CHARACTER PATTERNS IN HENRY JAMES'S THE WINGS OF THE DOVE AND THE GOLDEN BOWL

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ABSTRACT

CHARACTER PATTERNS IN HENRY JAMES'S
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AND THE GOLDEN BOWL

By

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Character development in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl is a function of patterns created by the moral choices each character makes. Kate Croy and Charlotte Stant, who use humanity as a means to an end, subordinate love to wealth. Each maintains a single, erroneous choice of action throughout the novel for fear of jeopardizing a social or financial position. Both are limited and unable to change because they travel conceptually in a circular pattern. Milly Theale and Maggie Verver, on the other hand, move in an ever-expanding spiral of increased perception. As their innocence gives way to experience, they move from initially circular modes of action to the freedom of knowledge and of responsibility. Both Milly and Maggie value humanity as an end in itself, and seek to maximize the dignity and freedom of the others by acting as choice-givers rather than as role-givers.

Merton Densher and the Prince occupy positions which intermediate between the patterns of the protagonists and antagonists. In the beginning, neither has the moral sense nor will power to create personal patterns. Densher subordinates his beauty of trust to Kate's freedom of

action, while the Prince gives his allegiance to Charlotte. Only after each achieves a direct mode of communication with a spiral character does he adopt a freer, more perceptive pattern of life. When that occurs, Densher copies Milly's orientation toward Kate, just as the Prince copies Maggie's behavior toward Charlotte. Kate, who cannot understand why Densher should change while she hasn't, accepts Milly's legacy rather than Densher's love; Charlotte, trapped in a marriage of convenience with the wealthy Adam Verver, returns to the sterility of American City.

The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl propose alternate fates for their heroines, but in each novel the antagonists or villains are accorded sympathy and understanding by James. Kate and Charlotte can neither be wholly blamed nor wholly exonerated for their actions; the pressures of society on the one hand and the weakness of Densher and the Prince on the other are responsible for the life-denying patterns which they adopt. Prototype spiral and circular patterns can be identified in the earlier novels, although this method of character development only reached its fruition in the last two completed works. Once the patterns are defined in each novel, one can trace the development of James's conception of good and evil from the modes of innocence and experience to patterns of moral perception and moral blindness.

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INTRODUCTION

Henry James's The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl are the culmination of an artistic style in which a special form of character development plays a major part. In James's early novels, the international theme was the main emphasis; as his technical proficiency grew, however, the characters themselves became his primary subject matter. By the late 1890's, when the texture of characterization reached a height of intricacy, internationalism had become a minor theme. An analysis of character motivation and the quality of "felt life" in the "frail vessels" of James's later novels reveals the existence of patterns of actions which not only identify the characters' levels of moral awareness, but also contribute both theme and structure to the novels. Certain characters, like Kate Croy in The Wings of the Dove, travel conceptually in circles; each action is prescribed by an initial choice of wealth over love, or by a decision to use another person as a means to an end. Such characters, who grow neither intellectually nor morally, are forced to reaffirm a wrong choice at the expense of personal satisfaction for fear of jeopardizing a social position. Others, like Maggie Verver in The Golden Bowl, behave as if they were moving in an ever-expanding spiral of increased

perception: each of their actions indicates a growth of moral awareness. Since growth by its nature requires change, these actions do not bind the characters to a limiting mode of behavior.

The process by which James arrived at his final formulation of presenting the story from the viewpoint of the characters involved a continual refinement of manner and theme. Christoff Weglin, in The Image of Europe in Henry James, points out that James's writing technique underwent several distinct changes. In the very early works, "At Isella" (1871) and Roderick Hudson (1875), for example, Europe is portrayed from the then currently fashionable American viewpoint as a "great gilded" historical "toy." By the time Daisy Miller (1879) was written, however, James displayed a new interest in American behavior; he began to portray europeanized Americans who themselves embody the fashionable viewpoint. The final change in technique subordinated the earlier concern for national values in a foreign setting to an emphasis on universal moral conceptions, as in The Wings of the Dove (1902).[1] In like manner, James's handling of character development progressed from a loose emphasis on 'what happened,' as in Roderick Hudson or The Europeans (1878), to the study of a consciousness undergoing new experiences [The Portrait of a Lady (1881), for example], to the detailed presentation of motive and thought processes found in The Golden Bowl (1904).

The intensity which James achieves, especially in the

later novels, by handling the story from his characters' points of view is heightened by the way in which he patterns their actions, thus avoiding the pitfalls of undifferentiated subjectivity which make Finnegan's Wake, for example, so difficult to read. In presenting the reader with a portion of the situation through the mind of only one character at any given time, and in portraying a range of characters whose levels of moral awareness vary considerably, James sustains interest and suspense within each novel. He is most perspicacious where levels of awareness come into conflict. Nevertheless, he required a long period of artistic development before he was able to motivate adequately not only his heroes and heroines but his unredeemably blind characters so that they, as well, are understandable and in some sense pitiable. It is truly "in the final justice of his pity, the completeness of an analysis which enabled him to pity the most shabby, the most corrupt, of his human actors, that he ranks with the greatest of creative writers."[2] In the early novel The American (1877), for example, Urbain de Bellegarde is a dehumanized symbol of aristocratic priggishness; he is an appropriate stage prop for the fashionable American viewpoint towards Europe, a viewpoint which James later personally dismissed in order to satirize it. The dry analytic comments which James makes about Urbain seem to preserve him as a symbol rather than to flesh him out into a fully rounded character. Urbain has perfected a "maintained attitude"; he has "a fine nervous dread that something

disagreeable might happen if the atmosphere were not kept clear of stray currents."[3] James himself comments on the "queer falsity" of the Bellegardes in the "Preface" to the novel; he has given an "affront to verisimilitude" by endowing the family with more pride than nobility, because, realistically, they would have accepted Newman for the sake of his fortune.[4] Gilbert Osmond, in the slightly later novel The Portrait of a Lady (1881), is a better developed and more carefully explained villain than Urbain. Osmond, who has "plenty of contempt," has adopted a series of "traditions" about women fit only for back-porch gossip. His egotism, which has detected the last "stupidity, the depravity, the ignorance of mankind," feeds on a belief in his own superiority to the "infinite vulgarity of things."[5] Given these presuppositions, his isolation, narrowness, and aestheticism are fairly motivated. Nevertheless, because Osmond's mask of indifference is so firmly fixed, not only for Isabel and Madame Merle but for the reader as well, he appears unable to feel and to suffer; hence he functions primarily as the symbol of an over-europeanized expatriate rather than as a suffering antagonist. James's early "leaning toward melodrama," in which he plays "virtuous Americans off against scoundrelly Europeans," disappears in the later novels where he "no longer sees life in terms of the innocent and guilty."[6]

Different from the Bellegardes and Osmond are Kate Croy in The Wings of the Dove and Charlotte Stant in The Golden

Bowl, both of whom are too realistically developed to function simply as symbols, even as symbols of villainy, although each evolves a dreadful little plan for self-gratification. In these two late novels, James portrays the morally unaware as thinking, feeling characters who present excellent rationalizations for their actions. The qualities which Kate and Charlotte have in common with their villainous prototypes are a lack of moral development and stultification of perspective. Whereas in the early novels James portrays moral unawareness strictly from a non-sympathetic standpoint and is concerned primarily with its effect on the morally aware characters, in the later novels he enlarges his perspective to take into account the effect of unawareness on the unredeemable characters themselves, and to explain the motivation for morally blind actions from the 'blind' characters' viewpoints as well.

A good deal of Jamesian ambiguity results from the reader's empathy with characters on two different planes of awareness. James's heroes and heroines, Isabel Archer, Lambert Strether, and Maggie Verver, for example, are presented as culpable human beings suffering not from the curse of sainthood but from a developing moral consciousness. James's later villains -- Charlotte Stant and Kate Croy -- eventually achieve the stature of 'anti-heroes' who are clever, self-sufficient, and pitiable. Given such a series of realistically portrayed characters, how is one to distinguish the good from the bad, the redeemed from the unchanged?

Almost all of the major critical articles on James touch on character development,[7] but no one has yet defined development in terms of pattern. It is the contention of this dissertation that James structured his characters in such a way that his beautifully damned souls willfully perpetuate a cramped moral outlook. Whatever decisions or movements they make reinforce an initial bad choice; as a result, they are caught in a circular pattern of repetitive actions. James's redeemable characters, on the other hand, learn to increase their levels of moral awareness and to recognize and change their limited perspectives. In contrast to the lost souls who, in Hawthorne's words, violate "the magnetic chain of humanity," these heroes and heroines, guided by love alone, learn to assume responsibility for the effects of their actions on others. Throughout the novel, their actions describe a spiral pattern which indicates a steady progression to wider and higher levels of awareness. A more extensive influence of character development on the structure of The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl is implied by labeling these patterns of action 'circular' and 'spiral' than would be suggested by the more common terms 'redeemed' and 'blind' or 'good' and 'evil.' The very progress of the story depends upon an unfolding consciousness, yet the stasis or limitation which another character exhibits provides a measure of growth for the Maggies and Millys while rounding out the end of each novel. Like stakes driven through the body of a suicide to tame his wandering spirit, Kate and

Charlotte are firmly fastened in fixed positions throughout each novel. When such different patterns of action are as intimately conjoined as they are in these two later works, one receives a more than adequate description of the complexity of human relationships. Earlier novels contain prototypes for the patterns, although the method received its refinement in the final works.

One way of illustrating this analysis of character development is to consider it in relation to Francis Fergusson's comments in his introduction to Aristotle's Poetics. A character's action, which is "the motivation from which deeds spring, . . . may be described metaphorically as the focus or movement of the psyche toward what seems good to it at the moment -- a 'movement-of-spirit.'"[8] Fergusson describes Oedipus's three changes of action as: "to discover how to cure Thebes of the plague"; "to find the slayer of Laius"; and "to accept the truth."[9] James's spiral characters seem to undergo a threefold "movement-of-spirit" which is similar in kind: thus Milly Theale might be described as trying to discover how to cure her illness, to find out who is to blame for her ill-health, and to accept the truth that those she trusts deceive her. Maggie Verver wants to discover how to cure the 'sickly' marriages, to find out who is to blame for the perversion of form and meaning in the relationships, and to accept the truth that those she trusts deceive her. On the other hand, James's circular characters exhibit no such progression towards the

truth, but rather are restricted to a single unchanging intention. Kate wants to achieve wealth and retain Densher by deceiving Milly and Maud Lowder, while, similarly, Charlotte seeks to maintain wealth and retain Amerigo by deceiving Maggie and Adam. Thus "the conscious purpose with which [human actions] start is redefined after each unforseen contingency is suffered,"[10] but Charlotte and Kate, no matter what the contingency, cannot redefine their purposes for fear of sacrificing material goals. (Further application of Fergusson's analysis to James's earlier novels will be found in the Appendix.)

The following chapter will include a discussion of James's late method of character development in relation to the short story, "The Figure in the Carpet," and an analysis of prototype spiral and circular character patterns in The Portrait of a Lady. Chapter II and Chapter III will be devoted to a detailed investigation of the patterns each of the major characters creates in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl. Kate Croy and Charlotte Stant will be examined as contrasts to the heroines, Milly Theale and Maggie Verver, who succeed in restructuring the life patterns of Merton Densher and the Prince. The end of each novel will be viewed as an outgrowth of the patterns which have preceded it.

CHAPTER I. PROTOTYPE PATTERNS

"The Figure in the Carpet"

> . . . words, after speech, reach
> Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness . . .
> "Burnt Norton" -- T. S. Eliot

James has written many stories about the craft of writing, but none so intriguing or mystifying as "The Figure in the Carpet." Did he create the story to illustrate a general lack of perceptive criticism which made a "direct appeal to the intelligence" impossible,[11] or did he wish to indicate the existence of an unrecognized "figure" in his own works? An examination of both possibilities yields insights into the nature of James's patterned character development.

The idea for "The Figure in the Carpet" is outlined in a Notebooks entry for October 24, 1895, where James notes the "lovely chance for fine irony on the subject of that fraternity" of critics inherent in a presentation of the reactions of an imperceptive reviewer to the "special beauty . . . that pervades and controls and animates" the novels of a certain writer.[12] The theme of the story, which was

developed almost a year after the unsuccessful performance of "Guy Domville," bears a resemblance to the special lesson James drew from his theatrical experimentation. If "the moral of the whole unspeakable, the whole tragic experience" of "Guy Domville" is to teach him "the singular value for a narrative plan too of the . . . divine principle of the Scenario," he writes, then he has had a "rare perception"; he has found "the thing to live by."[13] James, like Hugh Vereker in "The Figure in the Carpet," developed a secret technique of control and animation which was not readily perceived by the critics.

Yet, despite James's emphasis in the "Preface" to "The Figure in the Carpet" on his frustration at the "odd numbness of the general sensibility" which confined his reading public to the "scantest measure" of scarcely "half the intentions embodied" in a work of art,[14] the tone of the story itself is triumphant rather than embittered. Hugh Vereker, the author who has incorporated an "exquisite little scheme" into the essence of his work, calls it the "joy" of his soul. His face "lighted" when he spoke of it; he is a "man with some safe secret for enjoyment." When George Corvick discovers the "scheme," his reaction is a delighted "Eureka." After his death, his wife leads a life of "dignity and beauty" in possession of the secret; her second novel, which is better than her first, displays a "figure of its own." The secret of the scheme is never revealed, but the joy of possessing it seems to

mitigate frustration at the critical denseness which cannot detect it.

Critics have defined the "exquisite little scheme" in various ways. Seymour Lainoff proposes the secret to be "life," which, as the story hints, is "unformulatable."[15] Leo Levy believes that Vereker, alias James, is calling for an "act of love" on the part of the reader; "the understanding of form and total intention must be a human and humane action."[16] Similarly, Lyall Powers comments that the point is "not what the figure is but rather how to look at the carpet."[17] Other critics who maintain that the secret is "converting the sexual passion . . . into the civilized status of moral passion,"[18] or that it is the pleasure "of the phantasies which [the author] enjoys during his creative work,"[19] have overstated their analyses.

There are several textual parallels between the description of the secret in the story and James's Notebooks entry for February 14, 1895, in which he discusses his stage failure. Vereker's "exquisite little scheme" is like the "exquisite truth" of dramatization which lies behind the "divine principle of the Scenario." The metaphors used to illustrate Vereker's scheme, which is like "a bird in a cage, a bait on a hook, a piece of cheese in a mouse-trap,"[20] are similar in kind to James's figure, used in the Notebooks, of a "key" which "fits the complicated chambers of both the dramatic and the narrative lock."[21] James's discovered "truth" becomes "the thing to live by," just as Vereker's

"little point" is what he has "written his books most for."

When the evidence in the notebook entries is considered as a clue to Vereker's secret, his "exquisite little scheme" can be defined as that of dramatic technique. In addition, when the story is understood as a fable of James's own career, it seems to describe the existence of a pattern so basic and so vital to the construction of his novels that to ask like the narrator in "The Figure in the Carpet," "Is it something in the style or . . . in the thought? An element of form or . . . feeling?" is to make "pitiful" distinctions.[22] The form which expresses feeling, the style which is, at the same time, thought, describes a carefully constructed novel possessing a true coherency of form and content. In an article about "The Figure in the Carpet," Joseph Warren Beach points out that James's own "little trick" is "simply not to tell the 'story' at all . . . but to give us instead the subjective accompaniment of the story."[23] James does achieve a true coherency of form and content in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl where the subjective processes of the characters provide both the structure of the novel and its content.

To show that James first formulated his dramatic method in 1895 and produced his finest works thereafter, however, is not to demonstrate that novels written before that date lack the patterned approach which makes his later works such fine complexities of feeling and thought. As Weglin points out, James did not begin to develop a distinctive viewpoint

toward universal moral concerns until the late 1880's.[24] The Europeans (1878) is the first novel which deals with an analysis of American behavior from a European viewpoint. It contains several characters whose actions bear a resemblance to the circular and spiral patterns more fully developed in the later novels. Baroness Eugenia possesses the worldliness and accomplishments eventually attributed to Madame Merle in The Portrait of a Lady; both women return to their native lands after making advantageous marriages for their protégés, and both fail to develop out of a narrowly limited set of personal attitudes. In contrast, Gertrude Wentworth is a "frail vessel" whose personal intensity and desire to see life impels her to escape from a rigidly puritanical existence. Verena Tarrant in The Bostonians (1886), whose red hair and susceptibilities resemble Milly Theale's, is another example of an early spiral character. Both Milly and Verena are used as means rather than as ends in themselves until they reject the companions whose ethics they had initially admired and espoused. Verena, who relinquishes the women's liberation movement for the sake of a personal relationship, is contrasted with Olive, who uses Verena's rhetorical power and personal magnetism to gain success for the cause, and who eventually retreats from personal relationships into futile defensiveness.

By the time James wrote The Ambassadors, he had almost perfected the craft of patterned characterization. Lambert Strether's developing perceptions are delicately counterpoised to Wollett's preconceived notions about immorality.

Where Strether expects vulgarity in Paris, he finds refinement; Mrs. Newsome's preconceptions about Madame de Vionnet do not pass the test of experience. Strether's lesson is that the value of a human relationship far surpasses an abstract moral dictum. He is thus shocked at Chad Newsome's desertion of Madame de Vionnet. The experience which Europe offers has changed Chad only to the extent of superficial mannerisms and outward sophistication, whereas Strether's deepest ideals have been altered and widened.

The Portrait of a Lady

Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks . . .
"Ash Wednesday" -- T. S. Eliot

If The Portrait of a Lady is considered in detail as a prototype of the patterned subjective evaluation James used extensively in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl, one finds that the form of the novel is determined by the development of Isabel's maturing psyche, and that the content of the novel is her changing reaction to the world. James at first feared that the story had been weakened by being "too . . . psychological" but later in the "Preface" triumphed over the "interesting" and "beautiful . . . difficulty" he had conquered by placing "the centre of the subject in the young woman's own consciousness" (I:xv). The Portrait of a Lady cannot be read, like an adventure or mystery story, for its plot; the main interest lies in the movement of Isabel's consciousness, which gives continuity and validity to the action. At this point in James's writing career, the heroine's goodness is no longer the a priori condition it was for Christopher Newman, although the definition of evil as narrowness and restricted development remains fixed, without a hint of the sympathy later

accorded to Kate Croy and Charlotte Stant. Isabel's mistakes are well-motivated and forgivable, whereas Osmond's are not; James has acquired understanding for the sins of his leading character but not yet for those of the antagonist. Once he allows his heroine to be greatly, morally wrong, the impact of her realization is proportionally strengthened. For example, Roderick Hudson, the nominal hero of an earlier book, is rushed into a suicide with little explanation of his precipitous behavior. Again, in The American, Christopher Newman is victimized rather than erring; thus his loss of Claire and renunciation of revenge on the Bellegardes lack the drama and tragedy of Isabel's final rejection of Goodwood.

Isabel's errors of judgment are numerous. Her notion of experience, for instance, is to sample without the risk of involvement; early in her career she tells Ralph, "I don't wish to touch the cup of experience. It's a poisoned drink! I only want to see for myself" (I:213). After her disastrous marriage to Osmond, she discovers that "seeing" has not provided sufficient evidence on which to judge accurately. Before her marriage, however, all of her actions reaffirm her philosophy of uninvolvement. In Albany, she is admired as "superior," and therefore left to herself; because no one seems to "speak with authority," she can indulge her "sin of self-esteem." By attempting to place her life "in harmony with the most pleasing impression she should produce" (I:69), she removes herself from a direct reaction

to people around her and creates a gap between her apparent personality and the reality of her being. It is to Isabel's credit, nonetheless, that she disagree with Madame Merle's philosophy, which is really a corollary to her own theory:

> . . . every human being has his shell and . . . you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances . . . we are each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. (I:287)

Isabel labels Madame Merle's "appurtenances" as "perfectly arbitrary" barriers to personality; nevertheless, she fails to see that the "pleasing impression" she wishes to create is not only "perfectly arbitrary," but is an effective deterrent to real experience. Her distaste for involvement is also illustrated by her early companions, who function as vices in a morality play. She accepts the protection of her aunt, Mrs. Touchett, who is wife and mother in name only; she marries a man who cares more for his precious <u>bibelots</u> than for humanity; and she befriends Madame Merle, "too perfectly the social animal," who has successfully effaced all traces of any intimate relationships. The actions which are dictated by Isabel's belief in uninvolvement are static because they do not lead to deeper perceptions, and circular because one action tends to reinforce another of the same type. For example, her prodigious self-esteem allows her to assume a superior attitude to her Albany acquaintances; the same self-esteem dictates that she ignore the Touchetts' warnings about Osmond in order to rely on her own estimate which has been produced by judging without experience. Osmond's policy of "impress[ing] himself not largely but

deeply" seems to Isabel to indicate a commitment to involvement, but is actually a withdrawal from the vulgarity of humanity. In her inexperience, Isabel agrees that "one must choose a corner and cultivate that," but the unexpected sterility of her life with Osmond awakens her to a true understanding of her naiveté. There is a parallel between the corner Isabel does choose, which is "the house of dumbness, the house of darkness, the house of suffocation" belonging to Osmond (II:196) and her favorite corner in Albany where

> she might have had the whole house to choose from, and the room she had selected was the most depressed of its scenes. (I:31)

Ralph, whose illness denies him active participation in life, has an adequate excuse for transferring his legacy to Isabel as a substitute for a more personal expression of love. She, however, who has no such excuse, enters marriage primarily to invest her money by giving it to "the man with the best taste in the world" (II:193). She thus carries the indelicate burden of a seventy-thousand pound inheritance directly into Osmond's "dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" (II:189). Unlike Milly Theale, who renounces the kingdoms of the earth from her high place in the Alps, Isabel never even glimpses the view; her life with Osmond leads to the imprisonment of despair rather than

> . . . to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, so that one could look down with a sense of exaltation and advantage, and judge and choose and pity. (II:189)

Once Isabel recognizes that the "lengthening vistas" of her personality have been collapsed into a "small garden-plot"

attached to Osmond's "deer-park," she attempts to examine her lost illusions. She feels responsible for Osmond's incorrect analysis of her own disposition; under his singular charm, she had effaced herself, pretended "there was less of her than there really was." Thus "she almost pitied him; for if she had not deceived him in intention she understood how completely she must have done so in fact" (II:191). In terms of her earlier, mistaken attempt to live up to the impression she creates, she now discovers that she must live down to the impression Osmond is conditioned to expect. She admits that "she had loved him . . . -- a good deal for what she found in him, but a good deal also for what she brought him" (II:192). She loved him for the use to which he could put her wealth; however, instead of enhancing her fortune, he corrupted it by his meanness of attitude. She failed to present him with an honest sample of her largeness of thought except by endowing him with all the virtues her imagination could muster, and thus finding in him much that was not there.

The end of The Portrait of a Lady has been subjected to extensive analysis. James anticipated the furor when he said:

> The obvious criticism of course will be . . . that I have not seen the heroine to the end of her situation . . . this is both true and false. What I have done has . . . unity -- it groups together. It is complete in itself -- and the rest may be taken up or not, later.[25]

Certain critics see only the negative aspects of Isabel's return to Osmond. William Bysshe Stein finds a case of "sterile femininity" in which "conventional moralism"

triumphs over "instinctive integrity."[26] Arnold Kettle's criticism is somewhat sharper; he feels that James's art is self-betraying because the inevitability of suffering in Isabel's "sacrificial tribute" to her marriage becomes a form of inescapable external destiny.[27] Quentin Anderson calls the ending a failure, because there is no creative way for Isabel to tread her "straight path" to Osmond.[28] Three critics, however, agree that Isabel's return to Osmond indicates an acceptance of moral responsibility rather than a lapse into pretentious melodrama on James's part. J. A. Ward feels that Isabel's rejection of Goodwood represents the "fulfillment of her idealism and early search"[29]; Dorothea Krook claims that Isabel rejects Osmond's "sophistries" while respecting "the honor of a thing"[30]; and Dorothy Van Ghent finds that at the end Isabel's world acquires "an invisible extension in depth . . . an extension into the freedom of personal renunciation and inexhaustible responsibility."[31] Only after Isabel understands her errors with regard to Osmond and herself is she able to accept and live with the truth about Pansy's parentage and about the source of her own wealth. Only after she has suffered and despaired can she understand Ralph's all-encompassing love and Goodwood's strength. Her stance at the end is, then, anything but the "Phyrric victory" MacKenzie finds it to be.[32] By understanding her past blindness and Osmond's hypocrisies, she can face her life humbled, yet triumphant.

Isabel's acceptance of responsibility for her part in the failure of her marriage and her final choice of

involvement with Osmond, rather than escape, places her in the class of characters whose development has been described as spiral. She makes classic Jamesian mistakes by using Osmond as the vehicle for the employment of her wealth and by attempting to preserve her innocence while gaining experience. Marriage to Osmond teaches her the limitations of seeing without feeling, and shows her the sterility of a rigid indifference which denies humanity. In revulsion against her husband's way of life, which is the logical outgrowth of her own philosophy of uninvolvement, Isabel is able to break out of a pattern which threatens to become circular. Her decision to go to the dying Ralph is a choice of love made in defiance of Osmond's "traditions." Her decision to return to Osmond is not a resumption of her old attitudes, but a choice of responsibility to Pansy and to her marriage; it demonstrates that she has chosen involvement in a situation for which she is to blame rather than a false escape from responsibility with Goodwood. Her reaction to his final proposal is of paramount importance, because he represents the 'good wood' of America which, for Isabel, is now out of reach. He also stands for all of her lost illusions; in his last speech, he says

> We can do absolutely as we please . . . were we born to rot in our misery -- were we born to be afraid? . . . The world is all before us and the world is very big. (II:435)

Isabel has learned that doing absolutely as she pleases is the prime tenet of uninvolvement. True freedom requires the responsible recognition that other consciousnesses

besides one's own must be taken into account and that suffering is a necessary analogue to experience. In reality, the world is quite small, but its depth is immeasurable; the world is an essential part of the human being himself. Isabel's final decision is an act of mature judgment. She is no longer a spectator who judges the quality of experience by its extensiveness alone. With her decision to return, she is finally able to say that her action is genuine, the result of some direct impression or perception of life. Ultimately, she has chosen to know herself. At the end, even Osmond's hypocrisy cannot hide the truth inherent in his last words to her: "I think we should accept the consequences of our actions, and what I value most in life is the honor of a thing!" (II:356).

None of the characters in The Portrait of a Lady increase their levels of awareness or change as drastically as Isabel. Ralph falls in love with her despite his predilection for observing rather than experiencing, but like Mildred Theory in "Georgina's Reasons," he is one of James's exquisitely perceptive characters for whom an active change of outlook is irrelevant in the light of their invalidism. Osmond, whose single goal is to maintain his adopted conventions and avoid the general vulgarity of humanity, remains appalled at Isabel's "ideas" to the end. He has become fossilized within a set of rules governing a "deliberately indifferent" posture and as such will not change. Madame Merle, who accuses him of having "dried up" her soul,

comes to recognize that he is "very bad" and that she has been "so vile all for nothing," but her only expiation is to return to America. Osmond's moral stagnancy and Madame Merle's complicity place both in the class of characters whose early preconceptions have jelled in an unbreakable mold. Every action serves to reinforce a previously taken decision, so that if the moral evolution of these characters were plotted on a graph, the figure obtained would be a circle. In the early novels, which rely on more complicated stories to support the plot, the circular progress of the morally stultified characters is less obvious because they are relatively undeveloped. When we examine The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl, however, we find that the closer treatment accorded the unredeemed characters makes their entrapment in a circular pattern of action quite obvious.

CHAPTER II. THE WINGS OF THE DOVE

A close textual analysis of The Wings of the Dove reveals the spiral and circular character patterns which appeared in an embryonic form in the earlier novels. In this work, the moral integrity of a character is demonstrated by how effectively he restructures a cycle of recurring events. No major character displays the stereotyped evilness of Urbain de Bellegarde or the unconscious goodness of Christopher Newman; even Kate's narrowness seems mitigated, as Osmond's is not, by the anguish of the conflict between her emotional and financial needs. The complex moral relativities presented in The Wings of the Dove are clearly a reflection of Minny Temple's own bewilderment at "the indissoluable mixture of good and evil in us all."[33]

Kate Croy's choice of wealth over love sets up a restrictive, circular pattern in which her actions must reaffirm her initial choice if she is to gain her desired financial position. The flawed society of which she is a part subordinates human beings to wealth[34] and encourages her to adopt a role which conceals her feeling for Densher in order to gain a fortune. In her carefully structured universe, she distributes the roles which others play, and, like Alice and the Red Queen in Wonderland, runs as fast as possible to stay in the same place. On the other hand,

Milly Theale and Merton Densher free themselves from initially stultifying patterns of imperception; they are choice-givers rather than role-givers, and owe their allegiance to humanity rather than to wealth. Milly, who wishes simply to 'live,' finds her ultimate joy and ultimate knowledge in human relationships. Densher, who at first has great admiration for Kate's life style, learns, in the end, that he has sacrificed Milly to Kate's desire for wealth. As his expiation, he adopts Milly's values, but the knowledge which his moral growth places between him and Kate destroys their relationship forever.

Kate Croy

> What we call the beginning is often the end
> And to make an end is to make a beginning.
> The end is where we start from.
> "Little Gidding" -- T. S. Eliot

Kate Croy's analysis of English society as a "monster" which keeps its victims "hideously relative to tiers and tiers of others"[35] reveals the reason for her choice of wealth over love. She herself is "hideously relative" to other things. Lionel Croy insists that she sacrifice family feeling in order to accept Maud Lowder's financial and social patronage; Maud banks on Kate's exquisite beauty to attract wealth and prestige to her coterie. Because Kate is manipulated by father, sister, and aunt for the sake of social status, she learns to compromise familial feelings for financial stability. James has thus given Kate impeccable motivations for her decision to adopt the set of values sanctioned by Lancaster Gate. Nevertheless, her need for opulence, her responsibilities, and, finally, her attempt to serve Milly while serving herself[36] cannot completely excuse her actions. Lancaster Gate is a business complex where fortunes are made by valuing people for the use to which they can be put. The circularity involved in such a social system is evident: a gain for one person is

a loss for another, who attempts to recoup at someone else's expense. This type of compensation follows from disregarding a person's intrinsic value and leads to the desecration of human relationships. As Hawthorne points out, to use someone as a means rather than as an end is to violate the magnetic chain of humanity.

Lionel Croy is at the vortex of the debilitating pattern which traps Kate in a cycle of imperceptiveness. James, in fact, intended that "the image of her so compromised and compromising father was all effectively to have pervaded her life . . . to have tampered with her spring" (I:xiv); Kate is attached to her father by the same invisible leash which binds Charlotte Stant to Adam Verver at the end of The Golden Bowl. The half-enunciated plan which the elder Croy presents to Kate at the beginning of the novel structures her entire course of action. Maud Lowder promises to sponsor her in society on the condition that she disown her father; Kate is initially prepared to reject the offer out of family loyalty and love for Densher. For her father, however, Kate's acceptance of Lancaster Gate is the "basket" with all of his "eggs"; it is his conception of her duty. After she has derived the last possible advantage from Maud's society and has married "properly," Lionel Croy will resume relations with his daughter. Kate's duty is to sacrifice family feeling for financial and social prestige. She accordingly goes to Lancaster Gate, but the true nature of the advantages the glittering "castle" seems

to offer is revealed in her bitter castigation of English society to Milly: the function of Lancaster Gate is "to devour the unwary, to abase the proud, to scandalise the good" (I:277).

In many ways, Kate's actions mirror her father's. First of all, the relationship between Lionel Croy and his wife was highly ambiguous; all that is certain is the bare fact of his desertion, which for Kate reinforces the lesson that wealth is greater security than affection. He has, moreover, the sinister power of appearing blameless, arising from a "perfect look" which makes him a "terrible husband not to live with." Kate's own "perfect look" is similarly insinuating. In her company, both Lord Mark and Densher seem vaguely at fault, the one for hesitating to form an alliance with her, the other for cavilling at her demands about Milly. Finally, Lionel Croy has committed a "horrid" deed whose ominous shadow hangs over Kate like a Yeatsian monster of the second coming. The act is never identified, yet remains a latent force throughout the novel. Kate's sin against Milly and Densher is likewise unnamable; she herself hesitates to explain the scheme fully until she has gone too far to retreat. In the end, father and daughter successfully alienate wife and fiancé. One is convinced that Lionel Croy's final dissolution into speechless terror will someday be shared by his daughter.

The close relationship between Kate's and Lionel Croy's actions can be demonstrated by examining parallel textual references. When, at the end, Densher admits that his

fiancée would not have been "in the least the creature she was" if the sordid surroundings of Marian's lodgings "hadn't mismatched her" (II:365), he echoes Kate's own feeling about her father who, in the beginning, seems so extraordinarily mismatched with his vulgar little room. An explicit parallel is evident between the following two quotations: the first describes the meeting between Kate and her father, the second, Densher's later confrontation with her in Marian's rooms.

> . . . the absurd feeling her father momentarily made her have of being herself "looked up" by him in sordid lodgings . . . after he came in it was as if the place were her own and he the visitor with susceptibilities. (I:8)

> . . . she affected Densher at once as a distinguished stranger -- a stranger to the little Chelsea street -- who was making the best of a queer episode . . . the extraordinary thing was that at the end of three minutes he felt himself less appointedly a stranger in it than she. (II:364)

History repeats itself for the exquisite girl who has a father with a "perfect look." Further parallels become evident with each key scene in the novel. When Kate begins to reveal her plans about Milly, Densher feels instinctively that his fiancée is being "evasive": "He couldn't and he wouldn't -- wouldn't have her inconvenient and elusive" (II:19). Lionel Croy's elusiveness has been passed on to his daughter; Kate inspires the same type of mistrust that her father does. At their first meeting, she is painfully aware "of the futility of any effort to hold [Lionel Croy] to anything": and the inconvenience "was not that

you minded what was false, but that you missed what was true" (I:7). In addition, when Croy demands that she go to Lancaster Gate, her answer -- "you demand a great deal of satisfaction . . . for the little you give" (I:23) -- is in the profit-loss vocabulary which he has ably demonstrated as the only way to deal with personal demands. She repeats the same answer to Milly when asked to be discreet about the girl's visit to Sir Luke Strett. So characteristic has this response become to Kate, that it is indicative of the influence she has over Densher to find him parroting a variation to Kate herself:

> . . . you know, what you give me seems to me, more than anything else, the larger and larger size of my job. It seems to me more than anything else what you expect of me. It never seems to me somehow what I may expect of you. There's so much you don't give me. (II:197)

Kate indeed gives nothing; she only bargains. Her personal relationship with Densher is finally conducted on the same business terms as her relationship with her father.

Of secondary importance, but just as obvious, is Lionel Croy's effect on his other daughter. Marian marries the "incredibly fatuous" parson for a "dull suburban parish" who resembles her father in certain respects. Like Croy, Condrip possesses a blameless "saintly profile" which he presents "on system, having, goodness knew, nothing else to present . . . no imagination of the propriety of living" (I:35). He eventually dies, and Marian, like her mother before her, is left with a brood of "clamorous children" and no means of support.

Devouring the Unwary

J. A. Ward's analysis that "Kate's initial conflict is between acceptance of family poverty for the sake of loyalty and acceptance of Aunt Maud's wealth for the sake of magnificence"[37] is inaccurate; her initial conflict is between the acceptance of her father's will as her own and the pursuit of her own wishes. Not until she agrees to go to Lancaster Gate does the conflict between loyalty and magnificence become important. Her resolution of the conflict which Ward notes is a paradoxical attempt to maintain personal integrity while gaining wealth on Maud Lowder's terms. Kate wishes to pay nothing for her new-found prestige, but in reality sacrifices the one prize -- her personal integrity -- which is worth retaining. Nevertheless, her efforts to "square" Aunt Maud are conscientious. They do, however, demand two actions which are in direct opposition to her own desires. In order to guarantee Lionel Croy's hopes of remuneration and to conform to the explicit promise which Maud Lowder has extracted from her, she must disown her father; in addition, she must satisfactorily deal with her aunt's unspoken expectation that she give up Densher, a man who has "a private inability to believe he should ever be rich" (I:62), to contract a more socially and financially brilliant marriage. Thus Kate attempts to "square" everyone by agreeing to marry splendidly while "squaring" herself by secretly maintaining her loyalty to her father and to Densher.[38] To achieve her own ends, she presents an

exceptionally plastic surface to Maud Lowder; under her aunt's roof, she had "to dress the part, to walk, to look, to speak, in every way to express, the part . . . for the character she had undertaken" (I:34). Her long-range plan is to arrange for Densher to inherit a sufficient amount of wealth so that their marriage would be financially amenable to her aunt. The strength of Kate's will, however, is perverted into an unnatural channel even before she is introduced into society. It is too easy to allow sympathy for her predicament to obscure the fact that her proverbial strength of mind is not exercised by maintaining her integrity, but by accepting her father's decision that she go to Lancaster Gate, and by acceding to Maud Lowder's plans for a socially acceptable marriage. Her "strength" is exhibited only by the great extent to which she will allow her love for Densher and loyalty to her father to be violated in order to satisfy the dictates of a society founded upon inhumanity and materialism. Kate can "bear too much"; her corruption "lies in the use she makes of her own love and of her own great endowments, in her abuse of one sort of value for ends of quite another sort."[39]

The part which Kate has to play to maintain Maud Lowder's good will necessitates good acting ability and perfect self-control, since she must impose a pattern of behavior on herself and on others which will not jeopardize her father's plan, nor, when Milly arrives, her own scheme. Kate, as playwrite, manager, and actress, doles out the roles. Her task is to create an appearance which will satisfy

Maud and a reality which will satisfy herself. To achieve her goal, Densher must appear to give her up while she endeavours to make him wealthy. By Book 6, she has settled upon a course of action: if Densher feigns interest in Milly, Maud Lowder will believe that Kate's undesirable attachment is over; if Milly can be made to love Densher well enough to be generous to him, then Densher and Kate can make a financially secure marriage. The scene in which Kate presents her plan is a marvel of tension. She gives Densher only those cues which are enough for him to act on, and no more; she accurately guages exactly how much explanation he will accept and believe, and exactly how much she herself must 'pay' to keep him as an actor. Because she must constantly be a "creature of precautions" and seemingly acquiesce to all of her aunt's wishes without a moment's lapse into her real character, Kate cannot change. When she allows herself to be used by her aunt and her father, she enters the pernicious cycle of profit-loss which so dehumanizes the members of Lancaster Gate. She attempts to recoup the loss of her own freedom by profiting from Milly's imminent death and love for Densher, and thus uses Milly's humanity for her own gain.

The plan to use Milly is never stated in full; it is revealed, bit by bit, as Densher and Kate play out their roles. A reasonably clear statement does not occur until Milly's last party. Kate refuses, even then, to be the first to objectify the distasteful scheme, for that would be to

make vivid the horror of it all, just as to name her father's terrible crime would be to evoke the "old evil." "If you want things named, you must name them," she tells Densher; but once "he was in possession . . . she couldn't forbear, strangely enough, to pronounce the words . . . as if she should be ashamed, to the very end, to have flinched" (II:225). Kate seems to fear that, like Faustus, she might evoke uncontrollable forces by giving them their correct names. Her attitude towards her father's evil is similar to her attitude towards truth; just as she hopes to maintain mastery over the evil by not naming it, she hopes to retain her love for Densher by concealing it. In both cases, the result is a deceptively serene surface. Despite her silence, the influence of the "old evil" does not abate; Kate is very much enthralled by her father, as her grand scheme against Milly illustrates. Densher contributes to the silence by agreeing not to ask for a full explanation of Kate's demand that he befriend Milly; their relationship depends on Kate's "freedom of action" and his "beauty of trust." Unfortunately, her "freedom of action" necessarily curtails Densher's, but his "beauty of trust" in no way restricts her freedom. When Densher stops trusting and begins questioning, it is too late to withdraw from the scheme. For one thing, they have "gone too far" and "told too many lies" to act straightforwardly; Milly might die were Densher to withdraw his attentions, even in the interest of the truth.

The evil that Kate does becomes increasingly evident as Densher grows more and more committed to her management. She is not to blame alone; Densher's vacillating moral state and overweening desire for 'life' shackle him to her authoritarianism. He believes that Kate possesses a talent for living which he, with his intellectual flair, does not have; yet her talent for living is really a talent for acting, and what he admires in her is not 'life' but a simulation of it. Kate must pretend to be without family feeling to gain acceptance at Lancaster Gate, and without love for Densher to gain money for him from Milly; he, likewise, learns to simulate affection for Milly and to pretend that Kate's passion for him is non-existent. The play-acting which Kate demands of him requires as plastic a surface as she is forced to show to Maud. Obviously, no absolute judgment can be made which exonerates Densher and blames only Kate for Milly's deception and death; Densher, in his weakness and indecision, allows himself to be used as the bait to trap the poor little rich girl from New York.

Milly Theale

> The dove descending breaks the air
> With flame of incandescent terror . . .
> "Little Gidding" -- T. S. Eliot

The idea of Milly Theale as an absolutely blameless force palls considerably after reading James's "Preface." This "vessel of sensibility" is a Lorelei, and the complications caused by her "for the most part sinister liabilities" figure prominently in the "general engulfment." Milly, despite her princess-like stance, is given a technically realistic treatment; "her stricken state was but half her case, the correlative half being the state of others as affected by her" (I:xi). As Matthiessen points out, Milly, the dove, carries both regenerative and destructive overtones.[40] One can take James's remarks into account without condemning Milly, however; Blackmur, for example, is overly concerned about Milly's adverse influence when he maintains that Kate's predicament shows Milly to be the impossible aspiration, the "worst temptation," because she appeals to the worst in human nature.[41] Obviously, she also appeals to the best, and therein lies the choice.

The regenerative aspect of the dove image is demonstrated when it is used as a descriptive metaphor for idealistic or imaginative ideas. Lionel Croy accuses Kate

of a "fine flight" in thinking of refusing the well-cushioned "perch" which Maud Lowder offers. Susan Stringham has a series of "secret dreams" which "fluttered their hour" and finally "perched, on the instant, at the clearest lookout" possible to await a signal from Milly (I:105). Merton Densher, before his "descent to English earth," had spent his childhood on the continent, and "had passed, by the way, through zones of air that had left their ruffle on his wings -- he had been exposed to initiations indelible" (I:93). His projected trip to New York is expressed by means of the same motif; "The imprisoned thought had . . . flown straight out into Densher's face, or perched at least on his shoulder" (I:85). Later, he finds that Milly's generous spirit offers him a "perch" where he can rest from Kate's demands and expectations. In a related bird image, Maud Lowder appears as an eagle whose "gilded beak" and "wonderful gilded claws" fasten tenaciously on Kate. The description of Susan Stringham's felt hat, "feathered from the eagle's wing," precisely indicates the relative positions of the two women: Maud is clearly the more rapacious of the two, yet Mrs. Stringham, the more imaginative and humanitarian, has triumphed to the extent of wearing the totem bird in her headdress.

The dove image achieves its definitive regenerative/destructive nature when it is applied to its proper mistress. Upon Milly's arrival at Lancaster Gate, she is immediately plunged into the insistent appearances and multiple phenomena which wash over her "like plashes of a slow,

thick tide." She "alighted,"

> taking up her destiny again as if she had been able by a wave or two of her wings to place herself briefly in sight of an alternative to it. Whatever it was had showed . . . as better than the alternative . . . (I:160)

"Whatever it was" is the possibility of her "being . . . a success" in Lancaster Gate society, an entity which passes for the moment as 'life.' The "alternative" is the non-involvement she has already experienced during her lonely travels through Europe. At Lancaster Gate, Kate gives her the ambiguous role which she plays at first unconsciously and then later by effort: Milly "found herself accepting as the right one . . . the name so given to her . . . That was what was the matter with her. She was a dove. Oh wasn't she?" (I:283). Unlike Densher, Milly requires little persuasion to undertake her role as dove, because it is part of her nature to be peacemaker and protector. Even Kate, who hesitates to name the roles she and Densher play, is not afraid to enunciate Milly's part. Milly protects Kate, protects them all -- at first actively, then later by her silent forgiveness. Nevertheless, as Kate discovers, Milly the protector is also a temptation; and as Densher discovers, Milly the regenerative force demands the "unbearable pain" of purification.

With Milly's growing recognition that the rapacious attitudes of Lancaster Gate cannot satisfy her unfulfilled humanity, she withdraws to Venice. In her palatial tower, the "impossible romance" becomes for her "an image of never

going down, of remaining aloft in the divine dustless air, where she would hear but the plash of water against stone" (II:147). The silence of the tower and its seclusion from the general engulfment of Lancaster Gate demonstrate that Milly has chosen an alternative to society; her increased perceptiveness shows that the alternative is not simply the isolation which she had on the Swiss mountains. In the unhypocritical sense of Gilbert Osmond's words, she wishes to "impress" herself "not largely but deeply." Both she and Kate sample society, yet only Milly withdraws from its futility. Kate, who can vocalize the vicious use which the members of Lancaster Gate make of each other, nevertheless remains within the system and hopes to profit materially from it at the expense of her own spirit.

The destructive aspect of the dove image becomes most evident in the last chapters, where it becomes intensified to an ominous degree. Yet Milly is not merely a Lorelei, but a dove-like innocent who has the power to purify those around her. Densher and Kate begin to sense her two-fold nature during one of their "extraordinary conversations" about Milly when their solitude, in which "the only sign for their ears was the flutter of the doves, begot in the heart of each a fear" (II:193). Even at Milly's last party, Densher realizes that she "was indeed a dove . . . though it most applied to her spirit." Her wealth was dove-like "only as far as one remembered that doves have wings and wondrous flights, have them as well as tender tints and soft sounds."

Because of her change in outlook about Lancaster Gate, Milly's wings grow prodigiously while she is alive; in fact, their inordinate protective length covers everyone within reach, until they all are "nestling under them to a great increase of immediate ease" (II:218). Densher and Kate are also inevitably covered to a great increase of immediate and future discomfort.

Sin and Error

The kind of success Milly achieves as a dove and the efficacy of the role she adopts to increase perception and to enable her to live is defined by her attitudes toward other human beings. Like most of James's pilgrims, she comes to Europe from the New World, suffering the same restless energy which afflicts Roderick Hudson. Her early movements are notable primarily for a lack of purpose: "impatiences" and "bolder dreams" motivate her constant flitting for "endless variety." Mrs. Stringham decides that her charge, who displays a quantity of "eagerness without point," has in effect been "starved for culture." If 'experience' is substituted for "culture," one is faced with the implication that Milly, in her search for 'life,' may sin as deeply as Kate, who helps "lay the trap for the great innocence to come." James himself implies that Milly's major fault is extravagance; she is always, "in some direction, generous and extravagant, and thereby provoking" (I:x). J. A. Ward lists pride, reliance on money and resistance to facing life as Milly's greatest flaws.[42] Dorothea

Krook, who feels that Milly sins by hiding her illness and thereby preventing "some remnant of loving kindness out of the cold heart of the world" from saving her, does point out, however, that the world manifests very little sincere loving kindness.[43] What Milly sees in the hosts of "kind eyes" surrounding her is a reflection of her own generosity. Her "expensive silence" not only prevents false pity from reaching her, but has several more important effects. First of all, it quickly repells interest based on her approaching death rather than on her humanity. Secondly, it is a test of the spirit for all those who come in contact with her illness; everyone around her is "confronted with rare questions and called upon for new discriminations" (I:viii). Finally, Milly's silence about her mortality effectively denies it.[44] Whereas Lancaster Gate denies both the mortality and the life which characterize humanity by treating human beings as objects, Milly denies her mortality in order to emphasize the importance of life. Maud, Susan, and Kate and Densher are forced to examine their attitudes to determine whether, once her mortality is denied, Milly is to be valued as an object or a human being. Mrs. Lowder maintains her interest in establishing a liason between Densher and Milly, not so much for Milly's sake, but to settle her suspicions about Kate's unprofitable attachment. To Susan Stringham she seems to be saying, "I'll help you for Milly, because if that comes off I shall be helped, by its doing so, for Kate" (II:117). Susan, who has a sincere

interest in Milly's welfare, characteristically does what she can to save her by a final appeal to Densher. She translates Milly's plight into the romantic explanation that she is dying for love, which is not too far from the truth: Milly is actually dying for life, and the immediate cause of her death is the discovery that the only possible relationship with those she had trusted is one based on use.[45] Kate continues to maintain her interest in Milly as a vehicle for wealth. After Kate's outbreak about the viciousness of society, she and Milly tacitly agree to hold up protective masks while they are with other people, but "it was when they called each other's attention to their ceasing to pretend, it was then that what they were keeping back was most in the air" (II:139). Only Densher reacts to Milly's struggle in an unexpected way; he too initially fails to value her humanity, but her final illness is the catalyst which sparks his moral growth. Although Milly's greatest sin may be a pride which results in an overwrought sense of privacy, it is a remarkably fertile sin, opening the possibility of moral reorientation to those around her.

Milly's worst error can thus be defined, not as a mistaken evaluation of humanity or her own personal worth, but as an incorrect estimation of the quality of the fulfillment society can offer. Nevertheless, her initial acceptance of Lancaster Gate as the fullness of life soon pales in the pink light of her "curiously soon" apotheosis. Standing before the Bronzino, which is a portrait of a "very great

personage" who is "dead, dead, dead," Milly finds social achievement vanishing into mortality: "I shall never be better than this," she exclaims (I:221). Her despair over society's neglect of her humanity causes her to visit Sir Luke Strett, whose later counterpart is Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly in T. S. Eliot's The Coctail Party. Sir Luke's apostolic mission is to convince Milly that life is worthwhile, even in an antagonistic society. After undergoing "James's equivalent for a confessional,"[46] Milly makes the positive decision "to live, if one would" rather than the more negative 'not to die if one could.' It is important technically that her decision take this form; as James points out in the "Preface", "the poet can't be concerned with the act of dying" (I:vi). Milly, concerned with the act of living, takes Sir Luke's prescription to do as she pleases seriously. She is the only character who adopts that prescript, and thus is the only character who can be considered free from a self-imposed pattern of action. Kate follows her father's plans, Densher follows Kate's scheme; Susan has given herself to Milly, Marian to her children, and Maud to the members of society. Milly alone does what she will, and like the major figure in a carpet, influences the lesser patterns around her.

The Dove and the Tiger

A comparison between Milly and Kate reveals a good deal about their conflicting patterns of action. Matthiessen points out the contrasts only, stressing the weight of

Milly's "quality" against Kate's "quantity," her "nerves" against Kate's "blood."[47] Ward, on the other hand, maintains that the two are similar in many respects although Milly represents the "ideal of spiritual love" while Kate stands for the "ideal of practical intellect." Both girls have similar origins; both of their mothers have died. The two, who are in love with Densher, decide separately to affront life at Lancaster Gate. Kate mistakes vulgarity for magnificence, despite her disdain for the vulgar, and Milly mistakes vulgarity for intensity of life. Milly hopes that society will somehow compensate for mortality, and Kate wants money to compensate for "narrow feeling."[48] Nevertheless, Kate knows precisely what she wants from Lancaster Gate and how to get it, whereas Milly drifts into the establishment with an undefined desire for people, or, what is broader still, for 'life.' Milly is the odd character in a set of fortune hunters who can easily understand Kate's search for wealth, but cannot fathom Milly's troubled spirit. Here, as elsewhere, James juxtaposes "moral beauty" with a "worldly kind"; "it is one of his deepest convictions that you cannot have both at the same time."[49]

The attitudes with which Maud Lowder and Susan Stringham approach their charges indicate why one girl is free while the other is not. As Ward points out, the two chaperons are distorted reflections; Maud's vulgarity adequately reflects Kate's "tarnishment," just as Susan's sentimentality reflects Milly's inward beauty.[50] Susan Stringham

over-romanticizes Milly's position, yet respects her human value as Lancaster Gate does not. She approaches Milly with the "single alarm" that she "really might act on her companion clumsily and coarsely." Her "inspiring thought" is to "leave [Milly] untouched . . . because no touch . . . however light, however just, however earnest and anxious . . . would be anything but an ugly smutch upon perfection" (I:112). Susan pursues a "general surrender" to Milly's greatness in which she completely renounces her personal concerns. James is mildly ironic about her renunciation: "she honestly believed that she was thus supremely equipped for leading Milly's own [life] " (I:113). Nevertheless, Susan is sincere; unlike Maud Lowder, she wishes in no way to tamper with her charge's life, and prefers to efface herself than to curtail Milly's freedom. The nature of their relationship transmutes the persistent profit-gain question into one of giving and taking on an intensely personal basis. Milly has the emotional support and understanding from Susan which Kate completely misses in Maud Lowder. Although Leon Edel advances evidence for what he calls a Jamesian "vampire" syndrome in which one person flourishes while his companion wastes away,[51] James's sympathetic portrayal of Susan's character seems to exclude her from that category. Susan is not a parasite; she contributes more to Milly's life than to her death. In contrast to Susan, Maud Lowder treats Kate as if she were a piece of merchandise; Kate is used as an attractive display

to lure wealth and prestige to Lancaster Gate. Maud deals in human affection and profits by its violation. She demands that Kate take the unnatural position of disowning her father and Densher for more tangible assets. Kate, who has learned her lesson well, seeks to profit from her aunt's dubious generosity to the final desiccation of her spirit. In attempting to retain some fragment of her emotional life she deludes herself into believing that she risks everything for love, whereas in fact she risks everything -- even Densher -- for the sake of Maud's protection and Milly's money. The different ways in which Milly and Kate make use of Susan and Maud illustrate the contrasting attitudes of the two chaperons. Kate takes advantage of Maud's wealth and prestige, a selfish act which is an accepted part of Lancaster Gate society; Milly "works" "dear old Susie" for emotional support and companionship. Susan, however, offers to "go anywhere . . . in the world" with Milly, whereas Maud only offers the means to what she believes Kate <u>should</u> want. Milly's actions are thereby open-ended, while Kate's limitations are set from the very beginning. The two chaperon-protégé relationships become mirror images when one considers the type of advantage offered on each side. True, both Maud and Susan offer protection and support; nevertheless, it is the younger Milly who proffers financial aid to her companion, while it is the older Maud who provides the same service for Kate. Thus similar dangers exist for each pair, but Susan willingly gives up her

personal concerns out of love for Milly, while Kate is forced to give up love for Maud's money. Neither Kate nor Susan can afford a tangible return. Kate offers her exquisite appearance as a precious ornament to Lancaster Gate; Susan's offering, consisting of a wealth of unsophisticated knowledge about the world, is even less negotiable. Yet between Milly and Susan there is a fine rapport which does not exist between the others. Milly is free as her financial counterpart, Maud, or her youthful counterpart, Kate, is not. In fact, James particularly states in the "Preface" that he intended to endow Milly with "a strong and special implication of liberty, liberty of action, of choice, of appreciation," which no one else in the novel possesses (I:ix).

Merton Densher

> After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
> History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
> And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions . . .
> "Gerontion" -- T. S. Eliot

Merton Densher, so beautifully blessed by Milly's last benediction, seems on first analysis the least deserving. He, however, casts only a slightly lesser light in the novel than Milly herself, and certainly a greater one than Kate. He has, in fact, been called the central dramatic character.[52] Like all of James's observers, he takes an inordinate amount of time to decide to act; the most delicately wrought descriptions of Densher's suffering are only found late in the novel, when he reaches his moral impasse over Milly and first achieves a measure of consciousness. Before that point, he is a man without a will, a man who surrenders his entire being to Kate's firm direction. Just as Milly mistakenly believes she has found life at Lancaster Gate, Densher believes he has found the same quality in Kate. "Having so often concluded on the fact of his weakness . . . for life -- his strength merely for thought" (I:51), he is attracted to Kate, who "had more life than he to react from." The differences between Kate and Densher are so strongly emphasized that although Densher is

under Kate's control, their patterns of life appear to be dissimilar from the beginning. As already noted, Kate's and Milly's differing attitudes towards using people and towards changing their goals set them apart; it is likely, therefore, that Densher, who is so different from Kate, may be similar to Milly in ways that finally preserve him from succumbing totally to the Lancaster Gate ethos.

Neither Milly nor Densher are as much at home in English society as is Kate. Milly is the last scion of one of the fine old families of New York; Densher has spent his early years abroad in "strange countries" until his enrollment at Cambridge. Densher's father, who served as "resident or occasional" chaplin for "twenty settlements of the English" abroad, "had for years the unusual luck of never wanting a billet" (I:92). Densher's mother, who bears a strong resemblance to Hilda, the dove girl in Hawthorne's The Marble Faun, was a copyist with a "happy natural gift" for the old masters. In contrast to the slight, charming description of Mrs. Densher, Kate's mother is mentioned as suffering, at the least, under the cross of her husband's "plausibility." Kate had accompanied her mother in her "brief but repeated retreats" to Dresden, Florence, and Biarritz, where she received her training in the "weak and expensive attempts at economy" she hopes to escape at Lancaster Gate. Kate, while still young, has had a taste of the fashionable world where lack of money is a real hindrance to happiness. Densher's upbringing was simple, and

well within his family's means; he is probably only slightly more conscious of the role money plays in life than Milly, who possesses more than sufficient means. Milly's resources are so great that material things come cheap, and lose their meaning; Densher, as an impecunious journalist, is so reconciled to his perpetual lack of funds that he is free to pursue his dreamy intellectual existence regardless of his material standing. Kate, however, who can sense in the abstract "how poor you might become when you minded so much the absence of wealth" (I:34) does mind terribly. Her concern for wealth and the unhealthy moral atmosphere to which she early became accustomed sets her apart from Milly and Densher.

The attitudes which Kate, Densher, and Milly hold with respect to wealth are similar to those they hold with respect to trust. Kate, whose nature is the least trusting because of her impoverishment, demands Densher's "beauty of trust" as a guarantee for her "freedom of action." She trusts no one, not even herself; her insecurity is demonstrated by her compulsive desire to have everything and everyone under the control of her master plan. In reality, Densher's "beauty of trust" as well as his lack of money result from passivity; he does not attempt to examine the possible effects of the assent he accords Kate. Milly alone possesses the beauty of trust which cannot be demanded, but can only be given spontaneously. The eventual fate of each character can be predicted in terms of his degree of

trust and attitude to wealth. Kate, who trusts no one, must find emotional satisfaction in wealth. Densher willingly trusts Kate until he discovers that she is more interested in wealth than in the human quality, when he changes his allegiance to Milly and cedes his inheritance to Kate. Once Milly's assumption that everyone possesses generosity of spirit is falsified, life becomes too difficult for her to continue; the disparity which Kate engineers between the mask and the reality leads to Milly's death. When one grasps the utter depravity of Kate's scheme, it is difficult to agree with Stephen Spender that "harsh, logical, unscrupulous puritanism" causes the death of so many Jamesian characters.[53] Milly's world-view is out of joint with Lancaster Gate materialism, but to blame her for that would be to condone Kate's actions.

The first step in Densher's recognition of his responsibility for his part in Milly's predicament occurs in Venice when he suddenly understands how strongly he objects to the quality of his relationship with Kate. He realizes that "to be in real danger with her would have had another quality" (II:175); because he has forfeited his precious freedom of action, they are equal partners in nothing. The meaning of his "so extremely manipulated state" is that "he was perpetually bent to her will" (II:176); "it was not in the least doing -- and that had been his notion of his life -- anything he himself had conceived." Worst of all, Kate's talent for life, which he has so honestly admired,

is precisely what has so utterly obliterated his own, "poor weak thing of the occasion" though it be.

> The proof of a decent reaction in him against so much passivity was, with no great richness, that he at least knew -- knew, that is, how he was and how little he liked it as a thing accepted in mere helplessness. (II:176)

His natural reaction against being manipulated is more decent than he ever perceives. During his self-examination, he recognizes both the precariousness of his delicate relationship with Milly and his subservience to Kate's goals of wealth and prestige. Despite the fact that it was Kate who had so perched him at the pinnacle of his false position he knows that he alone is responsible for holding Milly there with him.

> If he took off his hand, the hand that at least helped to hold it together, the whole queer fabric that built him in would fall away in a minute and admit the light. (II:175)

His resentment at Kate for "ridiculously exposing" him and then abandoning him to exploit the dying Milly leads him to further dismay at his lack of freedom; "whereas he had done absolutely everything that Kate had wanted, she had done nothing whatever that he had" (II:177). In short, he realizes that he is being used; the psychological price he is paying is so great that he is finally prompted to pose the crucial question "of whether he had really no will left."

After considering the import of this question, he decides to test both Kate's sincerity and the existence of his own will by demanding an act of trust from her. If he is able to defy Kate by initiating an action which she has not

sanctioned, then he indeed possesses a remnant of freedom; the exercise of his own will power removes him from complete subordination to Kate, as well as from the cycle of passivity which is to a great measure responsible for the elements of success in her plan. His movement of will is symptomatic of the "gulf . . . opening between him and Kate,"[54] and his decision to demand her "beauty of trust" signals his adoption of the role of choice-giver, which is in direct opposition to Kate's part as role-giver. Once he begins to lose his beauty of trust in Kate's motivations, her freedom of action is questioned and threatened; thus when she reiterates that she risks "everything" for his sake and the success of her scheme, he is able to retort "I thought you exactly contend that, with your aunt so bamboozled, you risk nothing!" (II:197). His answer clearly displays his newly-formulated suspicion of her motivations and his fear that it is <u>he</u> who risks everything, especially since "it was the first time since the launching of her wonderful idea" that she had been "at a loss" (II:197). Following up his advantage, he demands that Kate demonstrate her love for him in a positive way; it is his first request that she risk something for <u>him</u>. He fails to see, however, that Kate's gift of herself is not freely given, and thereby loses its value; it is part of a business pact, in which Densher agrees to tell lies for her. He, in effect, is using her as brutally as she is him, and balances the positive worth of his new freedom by meeting her on her

own terms of profit-loss.

When Kate finally leaves Densher alone in Venice with tacit instructions to bring the deception of Milly to fruition, he, like Lambert Strether, must cope with a control which is strong though distant. Unlike Strether, however, who feels reluctant to use his opportunity in Paris to gain experience for himself, Densher realizes that not to "profit" by Milly's generosity of spirit would have been to "go directly against it." At this point he realizes with intense vividness the extent of his responsibility for Milly's life and the extent to which he values her humanity, quite aside from what she is capable of doing for him and Kate financially. Milly's instinctive silence about her illness tests whether she is valued in life or in death. Densher's new perception of Milly's value is different in kind from the response of those at Lancaster Gate when her silence called for a reaffirmation of her value. "Anything he should do or shouldn't would have close reference to her life, which was thus absolutely in his hands" (II:252). The terror of this thought keeps him "motionless" for several hours until all action "had heard in it a vivid 'Hush!' the injunction to keep from that moment intensely still" (II:252). He attempts "perfect tact" for several weeks, keeping everything in "the key of the absolutely settled," until Lord Mark's appearance provokes a correspondingly intense silence from the two women at the palace. Lord Mark evokes the evil which all feared by

naming the true relationship between Kate and Densher and their unholy alliance against Milly. No silence is perfect enough at this point to control the evil or to preserve Milly's life. In order to fulfill his pact with Kate to "tell any lie" she requires, Densher remains in Venice after Lord Mark's revelation to 'prove' to Milly that Kate's absence means nothing to him, and that Lord Mark's statements are false. Yet, he realizes that his staying in Venice is literally <u>against</u> Milly; as F. C. Crews notes, this realization, in which he has finally "admitted a disparity between Kate's aim and Milly's welfare," is an important step in his eventual condemnation of Kate.[55] Only when he makes his final appearance before Milly does he redeem his hypocrisy. Despite Susan Stringham's plea, he cannot lie directly to Milly to save her life; her knowledge of his part in Kate's scheme destroys his false appearance. He, at last, is true to her, but the shock of the original deception is lethal for Milly; she dies because she is valued more in death than in life. Her attitude during their last interview preserves his honesty; she, with "divine trust and inscrutable mercy," has demanded neither a refutation of Lord Mark's accusations nor an explanation of Kate's absence, and thus has not forced Densher to lie to her. He is therefore spared the necessity of breaking his pact with Kate by being excused from saying one word of the truth.

Densher and the Dove

The nature of Densher's initial rebellion against Kate in Venice lays the pattern for his final rebellion, which is successful enough to damn Kate and save himself. Like Kate, he is trapped in a purely static situation; if he acts at all, it must be in accordance with a prescribed role. Kate, however, underestimates Densher as much as Milly; she does not suspect that the narrow circumstances which hedge Densher will prompt a growth of will power and a desire for freedom, although she is forewarned by his demand for a proof of her love. In addition, she depends too heavily on his honor and his loyalty to preserve his subordination to her will. In the exigency of keeping his word to Kate after adopting Milly's values, Densher formulates another test for Kate and a plan to remove the stigma of Milly's death from their projected marriage. Before Milly's will is read, he offers marriage to Kate to "right everything that's wrong"; in effect, he asks her to guarantee that her love for him does not depend on money. Kate, whose goals have not changed, refuses. His offer is parallel to his first demand of her in Venice because it requires a demonstration of Kate's beauty of trust in his freedom of action; nevertheless, because his proposal is not a business deal and guarantees no just return for her in the profit-loss market to which she is accustomed, it is refused. Her refusal indicates to Densher that her motives in the scheme had little connection with his happiness. Her analysis

of their situation illustrates her moral stasis:

> I call it perfect -- from my original point of view. I'm just where I was; and you must give me some better reason than you do, my dear, for <u>your</u> not being. (II:348)

Kate has not changed; Milly's death has made no impression on her, other than presenting the possibility of inheriting money. Densher's offer of love is meaningless without wealth and social prestige. She cannot comprehend why Densher wishes to change their plans, since she has in no way altered or jeopardized her position. Kate has no "beauty of trust" in Milly's generosity.

When Densher does receive notification of his inheritance from Milly's lawyers, he subjects Kate to a final test in which she repeats the damning choice in favor of wealth which necessitated the scheme against Milly in the first place. He sends Kate the unopened notification. Since Milly's money never held the same importance to him as to Kate, profiting by her death becomes supremely distasteful. He has gone through the final, unbearable pain of purification in their last interview, and has been forgiven; thus to accept the inheritance would be to use and rejoice in her death, an attitude which he has renounced. For Densher, the pricelessness of Milly's lost humanity can in no way be compensated for by any gain in wealth. Therefore, when Kate commits the ugly vulgarity of opening the notification, he offers her two alternatives. With her consent, he will formally refuse the behest; without her consent to refuse it, he will simply ignore its existence. Either way, he

refuses to profit by Milly. The two alternatives allow him to remain true to his word that he will absolutely follow Kate's commands, while not violating Milly's memory. As Densher says, her "liberty" is "in every way complete." Kate, of course, does not consent to return the inheritance, yet she indicates that if Densher will swear not to be in love with Milly's memory, she will consent. Just as Densher could not deny Kate to Milly, he cannot do the opposite; he makes "every penny" of Milly's behest over to Kate in compensation for her loss of him.

In the final analysis, Kate has learned one lesson; she is correct, when leaving Densher, in saying "We shall never be again as we were." She has not changed while Densher has. Matthiessen feels that James left Kate's decision about accepting the money so highly ambiguous that even the perspicacious reader would be impressed primarily by uncertainty.[56] The aura of ambiguity at the end is intentional, of course, but Kate's character has been previously so well defined that there is no real question about her final action. Despite the liberty of choice Densher gives Kate, there is no other alternative for her but to choose wealth over love.

Even though she is possessed of the inheritance, Kate is free neither of Lancaster Gate nor of her family problems. The father, speechless with terror, will be little helped by the money. Monetarily, Kate is well off; spiritually, she is bankrupt. Densher is no richer than when he started,

but his understanding has been immensely enriched. Leo Bersani is quite mistaken to maintain that Densher's actions show no change of personality at all[57]; Densher truly "has arrived at the moral perception of the meaning of . . . loss and renunciation."[58] Kate remains trapped in her pattern; Densher has been able to exercise free will without breaking his word to Kate or being disloyal to Milly. With the dove's help, he has broken out of the detrimental pattern and affirmed his humanity.

CHAPTER III. THE GOLDEN BOWL

The Golden Bowl also deals with the theme of conflicting moral values. In The Wings of the Dove, the indictment is primarily against a rapacious society where the pressures of the system are so great as to ameliorate even Kate Croy's responsibility for the evil she engenders. In the later novel, however, the established social system is less to blame; guilt is focussed directly on the characters themselves, who pervert human values as they attempt to set up their own social entity. Maggie, for instance, is clearly responsible for the predicament which traps Charlotte, the Prince, and Adam, whereas the veil of spiritual fragility cast over Milly is simply a backdrop for the social pressures which cause her death.

In many ways the two novels are mirror images and so form a complementary pair. The Golden Bowl proposes an alternative to death for its heroine, and explores various plot ramifications suggested in the earlier novel. Milly's personality crumbles when her trust is violated; Maggie is strong enough to use her precious knowledge of evil as the basis for life itself. Both Charlotte and Kate achieve wealth, Charlotte by marriage, and Kate by refusing Merton Densher; yet Kate appears more interested in a fortune than Charlotte, who is happy to indulge her love for the Prince

under any circumstances. Kate must consider the demands of her family in all of her decisions, whereas Charlotte, who is entirely independent, need offer no extenuation for her conduct. Even in the end, the contrast between the novels is clear; the Prince's newly developed sense of morals is bolstered by Maggie's continuing presence, while Densher, who has shifted his allegiance to a dead girl, must rely on a memory to reinforce his actions.

In the following chapter, Charlotte, the Prince, and Maggie will be discussed in terms of their varying moral orientations. Charlotte, like Kate, is a circular character; she considers the renewal of her intimacy with the Prince as a return to their old relationship, and cannot understand the principle of growth which makes both Maggie and the Prince change radically. She is a role-giver who wishes to drown Maggie in a bath of innocence and who expects the Prince to adhere to her arrangements. Maggie, on the other hand, tries to avoid circumscribing the actions and dignity of the others by hiding her suspicions about the Prince and Charlotte; she is like Milly, who masks her growing social awareness under the guise of dovishness. The Prince, who depends on the others to define his moral orientation for him, follows Charlotte's guidance until he is confronted with Maggie's awareness of the situation, when he is forced to be personally accountable for his own actions.

Charlotte Stant

> And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
> Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
> Of motives late revealed, and the awareness
> Of things ill done and done to other's harm
> Which once you took for exercise of virtue.
> "Little Gidding" -- T. S. Eliot

Charlotte Stant occupies an anomalous position in The Golden Bowl: she is the only character who is essentially rootless, who possesses neither family nor tradition to circumscribe her actions. The Prince provides the one strong emotional attachment which influences her decisions; yet even he is not a purely attractive force, since her fear of a penniless marriage impels her to flee his company. Nevertheless, once he becomes engaged to the wealthy Maggie and is 'safe,' Charlotte hastens across continents to spend one final hour alone with him before his marriage makes their relationship untenable. Her unexpected appearance in England is ostensibly for Maggie's wedding, yet, ominously, she is the thirteenth guest at the ceremony. Maggie innocently believes that her friendship with Charlotte is close, although she refuses to recognize any aspect of Charlotte's character not consonant with her own simplistic viewpoint. Fanny Assingham knows enough about Charlotte's past relationship with the Prince to be concerned about her presence,

but even Fanny, who functions as the reader's surrogate in the novel by pondering the vital questions and insights which a perceptive reader might have, is unable to untangle the intricate relationships entailed by Charlotte's arrival.[59] Maggie is, at the end, the only character with the requisite perceptiveness to understand the entire complex situation.

Since Charlotte has shown different sides of her personality to the Prince and to Maggie, her marriage to Adam Verver poses the problem of maintaining three conflicting roles at the same time. As Maggie's friend, the Prince's mistress and Mr. Verver's wife, Charlotte is forced to guard against inconsistencies in her conduct which would abrogate any one of the roles. To spoil one would be to spoil all; Charlotte cannot act freely because she is too concerned with satisfying the demands of the roles. She is thus bound, not by tradition or by family, but by self-imposed patterns of action which themselves have no validity, since she lacks the freedom to express her love for the Prince, the honesty to be a sincere friend, and the loyalty to be a wife. Because each role is structured to fit a particular situation, no one can relate to her in all three roles at once. When Maggie inevitably grasps the falsity behind her friend's behavior, Charlotte discovers that no one role suffices to make her happy. To have married the Prince would have meant the loss of wealth; to be Maggie's friend means the loss of the Prince. The compass of her very narrow, gilded cage is the necessity of totally accepting the role of wife to a

man she does not love. Charlotte is thus not free to change her modes of behavior for fear of endangering her possession of wealth and her relationship with the Prince. Like Kate, who also has to maintain a set of highly structured attitudes, Charlotte is not totally blind to the effects her acts may have on other people, but since these effects are secondary to her own gratification, they are subject to rationalization. Just as Kate insists that undeceiving Milly would cause her death, Charlotte considers the maintenance of the Ververs' innocence to be a sacred trust.

The Magic Circle

Charlotte eventually commits three moral errors which are based on her false assumptions that self-gratification is justified (1) if she alone can take the blame for continuing a relationship; (2) if she satisfies her needs ostensibly for someone else's sake; or (3) if she can take advantage of a situation while evading responsibility for it. At least one of these justifications is used for every action which traps her in a cycle of repetitive motions. Her first misjudgment concerns her unexpected return; she believes that she may safely enjoy the Prince's company without fear of involvement, although their relationship is prefigured by earlier intimacies. Secondly, she is convinced that her acceptance of Adam Verver's proposal for the sake of his wealth is justified because she sets Maggie at ease about her father's loneliness. Thirdly, Charlotte

believes that Maggie's neglect of her husband for her father's sake is sufficient license to resume her old relationship with the Prince. All of these misjudgments can be traced to her attachment to the past, which, like her role-playing, is a substitute for family and social tradition as a guide to action. In contrast to the Prince, who attempts to enter his marriage as a tabula rasa, Charlotte maintains her old roles while assuming the new. Her belief that previous patterns of action need not be relinquished restricts her development and causes her entrapment. Too shackled to the past to adjust to the present, she ends as she began -- bereft of the Prince, coping with the bleakness of American City. To be sure, she possesses the wealth she lacked at first, but her new stance as cultural missionary is just another role.

The unexpectedness of Charlotte's appearance gives the opening of the novel the tone of a fairy tale. The Princess waves her magic wand (Maggie writes to Charlotte about her wedding) and the fairy godmother materializes to bestow a gift. Unfortunately the gift has a crack, and the handsome Prince is in league with the godmother rather than the beautiful Princess. Fanny Assingham, who correctly infers that Charlotte initially left the Prince to "save herself" and to "save him," attributes the virtuous desire to Charlotte to "see Maggie through" her discovery of the Prince's true, amoral nature. It is evident at the end of the novel that without Charlotte, the Prince and Princess would never have achieved a viable relationship, but Charlotte's service to Maggie is simply a justification for preserving her own

past relationship with the Prince.

Charlotte makes her unexpected journey, not to be present at Maggie's wedding, but to see the Prince alone for the last time. What she wants "is that it shall always be with [him] -- so that he'll never be able quite to get rid of" the fact that she has traveled expressly to see him (I:97). She has arranged to have "one hour alone" with him, in order to "give" herself away "for nothing." Her desire to be alone with the Prince "as we are now and as we used to be" is an expression of her attempt to perpetuate the past. She is safe from the temptation of a deeper relationship because the Prince has agreed to marry Maggie; yet it was precisely this temptation which made their earlier meetings so enjoyable. The Prince does not concur with Charlotte's attempt to resurrect the past; he is "amused" and offers her only the impersonal response of his companionship and conversation. All that he is in a position to give her is a ricordo of their afternoon together. Her refusal of the memento with the words "you don't refer, I refer" underlines her attempt to recapture the charm of their past adventures together while relieving him of the responsibility of affirming his involvement with her. On her own terms, her self-gratification is justified because it seems to affect no one but herself. In reality, her return must also affect the Prince because her gratification depends on his compliance with her wishes; her attempt to exclude him from involvement is paradoxical

because she tries to relive the past while leaving out the most important constituents -- the Prince and the possibility of a deeper relationship with him. She too wishes to give Amerigo a memento, but such a one would refer to the whole of their past relationship and not merely to their afternoon together. The Prince, with his decision to build a "new history," feels such a gift to be "impossible." The exquisite, cracked golden bowl might bring evil; he would be afraid for his "happiness," his "safety," and even his marriage. Any gift he might give Charlotte, on the other hand, would be "perfect." At the end of their afternoon together, he assures her that she too "must" marry, unwittingly prefiguring his gift to her of the perfect Mr. Verver, who is a "real galantuomo" and "simply the best man" he's ever seen. Charlotte, on her side, "would marry . . . to have something from the [Prince] in all freedom" (I:121).

Charlotte pays for the wealth and social position she enjoys with her marriage by making a convenience of herself to the Ververs. (Kate Croy errs in a similar way by allowing herself to be used to increase her aunt's prestige and her father's and sister's wealth, yet Kate is impelled by a strong, if misplaced, sense of family loyalty.) Mr. Verver proposes, not out of love for Charlotte, but to "put Maggie at peace." Charlotte is thus free to accept the proposal for Maggie's sake and not out of love for Mr. Verver; she marries a situation, not a man. "The significant private relationship which James values so highly is . . . consumed in the exigencies of form" for Charlotte and Adam;

"they marry for form's sake and continue to live for form's sake."[60] Charlotte cannot escape the form without sacrificing the enjoyment of wealth, and so her personal development is strictly limited both by her resistance to relinquishing the past and by her entrapment in a sterile relationship. Charlotte thus agrees to "see Maggie through" in return for a fortune and a prestigious social position made doubly palatable -- and doubly dangerous -- by the Prince's nearness. Her headlong rush to England and her confession to the Prince of her continuing attachment demonstrate that Adam Verver's choice of a wife is a dubious one. He, at least, is honest in revealing the basis of his proposal to Charlotte; he and Maggie are essentially "good children," innocent and trusting. Charlotte does not reciprocate in kind. Like Kate, who hides her love for Densher for the sake of wealth and conceals her engagement from Milly, Charlotte does not reveal her past relationship with the Prince to the Ververs. She attempts to absolve herself of responsibility for the concealment, however, by offering the Prince's telegram of congratulations to Adam. "We must lead our lives as we see them; but I am charmed with your courage and almost surprised at my own," it reads (I:290). The message is ambiguous. Charlotte interprets it to mean either that "without her his career was up-hill work for him . . . on behalf of a good appearance," or that, if she should imagine herself a "danger," he is "prepared in advance." Since Mr. Verver refuses to read the telegram, Charlotte feels "that her position, in the matter of

responsibility was . . . inattackably straight" (I:291). In reality, it is not; her deceptively casual offer to reveal an important piece of information which might have "dished" a marriage based on convenience is, after all, hardly a substitute for a responsible confession of the truth.

Charlotte thus believes she has cleared herself of the onus of responsibility by giving Adam Verver the opportunity to learn that she will become her former suitor's stepmother; any complaints of violated trust can be referred to his refusal to read the incriminating message. Likewise, Charlotte's decision to resume her past relationship with the Prince is the fault of their neglectful sposi; "such a relation . . . was never before in the world thrust upon two such well-meaning creatures" (I:303). Her philosophy, as Frederick Crews points out, is one of "enlightened fatalism"[61] and her insistence that they must be guided by the Ververs' indifference is an instance of her ability to turn being so placed to her own advantage while blaming her behavior on the actions of others. She makes the most of her situation while evading the responsibility for her own actions, but accepts the responsibility of maintaining the Ververs' indifference so that she can remain intimate with the Prince. The joy she experiences in resurrecting her past relationship with Amerigo is evident in her greeting to him on the day they make their sacred pledge to preserve Maggie's and Adam's innocence: "It's the charm . . . of trying again

the old feelings. They come back . . . Everything comes back" (I:300). The situation in which Charlotte finds herself is not, as she mistakenly senses, an objective correlative for her "old feelings," since she has forfeited the grounds of her previous intimacy with the Prince by marrying Adam Verver. When, "as closely confronted as any hour of their easier past" Charlotte and Amerigo join in a "passionately sealed" pledge to maintain the Ververs' "sweet simplicity" with "conscious care" (I:312), they are like Kate and Densher, scheming to preserve Milly's happiness -- or blindness -- by not revealing their intimacy. Jean Kimball, who favors Charlotte for the heroine of The Golden Bowl, proposes that a "deeper irony" would exist if in fact Charlotte and Amerigo were sincere in their pledge.[62] What makes their pledge so dangerous and so selfish is that they are sincere; without Maggie's innocence, their companionship would be impossible.

Kate and Charlotte, with their manifold errors and selfishnesses, have, as the Bloomsbury shopkeeper says, "seen . . . too much." They have learned that precious opportunities are few, and must be used expeditiously. Unfortunately, the great opportunity for each to achieve her desired state of wealth and social prestige depends upon the manipulation of another human being. Kage and Charlotte sin against Milly and Maggie not by purposely wishing them evil, for the schemes have the advantage of being to everyone's good if not found out, but by using innocence for their own

purposes. In both cases, however, they are mistaken about the capacity of innocence for knowledge and change. Kate and Charlotte not only pattern their actions to fit a circular framework of never-changing attitudes, but assume that the blind innocence of their victims is incapable of development. When Maggie and Milly do learn to expand their viewpoints and gain new perspectives, Kate and Charlotte are caught in the sterile roles they themselves have constructed.

The Prince

> Think
> Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices
> Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues
> Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.
> "Gerontion" -- T. S. Eliot

Charlotte's sudden appearance on the eve of the Prince's marriage is a somewhat ominous answer to his instinct to "do something or other, before it was too late, for himself" (I:20) before he need accommodate his actions to the mystifying ethos of his new wife and father-in-law. His mood has in it the "grimness of a crunched key in the strongest lock that could be made" (I:5). The Prince is not unwilling to marry Maggie, but feels his freedom compromised as never before; Charlotte's materialization, and with her the aura of familiar moral standards which must be given up for the Ververs' more unfathomable expectations, is a breath of the past. He recalls that he has never been "tested"; neither he nor the Ververs know "how many pounds, shillings and pence he had to give" (I:23). Charlotte, who has a "likeness to some long, loose silk purse, well filled with gold pieces" (I:47) <u>is</u> his test. Just as Charlotte is tempted by material wealth to forfeit a penniless marriage with her lover, so Amerigo is later

tempted by Charlotte's ostensible wealth of life to forfeit Maggie's more intangible assets as a human being. It is not until Maggie relinquishes her innocence that she learns "how many pounds, shillings and pence" he gives up in sacrificing the "long, loose silk purse." Face to face with this first test, however, the Prince remains true to his determination to create "some new history that should . . . contradict, and even if need be flatly dishonor, the old" (I:16). He is primarily concerned with ameliorating the past infamy of his family, yet aware that "the happiest reigns . . . are the reigns without any history," he preserves an air of detachment from Charlotte.

The introductory section of The Golden Bowl presents the three qualities of the Prince's nature which explain the changing aspects of his relationship with Charlotte and Maggie. His naive attempt to create a new personal history simply by disregarding the old, his inability to fathom the Ververs' expectations, and his lack of a moral sense predicate his dependence on an emotional attachment to provide guidance.

A character's attitude toward his personal history has an important role in determining the type of moral growth he will experience. In James's early novels, the confrontation between American and European mores may be understood in terms of a clash between developing history and formalized history (tradition). Even in the later novels, where the international theme is subordinate, the Americans are

noticeably uninfluenced by their personal history. The behavior of Kate, an English girl, is strongly swayed by her father's peccancies and her strong family loyalty, whereas the American Milly Theale exhibits only an external remembrance of her dead family in her "helplessly expensive" mourning attire. The absence of any determining factor intruding into the present from the past leaves Milly entirely free to construct a new personal history. Charlotte, whose Americanism has been blunted by a continental education, allows her past relationship with the Prince to determine her mores and so is just as bound as Kate. The Prince, who is the scion of an old Roman family which boasts of "crimes," "follies," an "infamous waste of money," and a "wicked Pope," views his marriage to the American Maggie as a way to satisfy his "desire for some new history that should . . . contradict the old." The Prince is perhaps the sole representative of his family to gain a fortune without committing "crimes" or "follies"; nevertheless, his hope that the past can be quashed completely is as illusory as Charlotte's idea that it can be revived. The Ververs, who have no past to contend with, become guardians for the history of other generations by collecting antiques. In other words, Maggie marries the Prince for his history. It was the "crimes, the plunder and the waste" which made Maggie "originally" think of him. "It wasn't," she tells him, "what you call your unknown quantity, your particular self." She knows nothing of this, as they both agree. When Maggie

asks the Prince, "Where . . . without your archives, annals, infamies, would you have been?" (I:9), she points out that without his family history, he might not have gained her interest, and might not have possessed the same personal quantity. The Prince's history, however, is compounded not only of the follies of the past but the hope of the future; as the namesake of Amerigo Vespucci, the Prince himself is a discoverer of new territories containing untold wealth. If the metaphor is carried to its logical conclusion, Maggie represents the new territory of America upon which a new history can be founded. Charlotte, like Kate Croy, is unwilling to relinquish the past; Kate cannot escape her father's influence, and Charlotte tries to perpetuate an old role in a new situation. Maggie has few determinants attached to her behavior. Like Charlotte, she initially clings to the past by attempting to maintain her old relationship with her father, but changes abruptly when she discovers that she has created no relationship with Amerigo strong enough to prohibit him from returning to <u>his</u> past relationships. She learns that the past can neither be resurrected nor completely ignored; since life is a process of development, the past must be continually incorporated into the present. The precious lesson of development is one which Charlotte cannot learn, and one which the Prince only begins to perceive at the close of the novel.

The Personal Relation

The Prince's inability to understand the Ververs' expectations occurs because they possess a moral sense alien to his and present a confusingly naive evaluation of his worth. He is bewildered by the "large bland blank assumption of merits almost beyond notation, of essential quality and value" (I:23) which they impute to his heritage. Nevertheless, since he is like an "old embossed coin" valued for its antiquity, he escapes "being reduced to his component parts." Whereas he can deal with "his own estimate" of himself, he is at a loss to handle the Ververs' trusting analysis of his intrinsic merits, particularly since their analysis is based on a knowledge of his history and not of his personality. Maggie's insistence that it isn't his "particular self" but his past which makes him attractive underscores the Prince's difficulty; he is expected, in some mysterious way, to live up to a valuation based on a family history which he would prefer to live down. He appeals to Fanny Assingham to guide him through the intricacies of the American moral system, for he has a "real, honest fear of being 'off' some day, of being wrong, without knowing it" (I:30). In attempting to determine how to satisfy the Ververs' undefined expectations, he assigns Fanny the role which Maggie eventually undertakes. His request to Fanny "Therefore it is that I want, I shall always want, your eyes. Through them I wish to look" (I:30) parallels his final words to Maggie, "'See'? I see nothing but

you." At the end of the novel, Maggie has replaced both Fanny and Charlotte as a guide to life. His moral sense, like a "tortuous stone staircase," "steep and unlighted," becomes accommodated to the Americans' "lightning elevator."

After his marriage, the Prince relentlessly gathers "impressions and generalizations" about his new life in an attempt to gain a perspective on the Ververs' expectations of him. Maggie senses that her husband, who worked "so constantly for comprehension," has a definite, if mystifying, goal. Unfortunately, however, his "saving up, for some very mysterious but very fine eventual purpose, all the wisdom, all the answers to his questions" (I:163) is as superficial and as ineffectual a learning process as Maggie's investigation of the "rows of volumes, in libraries" which record the Prince's family history. Neither the Prince nor Maggie seek a deeper understanding of the other than is revealed to the general public. The Prince, in fact, finally decides that the Ververs "were what he had once for all turned his back on" (I:315). He finds that their bland assumption of his value becomes tedious, and begins to use his imagination "mainly for wondering how they contrived so little to appeal to it" (I:314). His original apprehension about their indefinable expectations disappears as he finds he need do nothing "worthy of the personal relation." The Prince is a romantic, yet unlike his ancestors is bereft of dagger and poisoned cup, although "these were the services that by all romantic tradition, were consecrated to

affection quite as much as to hate" (I:315). He has already noticed that "any serious discussion of veracity, of loyalty" takes Maggie by surprise, and now discovers there is no need to display his loyalty.

His agreement with Charlotte to preserve the Ververs' innocence may thus be seen as an outgrowth of his disappointed romanticism as well as a reaction of his old Roman pride. A secret pact and a relationship which makes up for Maggie's neglect of his "personal quantity" are more satisfying than the "new history" which he has adopted. From this viewpoint, the Prince is well-motivated in his reactions to his new life; nevertheless, in compacting with Charlotte, he has performed the action which he at first so excessively feared. He is wrong without knowing it. However, Maggie too is to blame; the Prince, not unreasonably, feels that she has made him ridiculous by thrusting him into society with Charlotte. His whole estimate of his own "personal quantity" is at stake. He, at least as "he constitutionally conceived galantuomini," could hardly go about innocently with the charming and beautiful Mrs. Verver; that would be to publish him as "idiotic" or "incapable." His pact with her is thus the first step in making their apparent intimacy real. In one sense, he really is motivated "by an alert sense of social responsibility"; he accepts the situation which Maggie creates because she does need her father. Charlotte, on the other hand, is motivated "by a sense of her own needs."[63]

The Prince cannot accept his wife emotionally until she either captures his interest or gives him something to do "worthy of the personal relation." When he unexpectedly finds her waiting for his return from Matcham in their own home rather than in her father's, he can no longer predict her actions or take them for granted. She eventually presents him with a mission which satisfies his romantic sense to the utmost; he must, Maggie intimates, find out for himself who else in their establishment knows about his past relationship with Charlotte, and knows that Maggie is aware of it. If he at one point "vulgarly" complained that "one had never to plot or lie for them," he now has the opportunity of doing something "worthy" of their relationship. Like Densher, who can tell Kate nothing about his last interview with Milly, the Prince resolves to say nothing whatever to Charlotte about Maggie's discovery, or the changed aspect which her discovery has given their marriage. Replacing the pact he had with Charlotte is the new understanding he has with his wife. Maggie has performed a "worthy" feat for the Prince; her care in preserving the serenity of the two households while struggling with her unhappy perceptiveness demonstrates to him that she considers their personal relationship to be of paramount importance.

In his relationships with Maggie and with Charlotte, the Prince shows that he cannot function independently. He is subject to the life pattern which is for the time most

persuasive. Like a mirror, his actions reflect the viewpoints of those around him; his initial bewilderment at the Ververs' expectations occurs because, although they present nothing definite to react to or against, he seeks to obliterate the few standards he has inherited by immersing himself in their company. Charlotte's sacred pledge gives the Prince a practical definition of his role in relation to his wife and father-in-law. On the other hand, Maggie's neglect of his "personal quantity" gives him only an ambiguous clue for his behavior towards Charlotte; in fact, Maggie's reluctance to give up her previous intimacy with her father leaves Amerigo free to resume his former relationship with Charlotte. Not until Fanny Assingham breaks the golden bowl does Maggie indicate what she expects of the Prince. After that, his intense silences and solitudes are devoted to choosing between two powerful patterns of existence. Maggie's proves to be the stronger of the two; she vanquishes Charlotte and wins the Prince.

Maggie Verver

> Who then devised the torment? Love.
> Love is the unfamiliar Name
> Behind the hands that wove
> The intolerable shirt of flame . . .
> "Little Gidding" -- T. S. Eliot

The technique which James employs in The Golden Bowl to facilitate character development seems to be responsible for the critical disagreement about the quality of Maggie's goodness. In the "Preface" to the novel, James makes the following statement:

> It is the Prince who opens the door to half our light upon Maggie, just as it is she who opens it to half our light upon himself; the rest of our impression . . . coming straight from the very motion with which that act is performed. (I:viii)

Maggie is thus exposed as much by the way she phrases her thoughts of the Prince as by the way he perceives her. In an article entitled "Maggie Verver: Neither Saint Nor Witch," Walter Wright comments pertinently that "what gives Maggie significance is the struggle within her and the final resolution of that civil war": the point of the novel is the portrayal of her psychological reversal from innocence to knowledge and her consequent involvement in human relationships.[64] Joseph Firebaugh, however, claims that Maggie's pretence of ignorance about her husband's affair indicates that she, like the Prince, is "willing to build a false

world of appearances to conceal the truth about her life." Maggie, according to Firebaugh, does not possess James's sympathy.[65] Sallie Sears makes a similar analysis in The Negative Imagination: she charges that Maggie's silence is sanctimonious, and suggests that only an open discussion of her suspicions about the Prince and Charlotte would preserve her integrity. Not only do Maggie's "acts of duplicity" place her beyond the reader's pity,[66] but they remove her from James's sympathy, which is then bestowed upon Charlotte.[67] Both Firebaugh and Sears seem to misinterpret James's technique of recorded observation. James does not display a bias towards his hero or heroine as obviously as, for example, Dickens. His sympathy operates under the benign aspect of Janus, the double-faced Roman deity who protected portals; both sides of Maggie as well as both sides of the Prince are displayed to the reader as impartially as possible. James's treatment of Charlotte is certainly kinder than his earlier portrayal of Osmond, who perhaps possessed a similar longing for wealth and the tradition-ridden past; yet it must be noted that even in Charlotte's case, sympathy is expressed by means of Maggie's comments, rather than by means of direct authorial intervention. Since evil is a social problem as well as a product of mutually shared mistakes, James can sympathize with Charlotte while condemning her just as he sympathizes with Maggie while redeeming her. Both characters make errors out of moral blindness, but Maggie remains the

heroine because she is capable of development.

Innocence and Involvement

The impression of Maggie which emerges from the first half of the novel is unprepossessing. Seen through the eyes of the Prince, she is a shallow little person with the money to make him comfortable, but so inoffensive that her fortune is not a compensation. Maggie herself admits that she has "little limits -- terribly marked, she knew, in the direction of saying the right things" (I:163) and notices the Prince's evident feeling "that [French] supposed a cleverness she was not a person to rise to" (I:6). The possession of such limits is damning under the terms of James's philosophy that "to 'put' things is very exactly and responsibly and interminably to do them" (I:xxiv). Maggie not only lacks savoir faire, but according to Fanny is impossibly innocent and must be protected: "She wasn't born to know evil. She must never know it" (I:78). Maggie, who has no sense of evil and small expressive force, marries a man with no moral sense and a thirst for "explanations." The potency of this combination becomes evident as the Prince first underestimates, then dismisses Maggie's internal complexities.

Maggie, whom the Prince marries for money rather than for love, accepts the Prince for his history rather than his "personal quantity." Like Isabel Archer, who marries to finance Osmond's attitudes about life, Maggie must learn the value of honest involvement in human relationships.

At first, she appears to have learned the lessons of involvement and responsibility to an inordinate degree. She blames her marriage for her father's loneliness; yet her attempt to maintain the full intimacy of their old relationship -- "she had been able to marry without breaking . . . with her past" (II:5) -- is as erroneous as Charlotte's attempt at transposing her past relationship with the Prince into the present. Maggie is mistaken in accepting an immature definition of responsibility and in believing her superficial relationship with Amerigo to be valid. Like Isabel, who learns to accept the responsibility for marrying Osmond and befriending Pansy, Maggie must realize that she has responsibilities toward the Prince as well as toward her father.

Maggie's first suspicion that she has neglected her husband for her father's sake is expressed as an "absurd, fantastic" reverie in which Charlotte and Amerigo pull the family coach while the Ververs ride in state inside. When Maggie steps down, she is amazed at the view, and determines to make a deliberate effort to aid in pulling the coach by expressing special attention to the Prince's activities. Waiting for Amerigo's return from Matcham with Charlotte at her own fireside and not, as he would have expected, at her father's, Maggie broods over the "freshness of relation produced by her having administered to her husband the first surprise to which she had ever treated him" (II:10). She takes action on the most important questions she has ever

asked herself -- "What if I've abandoned them [Charlotte and Amerigo] you know? What if I've accepted too passively the funny form of our life?" (II:25) -- by taking a detailed interest in Charlotte's and Amerigo's Matcham adventures from which she had initially excluded herself. Since the Prince has seemed to have been "too absent" in spirit, Maggie decides that she will "be with him again . . . as she doubtless hadn't been since the 'funny' changes . . . into which they had each, as for the sake of the others, too easily and too obligingly slipped" (II:27). With this decision, Maggie begins to break the cycle of misplaced responsibility in favor of achieving real involvement with her husband. She determines, however, that since "their equilibrium was everything, and that it was practically precarious, a matter of a hair's breadth for the loss of the balance" (II:17), she would bring about a difference in their relationships without anyone suspecting that she is the cause. "Unless she were in a position to plead definitely that she was jealous she should be in no position to plead decently that she was dissatisfied" (II:34). She can give only commonplace reasons for her changed actions. Is Maggie thus motivated purely by "self interest," as Sallie Sears claims? Is it true that "to hold and keep what is precious to her regardless of who suffers . . . she plunges into the deepest hypocrisy"?[68] Charlotte and Amerigo, who decide to preserve Maggie's blindness to life for the gratification of their own pleasures, seem to be the ones motivated by

self-interest. Their pact to preserve the Ververs' innocence operates more for their own comfort than to mitigate Maggie's suffering. Maggie's dissimulation, on the other hand, is for the purpose of protecting the others; once her disclosure is made to the Prince, she attempts to mitigate Amerigo's and Charlotte's suffering by supporting the human dignity of each. Maggie, as Walter Wright puts it, "comes outside herself"; in pitying the two, she learns unselfishness.[69]

Maggie's decision to recapture the interest of the Prince while maintaining the serenity of the family relationships indicates that she is beginning to break out of a circular chain of actions characterized by the desire to preserve intact her old closeness with her father. Her quiet attempt to bring about a change for the better in their situation is a more viable reaction to a set of sterile circumstances than has been displayed by Charlotte and Amerigo, who have both given up the Ververs and withdrawn into their past relationship. The two make no attempt to awaken Maggie from her innocent, trusting dream; they take refuge in a relationship which at best has certain social limitations and at worst cannot deepen because it is subject to concealment. Maggie, too, at first takes refuge in the intimacy of her old relationship with her father, a relationship which cannot lead to maturity because of its dependence and cannot broaden her knowledge about life because of its protectiveness and exclusiveness. Maggie's

comfortable existence is finally jarred by the realization that the "form" which permits Maggie and Adam to remain homebodies while allowing Charlotte and Amerigo to become social personages provides the only validity for their relationships. "Ritual and fact" are indeed one to Maggie[70]; as one critic has put it, Maggie makes "passions of patterns, relationships of rituals," but she goes "beyond Milly to break the vision of herself as ritual."[71] Her attempt to rearrange the "form" of the two couples is basically an attempt to revamp the facts.

> They had taken too much for granted that their life together required, as people in London said, a special "form" -- which was very well so long as the form was kept only for the outside world and was made no more of among themselves than the pretty mould of an ice pudding. (II:27)

A manipulation of form which leads to the perversion of reality is seen in The Wings of the Dove, where Kate's and Densher's pretense at indifference leads to the dissolution of their relationship. Maggie, however, tries to break the mold of the "ice pudding" by changing the quality of her relationship with the other three. She does not succeed until the contents of the pudding -- that is, their mutual relationships -- have changed and grown sufficiently to break the mold. At that crucial point, Charlotte and Adam depart for America because there is no longer room enough in Maggie's relationship with her husband to accommodate the other two. Joseph Firebaugh, as already noted, deplores Maggie's dissimulation. Yet the Prince and Charlotte are

certainly more vulnerable to attack than Maggie, whose dissimulation is simply an attempt to preserve the "mould" until the "pudding" has hardened into its new shape. Similarly, Sallie Sears fails to mention Amerigo's and Charlotte's own duplicity while claiming that James's true sympathy lies with Charlotte.

The Bath of Benevolence

Maggie's new plan of involvement is a success, but is only the first step out of a stultifying situation. The second step occurs when she realizes that her success is due entirely to Charlotte's and Amerigo's efforts. She begins to question "why such promptitude of harmony should be important," and all but guesses the nature of their pact as she sees that "it was not from her that they took their cue but . . . from each other" (II:41). She senses that they have immersed her in a "bath of benevolence" "before they should, without knowing it, wound her" (II:43), and feels that "she must be kept in position so as not to disarrange them" (II:45). From this point on, her quest is to discover why Charlotte and Amerigo together possess the power to wound her. She deserts her bath of benevolence for the more arduous activity of pulling the family coach, and broadens her experience of life not only by engaging in apparently trivial social expeditions, but by investigating the hitherto unknown quantity of evil in the family's mutual relationships.

Maggie learns quite unexpectedly about Charlotte's and Amerigo's liason from the Bloomsbury shopkeeper, who has sold her the same golden bowl which Charlotte had wished to purchase for the Prince. Symbolically, when the bowl is broken, Maggie can carry only two pieces at a time; "she paid, with humility of attitude, this prompt tribute to order -- only to find however that she could carry but two of the fragments at once" (II:182). Either James wishes to indicate that she can handle only the two relationships with her father and Amerigo to the exclusion of Charlotte, or to imply that the two pieces stand for Maggie and the Prince. Alan Rose's suggestion that Charlotte and the bowl are synonymous because Charlotte, who is compared to a silk purse, is filled with gold, and both she and the bowl are flowerlike, seems untenable.[72] During her discussion with the Prince, the knowledge of a fresh relationship with her husband is born to Maggie.

> . . . he had used her, he had even exceedingly enjoyed her, before this; but there had been no precedent for that character of a proved necessity to him which she was rapidly taking on. (II:186)

His "new need" for Maggie results from her growth of knowledge about responsibility and evil; only <u>she</u> can "by an instinct all her own . . . securely guide him out" of the labyrinth of their disoriented relationships. "Look at the possibility," she appeals mutely, "that since I <u>am</u> different there may still be something in it for you -- if you're capable of working with me to get that out" (II:188). The

Prince must give up something if he wishes to benefit from Maggie's increased perceptiveness; he must consider "what price [he] may have to pay, whom [he] may have to pay with to get this advantage free." The Prince is at last face to face with the test he initially feared, and discovers that Charlotte, whom he has praised as a fine "silk purse" full of gold, is the measure of his payment.

Once Maggie reveals her knowledge to the Prince, the form which the couples had initially adopted is altered irrevocably. Charlotte loses her power to guide Amerigo; he accepts his wife's injunction to "find out" for himself who else is aware of her new knowledge, and deliberately neglects to disclose Maggie's discoveries to Charlotte. The Prince and the Princess together maintain the equilibrium of the group; it is Charlotte's turn to be walled into a "bath of benevolence." With the Prince's new need of her as a moral guide, Maggie finds that "the immense advantage . . . was that she should have now to arrange, to alter, to falsify nothing; should have to be but consistently simple and straight" (II:186). The character of her dissimulation thus changes subtly; she no longer needs to bide her time until her knowledge comes to fruition but is able to adopt a freedom of action "for some prodigious and superior adventure" which is "divorced from conviction." In revealing her knowledge to the Prince, she acts on conviction; but in her desire to "spare him" which had even "brushed her, in the depth of her trouble,

as with the wild wing of some bird of the air" (II:185), she acts on freedom. Conviction is thus made subsidiary to love, as it was for Milly when love overcame revenge at her deception.

What becomes of Maggie's "straightness" when she later lies to Charlotte, upon her honor, "I've not felt at any time that you've wronged me" (II:249)? Marius Bewley feels that a serious reversal of values takes place when Maggie's marriage becomes sanctified by her lies to Charlotte.[73] Maggie, however, escapes the onus of the lie because of her care for Charlotte's dignity. Maggie simply supports the appearance which Charlotte has set up, and that appearance crumples from the weight of Maggie's knowledge. Safe in her possession of the Prince, Maggie no longer needs to "arrange," but can be "simple" and straightforward in an act of charity. Her lie to Charlotte is part of her "prodigious adventure"; had she acted purely on conviction, she would have denounced the Prince's former companion. With a sense for the dignity of all of them, Maggie, like the "scapegoat of old," charges herself with "the whole complexity of their peril." She refuses to surrender Charlotte to public disgrace, although Charlotte is the one responsible for her experience of finding "the horror of the thing hideously behind, behind so much trusted, so much pretended, nobleness, cleverness, tenderness" (II:237). Perhaps it is true, as Ferner Nuhn maintains, that for Maggie to expose Charlotte would mean that the Ververs' "high faith in culture as liberation" is a delusion.[74] It seems evident, however, that Maggie spares

Charlotte not to preserve an illusive belief which she has recognized as false, but to preserve the personal integrity of all of them; it also seems clear that her "high faith" in Amerigo's culture is in the end vindicated. In trying not to "give them up," give up Charlotte and Amerigo and her father, she avoids, "by a hair's breadth, deflecting into the truth" (II:250). While one effect of the "extraordinary form of her humbugging" is to spare Charlotte, the other is to punish her more certainly than an outright accusation would have done. Maggie is able to spare her because she knows that she and the Prince are working together, while Charlotte "was really off in some darkness of space that would steep her in solitude and harrass her with care" (II:250).

Despite the intensity of Charlotte's punishment, there is a great deal of pity directing Maggie's actions. Joseph Firebaugh points out that Maggie's "certain compassion" for Charlotte is that of a "righteous deity," not that of a "fellow mortal."[75] He is correct, but not in the derogatory sense he intends; humbugging to the end, Maggie allows Charlotte to retain her last and most important possession -- her pride. Maggie's final "supreme abjection" on the eve of the Ververs' removal to America gives Charlotte the opportunity to express seemingly righteous anger about Maggie's intimacy with her father as well as to blame Maggie's interference as the reason for the Ververs' move. "To be doomed was in Charlotte's situation to have extravagantly

incurred a doom, so that to confess to wretchedness was by the same stroke to confess to falsity" (II:312). Charlotte -- doomed to a sterile life in American City -- is in reality being transported away from the Prince by Adam Verver, and the "quaver" in her clever voice, as she explains her husband's antiques to a crowd of gaping visitors, sounds to Maggie like "the shriek of a soul in pain." The passage, although long, is of interest:

> The largest of the three pieces has the rare peculiarity that the garlands, looped around it . . . are not of the same origin or period, or even, wonderful as they are, of a taste quite so perfect. They have been put on at a later time . . . so that although the whole thing is a little baroque its value as a specimen is I believe almost inestimable. (II:291)

If we understand the "three pieces" as a metaphor for the three living art pieces -- Maggie, Charlotte, and Amerigo -- which Mr. Verver has collected, Charlotte seems to be describing herself (Alan Rose's suggestion that "three pieces" refers to the golden bowl itself seems less supportable[76]). The "long, silken halter looped around her beautiful neck" has, like the garlands, been "put on at a later time" by Mr. Verver.

Maggie, for all of her humbugging, finally achieves her rightful position as a guide for the Prince. At the end, he "sees" only her to the exclusion of Charlotte and even Fanny. By emerging out of a cycle of childish dependence on her father into the knowledge that she is able to control her own life, Maggie grows to greater stature than Charlotte, with all her splendid style, has been able to achieve.

Maggie has become "deep"; she has become a person of enduring interest to the Prince rather than a toy for enjoyment. She has learned that involvement with another human being means more than a knowledge of his history; it requires harmony with the "personal quantity." Most of all, she has managed to preserve the personal dignity of three other people, and, in taking this responsibility upon herself, has avoided the trap of imperceptiveness.

CHAPTER IV. SUMMARY

> The major James . . . the hater of tyranny; . . . book after early book against oppression, against all the sordid petty personal crushing oppression, the domination of modern life . . . The outburst for human liberty, personal liberty, the rights of the individual, against all sorts of impersonal bondage.[77]

The Henry James who attended elite dinner entertainments to unearth ideas for his social comedies was indeed the "hater of tyranny" and the denigrator of the "domination of modern life." His pity for the individual caught in "impersonal bondage" and his belief in the human capacity for winged victory are displayed, not by socially conscious diatribes, but by subtle, understated novels revealing his intense humanitarianism. Certainly Kate Croy and Charlotte Stant, his best expressions of man's inhumanity, are treated with a masterly sympathy which imbues their actions with a fine touch of the pathetic. The two "splendid" creatures affront a world in which personal resourcefulness is the only defense against a monotonous life where taste, love and beauty are reduced to the primitive urgencies of food and shelter. Kate's and Charlotte's distaste for the commonplace, however, prompts them to subordinate the finer things of life to an undignified scramble for wealth, which, when achieved, does not lead to the heights of taste, love, and

beauty, but to their belittlement and eventual sacrifice. Milly and Maggie, James's representatives of humanity, are saved from the corruptive economic struggle by virtue of their great financial resources, yet, in the beginning, are as far from the fine life as Kate and Charlotte. James has updated and made credible the myth of the happy but impoverished retainer who cannot be swayed by money, by endowing Milly and Maggie with so much wealth that it ceases to become a motive for their actions. He implies that neither the lack nor the presence of money affects the growth of perceptiveness, only how it is used: Densher, who is very poor, achieves a spiritual understanding akin to Milly's, who is very rich; the Prince, who possesses only a title, learns more in a few years than the immeasurably wealthy Adam Verver has learned in a lifetime.

Both The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl are primarily concerned with character development; yet it is not significant merely to show that one set of characters develops while another set does not, for that is the formula upon which most novels and stories are constructed. James's special technique is to dramatize character development by juxtaposing two conflicting patterns which, in the preceding chapters, have been labeled 'circular' and 'spiral.' The labels are more than convenient ways to distinguish the antagonist from the protagonist, or the subordinate character from the hero or heroine; they are descriptive names for the types of "movement-of-spirit" the characters undergo.

If author's empathy were enough to define a heroine, then Kate and Charlotte would qualify, as some critics feel[78]; for James, however, an ever-widening spiral of development into a consciousness of the pricelessness of humanity and the nature of man's capabilities is the hallmark of a heroine. This development only takes place in characters who find that using a human being as a tool for gaining a selfish goal is unsatisfactory and limiting. Maggie, who at first innocently uses Charlotte to satisfy her concern for Adam's loneliness and to provide companionship for the Prince during social occasions, discovers at last how narrow her field of action and her outlook have become. With responsibility comes freedom; hence when Maggie finally accepts the responsibilities entailed by her marriage to the Prince, she can cease to depend on Charlotte and begin to partake of the joy of a fully-experienced relationship. Milly, in the beginning, sins not by usage but by accepting the society which condones the barter of human affections as the fullness of 'life.' After her visit to Sir Luke Strett, she realizes that she cannot even use pity for her illness to mitigate it; she must face her mortality alone. In contrast, Kate uses Milly's love for Densher to gain a fortune; Charlotte uses Maggie's affectionate attachment for her father not only to secure a wealthy marriage, but to indulge in her love for the Prince. Both Kate and Charlotte violate their humanity by subjecting individual liberty to the constraint of a false appearance assumed to

gain a selfish benefit. Love is sacrificed to form; neither can grow more perceptive because the free play of imagination and the expression of emotion have been deliberately sacrificed to the maintenance of a static attitude. Densher is equally culpable in allowing himself to be used; he subjugates his will completely to Kate's, even though he senses that her scheme to entangle Milly is wrong. Like the Prince, it is not until the end of the novel that he changes his allegiance from a limiting, circular force to a growing, spiral one.

James is perhaps best known for his juxtaposition of innocence and experience. These two facets of the human condition are, however, but a key to his vaster concern for 'good' and 'evil,' which are presented in his later works as free and limited modes of action. In fact, experience per se seems to provide only a false clue to what is good, as both Kate and Charlotte illustrate. Milly and Maggie also discover that experience reveals only the bad, the thing hideously behind what is trusted. Innocence, on the other hand, can be as limiting as experience; before Maggie comes to grasp Charlotte's motives, she is as "dead, dead, dead" to the real nature of love as the Bronzino portrait. With his distrust of both innocence and experience as it is commonly understood, James seems to imply that the only viable mode of life is a special type of experience which yields neither a concentration on selfish ends nor a desire to mitigate one's suffering by using another person. His

interest in this special type of experience results in an emphasis on the renunciation of revenge, a theme which makes its debut as early as The American, where Newman discovers that revenge on the Bellegardes is not adequate compensation for his lost fiancée. Milly learns, too, that revenge on Densher for his part in Kate's scheme would be fruitless and quite out of keeping with the love she bears him. For her part, Maggie knows that she is not to have the relief of a jealous outburst; she intuits the braver thing, the better propriety, to be the preservation of Charlotte's self-image through her own forgiveness. She, the victor, can afford to be generous, just as Milly, who succeeds in attaining Densher's love, can be open-handed. The result of a renunciation of revenge is an ambiguous situation in which the heroes -- Newman, Isabel, Milly, Maggie -- seem to submit to the will of the villains -- the Bellegardes, Osmond, Kate, Charlotte. In reality, the opposite is true; the villains win the tangible benefits, but the heroes are ennobled by greater perceptiveness.

The developmental pattern which each character creates is also a key to the structure of the novel. The effect is perhaps clearest in The Golden Bowl where the two halves of the novel are structured by Maggie's and the Prince's active consciousnesses, but even Isabel Archer's travels through Europe and eventual return to Osmond are analogues for her initial misunderstanding of freedom and her final growth of perceptiveness. In The Wings of the Dove, unlike

The Golden Bowl, three consciousnesses are presented in an overlapping fashion. Whereas Charlotte is given identity sheerly by Maggie's and Amerigo's reactions to her, Kate receives a more direct treatment, even though her "movement-of-spirit" which has been defined as immobile in the first part of the book is totally neglected in the second half. Both Kate and Charlotte share the honor of devising the plots for their respective novels; when the rest of the characters react to their plots, dramatic tension arises. This is not the case in The Ambassadors, where Strether reacts to the mores of an entire society, rather than to a malignant form of social error in a trusted associate; dramatic tension exists, but the confrontation is between individual and society rather than individual and individual.

There has been no lack of discussion about James's analysis of innocence and experience, or perceptiveness and limitation, but there has also been no explanation of how these themes are relevant to his techniques of form and development. The preceding paper has attempted to provide a coherent examination of character development in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl, the two novels which represent the fruition of James's craft, in an effort to lay the groundwork for further study of the effect of development and theme on structure. A future line of investigation could include a detailed examination of the early novels as prototypes containing "circular" and "spiral"

character patterns. In addition, a study of the growth of James's conception of 'good' and 'evil' into patterns of development is needed. At the same time, a further application of Fergusson's universal definition of action as "movement-of-spirit" would be helpful in determining the freedom of the characters in question.

Like Celia and Lavinia in Eliot's "The Coctail Party," each one of James's characters must choose to create a pattern of existence. Milly and Celia choose a path of sacrifice and spiritual influence. Maggie, like Lavinia, is of this world; she chooses to confront her situation and win a victory on her own terms without sacrificing any part of her marriage or her life. Kate and Charlotte choose to be successful on society's terms, and almost succeed in shackling Densher and the Prince to their wills. In the end, Densher and the Prince, whose greatest sins are <u>not</u> choosing a way of life, remain under a form of guidance; each shifts his allegiance to a life-giving pattern which he was unable to perceive alone. The ideal epitaph for both of them might be taken from Eliot's "Little Gidding":

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And to know the place for the first time.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The Image of Europe in Henry James (Dallas, 1958), pp. 28-29.

[2] Graham Greene, "Henry James: The Private Universe," in The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, by Graham Greene (London, 1951), p. 30.

[3] The American (New York, 1922), p. 219.

[4] Ibid., p. xviii.

[5] The Portrait of a Lady (New York, 1922), pt. II, 197.

[6] Edmund Wilson, "'The Pilgrimage of Henry James,'" in The Shores of Light, by Edmund Wilson (New York, 1952), p. 222.

[7] See, for example: Dorothea Krook, The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (Cambridge, 1962); Frederick C. Crews, The Tragedy of Manners (New Haven, 1957); and Sallie Sears, The Negative Imagination: Form and Perspective in the Novels of Henry James (New York, 1968).

[8] "Introduction" to Aristotle's "Poetics," trans. S. H. Butcher (New York, 1963), p. 8.

[9] Ibid., p. 40.

[10] Ibid., p. 13.

[11] James, The Portrait of a Lady, pt. I, xviii. (Future page references will be cited in the body of the text.)

[12] The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock (New York, 1961), p. 220.

[13] Ibid., p. 188.

[14] The Lesson of the Master, The Death of the Lion, The Next Time and Other Tales (New York, 1922), XV, xv.

[15] "Henry James's 'The Figure in the Carpet': What is Critical Responsiveness?," BUSE, V (1961), 128.

[16] "A Reading of 'The Figure in the Carpet,'" AL, XXXIII (1962), 464.

[17] "A Reperusal of James's 'The Figure in the Carpet,'" AL, XXXIII (1961), 226.

[18] Parker Tyler, "The Child as 'The Figure in the Carpet,'" ChiR, II (1958), 40.

[19] Mark Kanzer, "'The Figure in the Carpet,'" AI, XVII (1960), 340.

[20] The Lesson of the Master . . . , p. 233.

[21] Notebooks, p. 188.

[22] The Lesson of the Master . . . , p. 233.

[23] "'The Figure in the Carpet,'" in The Question of Henry James, by Joseph Warren Beach (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 154.

[24] Weglin, p. 29.

[25] Notebooks, p. 18.

[26] "Portrait of a Lady: Vis Inertiae," WHR, XIII (1959), 189.

[27] "From An Introduction to the English Novel," in Perspectives on James's "Portrait of a Lady," ed. William T. Stafford (New York, 1967), p. 109.

[28] The American Henry James (New Brunswick, N.J., 1957), p. 196.

[29] The Imagination of Disaster (Lincoln, Neb., 1961), p. 47.

[30] Krook, p. 362.

[31] The English Novel: Form and Function (New York, 1953), p. 215.

[32] Manfred MacKenzie, "Ironic Melodrama in The Portrait of a Lady," MFS, XII (1966), 22.

[33] F. O. Matthiessen, Henry James: The Major Phase (New York, 1963), p. 45.

[34] For a discussion of the ends-means confusion in Jamesian society, see: Tony Tanner, "The Fearful Self: The Portrait of a Lady," in Henry James: Modern Judgements, ed. Tony Tanner (London, 1968), pp. 144-145.

[35] The Wings of the Dove (New York, 1922), pt. I, 277. (Future page references will be cited in the body of the text.)

[36] Ernest Sandeen, "The Wings of the Dove and The Portrait of a Lady: A Study of Henry James's Later Phase," PMLA, LXIX (1964), 1067.

[37] The Imagination of Disaster, p. 136.

[38] Krook, p. 196.

[39] Weglin, p. 119.

[40] Matthiessen, p. 69.

[41] R. P. Blackmur, "The Loose and Baggy Monsters of Henry James," in The Lion and the Honeycomb, by R. P. Blackmur (New York, 1955), p. 277.

[42] Ward, Imagination of Disaster, p. 105.

[43] Krook, p. 214.

[44] Quentin Kraft, "Life Against Death in Venice," Criticism, VII (1965), 220.

[45] Ibid., p. 222.

[46] Matthiessen, p. 67.

[47] Ibid., p. 58.

[48] J. A. Ward, The Search for Form (North Carolina, 1967), pp. 178-183.

[49] Wilson, p. 223.

[50] Ward, Search for Form, p. 179.

[51] Henry James: The Untried Years (New York, 1953), p. 238.

[52] Leo Bersani, "The Narrator as Center in The Wings of the Dove," MFS, VI (1960), 137.

[53] The Destructive Element: A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 41.

[54] Matthiessen, p. 75.

[55] Crews, p. 74.

[56] Major Phase, p. 77.

[57]Bersani, p. 137.

[58]Matthiessen, p. 77.

[59] For an analysis of Fanny as the "Greek chorus who interprets the real meaning of experience" to the reader and to the characters, see: Adeline Tintner, "The Spoils of Henry James," PMLA, LXI (1946), 239-251.

[60] Ruth Taylor Todasco, "Theme and Imagry in The Golden Bowl," TSLL, IV (1962), 237.

[61] Crews, p. 100.

[62] "Henry James's Last Portrait of a Lady: Charlotte Stant in The Golden Bowl," AL, XXVIII (1957), 462.

[63] Weglin, p. 131.

[64] "Maggie Verver: Neither Saint Nor Witch," NCF, XII (1957), 67.

[65] "The Ververs," EIC, IV (1954), 406.

[66] The Negative Imagination, p. 201.

[67] Ibid., p. 186.

[68] Ibid., p. 206.

[69] Wright, p. 67.

[70] Sears, p. 203.

[71] Naomi Lebowitz, "Magic and Metamorphosis in The Golden Bowl," SR, LXXIII (1965), 72-73.

[72] "The Spatial Form of The Golden Bowl," MFS, XII (1966), 106.

[73] The Complex Fate (London, 1952), p. 95.

[74] The Wind Blew From the East (New York, 1942), p. 120.

[75] Firebaugh, p. 407.

[76] Rose, p. 108.

[77] Ezra Pound, "Henry James," in The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, by Ezra Pound (London, 1954), p. 296.

[78] See: Sears, p. 186; and Kimball, p. 449.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

"MOVEMENT-OF-SPIRIT" IN FIVE OF JAMES'S NOVELS

Francis Fergusson's definition of action as "the motivation from which deeds spring," which he describes metaphorically as "the focus or movement of the psyche toward what seems good to it at the moment -- a 'movement-of-spirit,'" can be applied to James's novels to determine the type of pattern each character creates. The protagonists, who wish to discover something, are in the constant state of development which has been described in the Introduction as spiral. A threefold "movement-of-spirit" can be identified for each. The antagonists, on the other hand, wish to preserve a state of affairs; their actions are limited and circular. In contrast to the heroes and heroines, the antagonists or villains maintain a single intention throughout each novel.

The description of action for each character on the following pages is based on Fergusson's formulation for the characters in the play "Oedipus," where the protagonist's three "movements-of-spirit" are "to discover how to cure Thebes of the plague," "to find the slayer of Laius," and "to accept the truth."

RODERICK HUDSON

Roderick Hudson:	To 'cure' inexperience in art and life.
	To discover what 'killed' his artistic ability.
	To accept the truth that he lacks the genius to become a great artist.
Christina Light:	To gain a husband at any cost.

THE AMERICAN

Christopher Newman:	To 'cure' loneliness by marrying.
	To discover why his proposal is rejected and who has slain the father.
	To accept the loss of Claire.
The Bellegardes:	To maintain their aristocratic pretensions.

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Isabel Archer:	To 'cure' innocence without suffering from experience.
	To discover what 'killed' her freedom and how to cope with Osmond's narrow way of life.
	To accept the truth that she is responsible for her actions.
Gilbert Osmond:	To maintain his aristocratic pretensions.

AWKWARD AGE

Nanda Brookenham:	To 'cure' herself of over-experience.
	To discover who is to blame for her social disorientation.
	To accept the truth that she is spoiled for Vanderbank.
Mrs. Brook:	To preserve the status of her social circle by excluding Nanda.

THE AMBASSADORS

Lambert Strether:	To 'cure' Chad by bringing him home.
	To discover who has 'killed' the 'old' Chad.
	To accept the truth that the 'old' Chad is still alive but that the 'old' Strether is dead.
Mrs. Newsome and the Pococks:	To convince Strether that Chad's attachment is not virtuous.