Ibid., p. 158.

18 Ibid., p. 250.

19 Ibid., p. 216.

20 Ibid., p. 218.


23 Ibid. James consistently uses the words "moral" and "morality" in both the religious and the aesthetic sense. As such, they have the connotation of "beauty."

24 Ibid., p. 158.

25 Henry James, *The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts*, sel and ed. with an Introd. by John L. Sweeney (London, 1956), p. 27. All future references to this work will be taken from the same edition and will be designated *P.E.*

26 "The Impressionists" (1876), *P.E.*, pp. 114, 115.


33 Ibid.

34 "The Grafton Galleries" (1897), *P.E.*, p. 259.

35 "John S. Sargent" (1895), *P.E.*, p. 217.

36 "Pictures by William Morris Hunt, Gérôme and Others" (1872), *P.E.*, p. 51.


38 Ibid., p. 201.


40 Ibid., pp. 92, 93.
James disowned *Watch and Ward* (1871) and referred to *Roderick Hudson* as his first novel.


The narrator willingly pays an exorbitant price for Jeffrey Aspern's miniature after it was offered to him free by Miss Tina.

Juliana is based on Jane Clairmont, one-time mistress of Byron and mother of his daughter Allegra. Jane Clairmont was the half-sister of Mary Godwin, Shelley's second wife. Frank Saltram was inspired by S. T. Coleridge.

CHAPTER I

JAMES'S PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

In "The Madonna of the Future" (1875), James uses art imagery and art objects to set the tone, underline theme, and reveal character. "Framing" and allusion to specific artists and their work are the principal methods employed. The problem of the ideal artist which was to engage James's attention in most, if not all, of his tales and novels, is here set forth.

Theobald, the romantic idealist and transcendental genius, possesses the "heart" but not the "hand" of Raphael. He lacks the will, the power to act, and wastes his life "in talk, in plans and promises, in study, in visions." He dreams of painting an "ideal" Madonna which will reflect the same "noble tenderness and human sublimity" as Raphael's "Madonna of the Chair"—the perfect fusion of body and soul, of physical and spiritual beauty, but his dread of falling short of his ideal conception paralyzes his hand, and his canvas remains blank. Yet Theobald is not an idle boaster; he recognizes the "ideal" in the "real" when he sees the outcast maiden mother and child, and his hasty sketch of the dying infant is regarded by even the cynical little Italian sculptor as "a masterpiece, a pure Correggio." Theobald aspires to the excellence of the old masters, but his romantic "sense of the past," his "purism," and his conviction that the present is "void of all that nourishes and prompts and inspires the artist" prevent him from maintaining a proper perspective. Thus his
preference for certain artists and his rejection of others constitutes a more significant revelation of his own character than a valid judgment of the artists and works concerned. His reverence for Michael Angelo, the great master of "form" and "movement," the genius who achieves the ideal in portraying a "great soul" in a "beautiful body" marks Theobald as both a traditionalist and an idealist, as does his admiration of Benvenuto Cellini whose smaller figures suggest the same mobility and power as those of his master. This is also true of his love of Titian whose greatness lies in his ability to achieve "reality" in his figures by the skilful treatment of light and shadow, and his worship of Raphael whose portraits surpass all others in the faithful rendering of soul and body. But there is a suggestion of bias in Theobald's contempt for Perugino who was surpassed only by his pupil Raphael in space composition. Theobald's dislike may be based on the fact that although Perugino's pictures perfectly express religious emotion, the artist himself was "an atheist and a villain."

Theobald's romanticism and lack of reality are also reflected in his predilection for certain artists. It is significant that while Titian maintained a fine grasp of reality by changing with the times and acknowledging the "bale" as well as the "bliss" of humanity, Fra Angelico (who, we are to assume from the narrator's account, is also revered by Theobald), was totally unable to portray evil, but only the "blitheness" and beauty of life. Add to this the fact that Andrea Mantegna (whose triptych Theobald admires), was a romantic idealist who drew his inspiration from "Italy's glorious past" and "naively forgot that Romans
were creatures of flesh and blood,"^10 and you have a reflection of
Theobald's problem and an indication of its cause. Unlike Titian,
Theobald cannot adjust to reality; and like Fra Angelico he cannot admit
ugliness, so he persists in regarding Serafina as "a beauty with a soul,"^11
although the "soul" is much in question and the "beauty" has grown old,
stout, and coarse. Theobald is a romantic idealist who, like Mantegna,
lives in the past, and the confrontation with present reality destroys
him.

In the most successful instance of "framing" in this tale the art
object (a painter's canvas), fuses setting with action and characterization.
The scene takes on the quality of real life as we view, through the eyes
of the narrator, Theobald's poor room with its "vacant misery" and
"abject poverty," and the artist himself seated near the single window
before an easel on which rests a large canvas. He is "pale," "haggard,"
"unshaven"--the picture of "absolute lassitude and dejection"--"his arms
loosely folded, his legs stretched before him, his head hanging on his
breast."^12 As the narrator passes behind him with the intention of at
last viewing the ideal Madonna, sight and insight merge. We see the
blank canvas, "cracked and discoloured by time," and grasp its full import
as Theobald, suddenly roused from his stupor, pours forth his pitiful
confession of failure:

'I'm the half of a genius! Where in the wide world is my other half?
Lodged perhaps in the vulgar soul, the cunning, ready fingers of some
dull copyist or some trivial artisan who turns out by the dozen his
easy prodigies of touch!'^13
Yet, just before his death, he exclaims:

'But our visions . . . have a way of being brilliant, and a man hasn't lived in vain who has seen the things I have.'

The other half of the genius is, in truth, a "vulgar soul" with "cunning ready fingers," a "trivial artisan who turns out by the dozen" "monkeys and cats" in a caricature of men and women in various attitudes of the game of love. This little Italian combines sculpture and satire and is as proud of his "chemical ingenuity" in producing "a peculiar plastic compound" as he is of his "types" themselves. He is frankly and vulgarly practical to the point where his "realism" can only be regarded as "naturalism," but there is no denying the cleverness of his "imitative felicity." He is the direct antithesis of Theobald—a man of action, not a dreamer, a success by the world's standard. His cynical: "Cats and monkeys,—monkeys and cats,—all human life is there!" echoes revoltingly again and again in the narrator's mind as he tries to shut out the "poignant memory of Theobald's transcendent illusions and deplorable failure."

Theobald and the little Italian sculptor of monkeys and cats not only prefigure Roderick Hudson and Gloriani (the idealist and the realist, the "heart" and the "hand," the dreamer and the doer), but they illustrate James's most important concepts of art and the artist. Like Raphael, Theobald is both grand in his conceptions and single-minded in his desire to faithfully interpret his chosen subject, but his subject must express ideal beauty—nothing else will suffice. His longing to achieve the ideal causes him, like Raphael, to pass from influence to influence in an effort
to realize in his Madonna the finest qualities of the old masters. Theobald's problem arises from his insistence on absolutes—his failure to realize that ideal beauty, whether of body or soul, can exist only in the mind of the artist. He refuses to admit that "the province of art is all life," therefore he can see only the beautiful, the ideal, "the Madonna," not the real living woman. Moreover, the goal he sets himself is so high that, fearing lest he fail to attain it, he wastes his life in "charmed inaction."

The trivial artisan, on the other hand, is a realist whose prime concern is "technique," not subject. The glories of the past hold no charms for him; he cares only for the present and the gratifications it can provide. He has no desire to pattern himself on the old masters, for he finds his subject matter in real life, and his inventive imagination supplies the rest. He is the master of caricature, not of the portrait, and he is amply satisfied with himself and with the public demand for his clever, suggestive little figures. The cunning artisan is devoid of sincerity and taste; he neither discriminates nor selects—except with an eye to "business." The little Italian has no illusions to be shattered. To him Serafina is hardly "divine," but rather a flesh and blood woman as "earthy" as himself. While he lacks "genius," he is the master of "application," and his cleverness and practicality "pay off" from a purely materialistic point of view.

Each artist is incomplete, inadequate. Theobald possesses the genius, but not the application; he recognizes the importance of subject, selection, and discrimination; he is sincere and will do nothing without
taste, but his inability to come to grips with reality renders him ineffective, impotent. He possesses a fine intelligence, but his "impressions" remain just that—they never issue in expression. The Italian sculptor perfectly illustrates James's belief that no work of quality can "ever proceed from a superficial mind." He is trivial, insincere, without taste, "interested," but he achieves a limited success by his awareness of reality, application, and cleverness—as opposed to genius.

While James shows his contempt for the unqualified realist, he also has a word of warning for the idealist who fails to take reality into account. James believes the successful artist must possess both "heart" and "hand;" he must dream and do—balance the real and the ideal. He must recognize ugliness as well as beauty, the "bale" as well as the "bliss," and, by the power of his will and imagination, achieve a work of art.

In "The Liar" (1888), James deals not only with the problem of the artist, but also with the nature and function of art. Art objects are again employed to reinforce theme and delineate character, and "operative irony" enhances the reality and interest of the tales. The story has commonly been regarded as concerned with three portraits, two artists, and two liars, but closer attention reveals three literal portraits, a figurative portrait and sketch, and a scene which also constitutes a portrait, three kinds of artist and three varieties of liar. It is a tale of love—and of hate, of "bliss" and of "bale," of "the real," "the romantic," and "the ideal."
Oliver Lyon at first appears to be the type of artist to win James's approval. He is "too occupied with his profession often to pay country visits,"\(^{19}\) and while painting Sir David's portrait he is both diligent and disinterested—intent on a faithful rendering of the "whole man." We learn that he "sketched with a fine point and did not caricature,"\(^{20}\) and although this refers to his accounts to Sir David of the activities at Stayes, it is equally true of Lyon as an artist. However, quite apart from the suggestiveness of his name, it appears that he has two serious flaws which may be attributed to uncontrolled romanticism and idealism.

Mr. Lyall Powers notes Lyon's susceptibility to the sensational in his avidity for the novel of Mr. Le Fanu and his so easily becoming a prey to Colonel Capadose's "long bow;"\(^{21}\) and Lyon's jealousy becomes apparent when Everina fails to recognize him at the dinner table but gazes affectionately at the Colonel. Ever since his student days in Munich Lyon has so idealized Everina that he refuses to believe her capable of any human folly or vice, and this excessive idealism, coupled with romanticism, opens the way for jealousy to blind the eye of both lover and artist.

When he first learns of Colonel Capadose's "monstrous foible" and the apparent "backing" he receives from his wife Everina, Lyon is both incensed with the Colonel and intrigued by the psychological nature of the problem. Does Everina actually aid and abet her husband, or does she suffer in silent disgust? Lyon begins to hope the latter, but he is "too afraid of exposing the woman he once had loved"\(^{22}\) to make any overt inquiry. Moreover, his observation convinces him that
... if Capadose was an abundant he was not a malignant liar and that
his fine faculty exercised itself mainly on subjects of small direct
importance. "He is the liar platonic," he said to himself; "he is
disinterested, he doesn't operate with a hope of gain or with a desire
to injure. It is art for art and he is prompted by the love of beauty.
He has an inner vision of what might have been, of what ought to be, and
he helps on the good cause by the simple substitution of a nuance. He
paints, as it were, and so do I!"23

At this stage Lyon accepts the Colonel as a fellow artist, an idealist
like himself. But soon the resentment of the disappointed lover begins
to alter Lyon's perspective, and he determines to paint the Colonel "as
he is"—a liar! With this decision, Lyon renounces his right to the
name of "artist," for he is no longer "disinterested." In order to more
easily achieve his aim, he first offers to paint, as a gift, the portrait
of the Capadose's little daughter. "The child was beautiful and had the
prettiest eyes of innocence he had ever seen,"24 but having lost his
artistic integrity, Lyon is unable to capture the child's innocence and
beauty on canvas. He can only regard her cynically as an extension of
her father. Lyon prolongs and multiplies the sittings and neglects other
important orders so that he may be with Everina (who always accompanies
Amy), for he hopes Mrs. Capadose will eventually confess that she is
unhappy with her husband. Sometimes Lyon's strokes are "a little wild,"
since he is "thinking so much more of his heart than of his hand."25

But Lyon's "masterpiece . . . of legitimate treachery"26 is quickly
finished. Not only does the Colonel come alone, but he is a "rare model."
He likes to talk, and Lyon exploits his foible: "He encouraged, beguiled,
excited him," and "lashed him on when he flagged . . . ."27 At first
Lyon contemplates a "subtle characterization" to be recognized only by
"the initiated," but his obsession is so great that he soon determines that "this character should be perceptible even to the meanest intelligence," and his only regret is that he cannot list the portrait in the Academy's catalogue "simply as 'The Liar.'" He now sees only one side of the Colonel, so he gives himself up "to the joy of painting nothing else." 28

Lyon's degeneration as an artist is apparent. Sir David's portrait was "sketched with a fine point," Amy's betrayed some "wild strokes," that of the Colonel amounts to caricature. Lyon once cared for the quality of his art alone and became sceptical of his success when the portrait of Sir David was admired by all who saw it. But he simply "used" little Amy, and while he first sought recognition of the Colonel's picture from a "select" audience, he now thirsts for the applause of the vulgar multitude.

Lyon not only deteriorates as an artist, but morally—as a man. Far from fearing to "expose the woman he once loved," he now exults in the belief that Everina has been forced to acknowledge that she is ashamed of her husband. Messrs. West and Stallman (in their interpretation of the scene in which the Colonel slashes his portrait), fall into the trap of viewing the other characters through Lyon's eyes and thus agree with the artist that Everina is ashamed of her husband. They further state: "The Colonel at this point comes to grips, at least momentarily, with his 'true' self (actually his 'false' self) for the first time." 29

This, I believe, is a misinterpretation which fails to take into account the "deeper psychology." It is important to remember that neither Lyon nor the Colonel is ever in need of much clarification; it is Everina who
is somewhat of an enigma. But even in her case we are given definite clues which help us to arrive at a reasonably accurate estimate of her character. From the outset we are told by Everina herself and by other characters that she loves her husband, and Lyon has ample opportunity to observe her affection and loyalty. The lies she tells are essentially harmless and protective. Even that which involves Miss Geraldine (Grenadine, Harriet Pearson) falls into this category, for Lyon, the Colonel, and Everina surely know that a person of her class and type is as safely anonymous as her name. Despite Lyon’s estimate of Everina as "simple," she appears to be fairly astute and may well have taken Lyon’s measure twelve years before when he proposed to her and been perceptive enough to judge what she might have to fear from such a jealous, puritanically idealistic man. She asks Lyon what good it will do him to paint the Colonel, and when Lyon replies that he wants to portray the Colonel’s "nature," Everina declares: "Nothing would induce me to let you pry into me that way." Thus the scene of violence (which is excellently framed with Lyon spying through the balcony curtains on the two distraught victims below him), is itself a masterly delineation of the character of all three. There is no indication that the Colonel recognizes the defamation until his wife points it out, and his attack on the picture expresses not only his anger at what Lyon has made of him, but his rage and grief at the pain and humiliation which Lyon has caused Everina.

In contrast, Everina’s terrible cries make Lyon tremble with a happy sense of success, and weighed against this triumph, the destruction of the picture means nothing. Ironically, his own nature has been so
perverted that he does not know whether the Colonel is damning the portrait or the artist. Nor does he realize that his finest delineation of character is not that of Sir David, or Amy, or even the Colonel, nor is it his mental sketch of Everina. It is the frightful portrait faithfully created stroke by stroke of—himself! While he has been probing for the mote in the eye of Colonel Capadose, the beam in his own eye has blinded him. Of Everina he can only say: "Truly her husband had trained her well," little realizing that this "training" may have been the discipline of love that has enabled Mrs. Capadose to see the "ideal" in the "real." She is fully aware of her husband's weakness (or forte) but, like Sir David, she recognizes it for what it is and for what, in honesty, Lyon first took it—an idealistic "embroidering" of the truth. The Colonel has told only one "interested" lie, and it is Lyon who has driven him to that. Lyon alone tells and lives a malicious, "interested" lie. He has not rendered the "whole man," but has painted the Colonel as type, as liar only.

Lyon has forfeited his artistic integrity by rendering the "surface," not the "substance." He has sacrificed his art to personal ends and has committed the unpardonable sin of violating a human soul. He has ignored the importance of "form"—the fact that, for the welfare of the individual and the preservation of society, life must often be "a masking." In his effort to "unmask" others, he has exposed his own miserable soul. Oliver Lyon has not learned the lesson of the master—he has failed to balance life and art, the real and the ideal.

Everina, on the other hand, is the artist of life. She accepts the real and transforms it into the ideal by the power of insight and love.
 Appropriately, hers is the final word in the best sense. Turning to their persecutor she smiles and says: "'You see the fates are against you. Providence won't let you be so disinterested--painting masterpieces for nothing.'" "'For you, I am very sorry. But you must remember that I possess the original!'"

In "The Real Thing" (1892), James once again considers the nature and function of art and the artist and the problems involved in achieving a satisfactory balance between the real and the ideal. The tale examines the difference between an illustration, a likeness, and a portrait; between type and character, and weighs the artist's right to "use" or "sacrifice" people in the interest of his art.

The Monarchs are indisputably "the real thing"—a lady and gentleman in every sense of the word. They are immaculately groomed, tastefully dressed, genteely discreet, socially correct with the ease and natural grace which characterize those who are born to the drawing room, the chase, and the society of "the best types." As to "stature, complexion and form," they leave nothing to be desired. They grace every room they enter, and their fine appearance and charming demeanour have been their capital. They have been much photographed, and Mrs. Monarch, at the time of her marriage, "was known as the Beautiful Statue." However, a reverse in fortune has made it necessary for them to seek remunerative employment, and since their strong point is "figure," they have offered themselves as painter's models. But despite their fine "lines," the artist can make nothing of them. They lack "plasticity" and "expression," and each drawing of them has the quality of a photograph—"an exact reproduction."
The Major and his wife are superficial; they have placidly accepted themselves as "lady and gentleman" and see no need to be anything else. From long custom they have become mere "types." Thus the painter, who has desired above all to delineate character, finds the Monarchs suited only for illustrations, not portraits.

In contrast to the Monarchs, Miss Churm and Oronte are not "the real thing." Miss Churm is a meagre, untidy, freckled little cockney, but she can "represent everything, from a fine lady to a shepherdess," and her value as a model consists in her having "no positive stamp," but "a curious and inexplicable talent for imitation." While the Monarchs pride themselves on their absolute authenticity, Miss Churm delights in representing an endless variety of characters far removed from her own common life. Oronte, like Miss Churm, has the gift of mimicry. The bankrupt little Italian street vendor can as easily assume the character of an English gentleman as Miss Churm can portray that of a Russian princess. They are artists in their own right—in their ability, by the power of the imagination, to transform themselves into the ideal. The Monarchs cannot understand this "alchemistry of art," they are convinced that their own reality as "lady" and "gentleman" is itself "ideal."

But the artist knows that whereas Miss Churm and Oronte are "round," "plastic," "makeable," the Monarchs are "flat" and "finished" types in whom the "stamp" is set. The very attributes which qualify them for the photograph unfit them for the portrait. The photograph is two-dimensional, "fixed," but the true portrait has the extra dimension which gives it life. It conveys not merely "surface" but "depth."

Perfect form and proportion can be a handicap to the artist who
attempts to delineate character, for perfection is a contradiction of humanity. For this reason the beautiful woman usually makes a poor model; her features are too regular, and in portraiture she tends to appear unreal, not true to life. Thus "the Beautiful Statue" impresses the artist as being "singularly like a bad illustration." He realizes that the Monarchs, by their very perfection of form, have become types, and since it is essential for the artist to "render" life, not merely "copy" it, they are useless to him as subjects. Although he pities their situation, he cannot afford to "sacrifice" his art to their need, nor is it conceivable that he retain a real "lady and gentleman" as servants.

In this brief analysis of three tales we have noted James's concepts of art and the artist, the real and the ideal, and the principal techniques of the painter which he employs in setting forth his aesthetic and in delineating character. Our observations may now be applied to two of James's major novels of his later phase: The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl to see how he achieves reality of characterization and the complete realization of the ideal in the real.
FOOTNOTES

1James's concern with the ideal artist extends not merely to the consideration of the painter, sculptor, and collector, but to "the artist of life."


4"The Madonna of the Future," p. 40. It should be noted that Bernard Berenson and Henry James are both products of the same general kind of intellectual climate (cosmopolite Americans), and their essential aesthetic view is almost identical. Bernard Berenson states that "Correggio was a much finer and subtler master of movement" than Raphael; "his contours are soft and flowing" and "his action at its best is unsurpassable." "Yet for all his superiority, his movement seldom counts as in Raphael," and his "form" is decidedly inferior. He "displays less feeling for the firmness of inner substance than any of his contemporaries," but he ranks among the best in his painting of the surface of the human skin. The Italian Painters of the Renaissance, pp. 192-194. (Italics mine). This is significant when applied to Theobald, as it reflects his skill in the execution of the "bambino," his failure to "count" as did Raphael, and his inability to realize the "inner substance" of Serafina.


6Benvenuto Cellini is renowned as a master sculptor and goldsmith, but he avoids the "massiveness" and "force" which became more and more apparent in Michael Angelo's later work. The "Perseus" in bronze at Florence is one of his finest masterpieces.

7"Space composition" is composition in three dimensions rather than two as in ordinary composition. Space composition gives a greater sense of "reality" by creating an impression of depth.

8Italian Painters of the Renaissance, p. 122.

9The triptych in the Uffizi, despite its religious subjects (the Crucifixion, the Circumcision, the Ascension), is totally lacking in religious feeling and serves Mantegna solely as a reproduction of the "Antique world," being in every aspect--figure and setting--"Roman." Italian Painters of the Renaissance, p. 148. It is also of interest.
that Mantegna failed to achieve full contour, but stopped short at outline and made no progress in "form" or "movement" after he was twenty-five. Theobald does not go beyond the "sketch" of the bambino and, like Mantegna, makes no progress in his art.

10Italian Painters of the Renaissance, p. 147.


12Ibid., p. 46.

13Ibid., p. 48.

14Ibid.

15Ibid., p. 44.

16Ibid., p. 52.

17The Art of the Novel, p. 39.

18"The Art of Fiction," p. 44.

19Henry James, "The Liar," The Complete Tales of Henry James, VI, 385.


23Ibid., pp. 411, 412.

24Ibid., p. 414.


26Ibid., p. 415. (Italics mine).

27Ibid., p. 420.

28Ibid., p. 419.


30"The Liar," p. 419.
In contrast to Oliver Lyon, Mary Tredick, artist of "The Tone of Time" (1900), views her subject with both hate and love. She sees both the "infamy" and the inescapable "beauty," and, by total involvement with the "whole man," she achieves a vital living portrait.

In his original sketch in the Notebooks James envisaged an embarrassing crisis which would be met by a supporting lie from the wife, but would turn her love for her husband to hate. But when James finally composed the story, he realized that to permit Everina's defection would be to sanction the ignoble designs of her frustrated lover—to condemn a minor deception while condoning a major.

Henry James, "The Real Thing," The Complete Tales of Henry James, VIII, 254.

Both "The Liar" and "The Real Thing" are based on fact. "The Liar" had its inception in a personal encounter between James and a charming "colloquial romancer" and his "serene," "veracious" wife who "did her duty" by her husband's tall tales "without so much as turning a hair." The Art of the Novel, pp. 178, 179. "The Real Thing" was based on an anecdote related to James by George du Maurier concerning two couples who had offered themselves "as artist's models for Du Maurier's weekly 'social illustrations' to Punch." The Art of the Novel, pp. 283, 284.
CHAPTER II
THE TWO SIDES OF THE MEDAL

In The Wings of the Dove James invites us to view both sides of the "medal" of each individual—"its obverse and its reverse, its face and its back," the side in the sunlight and the side in the shadow, in order that we may appreciate the infinite complexity of human nature. Through the use of successive centres of consciousness, operative irony, framing, and the objet d'art James creates vital living characters.

Milly Theale, the central figure in James's picture, first comes into sharp focus in a scene which integrates description with action and characterization, indicates relations, and suggests theme. We view Milly through the eyes of Susan Stringham, her New England confidante and travelling companion. The two American women, who are touring Europe, have stopped at an inn on the Brunig Pass. Milly has chosen to take a solitary walk, and Mrs. Stringham, who has become alarmed at her lengthy absence, has gone in search of her. Rounding a sharp turn on an alpine path, Susan suddenly catches sight of her young companion at the "dizzy edge" of a precipice—"seated at her ease" on "a slab of rock at the end of a short promontory . . . that merely pointed off to the right into gulfs of air." Susan is seized with horror at the danger of the girl's position and her possible intention, for Milly has lost parents, brothers, sisters. She is "alone," "stricken," "rich," "strange." But in the moment when sight and insight merge, Susan realizes that though
Milly may be "looking down on the kingdoms of the earth, . . . it wouldn't be with a view of renouncing them."^4

For she now saw . . . that the future was not to exist for her princess in the form of any sharp or simple relief from the human predicament. It wouldn't be for her a question of a flying leap and thereby of a quick escape. It would be a question of taking full in the face the whole assault of life . . . . She wouldn't cut short the thread. . . . she knew herself unmistakably reserved for some more complicated passage . . . .^5

Later, in a highly ambiguous speech, Milly ponders whether she will have much "of everything" and then expresses the doubt that she has "everything." When Susan presses her to know her meaning, Milly explains: "The power to resist the bliss of what I have."^6 This may merely imply (as Mrs. Stringham would like to believe), sheer "excess of the joy of life."^7 However, it may equally mean the power to resist the temptation to use wealth to purchase happiness and, as Mr. Firebaugh points out, "to purchase happiness may mean to purchase people—to acquire them, as a princess does her retinue, through a complicated system of courtly acts . . . ."^8 This intention is, I believe, taking shape in Milly's mind, for, coupled with a suggestion of fear as to the duration of her life and a marked desire for experience, Milly definitely states that what she wants is "'people,' so far as they were to be had," and she determines to "go straight to London."^9 We may, I believe, safely assume that when Milly went directly down to the edge of the precipice and calmly contemplated all that lay before her she faced reality, and her subsequent decisions indicate that she does not have "the power to resist the bliss" of what she has and of what she may still have.
At the dinner party at Lancaster Gate all the characters are brought into relation. Milly Theale has been introduced into Mrs. Lowder's circle, and there is a sharpening and heightening of her consciousness as she feels herself completely involved. The elements in this English situation are "rich and strange," and Milly senses a "complicated . . . possibly sinister motive" when, in conversation with the blase Lord Mark and the handsome Kate Croy, she learns that here people "work" people, sharp bargains are driven, and the highest possible value is gained in return.

The Matcham reception in Book Fifth marks the peak of Milly's social success and joy which began with the dinner party three weeks before at Lancaster Gate. Although Milly was made aware at Maud Lowder's of the social system in which everyone "works" everyone else, it is indicative of her innocence that she sees the guests at Matcham as figures from a Watteau painting—"gentle folks all," graceful, charming, elegant, natural, innocent. Like Watteau, Milly believes in the beauty and splendour; she fails to see the dark underside of greed and selfishness and social intrigue. Her present view of life is romantic, idealistic, yet poignant in its unreality. Placed as it is between two incidents which evoke fear and grief, this idyllic scene is an ironic comment on society and, by reason of contrast, it heightens our response to Milly in the central scene which is to follow.

The moment of supreme realization comes as Milly stands with Lord Mark before her likeness in the Bronzino portrait. Following, as it does, the Watteau picture which depicts an imaginary world of delight where pain and time do not intrude, the Bronzino becomes a symbol of mortality.
Refinement and elegance but thinly veil the pervasive sadness and mutability.

Milly found herself, for the first moment, looking at the mysterious portrait through tears... the face of a young woman, all magnificently drawn, down to the hands, and magnificently dressed; a face almost livid in hue, yet handsome in sadness and crowned with a mass of hair rolled back and high, that must, before fading with time, have had a family resemblance to her own. The lady... with her slightly Michaelangelesque squareness, her eyes of other days, her full lips, her long neck, her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds, was a very great personage—only unaccompanied by a joy. And she was dead, dead, dead. Milly recognized her exactly in words that had nothing to do with her. 'I shall never be better than this.'

Lord Mark does not understand. He thinks that by "this" Milly means the magnificence and grandeur of the "personage" in the picture, whereas, by a sudden identification with the dead lady, Milly has a foreboding of her own doom. As she studies the portrait, Milly is once again brought face to face with reality. On the edge of the precipice she contemplated using her power to gain happiness; now her hold on joy—on life itself, seems even more precarious. She realizes that she no longer has a choice—she must "manipulate" others or become a victim of their manipulation. Milly the romantic idealist, who has selected and cherished only the beauty and joy of life, must now come to grips with life's ugliness and pain.

The Bronzino portrait occupies the central position in the central scene of the novel. It advances plot by placing Lord Mark and Milly in closer relation and also prepares the way for Milly's visit to Sir Luke Strett. The painting and Milly's reaction to it reinforce the theme of La Mourante who desires desperately to live and whose very wealth and
misfortune make her a victim of the designs of the other persons involved in the drama. Finally, it reveals character. Bronzino's subjects are most often royal personages who have an air of distinction; they suggest "an aristocracy alike of the intellect and senses." Miriam Allott, who has identified this particular portrait, points out that "the expressive stillness of the pose suggests self-control allied to a capacity for intense feeling." Milly is regal and aristocratic in her superior material and intellectual status, in her acceptance of wealth and power, in her love of luxury, elegance, refinement. She is an aristocrat in her poise, restraint, and observance of form, and, like the Bronzino subject, she gives evidence of intense feelings and an underlying lack of repose which are carefully kept under control by her strength of will and power of endurance.

When her worst fears become settled convictions, not through what Sir Luke says but through what he refrains from saying, Milly begins to romanticize her doom in order to gain courage to live. She sees herself "as one of the circle of eminent contemporaries, photographed, engraved, signatured, and in particular framed and glazed, who made up the rest of the decoration" in Sir Luke's handsome back consulting room. Once again, as with the Bronzino, there is the double connotation of death, yet immortality through art. But it is significant that Milly sees herself not as a portrait but as a two-dimensional photograph which suggests a failure (despite her longing) to actually experience life.

On various occasions Milly has had intimations of the other side of Kate's "medal," an aspect of which is the look which Milly interprets as
Kate's "other identity, the identity she would have for Mr. Densher," but Milly has refused to believe that the two are in love, all appearances to the contrary. Milly has wanted, almost from the first, to work Merton Densher into her own picture, but the surprise encounter between Milly, Kate, and Densher at the National Gallery conclusively points to the fact that Kate and Merton are lovers. Milly, however, still intent on preserving her illusion intact, refuses to admit the evidence. She has sought out the gallery to belatedly absorb some culture and more particularly to find a temporary refuge from her problem. Kate and Merton have entered the gallery merely seeking lovers' privacy in public anonymity. Overhearing an American tourist comment on something "in the English style," Milly turns and sees, not a painting, but Kate with Densher. The sudden sharp encounter discloses an aspect of the character of each which is revelatory of their individual methods of handling a difficult situation. Densher is embarrassed and relies on Kate to extricate him from his predicament. Kate, whom Milly regards as "prodigious," simply "reduces" the situation to "easy terms"—they are all friends; the meeting is a pleasant coincidence. Milly

. . . knew herself handled and . . . dealt with . . . A minute . . . hadn't elapsed before Kate had somehow made her provisionally take everything as natural. . . . The handsome girl was thus literally in control of the scene . . . .19

Milly, who has been called a "princess" and treated as one by Susan, now assumes the role of the "dove" (an epithet previously bestowed upon her by Kate). With quick perception she "takes in" the situation and covers her dismay and confusion by adopting the spontaneity of the natural
American girl. Kate had, by a look, asked for time, "and the American
girl could give time as nobody else could. What Milly thus gave she
therefore made them take—even if . . . it was rather more than they
wanted."

Kate's ability to "reduce" situations to "easy terms," to "handle"
people is apparent. She has been "manipulated" by her father, sister,
and Aunt Maud, and it is now evident that she herself is a master in the
art of manipulation. Densher's vagueness and willingness to submit to
Kate come into view. Milly's role is one of passive resistance, but, by
her mere passivity, by the sheer force of her will, she will draw others
into the whirlpool of her tragedy.

This scene forms a link with that which centred around the Bronzino
portrait and with the scenes in the Palazzo Leporelli in Venice. Milly
identified with the Bronzino with its suggestion of sadness and
mutability, but she finds herself "too weak" for the brilliance of the
Turners and Titians, and turns from them to watch the lady copyists.
Like them, Milly is unable to "render" life—she can only copy it, and
their work suggests the escape to be found in mere perseverance and
detachment. The National Gallery, after all, becomes merely a "refuge."

It was the air she wanted and the world she would now exclusively choose;
the quiet chambers, nobly overwhelming, rich but slightly veiled, opened
out round her and made her presently say: 'If I could lose myself here!'
There were people, people in plenty, but admirably no personal question.
It was immense, outside, the personal question . . . .

In Venice Milly will again seek out "the quiet chambers, nobly overwhelming,
rich but slightly veiled," and this time she will not go out again to "the
personal question" but will, when the illusion breaks down, meet reality
"full in the face" within her tower.

In the gathering dusk of her personal world Milly seeks refuge in the Palazzo Leporelli.

The romance for her would be to sit there for ever, through all her time, as in a fortress; and the idea became an image of never going down, of remaining aloft in the divine, dustless air, where she would hear but the plash of the water against stone.

To "go down" can only mean to face reality, and Milly again turns her back on the "abyss." In her need to preserve the illusion of life, she surrounds herself with beauty and antiquity—the enduring quality of art which she sensed in the portraits in the National Gallery. But with the advent of Lord Mark with his callous proposal "the charm turned on them a face that was cold in its beauty, that was full of a poetry never to be theirs, that spoke with an ironic smile of a possible but forbidden life." Milly is swiftly transported in memory to their moments together before the Bronzino and, in a sudden flash of insight, she realizes that "she mightn't last, but her money would. With that there came to her a light: wouldn't her value, for the man who should marry her, be precisely in the ravage of her disease?"

It is in Book VIII, Chapter XXVIII that Milly makes her last public appearance at a party in honour of Sir Luke Strett. The ceremony and splendour of the scene suggests to Susan "a Veronese picture," and she exults that her "princess" is "lodged for the first time as she ought, from her type, to be . . . ." Susan sees herself as "the inevitable dwarf, the small blackamoor, put into a corner of the foreground for effect." As usual, she feels herself both "dwarfed" by Milly's
magnificence and relegated to a minor, though still significant corner of Milly's picture.

Laurence Holland has identified the painting to which Susan refers as "the Supper in the House of Levi." He observes:

In Veronese's treatment of the tale, a dwarf stands in the left foreground (placed there, Veronese informed the Inquisitors, 'For ornament as is usually done.') A blackamoor reaches out for the bird perched on the dwarf's wrist, above them on a landing of a staircase in a Venetian palace, in a strikingly mannered pose, stands a figure in green who seems about to descend the stairs and depart; he affords an analogy to Densher. At dinner, far in the background but centred, is the doomed and sacred figure of Christ; he, and his wealthy host, afford analogies to Milly.

Densher wonders "what part there was for him with his attitude that lacked the highest style, in a composition in which everything else would have it," but Mrs. Stringham informs him that he will be in the picture. "You'll be the grand young man who surpasses all the others and holds up his head and the wine cup." This second painting to which Susan alludes is, according to Mr. Holland, "The Marriage Feast at Cana." He says:

In Veronese's picture (the Louvre version, which James knew), a dark-skinned dwarf, with his bird, stands inconspicuously in the left foreground of a sumptuous banquet scene. On the right, holding up a wine cup, stands the steward; he is the figure Susan associates with Densher. Dominating the composition in the center foreground is a small group of musicians, including a portrait of Titian and a self-portrait of Veronese. They draw the eye in the direction of the figures directly behind, but, in their business as performing artists, they distract attention from the others; behind them at dinner, analogous in their position to Milly, are Mary and Christ.

The analogies which Mr. Holland notes have led critics to regard Milly as a Christ figure—one who entertains, enriches, gives all, only to be repaid by betrayal and death, but who, by her sacrifice, brings
about Densher's salvation. This is a very tempting and, to an extent, plausible explanation. Densher may readily be identified as a "Judas"--the "figure in green who seems about to descend the stairs and depart."
The apparent motivation is the same in each case--Judas's desire for the thirty pieces of silver and Densher's for Milly's money. The steward with the wine cup suggests that Milly, like Christ, has changed the water of her guests' lives into wine, and Densher, as chief steward, will have the opportunity to taste the best wine which is reserved till the last (Milly's Christmas gift). "Wine" also carries the double connotation of sacrifice and redemption. Milly's white robes and the epithet "the dove" further extend the analogy, and viewed thus, Milly becomes a type or manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

This interpretation might suffice were it not for James's stated aim--to render life and his invitation in the Preface to view both sides of the medal. To fail to do so must, of necessity, result in a one-sided approach to the problem. We have had intimations of the humanity not merely of Kate and Densher, but also of Milly. She appears unable to resist the "bliss" of what she has--the power of her wealth; she covets the love of Densher, and she is prepared, if necessary, to "manipulate" those around her. This is evident in the way she studies "the dovelike" with "the wisdom of the serpent." Milly adroitly arranges a meeting between Susan and Sir Luke so that her companion may learn from another the facts of Milly's "case." With a show of spontaneity, Milly whisks Kate and Densher home to luncheon following the encounter in the National Gallery and uses them as a temporary barrier between herself and
and Susan's pity. She answers Mrs. Lowder's question regarding the relation of Kate and Densher with perfect honesty, yet reveals nothing. But when Lord Mark makes his callous proposal, Milly tells him her true condition because she does not love him and is perfectly aware of his real intention.

Thus it would appear more probable that, in introducing two paintings by Veronese, James is implying Milly's desire to live, even if briefly, in the Veronese style—to enjoy the "ceremony and splendour" with a "frank and joyous worldliness,"\textsuperscript{55} to seek temporary refuge in the illusion of health and simplicity. This is surely Milly's final attempt to experience life. The analogy between Milly and Christ may imply not simply betrayal, martyrdom, sacrifice, and redemption, but power—the power to unite and to divide. For while it is true that Milly brings her guests "into relation," makes them "more finely genial,"\textsuperscript{56} she is the final cause of the great gulf fixed between Kate and Densher.

The scene of Milly's party resembles a Veronese painting with the great golden saloon lighted by myriad candles, the musicians taking their places, and the guests in gay attire moving to and fro. Milly is in the midst—for the first time all in white, her pallor and red hair accentuated by the lights, the purity of her dress with its rich lace, and her long, lustrous, double strand of priceless pearls. At the other side of the room, apart from the rest, stand Kate and Densher watching Milly intently. By the very power of her presence, without taking action of any kind, Milly draws Kate and Densher to the edge of the abyss.

For the first time Densher sees Milly in a new light, and Kate
suffers by comparison. Densher is impressed by Milly's beauty and charm, Kate, by her priceless pearls. "'She's a dove,'" Kate murmurs, "'and one somehow doesn't think of doves as bejewelled. Yet they suit her down to the ground.'" Densher applies the epithet to Milly's spirit, but he has a sudden intuition that "Kate was . . . exceptionally under the impression of that element of wealth in her . . . which was a great power, and which was dove-like only so far as one remembered that doves have wings and wondrous flights." Milly's pearls symbolize the difference for Kate, and Densher is painfully aware that she is thinking that pearls are exactly what he, as a poor journalist, will never be able to give her. It is at this point that Kate reveals the full range of her intention. Since Milly can't live, Densher is to marry her for her money, and they will then "in the natural course be free." Densher is unable to understand how, loving him, Kate could bear his marriage to Milly, but Kate shows herself to be a complete realist as she replies: "'I don't like it, but I'm a person, thank goodness, who can do what I don't like.'" Kate has just made her proposal when Milly sends across the room to them "all the candour of her smile." Almost immediately Densher extorts a promise from Kate that she will go to his rooms. Thus Milly's "occasion," which represents her affirmation of the will to live, reaches a sombre climax. By her innocence, restraint, and wealth Milly has unconsciously united Kate and Densher in their plot against her.

Although Kate is completely realistic in her determination to have both Milly's money and later marriage to Densher, she appears to be idealistic in her concern for Milly. Kate maintains that they must
continue their act, for if they destroy Milly's illusion of Densher's love it will kill her. Yet even this apparent idealism creates a feeling of doubt and uneasiness, for it cannot be denied that Kate seemingly has everything to gain by deceiving Milly and very little to lose. Kate has "a dire accessibility" to the pleasures of "material things"—the things which only Aunt Maud can provide, yet she is unwilling to pay the required price—marriage to Lord Mark, a man she does not love, in order to gratify Mrs. Lowder's desire for a title. Kate is fully aware that Maud Lowder prizes her purely as a social asset (on the basis of her beauty and charm), while her father and sister Marian value her solely for the monetary benefits she can provide through her share of Aunt Maud's wealth. Kate has already declared and proved that she can do what she doesn't like—if it appears to be to her eventual advantage, but for Densher it is another matter. He has always prided himself on his "ideal straightness," yet now he finds his idealism in conflict with Kate's realism. He loves Kate and is determined to remain loyal to her, and he sincerely wants to spare Milly pain, but he is unwilling to lie to her either to further Kate's plan or to preserve Milly's illusion. Densher tries to remain "straight" by merely adopting a passive role. He will make no advances but will simply leave action to Milly. Milly's unquestioning acceptance of him and the fact that she never makes it necessary for him to commit himself both facilitates Densher's course and increases his underlying sense of guilt. He realizes that by his very silence he has turned a corner, yet "the feeling of how far he had gone came back to him not in repentance, but in this very vision of an escape."
Like Milly, Densher attempts to maintain his idealism at all costs. He, too, has flashes of recognition when he looks into the abyss of his own heart, but these moments of insight are always followed by withdrawal and evasion.

The scene of the first autumn sea storm which chills and drenches Venice is set between two crises. It is preceded by Milly's refusal to admit Densher and followed by Densher's sudden unexpected view of Lord Mark. Again James uses "framing" to give further insight into character. As Densher peers through the window of Florian's café and glimpses Lord Mark seated at a table reading the *Figaro* sight and insight merge, and he immediately associates Milly's rejection of him with the man he now regards as a rival. Densher ironically shifts the blame for Milly's apparent distress to Lord Mark's shoulders and, with a sense of relief and escape, he mentally accuses Lord Mark of the stupidity and cruelty of which he himself is guilty.

When Susan Stringham comes with word that Milly "has turned her face to the wall" and asks Densher, out of mercy, to deny his engagement to Kate Oroy, he is once again saved from a commitment, this time by Susan's restraint, nor does Sir Luke, on his arrival, require a pledge, much to Densher's relief. But as the gondola bears the great doctor away to the Palazzo Leporelli,

[Densher] found himself, as never yet, . . . in the presence of the truth that was the truest about Milly. . . . It was all in the air as he heard Pasquale's cry and saw the boat to disappear—by the mere visibility on the spot, of the personage summoned to her aid. He had not only never been near the facts of her condition—which had been such a blessing for
him; he had not only, with all the world, hovered outside an impenetrable ring fence, within which there reigned a kind of expensive vagueness, made up of smiles and silences and beautiful fictions and priceless arrangements, all strained to breaking; but he had also, with everyone else, as he now felt, actively fostered suppressions which were in the direct interest of everyone's good manner, everyone's pity, everyone's really quite generous ideal. It was a conspiracy of silence...to which no one made an exception, the great smudge of mortality across the picture, the shadow of pain and horror, finding in no quarter a surface of spirit or of speech that consented to reflect it. 'The mere aesthetic instinct of mankind—!'44

While the preservation of form has been necessary and all have contributed to it, Densher is becoming aware that Milly has been consigned to a lonely eminence (the position she first chose of her own accord in the Alps).

But Densher is not yet willing to take a close look at both sides of the medal. He admits the "beautiful fictions," the "conspiracy of silence," his relief at not having "been near the facts" of Milly's "condition," but he continues to regard everyone's behaviour as a "really quite generous ideal." He either cannot or will not face reality—the fact that everyone has used Milly for his own selfish ends.

After a final brief visit with Milly at her request (a meeting which James discreetly veils), Densher returns to London, but it is a fortnight before he calls on Kate. The scenes which follow show the gulf widening between them. Densher immediately notices a difference in Kate—she is glib, and her concern as to what Milly has done for Densher is uppermost. Densher also becomes aware that Mrs. Lowder has used his relationship with Milly to leave Kate free for a brilliant marriage. His resentment grows. He realizes that there is a terrible difference between his view of the situation and Kate's. Kate admits she would have lied to Milly, and this, Densher feels, is but another instance of her tendency
to "simplify" for her own ends. This is not consistent with his idealism. He declares:

'If I had denied you . . . I would have stuck to it. . . . I wouldn't have made my denial, in such conditions, only to take it back afterwards.' With this quickly light came for her, and with it also her colour flamed. 'Oh, you would have broken with me to make your denial a truth? . . . to save your conscience?' 'I couldn't have done anything else,' said Merton Densher. . . . Kate again considered . . . 'You have fallen in love with her.'

Densher does not deny the charge but merely says that, though she asked nothing, Milly wanted the truth. Kate flatly denies this.

'She never wanted the truth . . . She wanted you. She would have taken from you what you could give her, and been glad of it even if she had known it false. You might have lied to her from pity, and she have seen you and felt you lie, and yet—since it was all for the tenderness—she would have thanked you and blessed you and clung to you but the more. For that was your strength, my dear man—that she loves you with passion.'

This amounts to a direct confrontation between idealism and realism. Time and again Densher has attempted to take an ideal view of his motives and actions—a view which frequently does not "square" with reality. In his effort to be perfectly "straight," to "save his own conscience," as Kate puts it, Densher deeply wrongs both the women who love him. In Venice his scruples led him to reject the lie which might have brightened Milly's last days, and he felt positively relieved that Lord Mark, by his "brutal" intervention, should have made his own behaviour look relatively decent. Densher allowed Kate to "manipulate" him—to lead him into a course which he knew to be wrong, yet he tried to remain morally aloof from the plot by mere passivity. However, he did not hesitate to exact his price—Kate's honour. Now he is convinced
(or would like to be), that his actions are justified—Milly wanted the truth (even though the truth caused her to "turn her face to the wall").

Kate, on the other hand, appears to have had few illusions about herself or others. She never indulges in self-pity, rationalization, or recrimination; she simply "sizes up" the situation, makes her plans, puts them into effect, and calmly accepts the outcome. Given Milly's reaction to the obvious relation between Kate and Densher at the time of the surprise encounter in the National Gallery and her unquestioning acceptance of Densher's attentions in Venice, it seems quite likely that Kate's present estimate of her is correct.

Kate and Densher have been unlike from the beginning, and the stresses and tensions resulting from their machinations against Milly have gradually increased until their relationship is threatened. Densher spends more and more time with Mrs. Lowder because she doesn't know the truth and less and less with Kate because she does. But when Mrs. Lowder informs him of Milly's death in the words: "Our dear dove . . . has folded her wonderful wings. . . . Unless it's more true . . . that she has spread them the wider," Densher realizes that she, like Kate, is thinking merely in terms of Milly's money. In a final attempt to maintain his "ideal straightness," Densher suggests an immediate marriage, but Kate is "immovable," and her reasons sicken him. She wants first to be sure of Milly's money. His horror of her "lucidity" turns to "rage," then "to mere cold thought." Yet Kate still exerts a strange power over him. In tribute to her submission to his will in Venice and as a final proof of his loyalty, Densher takes her Milly's letter (received on
Christmas Eve), with the seal still unbroken. Kate flings it, unopened, into the fire. It is an act of pure jealousy. Kate is becoming aware of Milly's influence over Densher, and she resents her accordingly. It is also probable that Kate is fairly certain of the general purport of the letter—Milly has left her money to Densher, and if this is the case, they need only wait for legal confirmation.

When the second letter comes, an official communication from New York, Kate does not hesitate to break the seal. This foreshadows and is symbolic of the destruction of a relationship. Densher would have sent the document back "intact and inviolate," and Kate's act has destroyed the ideal beauty of renunciation and irreparably flawed her image in his eyes.

In the final confrontation between Kate and Densher the problem of selection becomes uppermost. Densher will marry Kate without the money; he will not marry her with it. To do so would constitute a violation of Milly's trust and beauty, of her sacred memory, of his own idealism. Kate has said: "I used to call her, in my stupidity—from want of anything better—a dove. Well she stretched out her wings, and it was to that they reached. They cover us." Densher concurs: "They cover us." But there is an ironic immensity of difference in the view taken by Kate and Densher of Milly's sheltering wings. For Kate the protection will always be seen as material—the protection afforded by wealth; for Densher it is spiritual—the wings have stretched over them in love and forgiveness. Milly has seen with larger other eyes and made allowance for them both.
Kate knows the truth—Milly's memory is Densher's love; he wants no other. Yet Kate is still unwilling to relinquish him—whether from love, or jealousy, or both. She issues a final ultimatum: she will marry Densher if he will renounce this love. But Densher still clings desperately to his idealism; he will marry Kate—"as they were." He must retain his concept of himself as "straight." Kate, however, is above all a realist; she knows too well that all has been forever changed by Milly's greater, though passive power. Kate "turned to the door, and her head-shake was now the end. 'We shall never be again as we were!'"

James's medal hangs free—"the bright hard medal, of so strange an alloy, one face of which is somebody's right and ease and the other somebody's pain and wrong." As the medal rotates we see both sides of the case, both sides of each individual—the strange duality of human life. If we view impartially, objectively, we must agree that the characters are very real, intensely human. Not one can be categorized as either an absolute saint or an unqualified sinner. As Kate points out, people "work" people. "The worker in one connection was the worked in another..." The devoted Susan "uses" Milly as a "trophy" to gain admittance to Maud Lowder's social circle and to compensate for her own "small marriage" which is in such contrast to Maud's "great one." Her starved Puritan conscience feeds on the romance of Milly who strikes her as a "Byzantine princess." She lives vicariously in Milly's triumphs, yet she satisfies her conscience by "giving up," by "suffering" with Milly. Maud Lowder "manipulates" Kate and Densher only to be deceived and manipulated in return. Yet she is not entirely selfish, since in
trying to arrange a brilliant marriage for Kate she is thinking of her niece's welfare as well as her own. Kate has known only "the failure of fortune and . . . honour" with her father and Marian, but Mrs. Lowder knows social honour can be bought, and she is out to "buy" it with Kate's beauty and charm. Densher is a curious mixture of strength and weakness. He wants to be perfectly "straight," but the road he walks is more often "crooked." He suffers under Kate's manipulation, and he brings suffering to both Milly and Kate. Yet, at the end, the stamp of his medal is fixed, his value set, not by Kate, but by Milly, "the little American girl" whom he first consented to exploit only to eventually find her the "dove" whose pervasive influence changes the entire course of his life. Kate seems unscrupulous in her deception of Aunt Maud, her manipulation of Densher, and her exploitation of Milly, yet she is "used" by each of them, as well as by her father and Marian. She appears to be the dark lady, "magnificent in sin," yet when we contrast her strength of will, pride, and "talent for life" with her sordid background and the wretched father and miserable sister to whom she returns, when we observe the quiet dignity with which she accepts her final defeat, the "sin" is toned down and merges into her background, and she stands forth magnificent in vitality and beauty. Kate has been false, but she has also been true, and she, perhaps more than any other character, has been able to face reality.

Milly has been regarded by many critics as the least realistic character in the novel, perhaps the least real of all James's heroines, yet this judgment of her arises, I believe, from a total misinterpretation of a most human quality. Milly is not a purely allegorical figure; she
is merely inscrutable. She has to be, both for her own protection and to protect others from the reality they shun. Milly is not pure spirit. She adopts the role of the "dove" and uses "the wisdom of the serpent" to attain her ends. It is true that she is exploited, betrayed, sacrificed, but Milly herself is the most clever of manipulators. By doing nothing overtly she draws all the characters into the whirlpool, brings them all to the edge of her abyss in one way or another. They are all necessary to her illusion, and they are "worked" as well as she. Milly is an enigma, like life itself. It is impossible to know whether her posthumous Christmas gift to Densher is a token of love (as he and Kate believe), or an act of revenge; whether, in her purity of heart, Milly forgives all and attempts to provide for the marital bliss of Densher and Kate, or whether, with her finely developed consciousness, she understands Densher better than he understands himself and knows that her gift will divide the lovers forever. Does she realize the "ideal" in the "real" by accepting the truth and meeting it with generosity and forgiveness? or is she "destroyed" by her confrontation with reality? When she "turns her face to the wall" does she resign herself to the "bale" of life? or does she despair at her loss of the "bliss"? We may assume the latter, but the medal rotates, and we cannot be sure. James knew that life contains few absolutes, and in presenting both sides of his characters he renders reality--life and humanity as they are--unknown and unknowable.
FOOTNOTES

1 Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove* (New York: The Modern Library, 1930), p. xiii. All further references to this novel will be to this edition.

2 Ibid., I, 138.

3 Ibid., p. 118.

4 Ibid., p. 139.

5 Ibid., p. 140.

6 Ibid., pp. 146, 147.

7 Ibid., p. 148.


9 *The Wings of the Dove*, I, 150, 149.

10 Ibid., p. 171.

11 Henry James, "The Wallace Collection" (1873), *The Painter's Eye*, p. 76. James says of Watteau's painting: "What elegance and innocence combined," yet "so extremely impracticable: a scheme of lounging through endless summer days in grassy glades in a company always select, . . . in which satisfaction should never be satiety. Watteau was a genuine poet; he has an irresistible air of believing in these visionary picnics. . . . But oddly enough, the dusky tone of his pictures deepens their dramatic charm and gives a certain poignancy to their unreality." P.E., pp. 76, 77.

12 *The Wings of the Dove*, I, 242. The resemblance between Milly and the subject of the Bronzino portrait is unmistakable. See the descriptions of her on pp. 118, 132. On p. 118 she is described as a "slim, constantly pale, delicately haggard, anomalously, agreeably angular young person, of not more than two-and-twenty in spite of her marks, whose hair was somehow exceptionally red even for the real thing, . . . and whose clothes were remarkably black even for robes of mourning . . . ." P. 132 describes her features in detail, and the similarity is marked.


Miriam Allott, "The Bronzino Portrait in The Wings of the Dove," Modern Language Notes, LXVIII (January, 1953), p. 24. Miss Allott has identified this portrait as that of Lucrezia Panciatichi in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence. She points out that it was "painted between 1532 and 1540" and "is reproduced—unsatisfactorily—in the Enciclopedia Italiana (VII, facing p. 928, 1950), but it is also available as a Medici Society print. The pale face of the sitter stares out of the now dark setting—once probably deep green—and confronts the world with the characteristic aloofness of Bronzino's aristocratic subjects. . . . The pallor of the face combined with the red hair 'rolled back and high,' 'the long neck,' 'the Michaelangelesque squareness,' the 'brocaded and wasted reds' and 'the recorded jewels' makes the identification irresistible." Miss Allott believes that "James must have looked hard and long at the portrait in the Uffizi. The phrase 'her recorded jewels' reveals this. Carved into the longer green 'beads' of the second and larger necklace worn by Bronzino's Lucrezia is the legend 'Amour dure sans fin.'" pp. 24, 25.


Ibid., p. 255.

Milly has even been informed of the relationship between Kate and Densher by Kate's sister, Marian.


Ibid., p. 323.

Turner is noted for his "pale brilliance of colour," what he termed his "tinted steam." Peter and Linda Murray, eds. The Dictionary of Art and Artists (London, 1965), p. 203. The paintings of Titian's early period are noted for their "spontaneous joy of life" in which there is "no sign of a struggle of inner and outer conditions." During Titian's last three decades he represents man "as acting on his environment and suffering from his reactions. He made the faces and figures show clearly what life had done to them." Italian Painters of the Renaissance, pp. 19, 22. Milly, with her consciousness heightened by fear and pain, would sense the feelings expressed in Titian's pictures and would turn away from both the "exuberant joy," the life without struggle, and the suggestion of man "humbled," "broken," "almost brutalized by pain and suffering." The early pictures would intensify, by contrast, her own misery; the later works would evoke a terror of what might lie ahead.


Ibid., II, 173.
The description of the Palazzo Leporelli with its "pompous Tiepolo ceiling," Gothic windows, and court with outside staircase is based on James's memory of the Palazzo Barbaro, home of his friends the Daniel Curtises whom he visited in Venice in 1887. The account of his visit is recorded in the preface to The Spoils of Poynton in The Art of the Novel, pp. 135, 136. Viola Hopkins observes: "Perhaps through association the Veronese images sprang to mind; according to a painting representing the interior of one of the Palazzo Barbaro salons there were at the turn of the century two Veroneses—'The Rape of the Sabines' and 'The Continence of Scipio'—on its walls. (This painting, which is in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is by Walter A. Gay. Sargent's 'Interior of a Palazzo in Venice' is of the grand sala of the Palazzo Barbaro with its representation of figures [the Daniel Curtises, their son and his wife] in informal poses . . . .)" It appears that on his first visit to Venice James was introduced to Veronese. "Visual Art Devices and Parallels in the Fiction of Henry James," p. 569.

The Wings of the Dove, II, 162.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 164.

Ibid., p. 225.

See Luke V, 27-35, The Holy Bible, King James version, 1611. All further references to The Holy Bible will be taken from this version.


See John II, 1-11, The Holy Bible.


Bernard Berenson draws attention to Veronese's "singularly happy combination of ceremony and splendour with an almost childlike naturalness of feeling." Berenson says: "His cheerfulness, and his frank joyous worldliness, the qualities ... which we find in his huge pictures of feasts, seem to have been particularly welcome to those who were expected to make their meat and drink of the very opposite qualities" (the monks). He further notes that "there were no painters in the North of Italy, and few even in Florence, who were not touched by the influence of Veronese." 

Italian Painters of the Renaissance, p. 29. James writes: "Never was a painter more nobly joyous, never did an artist take a greater delight in life, seeing it all as a kind of breezy festival and feeling it through the medium of perpetual success. ... He was the happiest of painters and produced the happiest picture in the world ('The Rape of Europa'). ...

Nowhere else in art is such a temperament revealed; never did inclination and opportunity combine to express such enjoyment. The mixture of flowers and gems and brocade, of blooming flesh, ... of youth, health, movement, desire—all this is the brightest vision that ever descended upon the soul of a painter:" James refers to "the usual splendid combination of brocades, grandees and marble colonnades" in the 'Feast at the House of Levi.' He calls Veronese "the dealer in silver hues" who "thrones in an eternal morning" and declares that his "painting seems ... to have proposed to itself to discredit and annihilate ... everything but the loveliness of life." In his art "the hard outlines melted together and the blank intervals bloomed with meaning." Comparing the work of Tintoretto, Veronese, and Titian, James says: "Veronese and Titian are content with a much looser specification. ... There are few more suggestive contrasts than that between the absence of a total character at all commensurate with its scattered variety and brilliancy in Veronese's 'Marriage of Cana,' at the Louvre, and the poignant, almost startling, completeness of Tintoret's illustration of the theme at the Salute church." Italian Hours (London, 1909), pp. 23, 24, 58, 59, 87, 291, 292. The association of Milly with Veronese underlines the tragic irony in her intense desire to live which is reflected in her splendid final party. Milly's naïveté is akin to Veronese's "almost childlike naturalness of feeling," the same quality which we perceived in her comparison of the Matcham reception to a Watteau painting. Like Veronese, Milly delights in "ceremony and splendour:" she too has the "inclination" to enjoy life, but her "opportunity" is tragically limited. There is a great sadness in the fact that the girl who identified with the mutability and mortality of the Bronzino is now attempting to preserve the illusion of the beauty and joy of life as seen by "the happiest of painters." Ironically, she has an abundance of "flowers and gems and brocades," of "youth" and "desire," but the "blooming flesh"—the "health" are forever denied her. She can only look with longing at the magnificent spectacle of life which she is so soon to leave. Milly would "throne in an eternal morning," and she selects for this one occasion the beautiful "silver hues"—the white gown and lustrous pearls in a final futile attempt to deny the coming shadows and darkness. She is valiantly trying to give life meaning, and her brief sojourn is to influence the lives of all her associates. James's choice of Veronese's 'Marriage of Cana' rather than Tintoretto's
more powerful painting is suggestive of Milly's inability (like Veronese), to achieve "a total character"—a complete realization of life "at all commensurate" with the "scattered variety and brilliancy" of the scene before her. We are reminded of Milly's identification with the lady copyists at the National Gallery after she found the Titians and Turners "too rich."

37 Ibid., p. 238.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., p. 247.
40 Ibid., p. 250.
41 Ibid., I, 31.
42 Ibid., II, 103.
43 Ibid., p. 294.
44 Ibid., p. 325.
46 Ibid., p. 354.

47 Mrs. Lowder views Densher as Milly's stricken suitor and Densher tacitly acquiesces.

49 Ibid., p. 379.
50 Ibid., p. 432.
51 Ibid., p. 438.
52 Ibid., p. 439.
53 The Art of the Novel, p. 143.
54 The Wings of the Dove, I, 198.

55 The comparison of Milly to a Byzantine princess suggests not merely her beauty and aristocracy of manner, but Susan's unrealistic, isolating view of her, since Byzantine art emphasizes the "divine" rather than the
"human." There are also connotations of two dimensions, angularity, and fixity. Milly is unable to experience a fully rounded life; she is angular in appearance, and "fixed" by her mortal illness.


58 In the second half of the novel Milly is deliberately enigmatic, and her passivity acquires the quality of calculation.
CHAPTER III
THE VESSEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In *The Golden Bowl* James unrolls "the great, beautiful, terrible spectacle of human life" through the fine consciousness of two highly intelligent intense perceivers—Prince Amerigo and Maggie Verver. Once again he combines the technique of the painter with that of the novelist in rendering the "deeper psychology." This novel marks James's supreme achievement in the delineation of character and the complete realization of the ideal in the real.

The story opens on a scene which integrates description with action and characterization, indicates relations, and suggests theme. Prince Amerigo is seen wandering aimlessly down London's Bond Street, occasionally stopping before a shop window to glance absently at "objects massive and lumpish, in silver and gold" which speak of "the loot of far-off victories" of the Roman Empire, then turning to catch a glimpse of a pretty face shaded by a "huge beribboned" hat. At the outset James indicates two elements which are to influence the Prince's future actions—wealth and feminine beauty. We learn from Amerigo's musing that he has pursued and won Maggie Verver, attractive daughter of an American billionaire, but his triumph has left him with a sense of uneasiness, for he realizes that the romantic Americans value him not for himself, but for his title, his style, his dark and mysterious history. Maggie has blithely informed him that he is "a rarity, an object of beauty, an object of price," "absolutely unique," "curious," "eminent," in short, "a morceau
The Prince's restlessness reflects his sense of the loss of dignity and freedom—his awareness that he is to constitute a mere possession, and the impulse comes over him to once more assert himself before it is too late.

Amerigo's motives for marrying Maggie are both realistic and idealistic. He desires Adam Verver's money for selfish reasons, but also as a means of escape from a tradition of crime and folly which has centred around power and wealth. To be powerful and wealthy, yet refrain from arrogance and greed will, he believes, give him a fresh start. A product of the Old World, the Prince is unable to understand the apparent innocence and good faith of the New; the motives of Americans seem alarmingly obscure. Adam Verver's "form" and "tone" leave Amerigo in doubt, and he perceives that for Maggie any serious discussion of such matters as veracity or loyalty are out of the question. He doesn't know exactly what the Ververs expect of him other than "a large bland blank assumption of merits almost beyond notation . . . ."

It was as if he had been some old embossed coin, of a purity of gold no longer used, stamped with glorious arms, mediaeval, wonderful, of which the 'worth' in mere modern change, sovereigns and half-crowns, would be great enough, but as to which, since there were finer ways of using it, such taking to pieces was superfluous. . . . he was to constitute a possession, yet was to escape being reduced to his component parts. What would this mean but that practically he was never to be tried or tested? What would it mean but that if they didn't 'change' him they really wouldn't know—he wouldn't know himself—how many pounds, shillings and pence he had to give? 4

From the Prince's point of view the Ververs expect perfection. He is to be pure gold—malleable, precious—a wonderful antique with a glorious pedigree, but of no particular significance as a human being. There is
a sense of security in the fact that his actual worth is not likely to be questioned, but, on the other hand, his true value may remain forever unknown. Despite his "solid prospects," Prince Amerigo has "an impulse to look the other way--the other way from where his pledges had accumulated," and he takes a cab to Cadogan Place to visit Mrs. Assingham, the "ironic" friend who, for unknown reasons, has "made" his marriage.

It is at Mrs. Assingham's that the Prince meets Charlotte Stant and finds her as irresistible as ever.

He saw the sleeves of her jacket drawn to her wrists, but he again made out the free arms within them to be of the completely rounded, the polished slimness that Florentine sculptors in the great time had loved and of which the apparent firmness is expressed in their old silver and old bronze. He knew her narrow hands, he knew her long fingers and the shape and colour of her finger-nails, he knew her special beauty of movement and line when she turned her back, and the perfect working of all her main attachments, that of some wonderful finished instrument, something intently made for exhibition, for a prize. He knew above all the extraordinary fineness of her flexible waist . . . which gave her a likeness to some long loose silk purse, well filled with gold-pieces, but having been passed empty through a finger-ring that held it together. It was as if, before she turned to him, he had weighed the whole thing in his open palm and even heard a little the chink of the metal.6

The combination of sexual, fiscal, and art imagery which Amerigo uses to describe Charlotte marks him as passionate, excessively preoccupied with wealth, and a connoisseur of works of art. But there is also the suggestion that, like his father-in-law, Amerigo regards people as mere objects and values them according to the degree to which they gratify his taste for the beautiful or his love of luxury. His comparison of Charlotte to Florentine sculpture of "the great time" (a beautiful statue in "silver" or "bronze"), like his view of Maggie as of "the cinquecento at its most golden hour"7 while indicative of taste, is also cold and
dehumanizing. The Prince's attitude toward Charlotte and the Ververs is similar to that of the Ververs to himself. It is evident that when Amerigo refers to Charlotte as a "purse" "passed empty through the finger-ring," he is recognizing her poverty as the obstacle to her ever becoming his wife. The "purse" is to be "well filled with gold pieces" only through marriage to Adam Verver.

Charlotte's calculation is apparent in the deliberate manner in which she enters the room and coolly lets Amerigo "take her in" before she turns and says: "'You see you're not rid of me.'"8 From the beginning she is prepared, purposeful, pointed. The Prince twice refers to her as a "huntress," but "having known many women," he believes that a man infallibly has the advantage, and he rather brutally waits for Charlotte to show her "abjection." Charlotte, however, proves herself equal to the situation and wins Amerigo's admiration for her poise, "amusing taste," and ability to arrange appearances. Although he regards her merely as "the twentieth woman,"9 the Prince is quick to adopt Charlotte's "note of publicity as better than any other" if they are to "put their relation on the right footing."10 Later, in the park, Charlotte openly declares: "'I came back for this... To have one hour alone with you.'"11 "'What I want is that it shall always be with you—so that you'll never be able quite to get rid of it... . . ."12 As Elizabeth Owen points out:

She has come back expressly to exact an intimate reunion with her lover on the eve of his marriage, and the 'always' and 'never able to get rid of it' . . . imply an intention to extend her power right into the future of the marriage.13
When Amerigo hesitates, Charlotte challenges him: "'Do you want then to go and tell her?'" This makes the Prince feel foolish, and he falls back on "minimising 'fuss.' Apparent scruples were obviously fuss." Charlotte at this point gives every indication of being an absolute realist, and Amerigo's malleability appears to be taking the form of her design.

The scene in the little antique shop in Bloomsbury introduces the central symbol of the novel. Plot is advanced, the note of the ominous is deepened, our view of relations is sharpened, and Amerigo and Charlotte further reveal their characters through speech and action. The couple have entered the shop in their search for a wedding present for Maggie--something with a special "charm," but not too expensive for Charlotte's purse. Nothing suits until the little antiquario produces his "Golden Bowl"--

... a drinking-vessel larger than a common cup, yet not of exorbitant size, and formed, to appearance, either of old fine gold or of some material once richly gilt. ... Simple but singularly elegant, it stood on a circular foot, a short pedestal with a slightly spreading base, and, though not of signal depth, justified its title by the charm of its shape as well as by the tone of its surface. Charlotte is immediately taken with the piece and lifts it with care, but the Prince regards it from a distance. The conversation which ensues is among the most significant in the entire story. Charlotte asks if the cup is "really gold," and the shopkeeper, at Amerigo's insistence, replies: "'It's just a perfect crystal.'" Charlotte wonders whether she would find "any joint or any piecing" if she were "to scrape off the gold." The antiquario answers: "'You couldn't scrape it off--it has been too well
put on . . . by some very fine old worker and by some beautiful old process." He adds that it is a product of "a lost art" and "a lost time." Charlotte ironically declares: "'It may be cheap for what it is, but it will be dear, I'm afraid, for me.'" The dealer says he is willing to part with the bowl for less than its value, but Charlotte now suspects that there may be something wrong with it. At this point the Prince loses patience and leaves the shop, but Charlotte still wants the vessel and resumes her conversation with the shopkeeper who now maintains that he has been saving the bowl for her.

'You've kept it for me because you've thought I mightn't see what's the matter with it?'
'But if it's something you can't find out isn't that as good as if it were nothing?'
'I probably should find out as soon as I had paid for it.'
'Not,' her host lucidly insisted, 'if you hadn't paid too much.'
'Does one make a present,' she asked, 'of an object that contains to one's knowledge a flaw?'
'Well, if one knows of it one has only to mention it. The good faith,' the man smiled, 'is always there.' . . .
'Does crystal then break—when it is crystal? I thought its beauty was its hardness.'
Her friend, in his way discriminated. 'Its beauty is its being crystal. But its hardness is certainly its safety. It doesn't break . . . like vile glass. It splits—if there is a split. . . . On lines and by laws of its own.'
'You mean if there's a weak place?'
For all answer, after an hesitation, he took the bowl up again, holding it aloft and tapping it with a key. It rang with the finest sweetest sound. 'Where's the weak place?'
'Well, for me only the price. I'm poor, you see—very poor.'16

With this Charlotte leaves the shop and rejoins the Prince out in the street. No words pass between them on the matter, but the search for Maggie's gift is tacitly abandoned. However, the Prince soon reverts to the subject of the bowl itself. He declares that he saw from the first
that it had a crack, and he regards the crack as an ill omen. He would neither give, nor accept the vessel as a gift; he would be afraid for his "happiness," his "safety," his "marriage." Charlotte replies: "Thank goodness then that if there be a crack we know it! But if we may perish by cracks in things we don't know—! . . . We can never then give each other anything."17

In this scene the Prince displays his power for resistance, Charlotte, her power for action. Amerigo stands off, views from a distance, retreats, and waits; Charlotte approaches, takes up, pursues, persists, and finally relinquishes with reluctance. The Prince is both an intense perceiver and a connoisseur. He quickly becomes aware of the gilt and the flaw, whereas Charlotte only suspects that the object is not what it appears because of its relative cheapness. Amerigo rejects the vessel, but even after she knows of the gilt and the crack Charlotte still considers the bowl "exquisite" and continues to want it. Her lack of perception and unwillingness to renounce are to make her the most vulnerable of all the principal characters, while the Prince's intense awareness eventually saves him.

A wealth of concepts cluster around the golden bowl. Superficially, it is a mere plot device which brings about a crisis and dénouement, but the overtones are almost limitless. As Lotus Snow observes:

To Charlotte, the cup is a ricordo of her love, indeed of herself, something she cannot give the Prince because she is, as she tells the shopkeeper, 'very poor.' By the same inference, it is also the Prince, whose price, in the old time in Rome, Charlotte could not meet. To the Prince, . . . the golden bowl represents his contract with the Ververs, whose gift he is from father to daughter; the crack, the betrayal of his pledge that acceptance of Charlotte's gift would mean.18
Oscar Cargill regards the Prince's refusal of the golden bowl as a symbolic rejection of Charlotte herself.19

The symbolism of the cup or bowl reaches into antiquity, but space permits me to cite only a few examples. In Ecclesiastes the "golden bowl" represents life itself and its destruction, death.20 Christ prayed: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me . . . ."21 signifying, in part, a desire to escape physical and mental anguish and, in the words that follow, a willingness for self-renunciation. In "The Mental Traveller" Blake's "cups of gold" again symbolize life—life in which the pain of human experience is gathered.22 The image recurs throughout James's works with various connotations commencing with his first acknowledged novel, Roderick Hudson (1875). Rowland Mallet questions Roderick concerning his statuette of "a naked youth drinking from a gourd."

'Does he represent an idea? Is he a pointed symbol?'
'Why, he's youth, you know; he's innocence, he's strength, he's curiosity.'
'And is the cup also a symbol?'
'The cup is knowledge, pleasure, experience.'23

In "The Author of Beltraffio" (1884), the cup is enriched and becomes "a golden bowl." This is the cup of art, "a golden vessel, filled with the purest distillation of the actual,"24 the vessel in which life is held. In The Golden Bowl the vessel loses its massiveness and becomes an object of crystal covered with gilt. The earlier connotations of life and art are united in a richly allusive image. The golden bowl now suggests relations and serves as a means to and a test of perception. The reactions
it evokes reveal integrity or the lack of it. It constitutes a love test
and, most important, it points up the difference between the "real" and
the "ideal." Charlotte ironically wants to know the absolute value of
the bowl, but the shopkeeper lucidly points out that its value is relative
to the significance it has for its possessor. To the one who is unaware
of the flaw the vessel is perfect, and even if he should learn of it, the
object may retain its value if good faith is maintained between the giver
and the receiver. In the scenes which follow, particularly that in which
the golden bowl is broken, further relations come into view, and
additional meanings accrue to the bowl.

Book II introduces Adam Verver, reveals aspects of his character,
and places him in relation to the other participants in the drama. It
soon becomes apparent that his ruling passion is the collection of fine
pieces, but he makes no distinction between collecting objects and
collecting people. He applies "the same measure of value to such different
pieces of property as old Persian carpets . . . and new human acquisitions
. . . ."

He put into his one little glass everything he raised to his lips . . .
As it had served him to satisfy himself . . . both about Amerigo and
about the Bernardino Luini he had happened to come to knowledge of at
the time he was consenting to the announcement of his daughter's betrothal,
so it served him . . . to satisfy himself about Charlotte Stant and an
extraordinary set of oriental tiles . . . .

Even Maggie is regarded as an objet d'art--

. . . some slim draped 'antique' of Vatican or Capitoline halls . . .
keeping still the quality, the perfect felicity, of the statue; the
blurred absent eyes, the smoothed elegant nameless head, the impersonal
flit of a creature lost in an alien age and passing as an image in worn
relief round and round a precious vase.
Maggie's first-born, the little Principino, strikes his fond grandfather not as a delightful morsel of humanity, but as the finest of his small pieces.

Adam Verver's "passion for perfection at any price"\(^{27}\) threatens to make him indifferent to the humanity of his animate acquisitions, and his taste in art heightens this impression. Each of the objects mentioned is lacking in movement, depth, and life. The "Luini," Damascene tiles, and "image in worn relief" are all two-dimensional and characterized by surface beauty. Luini's figures are "sweet, gentle, attractive," but "boring" in their "uneventfulness." "There is no movement; no hand grasps, no foot stands, no figure offers resistance."\(^{28}\) The Damascene tiles suggest splendour and harmony in their beautiful "amethystine blue," fixity in their "glaze," and order in their "matched array."\(^{29}\) The figure passing round and round the vase is "elegant," "impersonal," and, like the tiles, "fixed." It appears that Adam Verver may wish his human objets d'art to possess similar attributes—to be beautiful, decorative, harmonious, "fixed," to "be" rather than "do," to offer no resistance to their possessor. Yet there is also the possibility that Adam's preference for impersonal, simplified, generalized beauty, for beauty which does not demand deep personal involvement (the kind of involvement which is required for appreciation of a portrait in contrast to the lesser demand made by two-dimensional art), may represent his need for detachment from the multitudinous human appeals which continuously impinge upon him. For, we are told,
... it had never for many minutes together been his portion not to feel himself surrounded and committed, never quite been his refreshment to make out where the many-coloured human appeal, represented by gradations of tint, diminishing concentric zones of intensity, of importunity, really faded to the impersonal whiteness for which his vision sometimes ached.

Thus the Prince fits admirably into Adam Verver's picture. He simply accepts the benefits of his father-in-law's wealth without making any further demands upon him or disturbing the even tenor of his life. While Amerigo strikes Adam as "a great Palladian church" which occupies considerable space in the life of the Ververs, he does not constitute "a block." Mr. Verver feels he has no cause to fear the "sharp corners," "hard edges," and "stony pointedness" usually associated with such a structure. To his relief, Amerigo seems to present no problem of "friction." "The Prince, by good fortune, hadn't proved angular," and their "contact" is one of "practically yielding lines and curved surfaces."

'You're round, my boy,' he had said—'you're all, you're variously and inexhaustibly round, when you might ... have been abominably square. ... You're a pure and perfect crystal.'

Mr. Verver considers himself a connoisseur, practically incapable of errors, yet

He cared that a work of art of price should 'look like' the master to whom it might perhaps be deceitfully attributed; but he had ceased on the whole to know any matter of the rest of life by its looks. He took life in general higher up the stream ...

Does this mean that Adam Verver's taste in art is questionable, but his judgment of people is sound? Or is he completely deceived when he considers himself a connoisseur of fine pieces--animate or inanimate?
The "Luini" is definitely inferior, but the precious vase is not. At first glance it appears that Adam judges only surface attributes, yet it must be remembered that the symmetrical planes of the crystal are the external expression of a definite internal structure.

The scene of the purchase of the Damascene tiles sheds further light upon the characters of Adam Verver and Charlotte Stant. For the first time in his life Adam's whole being is not devoted to the undivided appreciation of a valuable objet d'art, since Charlotte and his intended proposal to her claim a large portion of his attention. He has realistically contemplated this union with the deliberate plan of providing for all contingencies, in particular, for Maggie's peace of mind, in order that she will not feel that by marrying the Prince she has deserted her father. Yet Charlotte's "free range" of observation, her gaiety, lively curiosity, intensity, sense of irony, and above all, her apparent concern for him now promise to add a new dimension to his life. Formerly Adam has taken others (particularly Maggie) about, now it seems that Charlotte is taking him. The experience is novel, flattering, and Adam's temporary view of his situation is almost pathetically romantic—so much so that the formerly aloof connoisseur momentarily feels himself merged in the close family group to whose admiration and hospitality Charlotte freely responds at the close of his transaction with Mr. Gutermann-Seuss.

Contrary to custom, Adam has foregone the pleasure of bargaining and has unquestioningly paid a high price, and his appreciation of Charlotte has been enhanced by the "ease" and "felicity of silence" with which she has witnessed the proceedings. Like Mr. Guterman-Seuss, she impresses Adam by her "rare manner" and her instinctive knowledge "of
what not to say; "like the Prince, she displays perfect taste and appears to present no problem of "friction." But upon reflection, Mr. Verver realizes that he has exposed Charlotte to "the north light, the quite properly hard business-light," and romantically and idealistically he feels a responsibility attached to making such a display of his wealth before a poor girl. Thus his offer of marriage appears to arise from mixed motives, and it is possible that his gratitude and good faith blind him to the ironic overtones in Charlotte's response. Her reply to Adam's business-like proposal is marked by it "straightness"—a straightness matched by Adam's clear statement of his reasons for marrying—he "likes" Charlotte, and he wants to make things easy for Maggie. Charlotte tells Adam that she thinks it "a great deal" for her to marry him—that for what she wants she need not do "quite so much." She asks: "'Do you think you've 'known' me?'" then adds: "'How can you tell if you did [know me] you would [like me]? I mean when it's a question of learning one learns sometimes too late.'" "She faced him always—kept it up as for honesty, and yet at the same time, in her odd way, as for mercy." Charlotte deliberately gives Adam time and doesn't withdraw from his view "a single inch of her surface. This at least she was fully to have exposed." But there is a suggestion that Adam may have some intimation of the depths, for Charlotte impresses him as "oddly conscientious," and his reply: "'You're very, very honourable!'" may also be ironic. Yet it appears that regardless of any doubt raised by Charlotte's "tone" or "look," Adam is impelled by his own romanticism and idealism and quite probably by his admiration for Charlotte herself. It is possible that even if he
is aware of her true reason for accepting him, he may feel that she, like
the Prince, is well worth the price.

How much of the truth Adam perceives is open to speculation, but
Charlotte is fully aware that it is Maggie, not she, who takes pre-eminence
in Adam's scale of values, and in accepting her position she is completely
realistic. It is almost certain that at the time of the purchase of the
Damascene tiles Charlotte counted the cost, saw how little the human
element mattered to Adam Verver, recognized the terrible contrast between
the warmth and communion of the Gutermann-Seuss family and the cold
impersonal attitude of the man whose property she might become, and was
still willing to pay the price in return for Adam's wealth. But the
motive behind her "straightness" cannot definitely be established. She
may wish to be honest, fair, merciful—to suggest to Adam that she is
accepting him with reservations, or she may be deliberately warning him
so that he can have no grounds for complaint if her future actions
displease him.

First at the Embassy reception and later at the Matcham house party
Charlotte and Amerigo are placed in close relation. On each occasion the
Ververs decide to remain at home together and urge their respective sposi
to "do the 'worldly'" for them. Amerigo feels a sense of irritation at
the falsity of his position. It strikes him as "grotesque" that a
"galantuomo," as he regards himself, can be "thrust, systematically, with
another woman," a woman he happens "exceedingly to like," and yet be
expected to "'go about' . . . in a state of childlike innocence . . . ."
He resents being "held cheap and made light of" for his wife's
convenience. Maggie impresses him as unimaginative and lacking in perception. Charlotte, too, feels the irony and injustice of their situation. Thus it is not surprising that the Prince and Charlotte decide to prolong their time together after the party has broken up and the others have returned to London.

The scene which follows draws the couple even closer together in their sense of complicity, yet, paradoxically, it prepares for the crisis which is to separate them. The Prince is seen strolling on the terrace, placidly smoking, and drinking in the beauty of the day. As he turns toward the house, he sees Charlotte at a window dressed to go out, and her appearance suggests to Amerigo that she is prepared to take "some larger step" with him. They seem to have "identities of impulse," and the Prince is now convinced that they are "meant for each other." His certainty that he can count on Charlotte increases his confidence. As she comes to meet him, Amerigo regards his freedom

... as perfect and rounded and lustrous as some huge precious pearl. He hadn't struggled nor snatched; he was taking but what had been given him; the pearl dropped itself, with its exquisite quality and rarity, straight into his hand. Here precisely it was, incarnate; its size and its value grew as Mrs. Verver appeared, afar off, in one of the smaller doorways. She came toward him in silence while he moved to meet her...

Amerigo takes in her "long look" and exclaims: "I feel the day like a great gold cup that we must somehow drain together." Charlotte reminds him of the bowl with the crack which he refused to accept from her, and the Prince ironically replies that he hopes she doesn't mean that this "occasion" is "also cracked." Charlotte asks: "Don't you
think too much of 'cracks' and aren't you too afraid of them? I risk the cracks.'" Amerigo retorts: "'Risk them as much as you like for yourself, but don't risk them for me.'"41 The Prince is governed by his superstitions, but Charlotte relies on her ability to "arrange." While Amerigo has been wishing for a day alone together at Gloucester, Charlotte has "looked up" train timetables and chosen the "right" inn.

Amerigo is intensely aware of the power of his charm and purely passive in the means he employs to gain his ends. His view of his freedom (embodied in Charlotte) as a perfect pearl is both unrealistic and suggestive of a dangerous degree of overconfidence. It is an absolute view which disregards the fact that few pearls are both "huge" and "perfect." The large pearl, like the large freedom, usually has a flaw, and Amerigo has repeatedly shown himself to have an inordinate fear of flaws—"cracks" in an occasion or relation which could threaten his security. His desire to drain the "great gold cup" with Charlotte is equally ironic, for he cannot know how bitter the dregs will be for both of them. Charlotte, on the other hand, has had to make her own "luck," and in this, as in previous situations, she takes the initiative and shows herself to be prepared, calculating, resourceful. She knows what she wants, and she is realistically prepared to "risk the cracks"—take her chances and face the consequences.

It is significant that Maggie's section opens with her vision of her situation as an "outlandish pagoda."

This situation had been occupying for months and months the very centre of the garden of her life, but it had reared itself there like some strange tall tower of ivory, or perhaps rather some wonderful beautiful
but outlandish pagoda, a structure plated with hard bright porcelain, coloured and figured and adorned at the overhanging eaves with silver bells that tinkled ever so charmingly when stirred by chance airs. She had walked round and round it—that was what she felt; she had carried on her existence in the space left her for circulation, a space that sometimes seemed ample and sometimes narrow; looking up all the while at the fair structure that spread itself so amply and rose so high, but never quite making out as yet where she might have entered had she wished. She hadn't wished till now—such was the odd case; and what was doubtless equally odd beside was that though her raised eyes seemed to distinguish places that must serve from within, and especially far aloft, as apertures and outlooks, no door appeared to give access from her convenient garden level. The great decorated surface had remained consistently impenetrable and inscrutable.42

For some time Maggie has sensed a lack of balance and harmony in a situation which she idealistically used to regard as perfect—the arrangement by which she and her father have been able to marry Amerigo and Charlotte without giving up their old relation. Now, however, the situation has assumed a new, puzzling, almost frightening dimension. Maggie has gradually become aware that the strange structure which threatens to usurp too large a space in "her garden of life" has been partly of her own construction. She has allowed it to rise to an alarming height by refusing to face the facts which might destroy her illusion of perfection. The careful observance of "form" by each of the parties concerned has created a beautiful, but impenetrable surface which Maggie has been content to admire without experiencing any desire to penetrate it. She has been satisfied to listen to the tinkling silver bells of the Prince's and Charlotte's charming accounts of their little adventures together; the beauty of their manners and the splendour of their social accomplishments have delighted her, but now their relation seems vaguely disturbing. Maggie can no longer ignore the strange structure, and she
finds herself "pausing," "lingering," "stepping unprecedently near," even "knocking" for admission. Maggie has, in short, suddenly realized that her innocence and ignorance, her refusal to accept a change in her relation with her father, has made her an outsider, and her "tap" amounts to a request for admittance to Amerigo's life. The faint answering sound indicates that he has heard and taken note.

The point of crisis is reached with the second appearance of the golden bowl. Maggie chances upon it in the little shop in Bloomsbury and purchases the vessel at an exorbitant price as a birthday gift for her father. Whether moved by conscience, superstition, liking for Maggie, or the sudden realization that the bowl is to constitute a gift for a wealthy and renowned collector, the antiquario calls to confess that the object is not worth the price paid; it has a flaw and could bring ill luck to the recipient. During the visit the shopkeeper recognizes the photographs of the Prince and Charlotte and connects them with the vessel. Maggie is now confronted by reality—the ugly truth. Successive flashes of insight—moments of intense awareness when she has read the meaning of a fleeting expression on the face of the Prince, Charlotte, Mrs. Assingham, all blend together into full consciousness. The Princess has passed from innocence to experience. Her first thought is for her father—that he may be spared the knowledge which has come to her.

Mrs. Assingham is summoned, and though no word of reproach is uttered, Fanny immediately perceives that the Princess knows that she has withheld the truth concerning the pre-existent relation of the Prince and
Charlotte. She is also aware that Maggie counts on her to "see her through"—to preserve appearances and protect Adam Verver. Maggie indicates, as proof of her knowledge, the gilt cup with its crack. Fanny denies the validity of Maggie's suspicions and, with a sudden inspiration, she lifts the golden bowl above her head, pauses to signify her intention, then dashes it to the floor where it splits into three pieces. At that moment the Prince enters. Sight and insight merge. Amerigo meets the eyes of Mrs. Assingham; there is a "rapid play of suppressed appeal and disguised response," and the Prince knows that Fanny Assingham has tried to defend him. With no explanation of her action, Fanny leaves the room, and husband and wife confront each other.

Maggie's cup of pain and terror has been filled to the brim, but she has not allowed it to overflow. Full exposure to the "bale" of life has intensified her vision, but after the initial shock of recognition she has maintained the fine detachment so necessary for the preservation of "form" and the restoration of order and harmony. The real and the ideal have come into conflict, but in the moment of full consciousness a balance has been struck. Maggie's love for her father and her love for her husband have struggled within her with the former threatening to gain the ascendancy, but now, as she turns to Amerigo, many impressions combine to create a strong new bond between husband and wife. Maggie perceives Amerigo's recognition of the possible import of the shattered bowl. He silently views the three fragments from across the room, and the Princess, unable to bear the expression of pain and conviction on his face, stoops in her rustling finery and jewels and attempts to gather
up the pieces. She can carry but two at a time and has to return for
"the solid detached foot" which she carefully arranges with the others
on the mantelshelf. The split determined by the unseen flaw is so sharp
and precise that, if there had been any means of holding the fragments
together, the bowl, seen from a short distance, would have appeared
perfect.

Maggie's inability to look upon the Prince's pain and embarrassment
is indicative of her idealism which shuns ugliness—the marring of surface
perfection and the disruption of form. But even more, it reveals her
compassion, love, and depth of understanding. While she knows the pain
is necessary to a change in Amerigo's attitude, she is deeply distressed
by her husband's suffering. The Prince's silence signifies his growing
awareness of his wife's knowledge and the difference this must make in
their relation.

Maggie knows that up to the present her husband has merely "used"
and "enjoyed" her; now she senses that he will need her to guide him out
of his labyrinth. By "helping him to help himself" she will "help him to
help her."45 Herein lies her advantage and her hope. The broken bowl
still retains its essential value for Maggie since it reveals the truth,
and she now believes that she will no longer need to "arrange," "alter,"
"falsify," but simply to be perfectly "straight." Her "straightness,"
however, is both idealistic and realistic. Like that of Charlotte, it
too may be seen as a weapon. Maggie confronts Amerigo with her knowledge
—in particular her knowledge of his hours alone with Charlotte on the
eve of their marriage—the day he and Charlotte bought her no gift. The
Prince quietly remarks: "'You've never been more sacred to me than you were at that hour—unless perhaps you've become so at this one.'" We must ask whether the Prince is making an affirmation in good faith, or merely lying in sheer bravado. Maggie is chilled by his "assurance" and "consistency" and pointedly declares:

"Oh the thing I've known best of all is that you've never wanted together to offend us. You've wanted quite intensely not to, and the precautions you've had to take for it have been for a long time one of the strongest of my impressions."

Amerigo patiently hears her out, even realistically inquiring into details so that he may know exactly where he stands. He significantly asks the price of the bowl and wonders whether Maggie will get her money back—a question which is to take on a wealth of meaning. However, the Prince is unable to name Charlotte without bringing in Adam Verver, and this constitutes Maggie's note of safety. Maggie pities the Prince, but she refuses to enlighten him, and when she finds that Charlotte is also bound by the same ignorance the Princess suddenly realizes that her father's plan and motive may be identical to her own. He may already know the situation, yet, in his love and inscrutability, he may be striving to protect his daughter. With this realization, Maggie's course is unalterably determined. She turns to the Prince with words that seem strangely harsh: "'I've told you all I intended. Find out the rest—!'"

The Princess is fully aware that she must not permit pity and love to deter her from her purpose; she must resist and endure; above all, she must trust to knowledge and inscrutability to achieve her ideal.

In this scene the golden bowl takes on added significance. Its
primary function is to serve as a test or measure of perception. Mrs. Assingham's initial reluctance to touch it suggests her fear of the consequences to each of them of Maggie's discovery. She is both realistic and idealistic when she breaks the bowl in an effort to convince Maggie that it is her idea about the Prince and Charlotte which is "cracked."

To Amerigo the broken bowl represents the breaking of his pledge to the Ververs, the breach in relations, the destruction of harmony, the threat to his security. Maggie regards the crack as betrayal. She may see the golden bowl as the Prince just as Charlotte did on an earlier occasion. He may thus be regarded either as the treasure that was left for Maggie—the vessel she believed in instinctively and for which she was willing to pay a high price, or as the gift from her father—thought by both to be pure gold, but in reality flawed and possessed of surface beauty only. Charlotte appears to her as the cracked cup—"an offering to a loved parent, a thing of sinister meaning and evil effect." But above all, it is evident that Maggie regards the golden bowl as her marriage. The two pieces represent herself and the Prince, the solid base her father, the split, Charlotte. But while Maggie recognizes the flaw in Amerigo and Charlotte, the golden bowl has helped her to see her own culpability; her innocence may equally be the flaw in their relation. With this knowledge, she determines to realize the ideal in the real as her words to Fanny Assingham prove: "I want . . . the golden bowl—as it was to have been. . . . The bowl with all our happiness in it. The bowl without the crack." 

James's consummate skill in "framing" is best seen in the fifth book. Plot is advanced, theme underlined, description is integrated.
with action and characterization, and the precise visual impression is merged with the feeling this impression evokes. Maggie stands alone on the terrace observing, through the lighted window of the smoking-room, the living picture within. The others are playing bridge, and as she watches them, the Princess is intensely conscious of her power to bring bliss or bale to every participant in the drama.

... the facts of the situation were upright for her round the green cloth and the silver flambeaux; the fact of her father's wife's lover facing his mistress; the fact of her father sitting, all unsounded and unblinking, between them; the fact of Charlotte keeping it up, keeping up everything, across the table, with her husband beside her; the fact of Fanny Assingham, wonderful creature, placed opposite to the three and knowing more about each, probably, when one came to think, than either of them knew of either. Erect above all for her was the sharp-edged fact of the relation of the whole group, individually and collectively, to herself—herself so speciously eliminated for the hour, but presumably more present to the attention of each than the next card to be played. 51

For the first time in her life Maggie knows "the horror of finding evil seated all at its ease where she had only dreamed of good; the horror of the thing hideously behind, behind so much trusted, so much pretended, nobleness, cleverness, tenderness." 52 As she paces back and forth around the house, Maggie is aware of "the secret behind every face," aware too that before she left the room each pair of eyes had mutely appealed to her to maintain appearances—to protect each from a disturbing relation with the others. They expect her to "simplify," to take upon herself the "complexity of their peril." The Princess knows that by a mere stroke she can people the scene "either with serenities and dignities and decencies, or with terrors and shames and ruins, things as ugly as those formless fragments of her golden bowl she was trying so hard to pick up." 53 The
temptation to use her power struggles briefly for expression and is as quickly renounced. As she again passes before the window, Maggie sees, "as in a picture" why she had not given in to "the vulgar heat of her wrong." "The straight vindictive view, the rages of jealousy, the protests of passion"—these were "a range of feeling" which

... figured nothing nearer to experience than a wild eastern caravan, looming into view with crude colours in the sun, fierce pipes in the air, high spears against the sky, all a thrill, a natural joy to mingle with, but turning off short before it reached her and plunging into other defiles.\(^{54}\)

Viola Hopkins believes this image derives from James's memory of Decamps's famous 'Arabs Fording a Stream.'\(^{55}\) Maggie, like Decamps, "paints" "not the thing regarded, but the thing . . . imagined, desired—in some degree or other intellectualized." She, too, imparts to a subject "that fanciful turn which makes it a picture, even at the cost of a certain happy compromise with reality."\(^{56}\) While she watches the apparently tranquil bridge players, Maggie's mind is occupied with a fierce imaginary situation in which, animated by her sense of power, she confronts the defenceless players with her knowledge and causes faces to turn pale and cards to drop limply from their hands. Then, her fury turned aside by this resort to fantasy, she regains her detachment and self-control. Each time she is brought face to face with ugliness Maggie briefly turns away and suspends judgment, only to turn again, accept reality, and seek a means of achieving the ideal.

As Maggie decides to bear the full burden of responsibility, Charlotte comes in quest of her through the darkness. Like some predatory
animal, Charlotte waits, watches, and times her approach by her victim's show of indecision and fear. She has the advantage, and both of them know it. Maggie is again restrained and on the defensive because of her terror of what her step-mother may reveal to her father. Charlotte draws her back to the lighted window, and Maggie views the card players from another perspective—that of Charlotte's power. Both closely observe Adam Verver, but he does not look up. He is inscrutable. Maggie feels her possession of him "divided and contested." Returning to the lighted drawingroom (which Maggie formerly saw as a stage under her direction), Charlotte puts her question—straight, as is her custom. After a momentary hesitation, Maggie realizes that duplicity is also her note of safety, and she, too, resorts to "straightness." Her calm denial that she feels herself to have been wronged by Charlotte is made easier by her knowledge that the Prince has lied to his mistress to prove his loyalty to his wife. Maggie's perjury is sealed by Charlotte's kiss of betrayal—passively accepted in the eyes of all, for the others have come in search of them—Maggie's father and husband in the front. If Maggie was in ignorance of how to play the game of life before, she is not so now. Charlotte and Amerigo have helped to expand and intensify her consciousness. The Princess has had to experience the full bitterness, the bale of life, before she can fully appreciate the bliss.

The "strange alloy" of human life is revealed in all its poignancy in Book Fifth, Chapter IV. Framed in doorways at opposite ends of the long gallery at Fawns, Adam Verver and Maggie stand in silence watching Charlotte, halfway down the vista, lecturing to a cluster of visitors who
have come to tour the collection. Fanny Assingham, "rapt in devotion," stands on the periphery. Charlotte is "almost austere in the grace of her authority," and the group listens as quietly "as if it had been a church ablaze with tapers and she were taking her part in some hymn of praise."58 Indicating an objet d'art, Charlotte intones:

'The largest of the three pieces has the rare peculiarity that the garlands looped round it, which as you see are the finest possible vieux Saxe, aren't of the same origin or period, or even, wonderful as they are, of a taste quite so perfect. They've been put on at a later time by a process known through very few examples; and through none so important as this, which is really quite unique—so that though the whole thing is a little baroque its value as a specimen is I believe almost inestimable.'59

Mrs. Assingham, who has steadfastly maintained an attitude of inscrutability, now looks at Maggie with "a mute appeal." Suddenly the Princess turns away to the window, her eyes blurred with tears. "The high voice went on; its quaver was doubtless for conscious ears only, but there were verily thirty seconds during which it sounded . . . like the shriek of a soul in pain."60 Maggie looks at her father, and the tears in his eyes confess to a "sharp identity of emotion." For a strained moment father and daughter are held together by their mutual awareness. "After which, . . . the shame, the pity, the better knowledge, the smothered protest, the divined anguish even, so overcame him that, blushing to his eyes, he turned short away."61

Ironically, Charlotte appears to be unwittingly delivering a lecture on herself and the Prince and their relation to Adam Verver. Adam may be regarded as "the largest of the three pieces" around which Charlotte and Amerigo (the garlands) are looped. Although fine, they are
not of the same "perfect taste," "origin or period." Both are of another
generation; Amerigo is Italian, and Charlotte is more European than
American. They have been "put on" by a marriage which is unique, since
each has been acquired as a work of art. The fact that the specimen is
baroque suggests Adam Verver's power by means of which Charlotte and the
Prince have been subordinated to the dominant element in his life—Maggie's
happiness.

The image of the "long silken halter" by which Adam Verver controls
Charlotte has led many critics to charge him (and James) with callousness
or cruelty. While there is some evidence to support this interpretation,
closer analysis seems to indicate that this view is mistaken. On meeting
Maggie's eyes, Adam blushes with "shame" and turns away, and there can be
little doubt but that, given their fine awareness, he and Maggie recognize
their culpability. Charlotte was "bought," presumably for Maggie's comfort,
and Maggie has seen her own innocence as the flaw in the golden bowl. In
one of their private conversations Adam spoke of their selfishness, and
the unspoken agreement to keep Charlotte in ignorance of her true situation
and eventual fate does seem brutal. However, the tears, "shame," "pity,"
"better knowledge," "smothered protest," "divined anguish"—the turning
away may equally suggest the fine consciousness which idealistically
shrinks from the vision of the ugliness and inevitable suffering which
Charlotte has brought upon herself. We must remember that Amerigo saw
her as "a huntress," Mrs. Assingham, as "a Borgia," Maggie, as a beast of
prey. Charlotte has consistently shown herself to be calculating,
deceitful, ruthless. Most of her lies have been "interested." With full
comprehension of the true nature of their innocence and good faith, she took advantage of the Ververs and attempted to manipulate them for her own ends. She has been partly responsible for the disruption of relations, and, for the good of all, Adam Verver must keep her under control—must eventually remove her to American City. He may and does pity Charlotte, but the restoration of balance and harmony depends on his ability (and Maggie's) to remain detached and inscrutable.

Charlotte has used her own taste for the beautiful to "work" Adam Verver, yet she has scrupulously kept her side of the bargain by "doing the 'worldly'," and her attempt to protect the Ververs's innocence may have been, at least in part, idealistic. Now, as cicerone, she is truly magnificent in her quiet dignity and observance of form. In spite of her terror and despair, Charlotte maintains appearances and will continue to do so to the end.

The scene of the second confrontation between Maggie and Charlotte prepares for the final dénouement and the complete realization of the ideal in the real. Framing is again employed to integrate description with action and characterization. On this occasion the entire situation is reversed. Charlotte pursued Maggie through the starless night intent on intimidation and "manipulation;" Maggie goes in quest of Charlotte in bright sunlight with a desire to bring consolation to the poor tormented creature. Yet the initial reaction is the same in each case--fright, indecision, and finally a desperate attempt on the part of the one "at bay" to maintain appearances at any cost.

From her window Maggie sees Charlotte descend the steps. Acting
on impulse, she follows the white dress and green parasol across hot open spaces and down long shady avenues of trees until the fugitive finally seeks refuge in an ancient, pillared, temple-like structure. Approaching slowly and deliberately to give Charlotte time, Maggie tentatively holds out the first volume of the romance which Charlotte, in her abstraction, has left in the house, taking the second by mistake. It has served as a pretext for following her stepmother. As they face each other, sight and insight merge. The Princess watches Charlotte's fear subside, change to suspicion, then wonder, then determination. With swift perception, she sees that Charlotte has chosen to regard her as "abject," and she quickly adopts the role of supreme abjection. Charlotte stiffens herself for defence or aggression, flinging about her the mantle of pride, and Maggie prepares, if need be, to "grovel." Charlotte grandly reveals her grievance and her plan—Maggie has come between Charlotte and her husband; now she is determined to fully possess him—to take him back to American City to the life she has chosen. Maggie's wail of distress, her plaintive "'You want to take my father from me?'" is followed by Charlotte's accusation that Maggie has worked against her. Maggie's studied confession: "'I've failed!'" marks the perfection of her deceit. She has, indeed, "done all." At the cost of her own dignity the Princess has enabled Charlotte to preserve her's. By appearing to resist Charlotte's complete possession of Adam Verver Maggie has guaranteed Charlotte's loyalty to him. Lacking perception, Charlotte has misjudged Maggie's true motive. In her desire to be perfectly right she has committed herself to a course of action and an attitude from which she
cannot withdraw. Her triumph is defeat, just as Maggie's defeat is triumph, but in the "strange alloy" of human life "bliss and bale" are forever mingled. Charlotte has gained the luxury and security her soul craves, but she has lost her freedom. She is exiled to a country she hates with a man she does not appear to love. Maggie, in turn, has relinquished her beloved father to keep her cherished husband.

The great final scene centres around three priceless objets d'art—one inanimate, two animate—all viewed through the eyes of their collector. The occasion is the final tea and leave-taking of Mr. and Mrs. Verver before their departure for American City. The Prince and Charlotte are seated together at the tea table. Adam Verver moves noiselessly about the room inspecting its contents for the last time. Finally he stops before a painting—an early Florentine sacred subject which he had given Maggie as a wedding gift. His daughter joins him; she knows how much he values the picture, and his willingness to leave it with her is as near as he can come to leaving himself. The moment of parting is charged with emotion, but the words spoken have a surface lightness: "'It's all right, eh?' 'Oh my dear—rather!'"65 Both father and daughter refer to the picture, but as they link arms and glance about them their words take on a deeper significance. Their eyes pass from "sofas," "chairs," "tables," "cabinets" to the "'important' pieces," and finally come to rest on Charlotte and Amerigo.

The two noble persons seated in conversation and at tea fell thus into the splendid effect and the general harmony: Mrs. Verver and the Prince fairly 'placed' themselves, however unwittingly, as high expressions of the kind of human furniture required aesthetically by such a scene. The
fusion of their presence with the decorative elements, their contribution to the triumph of selection, was complete and admirable; though to a lingering view . . . they also might have figured as concrete attestations of a rare power of purchase.66

Adam's "'Le compte y est. You've got some good things,'" and Maggie's "'Ah, don't they look well?!'" again have a double connotation and strike the ear harshly. The impression is intensified with the comparison of the Prince and Charlotte to "a pair of effigies of the contemporary great on one of the platforms of Madame Tussaud."67 Once more it appears that Adam Verver makes no distinction between collecting objects and collecting people. Amerigo and Charlotte contribute to the "splendid effect and general harmony;" they are the "kind of human furniture" which Adam's aesthetic sense craves. Disturbing echoes from the past remind us that Adam applied the same standard of value to the acquisition of the Prince and the Bernardino Luini and negotiated for the Damascene tiles at the same time that he proposed to Charlotte. Adam's passion for fine pieces is carefully contained; it burns deep within him, feeding upon the "supreme idea," and issuing in the "appropriation" of perfect works of art, but it is not allowed to spread and destroy the harmony of his life, particularly as this centres around Maggie's welfare. Maggie's mother failed him by her lack of taste, but Charlotte's taste is exquisite and her beauty rare. This appears to constitute her value and also Amerigo's. When Adam says of Charlotte: "'She's beautiful, beautiful!'" Maggie recognizes the "note of possession and control."68 Charlotte is not to be wasted in the application of Adam's plan, and this for him may well constitute her "greatness." She perfectly fulfilled her role as cicerone
at Fawns, and she will show to even better advantage in American City.

It is doubtful whether Adam is capable of deep affection, except where Maggie is concerned. During one of their conversations Maggie explained:

'My idea is this, when you only love a little you're naturally not jealous—or are only jealous also a little, so that it doesn't matter. But when you love in a deeper and intenser way, then you're in the very same proportion jealous; your jealousy has intensity and, no doubt, ferocity. When however you love in the most abysmal and unutterable way of all—why then you're beyond everything, and nothing can pull you down.69

Adam rather sadly replies: "'I guess I've never been jealous.'"70 As "a taster of life, economically constructed," Adam's passion (apart from his love for Maggie), has been confined first to the acquisition of wealth, then to the acquisition of works of art, of which Charlotte and Amerigo represent the finest. In this Adam is an idealist, yet in his judgment of people he is a realist. He recognized Amerigo for the perfect crystal which he becomes, and he knows that, given her desires and propensities, there can be no other future for Charlotte than the one he has marked out. He realizes that she and Amerigo have been necessary to Maggie's full development. Above all, he is fully aware that their parting, the dissolution of their old-time union is essential to Maggie's happiness and the restoration of balance and harmony. Adam Verver may be limited in his capacity for deep human affection, but we cannot be sure. He knows Charlotte best; he may love her both realistically and idealistically in a way that even Maggie may or may not suspect—he could not keep his eyes from lighting when Maggie referred to Charlotte as "incomparable."

Adam Verver is inscrutable, and his very inscrutability marks him as intensely intelligent—but also as intensely human.
When Maggie exclaims: "'Charlotte's great'" she is paying tribute to her stepmother's courageous and dignified acceptance of her fate and observance of "form," despite her inner torment. Charlotte has accepted reality—the "bale" of life which is at present her portion, but she is trying to realize in it the ideal. She already refers to her "exile" to American City as her "mission" to represent "the arts and graces to a people languishing afar off and in ignorance." Charlotte's mixed motives are terribly human. She is avaricious, calculating, ruthless, cunning, yet she is also magnificent in her pride, courage, reticence, endurance. She has taken advantage of the Ververs's good faith, but she has been taken advantage of in turn, and her plight is the most pitiable since she is condemned to suffer in complete ignorance.

Amerigo, too, has been left to "find out for himself" and has likewise fallen back on pride and silence, but whereas Charlotte reacted aggressively with duplicity, the Prince has remained passive and "straight" in his relation with the Ververs. He has asked no further questions, shown no irritation, allowed no lapse of form, and his omissions indicate a beauty of intention. He has spent the months trying to "find out" Adam Verver's view of him regardless of how painful or disastrous such knowledge might prove. The Prince has faced reality and yet maintained his idealism. He has quietly awaited the issue of his action with perfect taste. Amerigo has not understood the Ververs, and he has wronged them and Charlotte, but Charlotte, it must be remembered, both understood and initiated the deception, and she cheapened herself from the beginning by appearing too "easy." The Prince is repelled by her lack of perception—
her failure, even beyond his failure to understand Maggie. Now he is finally aware of Maggie's compassion, generosity, comprehension. His final words: "I see nothing but you" would thus seem to signify full consciousness of his wife's true value and his deep love and respect for her.

Maggie has been as deliberate and calculating in her deception as Charlotte, but she has lied in the interest of a higher truth. The cost to her has been great, but great also has been her reward. She has drained her cup of humiliation, bitterness, sorrow to the dregs, but she has also tasted the sweetness of triumph and joy. Maggie has passed from innocence to experience; her vessel of consciousness is filled to overflowing with the mingled "bliss and bale" of life. Above all, she has realized the ideal in the real. The Princess has found her Prince to be a creature of flesh and blood, not the romantic phantom of her dreams. She has become aware of his flaw and has accepted it. Yet, through the power of love and understanding, she has also seen the latent beauty in the marred vessel and has helped her husband to achieve complete restoration. Maggie now has "the golden bowl—as it was to have been. The bowl with all [their] happiness in it. The bowl without the crack." As the antiquario observed, the flaw and the gilt are relative. The good faith of Amerigo and Maggie has kept the value of the bowl high. The question of price has been answered—the Ververs have not paid too much for their Prince. Three persons, intensely aware, have rendered the bowl (the marriage) beautiful. The fine perception of Adam Verver has constituted the solid base upon which Maggie and the Prince have
achieved, through their own fully developed consciousness, a union which reveals no flaw. The Principino (the only child born in a James novel), is the embodiment of the real and the ideal. He represents the united hopes of Adam, Maggie, and the Prince for their future.
FOOTNOTES

1 Henry James, *Transatlantic Sketches*, p. 93.


3 Ibid., p. 12.

4 Ibid., p. 23.

5 Ibid., p. 20.

6 Ibid., pp. 46, 47.

7 Ibid., p. 13. "Cinquecento" (1500)—a term applied particularly to Italian art of the sixteenth century, a brilliant period when the classical revival was at its height in Italy. It is noted for such artists as Benvenuto Cellini, goldsmith and sculptor (cf. his "Perseus"), and Michael Angelo who was renowned as much for his sculpture as for his painting (cf. his "David" and "Moses"). This is significant in that the Prince tends to view people in terms of cold statuary rather than as living portraits.

8 The Golden Bowl, I, 47.

9 Ibid., p. 50.

10 Ibid., p. 61.

11 Ibid., p. 89.

12 Ibid., p. 97.


14 The Golden Bowl, I, 95.

15 Ibid., p. 112.

16 Ibid., pp. 113-117.

17 Ibid., pp. 119, 120.


20 Ecclesiastes 12: 6, The Holy Bible. "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." This verse contains four symbols of death, and in the next verse the fact of death is explicitly stated: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was . . . ."


26 Ibid., p. 187.

27 Ibid., p. 146.


30 Ibid., p. 126.

31 Ibid., pp. 137, 138.

32 Ibid., p. 147.

33 Ibid., p. 214.

34 Ibid., p. 216.

35 Ibid., pp. 219-222. (Italics mine)

36 Ibid., p. 222.

37 Ibid., p. 335.

38 Ibid., p. 333.

39 Ibid., p. 358.

40 Ibid., p. 359.
41Ibid., pp. 359, 360.
42Ibid., II, 3, 4.
43Ibid., p. 4.
44Ibid., p. 180.
46Ibid., p. 199.
47Ibid., pp. 199, 120.
48Ibid., p. 203.
49Ibid., p. 223.
50Ibid., pp. 216, 217.
51Ibid., p. 232.
52Ibid., p. 237.
53Ibid., p. 236.
54Ibid., pp. 236, 237.
56Henry James, The Painter's Eye, p. 74. In a review of "The Wallace Collection" (1873), James wrote: "Decamps paints movement to perfection; the animated gorgeousness of his famous 'Arabs Fording a Stream' (a most powerful piece of water-colour) is a capital proof. . . . The picturesqueness—we might almost say the grotesqueness—of the East no one has rendered like Decamps . . . ." P.E., p. 74.
57Jean Kimball finds Maggie "very much a child, but cruel and insensate." Miss Kimball declares that Maggie's "lack of understanding is underscored by a repeated image in the second volume, the image of the card game" in which she is unable to "follow the moves." She continues: "If Maggie has an imperfect understanding of the game of life, then she has serious weaknesses as a witness of the action in which she participates." "Henry James's Last Portrait of a Lady: Charlotte Stant in The Golden Bowl," American Literature, XXVIII (January, 1957), pp. 463, 464. Oscar Cargill disagrees. While he concedes that Maggie is immature in Book I, he maintains that "the second half of The Golden Bowl is . . . the story of her development into maturity." The Novels of Henry James, p. 406.
Foremost among such critics is F. O. Matthiessen who declares that "James's neglect of the cruelty in such a cord, silken though it be, is nothing short of obscene." *Henry James: The Major Phase* (New York, 1944), p. 100.

Dorothea Krook believes that Maggie "gains the Prince's 'respect' for her purposefulness, her shrewdness, her coolness, her self-possession . . . . Maggie's silence satisfies the Prince's 'taste'—delicacy, restraint, forbearance, abstention from every kind of tediousness. No reproaches, no recriminations, no martyred airs, no moralising, no discussion or analysis . . . . Perfect silence expressive of perfect civility, perfect composure, perfect good manners." *The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James* (Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 270.
CONCLUSION

Henry James aspired to the excellence he found in Turgenev's portraiture—figures that live and breathe, the union of "ideal beauty" with "unsparing reality." Like the great Russian master, James sought to render "psychological truth," and he did not fall short of his goal. While many of his early tales show a greater preoccupation with "idea" or "aesthetic" than with the delineation of character, the figures of his mature work are fully rounded, and we exclaim in the words he used of Turgenev: "It is life itself!"¹ In order to achieve this intensity of "felt life" James combines the technique of the painter with that of the novelist.

"Framing" and the objet d'art are used in a relatively simple and straightforward manner in James's early work, but in his later fiction they are employed with increasing subtlety and suggestiveness. Thus, in "The Madonna of the Future," the blank canvas merely connotes Theobald's excessive idealism and wasted life, and even the numerous allusions to specific artists present no difficulty of interpretation. The tale sets forth clearly and directly the problem of the ideal artist. The treatment of art in "The Liar" is more complex and suggestive. Instead of a single concrete art object there are three literal portraits, a figurative portrait and sketch, and a scene which constitutes a living picture. In contrast to the simple, almost allegorical presentation of the rather static figures in "The Madonna of the Future," the portraits in this tale delineate character more fully and show development by revealing life-like
emotions and drives. "The Liar" deals not only with the problem of the artist, but also with the nature and function of art. In "The Real Thing" James does not employ a literal art object, but rather four persons based on actual individuals. Two are mere types, the other two, characters. The artist's attitude to them reflects James's belief in the necessity to "render" not merely "copy" life. Again it is the "idea" which predominates, and there is consequently less attempt at delineation of character.

With The Wings of the Dove we move into James's mature phase, and art objects and art imagery become richly allusive and serve numerous functions (as noted earlier in this essay). In this novel James uses actual paintings by known artists to aid in the delineation of character, and the emotions which the portraits and scene evoke are perhaps even more revelatory than the connotations pertaining to the artists and their work. Description is more indirect, and the characters react to *objets d'art* with greater subtlety and complexity. Thus we may trace Milly Theale's growth in awareness, her vacillating attitude toward reality, her eventual decision to "manipulate" others in the interest of self-protection, her desperate attempt to "live," and her final defeat or triumph (we cannot be certain which), largely through her intensely personal views of the Watteau scene, Bronzino portrait, Titians and Turners in the National Gallery, and finally the author's allusions to Veronese paintings. All the characters "live and breathe," and the inscrutability of Milly is intensely life-like.

The Golden Bowl marks the acme of James's skill in the use of *objets d'art* to delineate character. In this novel James draws not only upon the art of painting, but also upon sculpture and architecture for
his material. There is an increased wealth of meaning proportionate to
the great number and variety of art objects and art images which range
from the golden coin to the golden bowl itself. The characters view
each other in terms of works of art (to a far greater extent than did
those in *The Wings of the Dove*), and reveal aspects of their own natures
while passing judgment on others. Each figure is presented from a
number of different perspectives, and the composite picture is thus
wonderfully rich and complex. The Prince is variously regarded as "a
morceau de musée," an old gold coin "embossed with glorious arms," "a
great Palladian church," "a pure and perfect crystal," and "the golden
bowl." Charlotte is seen as a "long loose silk purse, well filled with
gold pieces," and a beautiful Florentine statue in silver or bronze.
Maggie calls to mind a work of "the cinquecento at its most golden hour,"
"some slim draped 'antique' of Vatican or Capitoline halls," "an image in
worn relief passing round and round a precious vase." Adam Verver the
connoisseur strikes his daughter as a great work of art. She equates
him with an early Florentine sacred subject. He is also likened to "the
solid detached foot" of the golden bowl. Adam views the Prince and
Charlotte in the same light as a Bernardino Luini and Damascene tiles.
They also appear as the "garlands" looped around Adam (the largest of
three pieces in a baroque objet d'art). Finally, Adam and Maggie see
their sposi as "a pair of effigies of the contemporary great on one of
the platforms of Madame Tussaud." Occasions and situations appear as a
"huge precious pearl," a tall ivory pagoda, a painting by Decamps, and
both Maggie and the Prince view their marriage as the golden bowl. The
connotations are almost endless and reflect the infinite complexity and
ambiguity of human nature and life itself.

Through the use of art objects and art imagery James creates characters who are unquestionably human—a curious mixture of strength and weakness, moral beauty and ugliness. They suffer and cause suffering while seeking to protect themselves and others from the harsher aspects of reality. They desire to escape involvement or commitment which could threaten their security, yet they cannot or will not refrain from "manipulating" other people—often for their own personal benefit. They deceive both to gain their own ends and to shield others from disquieting knowledge. With the very best intentions, the innocent and the less intelligent frequently violate the freedom of those they are trying to help and unwittingly bring tragedy into their lives. Yet even those who appear most reprehensible in their cruel or thoughtless infliction of suffering are often magnificent in their strength of will, power of endurance, self-control, quiet dignity, poise, taste, observance of form.

James's attitude toward art and life is one. It is his conviction that both can realize the ideal in the real in the same way—by achieving balance, rhythm, harmony. The artist of life, like the artist of the brush or the pen, must be sincere, intelligent, sufficiently detached; he must possess a sense of reality, a love of beauty, and imagination. If he is to create a true work of art he must learn to discriminate, select, compose. Yet he must never forget that "the province of art is all life, all feeling, all observation, all vision. . . . it is all experience." Only the artist with the fully developed consciousness can achieve a true fusion of the real and the ideal. Full consciousness, James asserts, can only be achieved by complete exposure to experience with all its beauty.
and ugliness, its joy and sorrow, but there must always be a fine
detachment if life is to become a work of art. Intense awareness is the
final result of the "process of vision"—the gradual accumulation of
individual moments of insight. The rejection of knowledge that might
prove painful, the refusal to admit ugliness limits the growth of the
self and renders the individual ineffective. The one who is finely
perceptive realizes that moral judgment, beauty and ugliness are purely
relative; he knows that what one sees depends on what one *desires* to see
and *intends* to see—that ideal beauty can exist only in the mind of the
beholder. Thus he accepts the real and, by the power of the creative
imagination, transforms it into the ideal.

Mrs. Capadose, the Prince, Maggie, and Adam Verver are among James's
artists of life—those rare individuals whose high intelligence has
enabled them to realize the "ideal" in the "real." But we will never
know the full reach of their consciousness, the absolute nature of their
motives, nor can we pass definite judgment on Frank Saltram, Milly Theale,
Merton Densher, Kate Croy, Charlotte Stant, for, as Joseph Conrad observes:

One is never set at rest by Mr. Henry James's novels. His books end as
an episode in life ends. You remain with the sense of the life still
going on; and even the subtle presence of the dead is felt in that silence
that comes upon the artist-creation when the last word has been read. It
is eminently satisfying, but it is never final. Mr. Henry James, great
artist and faithful historian, never attempts the impossible.
FOOTNOTES

1French Poets and Novelists, p. 222.


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