"The Story In It": The Design of Henry James's "New York Edition"

Hicks, Priscilla Gibson

Boston University

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"THE STORY IN IT": THE DESIGN OF HENRY JAMES'S
"NEW YORK EDITION"

by

Priscilla Gibson Hicks
(A.B. Wellesley College, 1948; M.A. University of Michigan, 1949)

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Approved by

First Reader

Professor of English

Second Reader

Professor of Comparative Literature
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CHAPTER I

"THE LESSON OF BALZAC"

I

In the fall of 1913, James dispatched a note to Mrs. Prothero, who had submitted to him a young man's appeal to her "for guidance," as Percy Lubbock puts it, "in the study of H. J.'s books." James supplied two alternative lists of his novels and accompanied them with the following brief comment:

This, please, for the delightful young man from Texas, who shews such excellent dispositions. I only want to meet him half way, and I hope very much he won't think I don't when I tell him that the following indications as to five of my productions (splendid number--I glory in the tribute of his appetite!) are all on the basis of the Scribner's (or Macmillan's) collective and revised and prefaced edition of my things, and that if he is not minded somehow to obtain access to that form of them, ignoring any others, he forfeits half, or much more than half, my confidence. So I thus amicably beseech him--!

This plea is but one among many, and one of the more amusing indications

---

that James felt the "New York Edition" of his fiction supremely important for anyone wishing to get at the essential nature of his endeavor as a novelist. The Edition was, in fact, an indirect performance of criticism, as James understood the critic's task, on his own artistic "case." By its prefaces and revisions, selections and omissions, above all by the precise order in which it placed its fictions, the New York Edition interpreted James's oeuvre in the sense he had defined in an 1891 essay: "The more the tune is noted and the direction observed, the more we shall enjoy the convenience of a critical literature."  

The prefaces to this Edition are well known; and the prefaces abound in statements showing that the Edition is a much-deliberated one--abound to the point of almost insisting that it represents the artist's critical portrait of his achievement. Despite this fact, and despite the extensive attention which students of literature increasingly have paid to the revisions and the prefaces of the Edition, the order of its works has received surprisingly scattered comment. There is an important exception. Leon Edel's essay, "The Architecture of Henry James's 'New..."

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2 The Novels and Tales of Henry James: New York Edition, 24 vols. (Scribners, 1907-1909). In 1918, two posthumous volumes were issued in uniform binding with this Edition: The Ivory Tower (Vol. XXV), and The Sense of the Past (Vol. XXVI).


4 The eighteen prefaces are conveniently collected in a single volume, The Art of the Novel, ed. R. P. Blackmur (New York: Scribners, 1950). Henceforth my references to the prefaces will cite the pagination of this easily obtainable volume, under the abbreviated title Art of Novel. My references to the texts of the fictions, however, will cite volume and page of the "New York Edition."
York Edition," published in 1951 in The New England Quarterly, suggested that criticism had not yet plumbed the significance of James's arrangement. In sum, Mr. Edel argued that the sequences of the Edition build an "architecture." He noted that the Scribner prospectus for the Edition described it as "an elaborate edifice whose design and execution are absolutely unique in their kind owing to their complete unity of effect," and he interpreted that design to follow Balzac's division of La Comédie humaine into "Scenes": "From the moment that he proposed twenty-three volumes to Scribner, James was committed to selection and arrangement, and clearly he chose the method of Balzac."

5 L. Edel, "The Architecture of Henry James's 'New York Edition,'" New England Quarterly, XXIV (June 1951), 169-178. (This article will be discussed at length in Chapter Two.) In The Method of Henry James (New Haven: Yale, 1918. Revised edition; Philadelphia: A. S. Eiffr, 1954), J. W. Beach had suggested that the "strict limitation of the action" to the "inward life of a group of people" is the figure in the carpet of James's books. Beach emphasized James's portrayal of the novelist Hugh Vereker, in the story "The Figure in the Carpet," as wishing for a critic to identify the "exquisite scheme" that "the order, the form, the texture of my books will perhaps some day constitute . . . a complete representation of . . . ." Beach proposed that the techniques he identifies explain the "form and texture" of James's work, though "I don't know how the scheme I have indicated would be represented in the order of the books of James." (p. 155). Beach also implied that the fictions of the "New York Edition" may have been selected by James especially to explicate his later or developed fictional method. (p. 5). F. W. Dupee, in Henry James: American Men of Letters Series (Wm. Sloane Associates, 1951), p. 279, says briefly:

The making of the Edition was an act of self-criticism for him . . . . The rewriting of his stories was perhaps the least part of this process. For his readers, at any rate, his selections and groupings are of greater import; and to discover, for example, "The Beast in the Jungle" next to "The Altar of the Dead" in a volume largely given over to similar tales is to learn much about his themes and their progression from work to work and period to period. In this way he could reveal something of the inner content of his writings without the pedantic self-exposure which might have resulted had he chosen to be more explicit on this subject in his prefaces.

Mr. Edel's point that the order of the New York Edition is at
least as significant as other of its features is an invaluable reminder.
One kind of support for this point, which I believe bears emphasizing
although still more direct evidence is plentiful, is the amount of time
which James spent on the Edition, and at a particular point in his career:
It was discussed with the publisher during his August 1904-August 1905
American trip, and he probably began work on it early in 1906. On
March 5, 1907, James writes to Grace Norton that he has
been very busy all these last months in raising my Productions
a "handsome" . . . array will be the result—owing much to close
amendment . . . of the four earliest novels and to illuminatory
classification, collocation, juxtaposition and separation
throughout the whole series. The work on the earlier novels has
involved much labour . . . but the real tussle is in writing the
Prefaces . . . there are to be some 15 Prefaces (as some of the

7 By November 1906, the "revision of surface and expression" of
Roderick Hudson was finished (Letters, II, 55). In the same month, James
discussed with Alvin Langdon Coburn, the photographer with whom he
collaborated for the frontispieces to the individual volumes of his
Edition, six photographs which Coburn had taken in Paris in October
(A. L. Coburn, "Henry James and the Camera," London: BBC Third Programme,
letters of 1907-1909, Percy Lubbock implied that work on the New York
Edition began after May 1906 (when work on The American Scene was
interrupted), but instead it may have begun as early as the fall of 1905.
Coburn reports that he was invited to Rye on June 12, 1906, to do a
portrait of James which might serve as frontispiece for the first volume
of the Edition; that on June 26, 1906, he received a letter from James
requesting Coburn's return to photograph Lamb House itself; that he
photographed the latter on July 3, 1906, and that on the same visit James
suggested the young artist-photographer supply all the frontispieces.
On July 3, James presented Coburn with a copy of The American; and in
October Coburn visited Paris to search for subjects appropriate for
frontispieces to The American and The Princess Casamassima (subjects
usually suggested by James himself).
Lubbock reports that after James began work on the Edition "he
scarcely stirred from Lamb House except for occasional interludes of a
few weeks in London; and it was not until the spring of 1907 that he
allowed himself a real holiday," a motor trip with the Whartons through
western and southern France and his tenth visit to Italy since 1876
(Letters, II, 5).
books are in two) and twenty-three lovely frontispieces—all of which I have this winter very ingeniously called into being; so that they at least only await "process" reproduction. The prefaces, as I say, are difficult to do. . . .

Since by this date James knew that the prefaces would number at least fifteen, and since, moreover, twenty-three frontispieces already had been selected, we may assume that the arrangement of fictions also had been generally determined even if all the prefaces had not yet been written and even though the number of volumes and frontispieces was later expanded to twenty-four. In the light of James's normal, and astonishing, rapidity of creation, ten months or more spent on "close amendment . . . of the four earliest novels," on selecting and generally ordering the entire series, and on writing some of its prefaces, seems an unusual amount of time. It underlines the fact that he expended much effort on the total design, as well as on the prefaces and revisions.


9On this point see Dupee, Henry James, p. 231. The Golden Bowl, for instance, apparently had been composed in little less than a year.

10Counting from May 1906 to March 1907 makes ten months. By August 1907, James was back at Lamb House from his holiday. In October 1907, he began working on The High Bid (a three act play for Forbes-Robertson from "Covering End") and this production absorbed him through March 1908. (See L. Edel, The Complete Plays of Henry James J. B. Lippincott, 1949, p. 550. Also see Complete Plays, p. 67.) Apparently in spring-summer 1908, the remainder of the eighteen prefaces, as it turned out, were first written. (See Letters, II, 86; 99-100; 105-107; 119.) Volumes I and II of the Edition first appeared December 14, 1907, and the other volumes, making twenty-four in all, were issued by the American publisher two at a time between this date and July 1909. Because Vols. I-X did not sell so well as expected, Vols. XI-XXIV were first printed in smaller quantities. The prefaces to Vols. XVII and XVIII must have been reworked (or perhaps first written) after December 1908, for "The Jolly Corner" appeared in the English Review for that month and the preface to Vol. XVII mentions the fact.

Theodora Bosanquet, James's secretary during these years, tells us that
I cannot agree, however, with Mr. Edel's specific interpretation that the architecture of the New York Edition is based on, or is similar to, the method by which Balzac finally distinguished and ordered his cadres within *La Comédie humaine*. The aim of this dissertation is to show that, instead, the contents of the "New York Edition" are ordered to make increasingly clear the nature of James's artistic "case," or to make clear the stable "operative consciousness" James possessed throughout his career, as a result of his constant clarity about the combination of his conditions with his aim.

The "New York Edition" is structured like James's later fiction; its units are ordered by a compositional plan which conveys the "story" of James's artistic "case." The units unfold, or make a progressively clear demonstration of, this case. As a "story" in James's sense of since it was only between breakfast and luncheon that he undertook what he called "inventive" work, he gave the hours from half-past ten to half-past one to the composition of the prefaces . . . . In the evenings he read over again the work of former years, treating the printed pages like so many proof sheets of extremely corrupt text. The revision was a task he had seen in advance as formidable. He had cultivated the habit of forgetting past achievements to the pitch of a sincere conviction that nothing he had written before about 1890 could come with any shred of credit through the ordeal of a critical inspection. One morning when he was obliged to give time to the selection of a set of tales for a forthcoming volume, he confessed that the difficulty of selection was mainly the difficulty of reading them at all.


11 *Art of Novel*, p. 4.

12 Perhaps it should be emphasized here that while James's own view of his case is prime data for criticism, it cannot invalidate other interpretation of the sources, achievements and weaknesses of his fiction. This dissertation concerns James's self-portrait as painted by the arrangement of his Edition. It does not aim to argue that this self-criticism is the sole significant kind on his oeuvre. Mr. Edel remarks.
the word, the design of the Edition is founded on the principle that each of its larger and its smaller units successively makes more evident a certain germ interpretation of the nature of James's case. The structure of the Edition "unfolds" James's interpretation that, throughout his career, his fundamental operative habits had not changed (though his techniques for applying them more thoroughly had developed) and had been the product of a certain process: he always had consciously confronted the problem of how, since certain of his conditions posed obstacles, he could produce fiction fulfilling what he judged to have been Balzac's most important aim.

James's presentation, through the structure of the "New York Edition," of his own artistic case identifies certain continuing major conditions of his production: (1) access but to a limited number of areas of human experience--access to details of comparatively narrow range and often peripheral in kind (2) the possession of much "imagination," by which James meant the faculty of focusing many relationships among those details he did confront and command (3) the necessity, especially from the 1880's on, to compress his fiction into briefer space than even the principle of artistic economy dictated, in order to gain publication and reach an audience.

Working within these conditions, James constantly wanted to produce fiction which "rendered" the scope of human experience in his time--fiction which might rightly be called the representation of a human
comedy. Combination of this aim with the three above named conditions, which could be obstacles to the desire, is the artistic case which the Edition unfolds. From the beginning of James's career, the combination produced certain general operative habits which remained fundamental to his work. As he developed artistically, these operative habits more and more informed his specific procedures; too, as the habits were exercised on differing materials, they gradually produced differing techniques. But the architecture of the "New York Edition" does not trace the precise course of the latter development. Rather, the Edition is ordered to make increasingly evident the basic nature of James's "case" as an artist: the stable source of his fundamental operative habits in his unstinting awareness of what relation his conditions bore to his general aim.

By examination of internal evidence, this dissertation will attempt to support the above hypothesis concerning the arrangement of the New York Edition. I shall deal principally with the nature of the fictions which James places next to one another for "illuminatory classification, collocation, juxtaposition and separation throughout the whole series" of twenty-four volumes, and with the preface statements which seem

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13 The word "conditions" was always a key one in James's thinking about an artistic case or product. He wrote to his brother William on November 23, 1905:

... I'm always worried when I hear of your reading anything of mine and always hope you won't--you seem to me ... so condemned to look at it from a point of view remotely alien to mine in writing it, and to the conditions out of which, as mine, it has inevitably sprung--so that all the intentions that have been its main reason for being (with me) appear never to have reached you at all-- ... (Letters, II, 43).

14 See the passage from a letter to Grace Norton quoted on page 4 above.
particularly to bear on that collocation.

My aim in the second section of this first chapter is to show that for James the prime "lesson of Balzac" was that Balzac's huge and unified production had illuminated the essential nature of the novelist's medium, had pointed, too, to the worth of this medium and had suggested how the essential nature of the novel might more and less successfully be exploited. James selected and arranged his "New York Edition," I think, with this general "lesson of Balzac" in mind. Its series of twenty-four volumes unfolds James's own case as one of finding quite un-Balzacian means to an end which James considered Balzac's oeuvre especially to have illuminated. Balzac divided the 1842 (Furne) edition of La Comédie humaine into three main kinds of Études, the first of which—Études de moeurs au XIXe siècle—is further subdivided into six "Scènes" which are given titles of different milieux. Such an architecture stressed Balzac's purpose of identifying universal laws of human nature and of society; it also of course emphasized Balzac's typical means for rendering the human comedy—the means of exhaustively surveying the environments which he felt determined the varieties of human experience in his time and of indicating the many relationships between these milieux. But the design of James's "New York Edition"

15 I shall not attempt to deal very extensively with external evidence, either in the form of James's comments on the Edition in those of his personal letters which have been published (because these nowhere explicate his arrangement), or in the form of his correspondence with the publisher of the Edition. Mr. Edel has examined the latter correspondence in the Scribner archives. One may presume that he has cited its evidence for the order of the Edition in his article offering his interpretation of the architecture of the Edition. Chapter Two following will discuss Mr. Edel's article in detail.

16 In her important discussion of the "Development of the Scheme of the Comédie Humaine: Distribution of the Stories," (The Evolution of
Balzac's Comédie humaine, ed. Dargan and Weinberg [Univ. of Chicago, 1942], pp. 22-187), Brucia I. Dedinsky summarizes thus Balzac's final principles of classification:

From the first page of the Avant-propos [1842] he glorified the scientist [Saint-Hilaire] whose eternal honor it is, he says, to have proclaimed the system of unity in nature. Imbued with this idea... Balzac gives a scientific (physiological) description of social species throughout... his Comédie humaine... His analogical conception has a vital place in the plan of his works, as vital as the hub around which a wheel revolves; although his method of classification is not exactly based on social species, it is, nonetheless, the symbol of unity in the Comédie humaine. It derives from Saint-Hilaire's ideas of (1) one principle, i.e., unity of composition in nature, and of (2) cause and effect; upon this theory Balzac sought to build his three main divisions. Furthermore, the scientist's law of environment gave rise to Balzac's conception of both milieu and period of human life reflected in the six subdivisions: the family is usually the setting or the theme for the Scènes de la vie privée; the capital of the Vie parisienne; the province for the most part of the Vie de province; the rural districts of the Vie de campagne; and then, without any restricted habitat but with definite themes and characters, come the military and political spheres. These subdivisions are not absolutely fixed and must be considered as shifting planes, but in each of them Balzac shows himself the biologist and the painter of "mœurs transformistes," the disciple of Saint-Hilaire. (Ibid., pp. 134-135).

Again, analyzing the complex evidence for Balzac's view of the function of his three Études, Miss Dedinsky says:

the Études de mœurs is the foundation upon which the other two divisions will be built. In this division he intends to present social history in all aspects; to trace the history of the human heart phase by phase, and to depict the three stages of life from childhood to old age; and to treat of politics, justice, and war. He will portray every type of man, every situation and manner of living in every social stratum; his Études will thus represent all social phases of French life. (Ibid., p. 87).

Balzac first used the term "Scène" almost synonymously with tableaux for realistic tales each embodying an idea related to the idea of the next "Scène!" (Ibid., pp. 30; 55). However from 1832 on one can trace a sustained effort toward the roman social... The novel... with him became... a comprehensive record of all human activities and the experience of all milieux... The trend may readily be recognized in the general title Études de mœurs... and in its six subdivisions, all indicative of the sociological range of the growing scheme. (Ibid., p. 89).
generally inspired by Balzac and always aimed to exploit this nature to
the point of interpreting (by representation) the full scope of human
experience. Thus both James's likenesses and his differences from
Balzac are emphasized by the architecture of the "New York Edition."

Chapter Two of my discussion will present my reasons for
rejecting Mr. Edel's specific thesis that the architecture of the
Edition employs the method of Balzac's architecture, and in Chapter
Three I shall outline in more detail my own hypothesis about its design.
In order to support this hypothesis, the subsequent Chapters IV-VIII
will examine what I believe are the four major building blocks or units
within the Edition's "story" of James's artistic "case": (1) Vols.
I-IX, containing a chronological sequence of his novels before 1900
(2) Vols. X-XII, containing ten of his nouvelles and short stories (but
mainly nouvelles) not in chronological order (3) Vols. XIII-XVIII,
containing a "considerable assortment," again not in chronological
order, of his "shortest fictions" (4) at the climax, Vols. XIX-XXIV,
containing the three novels written after 1900—The Wings of the Dove,
The Ambassadors, and The Golden Bowl.
"The Lesson of Balzac" was the title of a lecture James delivered several times during his American trip of 1904-1905. This essay was first printed in *The Atlantic Monthly* for August 1905, and then in book form. Three years earlier, in September 1902, James had contributed a preface especially written for an English edition of Balzac's *Deux Jeunes Mariées*. Thus twice within the years immediately preceding his formation of the New York Edition, James discussed the signal importance of Balzac's work.

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There are two other, much earlier pieces of criticism on Balzac, both reprinted by James in *French Poets and Novelists* (London: Macmillan, 1878). Both of these, "Honoré de Balzac" and "Balzac's Letters," had first appeared in *The Galaxy*—in December 1875, and in February 1877, respectively.

to him and to other novelists of Balzac's example. Some of his opinions of Balzac had changed since the essays of the 1870's, but not the crucial one that

the greatest thing in Balzac . . . is the whole attempt—it is the method . . . that huge, all-encompassing, all-desiring, all-devouring love of reality. . . . The real, for his imagination, had an authority that it has never had for any other. When he looks for it in the things in which we all feel it, he finds it with a marvelous certainty of eye, and proves himself the great novelist that he pretends to be. 19

James's commentary on Balzac in 1902 and 1904 shows two notable changes from his 1875-1878 articles. The later essays articulate much more clearly what he had meant by Balzac's "love of reality" and that this did not mean Balzac always was verisimilar, never a romanticist. They also grant to Balzac an even more exalted position in the tradition of the novel. The reasons behind the latter change are extremely significant. In 1877, James had written:

from the moment he ceases to be a simple dramatist Balzac is an arrant charlatan. It is probable that no equally vigorous mind was ever at pains to concoct such elaborate messes of folly. . . . from the moment he attempts to deal with an abstraction the presumption is always dead against him. . . . the moral, the intellectual atmosphere of his genius is extraordinarily gross and turbid. . . . When we approach Thackeray and George Eliot, George Sand and Turgeneff, it is into the conscience and the mind that we enter, and we think of these great writers primarily as great consciences and great minds. When we approach Balzac, we seem to enter into a great temperament—a prodigious nature. He strikes us half the time as an extraordinary physical phenomenon. 20

It is pictorially a larger, sturdier, more systematic style of portraiture than Turgeneff's. This is altogether the most valuable element in Balzac's novels; it is hard to see how the power of physical evocation can go further. 21

19 "Honoré de Balzac," French Poets and Novelists (First Continental edition; Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1883), p. 116. This article cites Taine's as the best criticism on Balzac.
20 Ibid., pp. 88-89. 21 Ibid., p. 97.
By 1904, he expresses what he had meant by Balzac's "love of reality" as an
inordinate passion for detail . . . all being detail vivified and related, characteristic and constructive, essentially prescribed by the terms of his plan. The relations of parts to each other are at moments multiplied almost to madness—which is at the same time just why they give us the measure of his hallucination, make up the greatness of his intellectual adventure. His plan was to handle, primarily, not a world of ideas, animated by figures representing these ideas; but the packed and constituted, the palpable, provable world before him, by the study of which ideas would inevitably find themselves thrown up. 22

At this date, James still feels Taine's the best writing on Balzac, because Taine had stressed Balzac's "love" for his characters. Now James rates Balzac distinctly above Thackeray because of "saturation" with or "respect for the liberty of the subject," by which he meant Balzac's "leading gift, his art— . . . of working the exhibition of a given character up to intensity" and of "transmigrating" into the skin of his creatures. In the 1870's James had distinguished quite sharply between, on the one hand, novelists who emphasized "conscience and mind," and, on the other hand, "the most valuable element in Balzac's novels," the pictorial exhibition of characters. After 1900, James finds that Balzac's passion for completeness, the passion which produced his intellectual scheme, actually is a source of his ability to get at the interior of characters:

23 Ibid., p. 115.
24 Ibid., pp. 115-117.
What he liked was absolutely to get into the constituted consciousness, into all the clothes, gloves and whatever else, into the very skin and bones, of the habited, featured, colored, articulated form of life that he desired to present. How do we know given persons, for any purposes of demonstration, unless we know their situation for themselves, unless we see it from their point of vision, that is from their point of pressing consciousness of sensation? 26

James's final attitude is that since the "inordinate passion for detail" and the aim of thoroughly rendering a subject in concrete terms led Balzac to make an intense exhibition of his characters from the inside, and since "the most fundamental and general sign of the novel . . . is its being everywhere an effort at representation--this is the beginning and the end of it," Balzac "remains the greatest master" of the novel, "the father of us all."

The most general lesson of Balzac which James propounds in the essay of that title is that Balzac shows very clearly what a novel is and is not, what it can and cannot do: generally, the novel is "representation" and it can present even the interior of persons, or "constituted consciousness"; it is not history, and it cannot make us accept the survey of any bounded reality (however large) as an exhaustive presentation of the human comedy.

Both the 1902 and 1904 essays explicate why James arrived at this lesson, especially what he meant by "representation," through

27 Ibid., p. 114.
28 Ibid., p. 102.
bringing to their readers' attention a paradox. This anomaly is that
Balzac's "duality," his having a "historian" or "scientific" side and
29
an artist side, led to his being the "greatest" and "foremost"

novelist. The case of Balzac, James says, presents "a contradiction
always before us": the "odd" truth that although Balzac was but half
an artist, he was "of all novelists . . . the most serious." James

hastens to explain that by "serious" he means an exploiter of the

novel medium. Paradoxically, Balzac is so much a novelist because he

was both an "artist" and a "historian," even though in James's final

view the novel is not half art and half history. It is a "great and

interesting art," whose function, unlike science, is to convey a

31
"personal impression of" life. As artist, Balzac is a "projector

and creator" of "an image of life." But he developed precisely this

aim, James thought, because he held partly another—to survey reality

in the manner of the historian.

Balzac's "historian side" led him to the plan of La comédie

humaine; and "it is the scheme and the scope," James feels, that makes

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29 "Honoré de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, pp. 27; 31.

30 Ibid., pp. 25; 27-28. See also Ibid., p. 47.

31 "The Lesson of Balzac," Future of Novel, p. 102. Art of

Novel, p. 46.

32 "The Lesson of Balzac," Future of Novel, pp. 104-105. (The

italics are mine.)
Balzac "supreme" as a novelist and artist. Balzac's conception to provide "a huge, distributed, divided and subdivided picture of the life of France in his time" comes from the historian's "obsession of the actual," and from the corollary of this obsession, the aim to make a "complete" classification of the actual. In turn, however, the desire to handle the real "on the scale of the real" by devising a scheme of such scope helped to ensure that Balzac's fiction constantly would handle its numerous specifications (including even ideas) as images. In James's view, Balzac's scheme made him constantly represent rather than provide either explanations or illustrations. This point is an unusual one, not easy to grasp. It is best articulated by James's statement that Balzac's pretension to universal competence, his scheme, ensured that his characters move as comedians within a "congruous and capacious theater." His historian side made Balzac's fiction, continually "set up a world before us."

James attributed Balzac's constant "representation" within a "theater" to Balzac's identification of his vision of France with the

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33 "Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, p. 25. James adds that he is "applying this statement moreover not to the mere great intention, but to the concrete form, the proved case, in which we possess them."


35 "Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, pp. 32; 40; 27.

36 "The Lesson of Balzac," Future of Novel, p. 108. (The italics are mine.)

37 "Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, p. 43. (The italics are mine.)

complete actuality: since Balzac believed that he could exhaustively schematize the real, Balzac always "projected" an "image" rather than illustrated ideas. He never substituted explanation of relationships for showing them. In James's view, Balzac's belief that he had meaningfully related absolutely all the facts of France in his time led to his dealing exclusively in "appearances" or exclusively "representing." He handles in this manner even abstract ideas. Balzac's fiction does not employ for its images only characters and situations. It includes and uses ideas of all types, abstract theory on diverse matters. But it uses these ideas as parts of a whole, and, most importantly, as parts always placed before his reader in the sense that their myriad relations with the other parts are demonstrated, never summarily explained.

"Projector," "theater," "appearances of whatever sort" "image"--these are the key terms of James's analysis of the effect on Balzac's art of his huge scheme. James concluded that this scheme, despite its origin in Balzac's "historian" or non-artistic interests, ensured Balzac's constant "representation." The 1904 essay tries to explicate this point by distinguishing the "Novelist" from the "Poet": The "Poet" is the artist whose medium is "his own intimate, essential states and feelings"; the "Novelist" the artist whose medium is "appearances of whatever sort" (these may be states and feelings, but handled as if those of witnessed characters) and "an image of life." The "Poet" can convey the intensity of his own interior states; the "Novelist" can project with intensity the relation of appearances to one another--

create a self-contained "world." Neither the nature of Balzac's ideas underlying his scheme nor the correspondence to actuality of the facts Balzac used enabled him to "represent" and so accounted for his greatness as a novelist. Rather, Balzac's possession of a large scheme, his "hallucination" that he could thus "constitute a State," made his fiction into a "theater" or his art operate as within a frame (incommensurate with its contents), becoming actually an analogous "world," a self-contained image, a picture.


41 Ibid., p. 111.

42 "Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, p. 41.

43 It is not, as often has been assumed, for Balzac's "realism" in the sense of verisimilitude that James calls him the progenitor of the craft of novelist. James recognizes that Balzac frequently presents the "fantastic," and is as "romantic" as he is adept at making his inaccuracies irrelevant: He had "the secret of an insistence that somehow makes the difference nought." ("Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, pp. 45-46); Many readers of James's beautifully thoughtful tributes may have taken this statement as a sentimental asseveration, or a politely oblique way of acknowledging flaws while stressing admiration. But James means what he says: whether or not Balzac accurately reflects the life of France in his time is "nought" to whether he constantly "renders" and to what, therefore, his work shows about the fundamental nature of the novel.

Similarly, Balzac's "conservatism" (the analysis of society underlying his scheme) is but the shape in which his theater is built—the "conditions" of his representation. ("Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, pp. 35; 41). Just as an actual theater's shape cannot be said to be illustrated by the characters and situation projected within it, so Balzac's personages and "appearances" are not illustrations of his scheme. The latter procedure is Zola's, who therefore, James says, produces only "an extraordinary show of representation imitated." ("The Lesson of Balzac," Future of Novel, p. 114).
As well as "congruous," Balzac's "theater" was made "capacious" by Balzac's duality. It seemed to James that the size of Balzac's scheme helped to make it work as a frame or theater, and that the capaciousness of this theater showed the artistic worth of the novel. Since Balzac took for the province of his fiction what he thought was all of the actual, he but displayed the relations his scheme identified—the relations obtaining in "the world" he thought, but actually the relations making a "world" in the sense of self-contained entity or image. For the same reason, this produced image was very closely analogous to the actual world: the size of Balzac's scheme made his total image a large and complex one, and a large image or capacious theater is needed to interpret and to suggest the scope of the actual world. James felt that alone of theaters, the novel could be quite capacious enough to try to express the scope of the actual world or of human experience. He felt that Balzac's aim to portray the human comedy was not impossible for his medium, because the novel could be so much larger a theater than the playwright could command. Balzac's example not only showed that the essence of the novel is "representation." His oeuvre also showed the worth of the novel medium. Because the novel can handle as "images" or "appearances" an unlimited number of unlimited kinds of items, the novel can attempt to convey the sense of being presented with the whole of life.

Of imagination on one side all compact, he was on the other an insatiable reporter of the immediate, the material, the current combination, and perpetually moved by the historian's impulse to fix, preserve, and explain them. 44

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44 "Honore de Balzac," Art of Fiction, p. 27.
From this duality sprang Balzac's aim to project a closely analagous "world," James reasoned after 1900, and he felt that the aim comprised Balzac's greatness as a novelist. The aim showed that basically the novel was a "representation" such as conveyed a personal impression of all of contemporary life.

Yet there is another paradox James focuses: "To have wanted to do so much, to have thought it possible" is Balzac's artistic weakness, much as it also is a source of his artistic achievement. If it ensured that his comedians perform in a large theater such as the novel alone of literary forms can supply, the historian side of Balzac also made him endanger his fiction's existence as a "world" and nearly destroy its functioning as a theater. The idea behind Balzac's scheme James calls a "monstrosity," a Frankenstein:

He held that the great central normal fruitful country of his birth and race overarched with its infinite social complexity yielded a sufficiency of earth and sea and sky. . . . The sky, all the same, came down on him. He couldn't keep it up--in more senses than one. 46

45 In 1875, James had noted that the "most interesting" quality of Balzac is the purpose behind his "vast mosaic"--the purpose to create "a complete social system" which "in Balzac's hands becomes an organic whole; it moves together; it has a pervasive life; the blood circulates through it; its parts are connected by sinuous arteries." The younger James attributed this "fantastic cohesiveness" of La Comédie humaine to the French "intolerance of the indefinite, the unformulated"; and he had reminded English objectors that "if the human comedy, as Balzac pours it, condensed and solidified, out of his mould, is a very reduced copy of its original, we must nevertheless admit that the mould is of enormous dimensions." But the 1875 essay more closely anticipates James's later commentaries in making the point that "it was in the convenient faculty of persuading himself that he could do everything that Balzac found the inspiration to do so much!" ("Honoré de Balzac," French Poets and Novelists, pp. 79-82.)

46 Honoré de Balzac; 1902, Modern Fiction, pp. 36-37; 33. See also "The Lesson of Balzac," Future of Novel, p. 108.
When James refers to Balzac's "pathos" and "face of trouble," he means more than the expenditure of effort required by the *Comédie humaine*. The master not only "couldn't keep it up" because he inevitably ran out of the time and energy needed for his plan. Balzac's "sky . . . came down on him" in the sense that, although he gained a large theater, he did not consistently think of it as a theater and so did not really convey the scope of life in his time nor capture the human comedy. His attitude towards his scheme precluded, to begin with, that his fiction would convey any "overarching" other than France's numerous but quite finite social complexity. As a novelist, Balzac achieves not less "sky" or universal reference than other novelists, but less than his imaginative powers would have warranted.

James points out still another sense in which Balzac lost his artistic sky. He often fails of the clarity which comes from making unity absolutely dominant. Balzac's "jungle" of appearances frequently is so thick as to endanger salience. And the fusion in Balzac of "the man of business" with the "artist" is "never complete" enough to prevent fatal "breaks of 'tone,' the one unpardonable sin for the novelist." By "tone," James meant a form completely an organism. Balzac did not attain, in any one of his fictions, this degree of singleness of picture. He produced no work that is a "classic" of art,

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47 "Honoré de Balzac, 1902," *Art of Fiction*, p. 34.


49 "Honoré de Balzac, 1902," *Art of Fiction*, p. 29.
supremely unified around his conception.

In James's view, the nature of Balzac's degree of artistic success shows that the source of Balzac's greatness was equally the source of his artistic weakness: "to have wanted to do so much . . . and, in a manner, to have resisted the effort." He refused to be wholly systematic in the manner of the scientist and he is so caught up in the effort of "representation" that his main focus becomes transmigrating inside his characters. Unlike Zola, he shows passions and conditions "freely at play in the individual case." Generally, the scheme behind La Comédie humaine became not the narrow frontier of Balzac's significance but a theater for comedians and, at the least, a "world."

If, as Mr. Edel suggests, James listed with "evident relish" those "Scenes" into which Balzac has subdivided his picture, James also mentioned the "Scenes" in a spirit having, as he says, an unavoidable tinge of patronage. For these "heads and categories"

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50 "Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, p. 28. Putting this same point another way, James says that Balzac fails to search for "the interest proceeding from form." That is, Balzac has more "fusion" and more "composition" than many another novelist, but still not enough composition to gain clarity of focus, within any one work, around his dominant interest--the "social complexity" of his France. (Ibid., p. 30).


Although James's 1875 essay had listed Balzac's "cadres" or "moulds," speaking of these as a "goodly nomenclature," the early essay had praised especially the fact that the cadres indicated Balzac's attempt to create "an organic whole" ("Honore de Balzac," French Poets and Novelists, pp. 79=80). James's 1902 essay makes still more clear that
imply Balzac's belief that the human comedy could be thoroughly researched, the belief that was Balzac's "operative condition." Surely James did not regard his own "operative consciousness" as like Balzac's in precisely this respect, not his own case as "the man of business doubled with the artist." The New York Edition is not ordered to subdivide the several "Scenes" of experience which James may have used. However, it is ordered with his "lesson of Balzac" in mind.

The New York Edition shows that throughout his career James tried to fulfill, from within his own conditions, an aim to exploit fully that nature of the novel which he saw implied in Balzac's example. Balzac had shown James that the novelist tries, constantly by representing, to interpret the full scope of contemporary experience--the human comedy in his time. By this definition of the novel, James

he was far more impressed by this purpose behind Balzac's classifying, than by Balzac's principles and method of organization. ("Honoré de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, pp. 32-33; 36.)

53 "Honoré de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, p. 41.

54 Ibid., p. 30. (This was Taine's phrase for Balzac.)

55 For example, James wrote to R. L. Stevenson in 1888 that he intended, after completing Tragic Muse, "for a longish period, to do nothing but short lengths. I want to leave a multitude of pictures of my time, projecting my small circular frame upon as many different spots as possible and going in for number as well as quality, so that the number may constitute a total having a certain value as observation and testimony." (Letters, I, 138.)

It is significant that again in 1899, in "The Future of the Novel," an essay he wrote for Vol. XIV of The International Library of Famous Literature, James defined the "soul" of the novel, or the purpose of the genre, to present "at any moment the most immediate... picture of actual manners--indirectly as well as directly, and by what it does not touch as well as by what it does..." (This essay's re-
measured his own success, treating Balzac as the "fellow-worker of his craft" to whom he personally owed the most fundamental debt. When he said that debt was too large to repay "except in installments," James was acknowledging the comparative brevity and the compression of his critical remarks in 1902 and 1904. But from our point of view, this statement in his "fanatical Balzac Lecture" might have been provisioning the separate volumes of James's own New York Edition, which unfolded more and more the nature of James's own case.

This Edition is arranged to reveal both James's differences from Balzac and his similarity of aim. It reveals the extent to which James showed that Balzac's medium could become thoroughly an art. James's finest tribute to Balzac is perhaps not among his most explicit ones, for the New York Edition, too, repays the debt to the "master of us all." It exhibits the nature of one attempt to recoup, by using Balzac's road though not his precise vehicle, the failure to represent the human comedy.

56 "The Lesson of Balzac," Future of Novel, p. 104: "I speak of him, and can only speak, as a man of his own craft, an emulous fellow-worker, who has learned from him more of the engaging mystery of fiction than from any one else, and who is conscious of so large a debt to repay that it has positively to be discharged in installments; as if one could never have at once all the required cash in hand."
CHAPTER II
A DEFINITIVE EDITION

By calling his New York Edition "definitive," James doubtless meant several things. One is that he had taken the last of three alternatives discussed in his final preface: (1) actual non-revisionist--a "heroic policy," a "lot serene" (2) partial, piecemeal revisionist--"inconsequent and insincere" because any growth is not recorded consistently, and (3) avowed revisionist--consistently recording the "never extinct operation of sensibility" by reworking one's "terms" or language without rewriting substance or amending past choices of composition. As the final preface also notes, James's decision for the last alternative was supported by the "vast example of Balzac," who publicly had exhibited the fact of his growth by recording all "felt finalities" of language. The New York Edition is definitive because its text is extensively "re-seen" in this sense.


2 Art of Novel, pp. 342-346.

3 Ibid., p. 343.
Mr. Edel argues against the "quite gratuitous assumption" that James regarded the Edition as definitive in the sense of bringing together all the fiction he felt worthy of such revision. James wrote to Howells in August 1908, of "too marked omissions" and of "the rigour of 23 vols., and 23 only." Edel guesses that this rigour of the number twenty-three, however, originally had been proposed to the publisher by James; and guesses that it probably was proposed on the parallel of the Calmann-Levy edition of Balzac's *Œuvres complètes* in

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5 *Letters*, II, 99-100. "It has racked me a little that I've had to leave out so many things that would have helped to make for a rather more vivid completeness. I don't at all regret the things, pretty numerous, that I've omitted from deep-seated preference and design; but I do a little those that are crowded out by want of space and the rigour of 23 vols., and 23 only, which were the condition of my being able to arrange this matter with the Scribners at all. Twenty-three do seem a fairly blatant array--and yet I surmise that there may have to be a couple of supplementary volumes for certain too marked omissions; such being, on the whole, detrimental to an all professedly comprehensive presentation of one's stuff. ... And I have even ... a dim vague view of reintroducing ... 'Bostonians' ... ."

This letter to Howells must be compared with one exactly a year earlier to Robert Herrick: "The *raison d'être* [the edition's] is in its being selective as well as collective, and by the mere fact of leaving out certain things (I have tried to read over Washington Square, and I can't, and I fear it must go) I exercise a control, a discrimination. I treat certain portions of my work as unhappy accidents. (Many portions of many--of all--men's work are.) ... If I had planned not to re-touch—that is revise closely—I would have reprinted all my stuff and that idea is horrific." (Selected Letters, ed. Edel, pp. 190-191.) The letter to Herrick is dated "August 7, 1907" by Edel and that to Howells "August 17, 1908" by Lubbock. I cannot determine why Edel says the Herrick letter is "ten days earlier." See Edel, "The Architecture ... ," *NEQ*, XXIV, 172.
In 1906 James wrote to Scribner: "I quite adhere to my original idea as to the total number of volumes... I regard twenty-three volumes as sufficient for the series and have no wish to transcend it." After examining the James correspondence in the Scribner archives, Edel concludes that James himself "determined the scope and the extent of the New York Edition." But James did not hold all excluded works equally unworthy.

Edel feels we can safely "speculate" that James "hoped for addition and amplification later, but wanted the twenty-three volumes to be the main building, the great house itself, as in Balzac to whose twenty-three volumes additions were later made." One kind of support for this interpretation is James's several expressions of regret for

Edel points out that James's 1875 essay had noted: "Balzac's complete works occupy twenty-three huge octavo volumes in the stately but inconvenient 'édition définitive,' lately published." (French Poets and Novelists, p. 67.) The Oeuvres complètes de Honoré de Balzac, sub-titled Edition définitive because it claimed to make thorough use of Balzac's annotations to the Furne edition of 1842, was issued in 24 octavo volumes by Calmann-Levy between 1869-1876. (La Comédie humaine occupied Vols. I-XVII of this Edition; Theâtre complet, Vol. XVIII; Contes drolatiques, Vol. XIX; various pieces not hitherto collected, Vols. XX-XXIII. Correspondance, Vols. XXIV-XXV, were issued in 1876.)

That James saw some parallel between his Edition and Balzac's is supported not only by his last preface but also by his use of the phrase "edition definitive" for his own Edition in the letter to Herrick quoted in footnote #5 above, where he also mentions his "fanatical Balzac lecture."

7 Quoted by Edel, "The Architecture . . .," NEQ, XXIV, 173.

8 Ibid.: "In another letter to Scribners: 'I drop, for instance, in addition to The Bostonians, The Europeans, Washington Square, Confidence, The Sacred Fount.' Decidedly it was James who determined the scope and extent of the New York Edition, however much he might complain to Howells that he was cramped and limited."

9 Ibid., 177.
certain omissions and several references to "supplementary volumes."

While such evidence does not contradict the fact that a basis of selection for the Edition is a certain level of competence to James's eye (initially he had written to the publisher that he would "sift and re-sift in selection so as to have nothing but fine gold"), it also suggests that the criterion of worth does not exclusively account for the exclusions.

Edel proposes that another basis of selection for the Edition is the same principle which he thinks governs its arrangement. He suggests that its order classifies the subordinate kinds of the one major "Scene" which James particularly had located and presented, yet which had not been anticipated in Balzac's fiction: "International Life." In this view, James provisionally excluded "Scenes of American

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10 In addition to the already mentioned 1908 letter to Howells (Letters, II, 99-100), the following references should be added to those Edel cites: In 1911, James wrote to Sidney Colvin about "The Solution" that it "is not included in the quasi-collected editions of my products, but perhaps will be in some supplementary volumes." (E. V. Lucas, The Colvins and Their Friends [New York: Scribners, 1928], p. 284). On January 24, 1914, James wrote to William Roughead: "There are to be more volumes, if I can manage them, and a few absent things will then figure" (W. Roughead, Tales of the Criminous [London: Cassell, 1915], p. 255).

The letter to Roughead interestingly records, though in a general way, James's response to a review of F. M. Hueffer's Henry James, A Critical Study. James wrote: "But don't trouble about the monographers--they seem to be feeble folk, and I direct you, in case you haven't seen it, to the treatment of one of them in Thursday's Times. ... I enclose the Supplement in question." Under the title of "The Quest of The Golden Bowl," the Times Literary Supplement for January 23, 1914, had pointed out that Hueffer had produced too shallow a work to be called a "study." Of James the reviewer had stated: "As he has elaborated his criticism, so every step has been marked, every discovery embodied, in the series of his published works. He has tested and exemplified every method of representation; he has devised and worked out ever more intricate problems; he has thrown open to both novelist and critic a field of research that is virgin soil." . . ."

11 Quoted by Edel, "The Architecture . . .," NEQ, XXIV, 173.
Life" from his Edition, in order to focus major attention on the likenesses, in quality and method, of his own achievement to Balzac's:

Remarkable . . . is the revelation of the extent of James's scholarship in Balzac. . . . In 1902 he has consulted the Repertoire de la Comedie Humaine of Cerfber and Christophe and he knows Spoelberch de Lovejoul's Histoire des Oeuvres--two key studies which could distinctly influence any one planning a definitive edition. Indeed these volumes were in his library at the time of his death. . . . What does he admire in Balzac. . . ? He admires Balzac's productivity, he believes in the assiduity of his endeavor, his capacity for observing the minutiae of life, he is fascinated by Balzac's prodigious interest in money (an interest he prodigiously shared), but more than anything else it is the "scheme and scope" of his work--the vast imaginative attempt, so successfully carried out, to embrace a whole society, a world. The qualities he seized on in Balzac were those he felt in himself--allowing for the different minds and the different worlds involved. He too could be assiduous and productive; he too was insatiably curious; he too tried to draw upon "the packed, the constituted, the palpable and proveable world before him," he too had set his scenes and launched his dramas, he too had an extraordinary schedule of production. The lesson of Balzac could be applied in many ways. And James enumerated with evident relish in his first essay the classification of the Balzacian oeuvre in the Comedie Humaine . . . the "scheme and scope" which so impressed him. . . . If the figure twenty-three has a Balzacian significance, we are justified in reasoning that James must have had the great French master's example in mind as he planned the Definitive Edition. From the moment that he proposed twenty-three volumes to Scribner, James was committed to selection and arrangement, and clearly he chose the method of Balzac. The Comedie Humaine was Balzac's history and criticism of society, his exposition of its principles and analysis of its evils. James too had been a historian and a critic of his society. If the Comedie Humaine was the panorama of Balzac's France, Henry James, as America's "cosmopolitan" novelist, had created his "Scenes of International Life," and it is with international life that the Edition is largely concerned. 12

According to Edel, the Edition is definitive in a second sense: it builds an "architecture" of selected works so as to make

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the point that James had criticized his society by the Balzacian means of presenting its "Scenes." Mr. Edel's important article presents passages from two of James's unpublished letters to Scribners. In 1908 James wrote of his arrangement:

I have had as much as possible to take account of precedence by length, of congruity of subject and tone, that is of classification, and also in a general way of chronology (rigid time-order was absolutely defeated by other necessary arrangements) and yet make the individual volume attractive, and make, above all, these combination of things square and fit with the appointed number of words (for each volume). 13

Of the change from twenty-three to twenty-four volumes (an alteration made in 1908 and apparently because of difficulties he met in squaring "precedence by length," "classification," and general "chronology" with the word limit necessary to make the volumes roughly uniform), James wrote to Scribners:

My groupings had been, of course, exceedingly considered and various congruities and affinities much observed, so that each volume should offer, as to content, a certain harmonious physiognomy; and now that felicity is perforce—I abundantly recognize—disturbed. 14

Mr. Edel believes that the purpose of "classification" governs within the "combination" of principles of arrangement listed by James in the letter first quoted above. Moreover, to some extent Edel seems to believe that a classification of the areas from which James drew his material, rather than a "classification ... of subject and tone," governs James's architecture. It is true that this critic frequently speaks of the Edition as classifying James's fiction on a strictly thematic basis. Noting that in previous collections of short stories

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14 Ibid., 178. (See my discussion of the reflections of this change in the prefaces James wrote for Vols. XVII and XVIII of the Edition: pp. 493-494 of Chapter VII.)
James had brought together "groups of tales with congruous themes" and had indicated these themes in such titles as "Terminations," "Embarrassments," "The Soft Side," Mr. Edel argues that "a writer thus addicted to thematic arrangement must be expected to exercise that predilection to the fullest degree when he is given the opportunity to arrange his productions, covering thirty years of work, in twenty-four volumes." Nevertheless, in his "broad sketch" of the pattern of the Edition the critic identifies some "groupings" by the kind of raw material the fictions employ. The larger groups or major building blocks of James's "architecture" Edel sometimes describes by reference less to theme than to such characteristics as the setting of the fiction, the sex of main characters, their social position, occupation, nationality:

If the *Comedie Humaine* was the panorama of Balzac's France, Henry James, as America's "cosmopolitan" novelist, has created his "Scenes of International Life," and it is with international life that the Edition is largely concerned. The plan of the New York Edition suddenly becomes clear to us as we move along the shelf from volume to volume. The first three novels (comprising Vols. I-IV) are the stories of three American pilgrimages abroad, those of the artist (Roderick Hudson), the naif innocent, honest down-to-earth New World new man (Christopher Newman), and the young, clear-visioned innocent new woman (Isabel Archer). Then, come the English novels--"Scenes of English life"--The Princess Casamassima, treating of innocence caught up in social conflict; The Tragic Muse, the conflict between the artist and the British Philistine and the actor's struggle with the material conditions of the theater; and that group of studies of English society that might be called "Scenes


16 Ibid., 177.
in the Lives of Some Women"--The Awkward Age, The Spoils of Poynton, A London Life. See how congruously he places What Maisie Knew, In the Cage, The Pupil beside each other--"Tales of the Caged Young." The Aspern Papers and The Turn of the Screw are set side by side--"Tales of Curiosity"--the curious "publishing scoundrel" seeking to pry the secret of Aspern from Juliana, the curious governess seeking at all costs to tear out of Bly its extraordinary secrets that reside in her mind. (It is certainly no coincidence that the story James placed immediately beside "The Turn of the Screw" was "The Liar." The tales in Volumes XIII to XVIII inclusive similarly reveal Balzacian arrangement: XIV the stories of what James himself alluded to as "the chase for the husband"; XV the "Scenes of the Literary Life"; XVI tales of the old "Europe" that James himself has discovered in the 1870's and 1880's and thereafter designated invariably with quotation marks around the words; XVII what James described as "my tales of the gruesome or quas supernatural," that is the ghostly tales; XVIII divided between the stories of the self-made American girl and the Daisy Miller type, and tales such as "The Real Thing," dealing with things real and things imagined. And then in the final group the three major novels ... The Ambassadors and The Wings of the Dove both dealing with the theme of "live all you can" and The Golden Bowl in which the "inter-personal" equation James has studied in all his novels is finally resolved, and the characters are able in the end to live all they can. 17

This view would divide Volumes I-IV from Volumes V-X on the basis of a difference of setting ("stories of three American pilgrimages abroad ... Then come the English novels"), although Edel also seems to imply that Volumes I through X all have the theme of conflict of the European social order with some kind of innocence. Another obstacle to understanding how Edel's sketch of the "architecture" is based, as he says it is, on truly "thematic" congruities is his account of the relation between Volumes IX-X and


18 Identifying a first major break in the Edition after Volume IV and a second after Volume X also ignores, and contradicts somewhat, James's prefatorial remark to Volume IV that The Awkward Age belongs to "a group of my productions here re-introduced." (Art of Novel, p. 196); (The italics are mine.)
Volumes XI and XII: He refers to a "group of studies of English society that might be called 'Scenes in the Lives of Some Women'—The Awkward Age, The Spoils of Poynton, A London Life," as within a larger group ("English novels") opening with Volume V. Apparently he does not consider Volume XI, which he names "Tales of the Caged Young," as part of this larger group V-X. But he does not make clear whether he interprets a third and fourth major break of the Edition to occur after Volume XI and after Volume XII, or, on the other hand, considers these two volumes more closely related than are Volumes V-X. He implies that Volumes IX-X form a subsidiary unit within V-X, differentiated from V-VIII on the basis of the sex of their main characters ("Scenes in the Lives of Some Women"). Volume XI he partly differentiates from Volumes IX-X on the basis of the age of its central characters ("Tales of the Caged Young"). The telegraphist of "In the Cage" (Vol. XI) is not quite a child, however; "caged" is much more apropos to a thematic unity in Volume XI than is age. Edel's distinction between "Scenes in the Lives of Some Women" (Vols. IX-X) and "Tales of the Caged Young" (Vol. XI), and his seeming identification of a major break after Volume X, accent differences in sex, age and setting above truly "thematic" differences and congruities. On the

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19 Too, Edel's description rather ignores James's emphasis in his preface to Volume XI on some likenesses of Maisie, the telegraphist, and Morgan Moreen to Fleda Vetch and other of the heroines of Volume X, as well as to Hyacinth of The Princess (Vols. V-VI). See Art of Novel, pp. 156-157; 129-130.

20 But if Edel means to include Volume XI within the larger grouping he calls "English novels" and "studies of English society," "The Pupil" (XI) of course does not well fit this pattern. It is not specifically focused on English life.
other hand, he does posit in thematic terms the internal unity of Volume XII (containing besides "The Aspern Papers," "The Turn of the Screw" and "The Liar" the very short story "The Two Faces" also)—"Tales of Curiosity," or, as one assumes Edel might expand his designation, James's analysis of a kind of evil particularly fostered by his society.

From his explanation of the order in Volumes XIII through XVIII of the Edition, one cannot be sure whether Edel regards these six volumes as forming one major group, with subdivisions, or whether in his view each individual volume of this sequence constitutes a major "Scene." He remarks that Volumes XIII through XVIII "similarly reveal Balzacian arrangement," but his descriptions of the internal congruity of each volume accent several criteria not applied with great consistency: A principle of length ("shorter international tales" for Volume XIV) is invoked concurrently with area of raw material and kind of theme. The latter two principles are very haphazardly invoked in the descriptions: "'the chase for the husband!' is a quasi-thematic designation; but Volume XV, "Scenes of the Literary Life," is described in terms of what material James uses rather than in terms of what he does with that material. Likewise "Tales of the old 'Europe'" for Volume XVI points to a geographical-psychological area of material; but the description proposed for Volume XVII identifies what James has done with different settings and social positions—"tales of the ... gruesome." Finally, Edel does not explain how, in his opinion, James's inclusion of "quasi-supernatural" fictions fits into a critique of his society. And the group of three novels in Volumes XIX-XXIV the critic sees as a fitting climax to the architecture of the edition, its final
"Scene," for another reason than that the group presents a segment of society. Mr. Edel's account of the placement of these three novels seems to suggest that they close the edition because in them is James's evaluation of the basic flaws of society and of their cure.

This description of a pattern woven sometimes according to subordinate areas of "international life" and sometimes according to criticisms of that life seen as a whole, has the outstanding virtue of challenging us to look more closely at the configuration of the edition in order to confirm or to deny its similarity to Balzac's method. But the account that the Edition moves from (1) American pilgrimages abroad to (2) English life to (3) the "caged young" and (4) curious destroyers to (5) international tales (6) marriage hunts (7) the literary life (8) gruesome tales (9) two kinds of American girl, and the relation of imagination to reality, culminating in (10) the prefiguration of how "life" may be obtained in James's society, is admittedly too "broad" a sketch to indicate more than faintly any real "architecture."

Mr. Edel has provided only such indication of his reading of the order of the Edition as sketches an hypothesis that James's plan very generally is modelled on Balzac's division of La Comédie Humaine into "Scènes." He does not attempt to discuss the obstacles to this hypothesis which are readily discernible in the edition itself. The evidence he provides for his hypothesis is largely of the external kind and often is peripheral in the sense that it mainly supports the far more general conclusion that James had Balzac's example very much in mind when he was making the "New York Edition."

This evidence is mainly James's proposal of twenty-three volumes to Scribners, James's chagrin when his Edition ran to
twenty-four volumes, and James's comments on the importance of the "scheme and scope" of *La Comedie Humaine*. But, as we have seen in Chapter I, James's reasons for praising Balzac's "scheme and scope" are more complex than Mr. Edel suggests. Thus the critic seems to me to examine this external evidence less thoroughly than its importance warrants. It can support an hypothesis that Balzac's example was a fructifying one for an edition built around James's conception of the nature of fiction. It does not directly support the specific thesis that James ordered his Edition by Balzac's method.

A conclusion that the New York Edition has

a well-dissimulated architecture, deriving its inspiration from Balzac, and its subtlety from James's own love of patterns and figures, secrecy and mystification can be accepted only in part, with many qualifications: While indubitably the Edition has an architecture, its Balzacian "inspiration" does not take the form that Balzac's method in his *edition définitive* supplied the rationale for James's arrangement of fictions. Secondly, the "subtlety" of James's arrangement, if Mr. Edel means its complexity, does not solely derive from James's love of intricacy for its own sake. The complexity of the implicit architecture of the

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See the passage quoted from Mr. Edel's article on pages 30 and 31 above. This account of James's admiration for Balzac seems to me to accent speculation about unconscious motivation at the expense of thoroughly examining the content of James's critical reasoning. Discussion of the strength and hidden sources of James's attraction to Balzac may be relevant to description of James's psyche; but they remain largely guesses, and in dealing with a critical problem such as the consciously elaborated rationale of the New York Edition, are less valuable than confronting James's intricate reasoning on Balzac's artistic "case."

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Edel, "The Architecture . . . .", *NEQ*, XXIV, 177.
Edition comes mainly from James's purpose to unify several important critical considerations, and to unfold the nature of his own artistic "case." This hypothesis, which I would substitute for Mr. Edel's, is not tantamount to proposing that, as many other critics seem vaguely to have assumed, the New York Edition is ordered to follow the course of James's artistic development. I do not think that the Edition's major groupings have the purpose to delineate the chronology of James's artistic growth, even though "in a general way" chronology does enter into the arrangement, and even though the sources or the causes of James's growth of competence are made progressively more evident through the major units of the Edition.

Any hypothesis concerning the architecture must be supported principally by internal evidence—by all the details of James's chosen order. To be really satisfactory, the hypothesis cannot fit the Edition only loosely. It must be able to explain the smallest features of the sequence, ideally, the order of fictions within each volume as well as the movement from volume to volume. Any theory of an "architecture" in the Edition assumes two things: (1) that the order is as consistent as the factor of a limited number of words per volume will permit (2) that James, devising the order to be meaningful, indicates in his prefaces those points within the Edition where the criterion of length of a volume has had to govern more than "classification . . . of subject and tone." Yet many more

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23 The theory of an "architecture" assumes these two points because "architecture" implies true unity, rather than a mere collection of principles of arrangement. At several points in his
inconsistencies than James's prefaces identify do occur when his arrangement is viewed either as following Balzac's method of making a critique of society by means of division of it into "Scenes," or as tracing chronologically the steps in James's artistic growth:

Volumes I-VIII contain, in chronological order, five novels written before 1900. That The Awkward Age in Volume IX follows this series may appear to support an interpretation that the Edition traces James's development. For the fictions in succeeding Vols. X and XI are earlier in date than Vol. IX, but they are not novels. Thus the first nine volumes may suggest a series of changes in handling long fictions "with a 'complicated' subject." Long fictions are not again introduced until after Vol. XVIII, and Vols. XIX-XXIV clearly show the influence of certain features of the shorter fiction that has intervened. Like the prefaces to the opening novels, the prefaces to these three late ones in XIX-XXIV bring out that James gradually discovered the advantage of using as compositional law or "center" a consciousness involved in the action, having some "near individual view" of it. Also, this chronological series of novels in two main divisions (Vols. I-IX and XIX-XXIV) marks a gradual increase in construction which imbues the novel with dramatic quality--construction by "scenic

prefaces, and in his statement to Scribners (see page 31 above), James implies that his "combination" of factors is really a unity. In the preface to Vol. XVII, he did indicate that the factor of length of volume had perforce interrupted the "harmonious physiognomy" of Vols. XVII and XVIII.

24 This is James' description of the novel. See Art of Novel, p. 4.
consistency." Finally, preserving the chronological order of novels while stressing two groups of them, seems to chart emergence of techniques for implying the interactions between several consciousnesses. Such is the extent of the evidence that the Edition is designed to follow the course of James's technical growth.

Nevertheless, that hypothesis does not account for the sequence of Vols. X-XVIII, which contain nouvelles and short stories. These shorter fictions are not presented chronologically. Neither are they arranged to support those directions of technical development implied by the ordering of the novels. For instance, James himself points out that the fictions of Vol. X center in a consciousness "fine" and wide enough to encompass several kinds of more limited awareness with whom they mainly have to deal; Laura Wing and Fleda Vetch and Rose Tramore are mirrors of mirrors, like Lambert Strether. But the single mirrors used in the fictions of succeeding Vol. XI do not encompass other perspectives, though they are "clear" mirrors. The central

Beginning with Vols. VII-VIII (The Tragic Muse) more than one perspective on the action is used. Two are alternated under the law of their viewing the same thing so as to suggest still a third consciousness, the real center of the novel. Hereafter, multiplication of perspective is increased, and gains the effect of interchange between several awarenesses. Vol. IX shows us the surface interaction between persons within a social occasion, and also implies the interplay of deeper forces. The Wings of the Dove (Vols. XIX-XX) alternates between several awarenesses in order to suggest one consciousness of others' view of itself. The Ambassadors uses but one consciousness; however, this mirror continually reflects other perspectives on objects and events rather than simply those objects and events. The Golden Bowl employs two mirrors again, this time not to imply a third but to reflect one another and so to interpret for us their interaction, at depth, with one another.

Art of Novel, pp. 128-130.
consciousnesses for Vol. XI (the children Maisie and Morgan; the young telegraphist) are excluded from any large amount of intellectual apprehension of what they view; they "wonder" at, rather than "appreciate" the full tangle of relations to which they are exposed. Therefore, as the preface to Vol. XI underlines, they are mirrors much like Newman and Hyacinth Robinson. If James's main intention is to illustrate the course of his development, the nouvelles of Vol. X should have been placed after those of Vol. XI.

Even to the casual surveyor of their sequence, the shorter fictions collected in Vols. X through XVIII appear grouped rather more by thematic congruity than by stages towards the techniques of composition used in the novels of XIX-XXIV. But thematic unity does not seem fully to control this sequence.

We might consider that the fictions of X-XVIII have in common the general theme of danger posed to the individual by society: Vol. X contains nouvelles in which the very exercise of "free spirit" creates for itself a dramatic imbroglio in the English scene. Vol. XI collects "tales of the caged young," as Mr. Edel puts it, or of the dangers to potentially free spirit from the society in which it is developing. Vol. XII has stories of baleful "curiosity," or, I believe it better to say, stories focusing the effects of situations of aggrandizement. Vols. XIII-XIV treat American innocence bewildered by Europe and, predominantly, conflicts of manners threatening adequate perception of individuals. Vol. XV characterizes society as aggressively unaware of

27 Art of Novel, p. 156.
personal qualities, by presenting the personal states of artists who are treated by it in various ways, and Vol. XVII combines "tales of the gruesome and quasi-supernatural" with ones of "poor sensitive gentlemen." But so general a theme as the difficulties of "sensitive" individuals must be said to run throughout the entire Edition, rather than to identify one of its units. Moreover, it is difficult to explain Vols. XVI and XVIII in this way; they especially seem to lack a truly common theme and particularly the theme above stated. Finally, two other kinds of evidence force one to reconsider whether classification by theme chiefly explains the sequence of works in Vols. X through XVIII.

(1) Though some of the short fictions of these eight volumes whose themes are similar are grouped together in the same volume, others with seemingly equal congruity of theme are nevertheless separated:

For instance, "Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie" and "Fordham Castle" are in Vol. XVI, which Edel names "tales of the old 'Europe' that James had himself discovered in the 1870's and 1880's." But James's prefaces speak of "Miss Gunton" and "Fordham Castle" as like the fictions of Vol. XIV in one respect, unlike them in another respect. The conditions portrayed in "Miss Gunton" and "Fordham Castle," James says, are not yet archaic as are those used in some of the stories of Vol. XIV. It is hard then to see how "Miss Gunton" and "Fordham

28 Art of Novel, pp. 206-207.
Castle" fit a proposed congruity of "tales of the old 'Europe.'
Neither are they placed with the fictions of Vol. XIV which, James says, they partly resemble.

A second instance may be offered that the grouping within volumes sometimes seems to violate thematic congruity. Fictions scattered throughout Vols. XIV, XVI and XVIII, and quite markedly separated from one another, contrast "Europe" with "America." If it is proposed that such separations emphasize sub-groups within what James called the "international fallacy," the question remains why Vols. XV and XVII should intervene between such sub-groups. And, to comment again on the particular "thematic" congruities Mr. Edel proposes, if Vol. XIV is "the chase for the husband" and Vol. XIII "shorter international tales," The Reverberator (opening Vol. XIII and a "shorter novel" using Francie Dosson's possible marriage to Gaston Probert) seems really to belong with the group in Vol. XIV. Yet James nowhere indicates that this is so. Too, why is "Lady Barbarina" (who doesn't chase perceptibly more than does Francie Dosson) in Vol. XIV rather than "The Patagonia" and "Pandora" (Vol. XVIII)?

(2) Even if we assume that all the stories in Vols. X through XVIII have been placed together according to thematic likeness, the common themes observable then would appear to require, for intelligibility and emphasis, a completely different sequence from volume to volume from

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29 Art of Novel, p. 132.

the one James actually employs:

For example, provisionally accepting "Scenes of the Literary Life" as the unity of Vol. XIV, we yet wonder why this volume precedes "Tales of the old 'Europe.'" For in the present sequence "Literary Life" interrupts "shorter international tales" and "tales of the old 'Europe.'" Too, this thematic explanation of the arrangement seems to make quite incongruous the fact that tales of "poor sensitive gentlemen" is divided by "tales of the old 'Europe'" from "Scenes of the Literary Life." (Vols. XIV and XVII both criticize the nature of modern society by showing its influence upon the personal states of two kinds of persons opposed to it--artists and "poor sensitive gentlemen" or individuals desiring to assert a private standard.)

There seems no thematic reason for placing after Vol. XVII (fictions concerning largely "poor sensitive gentlemen") a volume which Mr. Edel says is "divided between stories of the self-made American girl and the Daisy Miller type, and tales such as 'The Real Thing,' dealing with things real and things imagined." It may be possible to discern some thematic progression, in X-XVIII, towards increased demonstration of the power of society to trample out the "tradition of sensibility." But that this principle does not govern the sequence is clear from the use of Vol. XVIII at its climax, and from the occurrence so early within the series of a volume (XIV) showing contrasts in manners triumphant over personal qualities.

Altogether, if the sequence from Vol. X through Vol. XVIII finally may be explained in thematic terms, which I do not doubt, nevertheless it appears unsatisfactory to refer the rationale of the
entire order of the Edition merely to some thematic likenesses within certain volumes. On the other hand, an acceptable account of the design of the Edition must be able to explain both the more obvious congruities of theme in Vols. X-XVIII, and, within this same portion of the Edition, those sequences which baffle analysis by a thematic principle alone. Equally, an acceptable account must be able to explain the grouping together in Vols. X-XII of only certain of the nouvelles of the Edition in an order which neither is strictly chronological nor illustrates the course of technical development seen in the novels series. The account must explain the placement of this group of nouvelles (X-XII) so that shorter fictions intervene between it and the last novels, a group with which the fictions of X and XI, at least, seem compositionally to have much in common. Finally, the hypothesis must be compatible with the division of the novels into two widely separated groups, and with the retention within the first of these groups of chronological arrangement such as accents the course of James's growth into certain techniques.
CHAPTER III

THE EDITION AS THE "STORY" OF JAMES'S "CASE"

The present chapter will outline what my hypothesis involves. This hypothesis is that James arranged his "New York Edition" to present his own critical interpretation of his "case" as a novelist, and ordered the Edition to exfoliate the nature of that case, much as his narratives characteristically exfoliate a central "germ" or "idea." The Edition builds a "story" in this sense of progressively revealing the nature of a critical "case."

In the first section of the present chapter, on pages 53-66 following, I shall deal with the opening preface James wrote for the

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1 Usually James's narrative movement is one making more clear something later discernible as embodied in the opening situation. This point frequently has been made by critics in several ways. Joseph W. Beach, for instance, said that in the most distinctive work of James . . . you have a sense of being present at the gradual unveiling of a picture. . . . The stages are merely those by which the exhibitor of the restorer of the picture uncovers now one, now another, portion . . . until finally the whole appears in its intelligible completeness. . . . The successive moments of the present narrative impress one as the successive steps by which we are made acquainted with the set of facts already constituted. . . . The story is . . . the process by which the characters and situation are revealed to us.


Edward Wagenknecht summarizes this Jamesian technique as "posing a 'problem' or setting forth a situation whose probing is the story."

Edition. Although the preface to Volume I directly concerns *Roderick Hudson*, it handles the one novel from a point of view which I believe to govern James's arrangement of all the succeeding fictions and the sequences of his commentary within later prefaces. In short, the opening preface, by its selection to develop only certain of the many topics about *Roderick Hudson* which James indicates that he might have discussed at length, hints at the rationale of James's collocation throughout the entire twenty-four volumes.

Everywhere in the Edition James points to this rationale, usually by implicit means—especially by certain emphases and intricate juxtapositions within his prefaces. But he does not chose the mode of implication because temperamentally or doctrinally he is committed to making things difficult for the reader. On the other hand, James is not concerned to simplify critical problems to the point that they cease to be the cruxes engaging his own "interest." As writer of critical prefaces to a twenty-four-volume definitive edition having a significant arrangement, James deliberately foregoes a purpose to capture the attention of the generality of readers, or even that of a good many sophisticated and discerning readers of his own work. In this dimension

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2 When acting as critic of his own work, as in his comparable writings on other artists, James felt that his foremost responsibility was to the product under his observation—that elucidating accurately the "case" must take precedence over trying to persuade many readers to an interest they might not naturally feel in this kind of complexity. For James, the critic, when truly armed "cap-a-pie" in the essence of his function, is the interpreter, the brother, and most significantly the "torch-bearing outrider" for the artist. In no sense did James consider the genuine critic of art a mere middleman. Instead, he sees the critic as the ideal converser with the artist and as one who is peculiarly possessed of an ability to enter fully (by means of the produced work) into the concerns of very different artists: "We blunder in and out of..."
of the "New York Edition," he addresses only those of his readers who happen to share what he would call a "critical" curiosity about any work of art, the curiosity that wants to affix precise relations between the artist's intentions and his success in effecting them, including the reasons for both these things. But as the novelist whose products are under observation by the critic of the prefaces, James of course addresses a wider audience; he wishes to move and to involve far more persons than the critical prefaces and the architecture of the Edition might hope to engross. James anticipated that his definitive edition would be turned to by many more readers than would struggle with all parts of all its prefaces. Of the latter, he knew that many even of his assiduous readers would be impatient. He did not quite design the sequences and the prefaces of the Edition in order to gratify only his own critical sense; but he did present this design in a manner which would reach only a limited audience. His manner of pointing to the architecture of his Edition addresses those readers for whom art "makes life, makes interest, makes importance," and for whom, in addition, the criticism of art is "the most complicated and the most particular" of the arts.

criticism as if it were a railway station—the easiest and the most public of the arts. It is in reality the most complicated and the most particular. The critical sense is so far from frequent that it is absolutely rare . . . . We have too many small schoolmasters."
("Criticism," Art of Fiction, pp. 217-218.) The genuine critic in the Jamesian sense has relatively less concern with the nature of his potential audience than has the artist. The artist does something with and to this audience. But for the critic accuracy of statement about the always complex phenomenon of a produced work of art is more necessary than is interesting all the audience of that work.

3 Letters, II, 490.

James's view of the function of criticism partly explains why his prefaces appear more to imply the design in his Edition than to announce it directly. I do not mean that in James's view true criticism always must proceed by implication. Rather, I mean that the problem of why James does not in his opening preface state the nature of his architecture more directly than he seems to is partially answered (1) by the very intricacy of the design, so that it cannot be intelligibly summarized in the space of only a few direct statements, and (2) by the fact that James envisions two kinds of audience for his critical prefaces. Although he anticipates diverse readers for his re-presented fictions, and anticipates that such readers will at least thumb his prefaces, he expects a smaller proportion of readers to be closely attentive to all the critical commentary. The latter proportion of the audience is quite able to apprehend a complex implied pattern when this mode of presentation becomes necessary. James finally chooses thus to imply his rationale for two reasons, one of them similar to the cause of his adopting an "oblique" method in his later fiction.

The problem of why James's opening preface does not more directly "state" the rationale of his architecture is allied to a more general one. This is the problem of whether what has been named the "obscenity" of his fiction, particularly of that after 1896, finally may be called an oblique approach merely for the sake of obliquity or, on the contrary, has other roots and virtues. Edward Wagenknecht has summarized, and in my opinion has clearly resolved, this general problem by pointing out that "there was no quest for mystification on James's part . . . . On the contrary, James is committed to clarity up to the
hilt, determined to leave nothing to chance, and so eager to explain everything that he becomes obscure through his very anxiety. With the addendum that James's brand of "obscurity" is characterized neither by any lack of salience (provided one has been willing to supply the maximum of attention to all of the presented details) nor by any whimsical departures from whatever method he once establishes, this analysis forcefully summarizes the reason that James's writing in his "third period" demands from all readers a special adjustment. For instance, it is as true of the Edition and of its prefaces as it is of James's later novels that "omissions are quite as likely to be troublesome as what may seem to the uninitiated the immense over-development of what he chose to give." Because he is "committed to clarity up to the hilt," that is to "explaining everything" and even making his omissions serve this function, the later James always seems to approach any subject obliquely. But his method is oblique because his goal is inclusiveness, rather than because he views indirection as intrinsically a good.

When he came to present his critical interpretation of his own "case" as a novelist, James obviously wished to convey that complexity as accurately and as fully as was possible to him. Yet the space at his disposal for this presentation was eighteen prefaces plus the arrangement of the fictions they would introduce. Besides limited

5 E. Wagenknecht, Cavalcade ... American Novel, p. 160.
6 Ibid., p. 161.
space, he also had to consider that the wider audience must not be put off from his Edition by the nature of its prefatory apparatus. James's prefaces had to be comparatively brief, and he wished them also to be free from any pedantry yet not in the least casual in substance. A kind of commentary which relies on the implications of omission, of juxtaposed development, and of an intricate web of allusion and cross-reference, is his means for painting an amazingly full critical portrait, yet in relatively brief compass and without burdening the general reader with pretentious statement of purpose or a kind of comment such as would intimidate him. (Had not Balzac perhaps made just this error?)

William James characterized his brother's later fiction as employing a "method of narration by interminable elaboration of suggestive reference." The method of presentation in the "New York Edition" (by its prefaces and by the order of its fictions) of the "story" of James's "case" might similarly be described: It is a method of critical explication by leaving a reader of a particular type to grasp the larger implications of a very elaborate structure of direct statements on specific works, i.e., a structure of statements on narrower, though far from simple, critical problems. Inevitably, and no doubt eternally, readers will differ over whether this indirect method, having inclusiveness of explanation as its ultimate aim, is suitable to critical exposition. They will differ, too, over whether James's

7 Ralph B. Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, I, 423-424.
mode of critical commentary in the whole of his Edition is as successful as is the comparable "foreshortening" within his later novels. Many will conclude that the summary of his purpose and rationale which James did provide in the first paragraph of his first preface could better have been at once expanded into further statement about the order of the Edition. It is important to realize, however, that James's decision not to provide this kind of expansion, his choice to employ an oblique method of critical explication, is a considered maneuver.

The general statements about his Edition which open James's first critical preface are very tightly related to its succeeding commentary on Roderick Hudson, and the entire first preface is so related to the subsequent ones, however implicit are these connections. Altogether, the implied relationships show the same thing that the order of fictions in the Edition shows: they paint James's critical self-portrait.

In this chapter, I shall deal first with the material and the structure of the preface to Volume I, in order to demonstrate that the opening commentary of itself points to the design of the Edition as a whole. James's first preface, using the method of critical explication above described, does more than provide us with his view of Roderick Hudson in particular.

The second and third sections of this chapter then will aim to expoit, respectively, what is meant by my proposition that James built the Edition (1) to present (for a certain kind of its reader) his critical estimate of his artistic "case" and (2) to unfold this
case in the manner of "story."

I

An example of how the first preface includes commentary on the entire Edition within statements directly concerning Roderick Hudson is its treatment of the topic of the selectiveness of the Edition: this general subject is covered in the course of stating why Roderick in particular has been included at all. James provides the reader with the principles that have governed his exclusions, but he implies these general criteria in the course of discussing topics directly pertinent only to one novel, and implies them through the structure of his preface.

We can learn from the first preface that while the fictions James excluded from the New York Edition are not only those which he regarded as unworthy, no included fiction fell below a certain standard of competence. We know that the latter standard is merely

8 A certain group of his excluded fictions, among them the novels Watch and Ward and Confidence, James wished entirely to disown.

In the first preface of the Edition, he says that sometimes rereading past works shows then totally unworthy:

The work break[s] down under even such mild overhauling. The author knows well enough how that may happen—which he in fact frequently sees it do. The old reasons then are too dead to revive; they were not, it is plain, good enough reasons to live. The only possible relation of the present mind to the thing is to dismiss it altogether . . . the only detachment is the detachment of aversion . . . .

(Art of Novel, p. 11).
the presence of some genuine unity in the work, for James says that all the included fictions closely enough "work together" to invite and justify an "active" critical observation of them:

I speak of the painter in general and of his relation to the old picture, the work of his hand, that has been lost to sight and that, when found again, is put back on the easel for measure of what time and the weather may, in the interval, have done to it . . . if subject and treatment, working together, have had their felicity, the artist . . . may find a strange charm in this stage of the connexion . . . it breathes upon the dead reasons of things, buried as they are in the texture of the work, and makes them revive, so that the actual appearances and the old motives fall together once more, and a lesson and a moral and a consecrating final light are somehow disengaged . . . . The painter who passes over his old sunk canvas the wet sponge that shows him what may still come out again makes his criticism essentially active. . . . I have felt myself, then, on looking over past productions, the painter making use again and again of the tentative wet sponge. The sunk surface has here and there, beyond doubt, refused to respond: the buried secrets, the intentions, are buried too deep to rise again . . . . Not so, however, when the moistened canvas does obscurely flush and when resort to the varnish bottle is thereby immediately indicated. 9

9 This famous passage from the first preface, where James calls his revisions his "varnish bottle," has been the main locus for the assumption that all fictions the Edition excluded had been found equally unworthy. However, although the "wet sponge" refers to a level of competence, this level is really but enough unity in the work to reveal its intentions. James emphasizes that his criterion of competence, for inclusion, is a very liberal one. He calls the wet sponge process "such a mild overhauling"; by it, some fictions may "obscurely flush." The wet sponge asks of a work only if it has "in its degree, poor dear brave thing, some shade of the all appreciable, yet all indescribable grace that we know as pictorial 'tone'?" This reference to possible degrees and shades of "tone" or unity makes clear that a level of competence so minimum could not have been the sole reason for all exclusions. (Art of Novel, pp. 10-12. The italics are mine.)

In 1950, in her exciting preface to Eight Uncollected Tales (New Brunswick: Rutgers), Edna Kenton proposed that one hitherto unremarked reason for rejection of some fictions from the "New York Edition" may have been that their situation or their theme was later reworked—and better reworked. Mr. Edel stresses that the excluded fictions were not all regarded by James in the same way and collects the impressive external evidence bearing on this point. Earlier,
A second and equally important criterion for inclusion is that the fiction must be able to contribute to the purpose of unfolding the nature of James's "case." The several "considerations" governing his arrangement (and of course his selection) which James summarized in his 1908 letter to Scribner are unified into this general purpose of the Edition. The internal structure of the first preface implies such a rationale—as does the still more elaborate structure made by all eighteen prefaces and twenty-four volumes.

We can see how James indicates the purpose of the entire Edition to the careful reader of the opening preface if we look at its total pattern, and a convenient key to this pattern is the references in the preface to Balzac. They may be summarized as James's avowal that while Balzac supplied the example for James's own

J. W. Beach had speculated that "one of the chief reasons for excluding The Bostonians may have been that in this work James had not employed his "distinctive method of gradual revelation!" (Method of Henry James, p. 42). Throughout his book Mr. Beach implied, though he did not develop the thesis, that the Edition was collected to reveal the nature of the "distinctive methods" of James's later fiction.

The "considerations" were: chronology "in a general way"; attractiveness of the single volume; a roughly uniform length of volumes; giving precedence, within a single volume, to fictions of greater length; and "congruities" of "subject and tone," that is, "classification" of the fictions. See pp. 29-31 of Chapter II above. Parts of this unpublished letter are quoted in Edel's article.

The last preface in the Edition, that to Golden Bowl, also refers to Balzac in a significant context, as Mr. Edel points out. The final preface states that James has emulated Balzac in making public the growth of his sensibility, by recording his "felt finalities" of language.
early aim in writing fiction, Balzac only in some respects supplied James's early means. The central theme of the first preface is that "the art of representation"--a topic introduced in the third sentence--is the art of creating an effect or an illusion, so that necessarily its means cannot be single or fixed: the art of the novel, of "representation" such as Balzac's fiction well examples, is a "variable process."

The contexts of the references to Balzac in the first preface are, generally, James's developments of commentary on certain of his several failures and successes in Roderick Hudson. As a whole, the first preface especially tells us that, upon rereading this novel in 1907, James is more struck by one kind of failure than by other kinds, and that most of all he is impressed with the reason for one of his successes in Roderick: The 1907 rereading interests him in the phenomenon that in 1875 he had taken incompatible means towards "representation." (The simple and unsurprising fact that in 1875 he had not very well known how to "represent" engages less of his interest.) Moreover, one of the incompatible means which he had employed in 1875, by 1907 seems to him the source of his limited degree of success in Roderick. Balzac's kind of success and Balzac's methods are twice mentioned by the first preface--in connection with these two points about Roderick which most impress the James of 1907.

Although the first preface briefly acknowledges many flaws of Roderick, it examines at length only three of them: (1) the failure to make Roderick's disintegration seem gradual enough (2) the failure to make credible Rowland Mallett's sudden personal attachment to Mary Garland (3) the decision to name the locale of the opening
chapters as "Northampton, Massachusetts." James says that the first of these three flaws, the handling of time in the novel, is "quite inadequate," and could have been avoided by other means than by lengthening the novel. Only more effect of duration is needed. An illusion of the lapse of time might have been achieved if James had conveyed the full complexity of the sources of Roderick's progress towards disaster. The hero's ruin seems abnormally swift because it seems "too simply" to derive only from his relation to Christina Light. James recalls that he had decided to give major emphasis in the novel to Christina's effect on Roderick, because "the amount of illustration I could allow to the grounds of my young man's disaster was unquestionably meager, but I might perhaps make it lively." In other words, he had chosen to portray "the grounds of" Roderick's disintegration by a means that sacrificed complexity to a striking event and to singleness of "Action." Gaining unity by selection, rather than by his later art of "foreshortening," the James of 1875 had sacrificed the complexity that would have ensured an effect of

12 Art of Novel, p. 12.

13 "The Lesson of Balzac" had said that "two elements of the art of the novelist" present "the greatest difficulty" and that the second is representing "the lapse of time, the duration of the subject." Balzac gains this effect, James said, by foreshortening or composition. "No one begins ... to handle the time-element and produce the time-effect with the authority of Balzac in his amplest sweeps—by which I am far from meaning in his longest passages. That study of the foreshortened image ... a substitute for the baser device of accounting for time-quantity by mere quantity of statement!" ("The Lesson of Balzac," Future of Novel, pp. 121-122).
time's duration. Despite this grave flaw, "what really saved" Roderick Hudson, James says, was his "instinct" to compose the novel not only around the external "Action" of Christina's effect on the hero, but simultaneously around Rowland Mallett's awareness of Roderick's course. To the degree that the nature of Rowland's consciousness of Roderick is the compositional center of the novel, complexity has not been sacrificed to a "lively" and a striking unity. The "movement" of Rowland's awareness is the agent of any created illusion of a gradual passage of time; it makes Roderick's disaster seem more credible, for Rowland estimates not one but several sources of the catastrophe.

Thus to James's mature view, the main interest of this first flaw is not simply its existence in so early a work, but that he had adopted two contradictory means for "representing" the sources of Roderick's disaster and effecting the illusion of duration. One means was the road of selectivity and liveliness; the other was the very different road of making the point of unity Rowland's view of the events. Besides being incompatible with the first means, the second was the more effective way of ensuring that the reader will not feel that Roderick's disaster has been "abnormally swift."

A similar point emerges from James's extended discussion of the third flaw. His choice to name "Northampton, Massachusetts" as

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15 Ibid., p. 15.
the locale of the opening chapters interests James more than what might appear the more striking fault, but which James only glances at—"the manner in which the evocation . . . of the small New England town . . . fails of intensity." Because the theme of the novel was not to be a comparison between two orders of civilization, the American setting had to be presented only in antithesis to Rome—to "a state of civilization providing for 'art.'" Though the "plan" of the novel did not involve "going in for" much presentation of the American locale, James achieved, he says, even less evocation of it than would have been valuable. However, whether the first two chapters of Roderick evoke a "small New England town" even "so far as attempted," is not so interesting to the James of 1907 as are the disparities between his several means and his general plan. Naming the "peaceful, rural New England community" (and hence of awakening expectations that it will be presented in full as "Northampton, Massachusetts") contradicts James's other conscious decision that the opening setting should be a preparatory, antithetic image to Rome. Once again the failure James most comments on, that of naming his place, is a failure to have sorted out the congruences between "variable processes" of representation. In sum, James presents his earlier self as aware that "representation" means creating an illusion, yet as employing for this end means inconsistent with one another.

16 Art of Novel, p. 8. (The italics are mine.)

17 Ibid.
The first preface mentions Balzac as James's model for having named Northampton; "one nestled, technically, in those days, and with yearning, in the great shadow of Balzac; his august example, little as the secret might ever be guessed, towered for me over the scene." The second mention of Balzac by the first preface is not in connection with a particular means but with a general aim. Balzac was in James's mind when he confronted in 1875 the problem of keeping unity ("confining" his picture) while yet "treating" the complex causes of his hero's ruin:

How boil down so many facts in the alembic, so that the distilled result, the produced appearance, should have intensity, lucidity, brevity, beauty, all the merits required for my effect? . . . It didn't help, alas, it only maddened, to remember that Balzac would have known how, and would yet have asked not additional credit for it . . . All the difficulty I could dodge still struck me . . . as leaving more than enough; and yet I was already consciously in presence, here, of the most interesting question the artist has to consider. To give the image and the sense of certain things while still keeping them subordinate to his plan . . . to give all the sense, in a word, without all the substance or all the surface, and so to summarise and foreshorten . . . that the mere procession of items and profiles is not only . . . superseded, but is, for essential quality, almost "compromised." . . . Such a case . . . proposed itself at every turn to the painter of life who wishes both to treat his chosen subject and to confine his necessary picture . . . .

This eternal time-question is accordingly, for the novelist, always there and always formidable; always insisting on the effect of the great lapse and passage . . . and on the effect of compression, of composition and form. . . . None was ever very well told, I think, under the law of mere elimination—inordinately as that device appears in many quarters to be depended on.

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18 Art of Novel, p. 9.

19 Ibid., pp. 13-14. (The first italics are mine.) This passage should be compared with the definition of foreshortening provided in "The Lesson of Balzac!": "that mystery of the foreshortened procession of facts and figures, of appearances of
Balzac, then, is mentioned for the second time by the preface when it comes to define James's goal, early and late. "Representation" requires one "to summarise and foreshorten"—a requirement that James in 1875 already was "consciously in presence" of, although he had not yet perceived that his two means for it were inconsistent with one another and that one of them was more effective. Previously in the preface, Balzac had been connected with a particular means for representation which, when James partially adopted it, had been inconsistent with other of his means and with the theme of his novel.

The first preface shows that Balzac's particular kind of treatment, his method of "systematic" presentation of the details of an area or "Scene," is not necessarily the model for all kinds of fiction, and in Roderick is not a viable method for James. But the preface equally stresses that Balzac's final effect—"boil down so many facts" instead of eliminating "the greater complexity, the superior truth"—distinctly is a model which Roderick should better have emulated.

whatever sort, which is in some lights but another name for the picture governed by the principle of composition, and which has . . . as little as possible in common with the method now usual among us, the juxtaposition of items emulating the column of numbers of a schoolboy's sum in addition. It is the art of the brush, I know, as opposed to the art of the slate-pencil; but to the art of the brush the novel must return. . . ." (Future of Novel, p. 121)

20 Naming Northampton, in emulation of Balzac, was a flaw when "one was not in the least, in one's prudence, emulating his systematic closeness!" (Art of Novel, p. 9).

21 In "Robert Louis Stevenson, 1894," James argues against Stevenson's proposed "better method" than Balzac's that it would have been none at all for Balzac's vision of a subject, least of all of the subject, the whole of life. Balzac's method was adapted to his notion of presentation—which we may accept, it strikes me, under the protection of what he
Too, the references in the preface to Balzac make clear that his method of "systematic closeness" was early felt by James to be inappropriate to him—and for some reason of "prudence." Finally, we should recognize that the means of composing around Rowland's consciousness of Roderick, the means which James says is the source of the novel's comparative success, is very different from the Balzacian mode of "systematic" detail identifying an area or a "Scene" of experience. The former method requires fewer details, and above all it involves a different composing center for them.

The question of why James's "prudence" kept him from wanting, in 1875, to follow Balzac's "systematic closeness" on "Scenes" even while he took as his goal Balzac's effect of representation within a confined picture, is partly answered by the nature of the one successful means James did find, a means not requiring analysis of the structure of society and then command of a wealth of detail to document the parts yielded by the analysis. What James found viable instead shows why, even immensely impressed by Balzac as the young James was, he should theoretically have rejected Balzac's method: first, the American social order characteristically did not present a fixed structure; secondly, James's acquaintance with the American order was not nearly wide enough to enable him either to identify well its "scenes" and their relations to one another, or to document more than one or two such scenes at most; finally, he was only

resents... Stevenson was disposed in general to have too short a way with this master... (Notes on Novelists [New York: Scribners, 1914], p. 16).
partially acquainted with a few scenes of European civilization. The young James was acutely conscious of these reasons.

The first preface tells us that the "plan" of Roderick was to represent "a civilisation providing for 'art,'" i.e., to represent the "Rome" which an American artist sees. The novel does not intend to evoke Italy in its entirety, but the aspect of that entirety which at once would strike an American artist. The choice of this kind of subject again suggests James's consciousness that Balzac's method was closed to him, and why James felt it so closed. For his choice essentially is to represent how one civilization looks to another. He could not try to "read," as he said Balzac had done, "the universe into" the structure of one civilization, because from his earliest years the conditions of his life had made him aware of several social orders--aware of American civilization as different from (not simply the opposite of) European. Again, Balzac's practice was closed to James because his personal situation did not equip him with sufficient and with the right kind of material for detailing either American life or European, although he knew the outlines of the American point of view. Even the younger James was aware that his having happened "to lay up, long before, a pleased vision of" Northampton did not constitute having gathered enough material for evoking a New England town through a Balzacian wealth of notation. He was just as constantly aware that he

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23 James's roots were in this awareness, in the transatlantic situation that "Newport" symbolized to him. See The American Scene, ed. Auden (New York: Scribners, 1946), pp. 219-225; 488-489.
had no command of details to document the American business world, which, very obviously to any intelligent American in the years following the Civil War, was a main center of American life.

Balzac's method was closed to one in James's given situation. At the same time, Balzac's "foreshortening" of his wealth of detail so as to make it seem of greater thickness even than it was—"the effect of the great lapse and passage . . . the effect of compression, of composition and form"—was very pertinent to James's ambitions and situation. For while Balzac showed that "appearances" always must be placed before a reader, that the novelist must work with concrete specifications and attend to "the immediate, the material . . . the current combination," equally he showed that the novelist creates his illusion mainly by the relations in which he places these items. Altogether Balzac's example suggested that James concentrate on composing whatever body of detail he could command—that James trust his "imagination," his appetite for relating, as his own means of representation.

The burden of the first preface within the "New York Edition" is that from 1875 through 1907 James confronted the same problem, and that he grew or developed in the sense of learned to identify more and more clearly this difficulty so as better to solve it. It is that the novelist must effect an impression of "thickness" always greater than any number of "appearances" he may command or can include. He must "represent," or must create the illusion of providing a

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See the passage quoted by the text of pages 60 above. above.
completely constituted world. In another guise, the problem is that although the novelist's picture is "confined," it must feel to its reader as relatively "full"—as non-selective—as does experience itself. The reader constantly must feel that he is being given "all the sense" even when the novelist cannot possibly give "all the substance or all the surface."

The preface to Roderick Hudson shows that, reviewing in 1907 his body of fiction, James considers he had always been dealing—in different degrees of consciousness—with two closely related questions: (1) that of the role of composition in achieving the illusion of a "world," and (2) that of what kind of composition can "summarise and foreshorten" (instead of "eliminate") so as not to falsify the "thick" quality of actual experience. The first preface suggests that throughout James's career he came more clearly to see why any novelist's one effective resource for adequate representation within a necessary limit or frame is increasing the number of indicated relations between his specifications, and why such thoroughness of composition is particularly important to the novelist who feels limits to the details he can or may supply.

The later James felt that the design which draws the greatest possible number of connections best gains the impression of a "world," and James had found his own key to drawing a maximum number of relations between his details when he had begun to organize Roderick Hudson around the activity of Rowland Mallet's consciousness. This maneuver had been discovered far more effective for treating the

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25 Art of Novel, p. 9. See the passage quoted on pages 60 above in my text.
chosen subject of Roderick than was another—"the law of mere elimination." Besides pointing out the presence of the two contradictory methods in Roderick, the first preface suggests why one of them is the surer means to the goal of all fiction. Too, the preface presents the younger James of 1875 as sharply aware that his own ability to document was limited and that any novelist reaches a point where he must somehow compose for an effect of more notation than he actually can supply, but not yet fully aware that the success of composing around Rowland's consciousness had an immense significance for the problem of making a confined picture seem fully to "treat" or to "represent" its subject.

The sequences of later volumes in the Edition expands these points already implied in the first preface. The rest of the Edition similarly regards James's growth between 1875 and 1907 as the achievement of a firmer grasp of the full significance of one of the means James hit upon in Roderick. The New York Edition looks at James's career as his confirmation in the belief that utmost composition is unequivocally the novelist's true "resource," that increasing relationships to the maximum possible point is his crucial means for inclusiveness and greatest vraisemblance to the quality of direct experience. Because of this assurance, James in 1907 views his lifelong limitations in knowledge of the details of many or even of central scenes of human experience as no finally insuperable obstacle to his representing the human comedy.

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Art of Novel, p. 277.
II

The New York Edition is ordered to demonstrate the nature of James's artistic "case."

James's critical essays on Balzac, as well as his other criticism, show what was involved for him in uncovering an artistic "case." For example, James does not argue either for or against Balzac's particular analysis of society. Balzac's convictions and opinions James takes as the "terms" of Balzac's "experiment," or as the artist's "operative condition." In general, James's critical essays try to identify what have been the major "conditions" or the "postulates" of the artist in question, and try to focus the relation of these conditions to the qualities of the artist's production.

27 "Honoré de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, p. 41.

28 See James's 1888 essay on "Guy de Maupassant," Art of Fiction, pp. 72-73, for his most detailed discussion of the critical method of identifying a writer's "case": "To make clear to ourselves the premises of the author . . . --those to which he is committed by the very nature of his mind. . . ."

This critical method probably resulted from James's rather divided responses to the "new criticism" of his day. On the one hand, he was influenced by, and welcomed, the exhaustiveness or the particularity and high seriousness of a "new" line of French critics. On the other hand, he felt acutely that a critical theory could get in the way of a critical sense. The latter should try, as the artist tries, to record a vivid personal impression--in the form of a "portrait" of the work of art. That is to say, James's critical method of identifying a "case" is significantly different from Taine's method, though it borrows somewhat from Taine's procedure. As Rene Wellek summarizes, "Taine's theory seems to him 'decidedly a failure,' even though he admits that 'a group of works is more or less the product of a situation.'" ("Henry James's Literary Theory and Criticism," American Literature, XXX [November, 1958], 297).
For James, the fruitful and interesting critical points about an artist concern (1) what opinions, aims, temperament and "postulates"—all of which are "given" in the sense that criticism cannot alter them—underlay a certain product and its methods. (2) Precisely to

James's 1871 review of Taine's History of English Literature, from which Wellak quotes, makes clear that Sainte-Beuve's practice was more the model for what James meant by identifying an artistic "case" than was Taine's:

M. Taine is fairly well known by this time as a man with a method, the apostle of a theory... His three main factors—they have lately been reiterated to satiety—are the race, the medium, and the time. Between them they shape the phenomena of history... M. Taine's originality is not in his holding of these principles, but in his lively disposition to apply them... No real observer but perceives that a group of works is more or less the product of a 'situation,' and that as he himself is forever conscious of the attrition of infinite waves of circumstance, so the cause to which, by genius as by "fate," he contributes, is a larger deposit in a more general current. Observers differ, first, as to whether there are elements in the deposit which cannot be found in the current; second, as to the variety and complexity of the elements: maintaining, on the one side, that fairly to enumerate them and establish their mutual relations the vision of science is as yet too dim; and, on the other, that a complete analysis is at last decently possible, and with it a complete explanation. M. Taine is an observer of the latter class;... He pays in his Preface a handsome tribute to the great service rendered by Sainte-Beuve to the new criticism. Now Sainte-Beuve is, to our sense, the better apostle of the two. In purpose the least doctrinal of critics, it was by his very horror of dogmas, moulds and formulas, that he so effectively contributed to the science of literary interpretation. The truly devout patience with which he kept his final conclusion in abeyance until after an exhaustive survey of the facts... is his living testimony to the importance of the facts... His only method was fairly to dissolve his attention in the sea of circumstance surrounding the object of his study, and we cannot but think his frank provisional empiricism more truly scientific than M. Taine's premature philosophy ("Taine's English Literature," Atlantic Monthly, April 1872. Reprinted in Literary Reviews and Essays, ed. A. Mordell [New York: Twayne, 1957], pp. 63-65).

what extent that product's virtues and limitations each derive from
the interplay between the given "terms" or conditions. Examining an
artistic "case" is focusing these critical points. (It should be
emphasized that evaluation is not precluded even though the
"conditions" identified are looked upon as "given." For instance, when
James presents Balzac's "case," he tries to relate Balzac's "duality"
to the qualities and the worth of his fiction.) A criticism of James's
own oeuvre, the New York Edition both identifies the unalterable
major terms of James's experiment--his "general operative condition"--
and relates the interplay between these given terms to the qualities
of his fiction.

Opening the first preface by speaking of the purpose of all
the prefaces to come, James summarizes in the following way the
purpose of the Edition itself, and of its design:

The art of representation bristles with questions the very
terms of which are difficult to apply and to appreciate;
but . . . the practice of it, with experience, . . . spread[s]
around us in a widening, not in a narrowing circle. Therefore
it is that experience has to organise . . . some system of
observation. . . . We see it as pausing from time to time . . .
to measure, for guidance, as many aspects and distances as
possible, as many steps taken and obstacles mastered . . .
nothing is superfluous in such a survey. . . . This is why,
as one looks back, the private history of any sincere work,
however modest its pretensions, looms with its own completeness
in the rich, ambiguous aesthetic air, and seems at once to
borrow a dignity and to mark, so to say, a station. This is
why, reading over, for revision, correction and republication
the volumes here in hand I find myself . . . in presence of
some such recording scroll . . . --from which the "private"
character, moreover, quite insists on dropping out. These
notes represent, over a considerable course, the continuity
of an artist's endeavour, the growth of his whole operative
consciousness and, best of all, perhaps, their own tendency
to multiply. . . . Addicted to "stories" and inclined to
In order that its prefaces can make this kind of "survey" upon a "system of observation," the edition has to order its works according to James's estimate of how certain "obstacles" conjoined with a certain stable aim to produce the "growth" of a more intense form of one kind of artistic consciousness. ("Continuity" and "growth" are equally stressed by James's statement. Both are related to an "operative" awareness of "obstacles" to a stable endeavour or goal.) The order of the New York Edition makes clear that, generally, James's "operative condition" was his awareness that most of the major facets of his situation potentially hindered another such facet—his aim to "represent." By his selection and arrangement of the definitive edition, as by its prefaces, James revealed this "operative" consciousness of obstacles and what general habits of approach to material he had grown as a result. The Edition presents his artistic "case."

According to this presentation, interplay between the following four terms or conditions is the source of James's "operative consciousness" that he faced obstacles and of the habits he grew to master these obstacles:

(1) his definition of fiction as "representation" in the sense that Balzac's fiction exemplifies.

This first condition is James's ambition to place before his readers a "confined picture" which nevertheless creates the effect or illusion of offering a completely constituted world

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30 *Art of Novel*, pp. 3-4. (The italics are mine.)
and an interpretation of the full scope of contemporary life. 

(The preface to Volume XVII states this aim as making the novel portray "an ampler comedy in human things." ) James wanted to exploit that nature of the novel medium which had been for him "The Lesson of Balzac."

(2) a command of detail which, especially when compared to the above aim, seems limited because the "appearances" James can provide are relatively few in number and perhaps peripheral in kind.

He could not command the amount of detail necessary for the Balzacian method; neither was he acquainted with what he felt to be the central "scene" of the American order, or with more than snatches of European "scenes," though he understood that his personal interpretation of the human comedy was a generally "American" one.

(3) his temperamentally addiction to pursuing the relationships between all the details in his experience. 

He was "imaginative"; he constantly composed and recomposed his experience. He was possessed of the conviction that "really, universally, relations stop nowhere." This kind of interest could be either an obstacle or an aid to the first mentioned condition: The artist's effort is essentially to "frame" relations, to stop them. If he is possessed by the sense of their actual complexity and infinitude, to obtain unity and

31 Art of Novel, p. 266.

32 Ibid., p. 5.
singleness of "tone" may be more difficult for him. On the other hand, his imagination could aid James's specific aim in the novel, for he felt Balzac had showed that characteristically the novel composed appearances for the effect of scope--the illusion of no elimination--and that this largeness of its "theater" was the novel's peculiar worth.

(4) His necessity, in writing for publication, to take account of two factors: that editors wanted fiction even briefer than the principle of artistic economy demanded, and that his American and English audiences shared few of his assumptions.

These facts controlled James's access to magazine publication especially, and especially after the 1880's; but to a lesser degree they always had influenced the publication of his work. A large gap always had existed between his own interests and the interests of the larger audience. About midway in his career, moreover, he lost even the audience that, roughly in the second decade of it (from 1875 to 1885), he seemed to have consolidated.

33 We may remember that in his 1902 essay on Balzac, James had named "breaks of 'tone,' the one unpardonable sin for the novelist" ("Honore de Balzac, 1902," Art of Fiction, pp. 29-30). This point is discussed on p. 22 of Chapter I above.

34 In an unfinished review of Lubbock's edition of James's Letters, a review which Howells was working on at the time of his death, Howells summarized: "In fact America was never kind to James. It was rude and harsh, unworthily and stupidly so . . . the nearest of his friends in Boston would say they liked him, but they could not bear his fiction; and from the people, conscious of culture, throughout New England, especially the women, he had sometimes outright insult . . . The case was not very different in England when he went to live there except that the popular rejection and contumely were neither so vicious nor so general. But a public grew up in England such as never grew up in America, and made England more like a home to him." Life in Letters of W. D. Howells, ed. M. Howells (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1928), II, 395-396.
Now came a marked constriction in James's access to his previous space and previous organs of publication. James's loss of his previous degree of popularity (though not of his prestige) began about 1886; throughout the 1890's he concentrated his effort on the drama and on shorter fictions of two kinds, either nouvelles for which there was little or no English-speaking audience, or "short stories" such as readers and editors did not expect. James's shortest fictions demanded the closest attention and yet had the effect of rapidity. As a result, his popularity was still more straightened, to the point that magazine publication, even of his intended "potboiler" stories, was very little open to him by the turn of the century. Thus, from about 1886 on, he frequently had to take account of spatial limits more brief than he felt artistically valuable. This fourth condition too, of course, was an obstacle to the first named one of desiring to produce fiction with scope.

James's awareness of the interplay between these four major terms is his general operative condition: a consciousness of certain "given" obstacles to a constant aim. He arranges the New York Edition to present this continuity of his case, and to present his growth, too, into a more thorough awareness of it. With the first volume of

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This constriction is not only attributable to the characteristics of James's fiction: As early as the first decades of the nineteenth century, the audience for periodicals began to be noticeably splintered among the barely literate and the literate. By the 1880's and 1890's, the steadily enlarging first group was exerting ever more influence on all organs of publication. Serialization of his fiction in magazines was not as easily open to a serious writer of the 1890's as it had been, for example, to Thackeray.
the Edition, he begins to present his awareness of obstacle and the habits of work resulting from this awareness. Probably he excluded from the Edition those of his competent fictions which could not so well as others be used to bring out his dominant problem of how to represent the human comedy when one's command of details is limited, when one's picture must be sharply confined, and when one is acutely aware of actual experience as unlimited relationships.

III

My hypothesis that James orders the New York Edition to present the "story" of his artistic "case" of course also involves the point that its arrangement is a special type such as James meant by "story."

A survey of all of the Edition's prefaces seems to show two dominant emphases in them: (1) that the subject or theme of a fiction is not identical with its raw material but rather with how this material has been treated, and (2) that James's process of

36 Persistently the prefaces argue that the significance or scope and importance of a novelist's themes cannot be simply estimated by looking solely at his kinds of material. While some themes are more "primary" than others, the range of areas from which the novel draws its specifications shows nothing about its scope. Similarly, the kind of detail shows nothing about the work's morality and its civic use: That the subject of a fiction depends on its treatment of its material perhaps is most roundly stated in the preface to Vol. IX, and the independence of a fiction's morality from the kind of material contributing to its "germ" is most thoroughly asserted in the prefaces to Vols. III and XI. At these points, James refutes critical charges that he "overtreats" trivial subjects when he uses material drawn from a narrow sector of actuality--such as the situation in some London
creating a "story" is a particular kind of procedure with a "germ." Consistently the prefaces spend a good portion of their space to define how James's fictions originate or what he means by a "germ," and then try to indicate what were some of the steps in the growth of a fiction from its "germ." Always, James insists, his germ or seed is an essential "idea" rather than a piece of raw material. Although suggested by life, the "germ" from the beginning is quite distinct from life. It already is an interpretation.

After each preface has identified, so far as possible, the seeds of the fictions in its volume, it outlines some portion of James's process of making a "story" from the germs. Having named the drawing rooms—and that his fiction has less moral significance when it uses such material as the involvement of a child in varieties of adult hypocrisy and promiscuity. Nevertheless, everywhere the prefaces uphold the premises that great fiction presents "primary" themes or an interpretation of experience which is inclusive and universal, applying to many areas, and that great fiction speaks to moral awareness.

37 Art of Novel, pp. 119-124; 98; 109; 42; 79. In "Robert Louis Stevenson, 1894," Notes on Novelists, pp. 15-16, James significantly uses the word "idea" for his own type of germ, and points out that Stevenson did not so intellectualize his germs: I remember no instance of his expressing a subject, as one may say, as a subject—hinting at what novelists mainly know... as the determinant thing in it, the idea out of which it springs. The form, the envelope, is there with him, headforemost, as the idea; titles, names, that is... He simply felt this, evidently, and it is always the one dumb sound, the... only unexpressed thing, in all his contagious candour.

(Though this essay is dated 1894 in its title, it first appeared in the North American Review, January 1900. See the Bibliography edited by Edel and Laurence [London: Hart-Davis, 1957], p. 152.)
germ equips a reader of the preface to assess the second kind of
information in the light of "the thing, in the case, to have been
done." Clearly a "story" for James is an unfolding of a germ idea.

The prefaces several times define, by context, the word
"story." One usage in the prefaces explicitly applies to all of
James's work, whether novels, nouvelles or still shorter fictions:
Story "as such" is "overwhelmingly the prime and precious thing" in
any fiction. Again, James says that the love of "a story as a
story!" is the love to evoke "alarm and suspense and surprise and
relief" in the reader--to practice all means for gaining the reader's
thorough exercise of his "need and love of wondering." In these
contexts in the prefaces to Volume XVII and to Volume XXI (The
Ambassadors), James is using "story" for movement and succession--
for "steps." Here "story" is the writer's riveting of a reader's
attention by the sequences of the fiction; it is his emphatic use of
the phenomenon of sheer change. In James's view, that a reader of
fiction have the sense of movement is more essential than that he be
presented with any one direction of movement or with a succession

38 Art of Novel, p. 79.

39 His prefaces constantly relate his techniques of treatment
to the particular nature of the germ. They take this means to imply
his own assessment of the relative success of each fiction.

40 Art of Novel, pp. 314-315. But it is interesting that, as
Ray B. West, Jr. notes, "one of the earliest—if not the earliest--
uses of the term 'story' in the title of a work in English was by
Henry James in Daisy Miller: A Study; And Other Stories, published in
1883." (West, The Short Story in America [Henry Regnery Co., 1952],
p. 314)

41 Art of Novel, pp. 252-253; 314-315.
of external incident. Story "as such" and as the "prime" aspect of any fiction is pure succession, or the creation in a reader of strong responses to sequence--"alarm and suspense and surprise and relief." This succession may be sometimes of external events, yet equally of internal states of the characters.

We can readily see why James preferred for "the prime and precious thing" in any fiction the term "story" to the term "plot." While he can make "story" refer to pure movement or to "steps" and sequence, the term "plot" implies a particular direction of movement, a specific shape of the steps. Moreover, as popularly used the term "plot" usually means a specific shape of only external incident. In his 1888 essay on Guy De Maupassant, James remarked that Une Vie "is especially to be recommended to those who are interested in the question of what constitutes a 'story,' offering as it does the most definite sequences at the same time that it has nothing that corresponds to the usual idea of a plot, and closing with an implication that finds us prepared."

42 "Guy De Maupassant," Art of Fiction, p. 92. James expressed the fact that popular usage restricted the terms "plot" and "story" to external incident by frequently placing quotation marks around these words. For example, in an 1866 review the twenty-two year old James had noted that the plot . . . although it can hardly be called very skilful on the writer's part or very absorbing on the reader's, is yet decently interesting, as plots go, and may readily suffice to the entertainment of those jolly barbarians of taste who read novels only for what they call the "story." "Marian Rooke" has an abundance—a superabundance—of story, a vast deal of incident. . . . ("H. D. Sedley's 'Marian Rooke,'" Notes and Reviews [Dunster House, Cambridge, Mass.: 1921], p. 160).

The mature James thought that great fiction should meet readers' demand for the excitement of sheer change. The love of "'a story as a story!'" or of "story as such" he felt was central to any fiction. But he
A second usage of "story" by James's prefaces implies a type of succession rather than solely the fact of "definite sequences": "Story" is also such steps as will make an ever clearer demonstration of a germ. In this sense "story" is whatever sequence the central interpretation logically implicates. It is the "right" kind of sequence, the succession that will make ever clearer the germ. For James, successful fictions, long or short, were expansions of their germs to the point of complete demonstration. At still other points in the prefaces, he speaks of "story" as drama and adventure, while pointing out that adventures essentially are conversions and that the greatest of conversions may be effected within someone's consciousness. Altogether, the two most significant features of James's usages of "story" are (1) that he applies it to internal just as much as to external movement, and (2) that he connects it with an unusual degree of unity in the fiction. For him, the "steps" of a

equally felt that identifying "story-interest" with "plot" in the usual sense of the word or with a chain of external incident was a stupidity not to be catered to.

In the course of denying that the "plot" and the "story" of popular usage are prime in fiction, while nevertheless affirming that sequence or succession "as such" is prime, James does not encourage a false distinction between Action and character: He agrees with Aristotle that Action or movement is of the essence. But he believes that centrally fiction employs movement to express a "germ," which is the writer's interpretation of a relationship between character and incident or of the qualities of consciousness behind a situation between characters. Consequently, for James the Action or "story" or sequences are always the movement of fusions of event and characterization. (See Art of Novel, p. 71.)

43 Art of Novel, pp. 311; 313-315.

44 Ibid., pp. 257-258; 286; 56.
story sequence each equally derive from a central idea, the germ of the fiction. Not only are the steps of the sequential movement equally influenced by the germ interpretation, but each must be, for a successful "story," logically necessitated by this central seed. The steps making a genuine "story" each equally imply the same germ, because they are related to it in the manner of the proof of a proposition in logic. We may summarize that the unfolding process

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That art concerns itself to render the world of appearances; that these appearances exist only in the consciousness, indeed are the content of the consciousness, of human observers; that the world of art, therefore, is a beautiful representation of the appearances present to a particular consciousness under particular conditions; and the novelist's overriding task is, consequently, to exhibit in the concrete, with the greatest possible completeness and consistency... the particular world of appearances accessible to a particular consciousness under the specific conditions created for it by the novelist: these are the elements of James's theory of art... If we turn our attention from the reflector to the reflected, a fresh view of James's late method presents itself, ... the particular reflection, or appearance, of the real that the given consciousness can offer bears the mark of its limiting conditions or determinants. ...

The last intricacy of James's theory of the fictive art is his doctrine of "internal relations"... The "painter" must create a world in which nothing shall "happen" but by an ineluctable necessity: ineluctable in the sense that all that "follows" was already present in the conditions laid down at the beginning, so that the "story" is in the nature of an unfolding, an exfoliation, of all that was from the beginning "involved in" the données... It follows that the necessity of the action can never be merely asserted but must always be exhibited. ... Every part of the action, that is, must always be shown to belong "intrinsically" to "the given case"; and shown to belong thus intrinsically by the most exact rendering of the "given" conditions; so that it may be evident to all that nothing can happen as a consequence of those conditions but what does in fact happen. The deliberate extinction of all alternatives, however desolating in life, is the vital principle
of "story" is making progressively more evident a fiction's often complex point of unity.

At several places in the prefaces, James calls attention to his application of the word "story" to the whole of the New York Edition. He frequently says that the re-seeing of his works which makes possible the building of the Edition is for him the equivalent of a "story"; In the first preface, the Edition is "a thrilling tale" and a "whole unfolding" of the growth of his operative consciousness. The preface to Volume XVIII calls a "story" his process of writing the very brief fiction titled "The Story in It." Like that fiction itself, looking back on that process of its production is said to be an "undertaking" to "get a little closer to . . . a subject." "The Story in It" unfolds a germ interpretation of what constitutes a story and an adventure; here a story has been made of the question of what is a story. The process of getting closer to or unfolding that definition of a story now is a story to the writer; and the entire labour of the storyteller, in all his productions, "an inveterate romance." In his preface to The Ambassadors, James

of every work of art that has been, in any strict sense, achieved. Wherever there is a "leak" there is failure. See also Beach, Method, pp. 23; 26; 48. Beach thinks that this "logic of illumination" is a "sacrifice of the ideal of variety to the ideal of consistency." But James's "foreshortening" aims to avoid just such a sacrifice.

46
Art of Novel, p. 4.

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48
Ibid., pp. 286-287.
states that "the story of one's story itself" has come to seem to him, finally, a more "objective" and more "dramatic imbroglio" than the one the novel presents.

By a so deliberate and so marked juxtaposition of two usages of the term "story"—one for the exfoliating type of sequence in his fictions; the other for the process of re-seeing the fictions and making the Edition—James may have meant attentive readers of his prefaces to understand that his Edition presents them with another unfolding of a germ interpretation.

If "story" means a type of sequential movement which in effect performs logical demonstration of a central idea, and if the Edition presents the "story" of James's storywriting, the arrangement of the Edition will present through the sequence of its fundamental units, its volumes, a progressively more forceful and more inclusive demonstration of a germ equally inherent in each unit. That is to say, each step of the Edition's series has been ordered so that the sequence brings out more and more effectively a central interpretation of James's artistic "case." Each unit of the Edition better shows the essential nature of that case.

My hypothesis is that James ordered his New York Edition to display with increasing clarity and force his "case" as a novelist: the Edition's series of fictions is the exfoliation of a single interpretation of what was James's operative consciousness, and of the

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Art of Novel, pp. 313; 319.
sources of this awareness. The movement from volume to volume exfoliates the relationship between the nature of James's productions and his general operative condition or his constant awareness of four major "terms" of his experiment. These terms, again, are: his restricted access to details of the central scene in American life and to many details of both American scenes and European; his excess of imagination; his acceptance of a necessity to work within even briefer space than artistic economy dictated and to attempt to capture the attention of a basically inattentive audience; finally, his ambition to "represent" the scope of contemporary experience.

The reader of the New York Edition from beginning to end is meant to be introduced ever more fully and emphatically to a single endeavor. He meets ever more clearly the same operative awareness of the same obstacles, or he meets solutions distinguishable from one another and increasingly effective but generally similar. As a "romance" of James's labor and the "story" of his "case," the Edition builds an architecture whose intricacy does not derive from a "love of

50 The sequences of fictions within volumes plus the sequences from one group of volumes to another group also are of this unfolding or "story" kind.

51 Such an hypothesis sees the Edition as enforcing James's statement that the "house of fiction" contains an infinite number of windows and that the view from these windows depends on both the eyes at them and the shape of the apertures. (See Art of Novel, pp. 45-46.) In other words, I regard the Edition as celebrative of what James called the "elasticity" of fiction—a genre especially shaped by the individual artist's shade of sensibility.
mystification" so much as from the degree to which James insists on unifying his own experience and his critical concepts.

L. Edel, "The Architecture . . .," NEQ, XXIV, 177: This broadly sketched, is the well dissimulated architecture of the New York Edition, deriving its inspiration from Balzac and its subtlety from James's own love of patterns and figures, secrecy and "mystification." Balzac openly outlined his plan and gave titles to the sections of the Comédie Humaine; James created an unlabelled but artfully arranged edition, leaving it to the reader to ferret out his figures in the carpet.
CHAPTER IV

THE OPERATIVE HABITS OF INDICTION AND IRONY:

VOLUMES I - II OF THE NEW YORK EDITION

The hypothesis that the design of the New York Edition exfoliates both James's unchanging endeavor and, at the same time, the "growth" of this single operative consciousness involves the following corollary: that the units of the Edition represent degrees of application of the same general means for overcoming his obstacles. According to this corollary, the Edition is not built to trace in chronological terms precisely what was the course of James's artistic development, nor to present his "growth" as a replacement of imperfect techniques with entirely new ones. Rather, the hypothesis is that the design of the Edition makes stand out the continuity of James's endeavor "over a considerable course" simultaneously with his "growth" into fuller awareness of his major conditions, and hence into a more thorough and more effective exercise of the operative habits occasioned by that awareness.

James's operative consciousness was that three of his major conditions posed obstacles (which must be accepted but whose potentially

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1Art of Novel, p. 4.
adverse effects might be negated) to his desire to "represent" in Balzac's sense. This awareness resulted in two operative habits or procedures which all the fictions of the Edition apply, but with differing degrees of thoroughness and effectiveness. Both operative habits result from, and are equally a sign of, James's awareness of his four "terms" or conditions; but the two habits may profitably be differentiated because they embody James's awareness of his "terms," his "case," as seen from a different angle:

(1) His ambition always to place the reader in the presence of "appearances" and by this means to interpret the scope of contemporary experience even though his command of specifications was restricted in several ways, produced the method of having to "double the value" of his details by working through an individual consciousness of them and so "representing," in the end, something rather different from those appearances themselves. I shall call this operative habit that of "indirection." It is "indirect" because the true subject is approached by using the appearances--to someone--of something quite different from it. The final subject is not these appearances, relatively few and peripheral kinds of specification as they often are. The final subject inheres in the way the details are apprehended--in the quality of the consciousness which is implied by means of the details.

(2) The intention to "represent" the human comedy, combined with access to relatively few details and with an imagination strong enough to seek the extremes of potentiality in these items of observation, again produced a kind of approach to material which I shall call, after James's own practice, "irony." This second operative habit requires further explication.
Each fiction of the Edition reveals James working to heighten the viewer's perception of a potential for better; each emphasizes contrast of a worse to a better, and each projects such contrast by thoroughly implicit means. James always stresses the contrasting potential of the situations he presents; he thus implies antitheses of worth. He handles any actuality so that a potential of it, opposed in quality, becomes evident. This constant procedure I shall term working for "irony," and it is observable in James's choice to employ only certain kinds of consciousness—to focus always on "the particular attaching case." The central personage of James's fictions is always an "interesting" or "eminent" case, either because he is particularly "fine," i.e., exhibits an unusual capacity for awareness, or because he is an exception to some very widespread phenomenon, or for both of these reasons.

For example, in "the chronicle of Lady Barb," as James's preface calls one of his stories in Volume XIV, he projects a "possible instance" in order to make a "speculative study" of it. None of the characters of this nouvelle has a particularly "fine" awareness; the personages are near average in the nature and the degree of their qualities. But Lady Barb and her American husband, Jackson Lemmon, are especially "interesting" cases for another reason:

It was just the observed rarity of the case that prompted me to put it to the imaginative test. Any case so unlikely to happen—taking it for at all conceivable, could only be worth attention when it should, once in a blue moon, occur. There was nothing, meanwhile, in truth, to "go by": we had

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2 Art of Novel, p. 328.

3 Ibid., p. 204.
seen the American girl "of position" absorbed into the European social system, but we had only seen young foreign candidates for places as cooks and housemaids absorbed into the American. The more one viewed the possible instance, accordingly, the more it appealed to speculative study; so that, failing all valid testimony, one had studiously, as it were, to forge the very documents. 4

The rarity of an apparent exception to a widespread phenomenon is "worth attention" when it is usable in exploring the reasons for the generality which apparently it contradicts. Forging the documents of a rarity—a "possible instance"—can yield a "study" of the actual, and particularly a study of whether the causes of the actual are all similar in quality or indicate a better potential.

Those of James's central characters who are not "possible instances" are "fine" cases or sometimes are "possible other cases."

(Most of his central characters belong to these last two groups.)

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Art of Novel, p. 204.

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"Lady Barbarina" studies the reasons for the gradual alienation of American husband and English wife, despite the couple's intention to disregard conflicts of manners. Their domicile in America after their marriage is a rarity, an imagined exception. The study of this "possible instance" brings out the reasons that European women of some social position generally are not absorbed into the American system. But the located causes are of contradictory quality: The nouvelle contrasts Lady Barb's desire to let differences in manners make no difference to her marriage, to her utter failure in this respect because she has been "formed" by a social order which has given her no flexibility in modes of personal communication. It also contrasts Jackson Lemmon's original attraction to Lady Barb because she is so "formed" by her English society to Jackson's Americanism, including an adaptability and a flexibility in personal relations. "Lady Barbarina" thus shows that even in a situation seeming to exhibit the complete triumph of conflicts of manners over apprehension of persons a different potential inheres. A later fiction making a similar study of a "possible instance" is "Julia Bride" in Volume XVII.
The preface to Volume XV uses the phrase "applied irony" for James's fictions employing the "troubled artistic consciousness," which he calls a "possible other case":

my postulates, my animating presences, were all, to their great enrichment, their intensification of value, ironic; the strength of applied irony being surely in the sincerities, the lucidities, the utilities that stand behind it. When it's not a campaign, of a sort, on behalf of something better (better than the provoking object) that . . . might be, it's not worth speaking of. But this is exactly what we mean by operative irony. It implies and projects the possible other case, the case rich and edifying where the actuality is pretentious and vain. So it plays the lamp; . . . . 6

The "fine" case differs from the "possible other case" only in that the latter is handled as admittedly a violation of probability. That is, the fiction spends very little effort to make such cases seem likely to occur. The presentation of the "possible other case" consults mainly how best to project something "better than the provoking object" or attends mainly to "the sincerities . . . that stand behind" the ironic "campaign"; whereas in the presentation of "fine" cases like Hyacinth Robinson and Fleda Vetch and Mildred Theale and Lambert Strether, James also consults verisimilitude, which he summarizes as the problem of keeping the consciousness both exceptionally wide or acute and plausibly enough "bewildered" for an imbroglio to result.

When he employs "possible other cases," James opposes them as "the something better . . . that blessedly, as is assumed, might

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6 Art of Novel, p. 222.
7 Ibid., p. 69.
be" --to a worse actuality: The qualities of a Neil Paraday are revealed through a situation which is probable and is of contrasting quality to Paraday's attributes. James also handles his "fine" cases so as to contrast an actuality to the better potential in it. And his speculative study of a "possible instance" such as Lady Barb's too may be said to plead "on behalf of the something better" by locating contrasts of worth among the causes of a widespread phenomenon.

His reply to the objection that his "possible other" cases violate probability touches on the fundamental aim of all of his fiction to encourage the active play of the reader's evaluative powers, and on the fact that to his vision the actual always is opportunity for evaluative activity--is always suggestive, thus, of "the something better":

What one would accordingly do is to . . . create the record, in default of any other enjoyment of it; to imagine, in a word, the honourable, the producible case. What better example than this of the high and helpful public and, as it were, civic use of the imagination?--a faculty for the possible fine employments of which in the interest of morality my esteem grows every hour I live. How can one consent to make a picture of the preponderant futilities and vulgarities and miseries of life without the impulse to exhibit as well from time to time, in its place, some fine example of the reaction, the opposition or the escape? . . . I was inevitably committed, always, to the superior case; so that if this is what you reprehensively mean, that I have been thus beguiled into citing celebrities without analogues and painting portraits without models . . . I carry my guilt lightly and have really in face of each perpetrated licence scarce patience to defend myself. 9

8 *Art of Novel*, p. 222.

This motive and vision underlies James's focus, in all of his fiction, on the "particular attaching" consciousness, whether the case is attaching and eminent because it is a "possible instance," because it is a possible "other" case which is improbably "honourable," or because it is an especially "fine" yet plausibly bewildered case. The motive and vision are James's second operative habit, which I shall call "irony."

I adopt the term "irony" for James's constant procedure of handling the actual in various ways so as to stress the existence of its contrasting better potential, because James himself uses "applied irony" and "operative irony" for "a campaign, of a sort, on behalf of the something better (better than the obnoxious, the provoking object) that blessedly, as is assumed, might be." As used henceforth throughout my discussion, "irony" does not mean an artistic phenomenon so ubiquitous as "tension" or balance between parts of a unified whole. Nor does it mean controlled ambiguity or paradox. By James's general operative habit of "irony," I shall mean always (a) his many means for emphasizing antitheses of worth, and equally (b) his means for only implying these antitheses in the course of placing before the reader the components of an actuality.

The two habits of irony and of indirection are coordinate results of James's operative consciousness. They are both signs of his awareness of his four major conditions, for they both result from his endeavor to represent an "ampler comedy in human things" despite a

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10 Art of Novel, p. 222.
situation of possessing much imagination yet what he felt to be a command of details relatively few in comparison with his ambition. Although each operative habit points to James's "case," to differentiate the two habits is profitable because each produces subordinate techniques which James often distinguished. His prefaces frequently mark off his means for focusing the fiction inside consciousness and for centering it on a quality of awareness (means for applying what I have called the habit of "indirection") from still other of his decisions to select a consciousness which is "eminent" or "interesting" (applying what I have called the habit of "irony"). For instance, the final preface of the Edition, that to The Golden Bowl, summarizes that James "constantly inclined to the idea of the particular attaching case plus some near individual view of it."

The fictions of the New York Edition make a successively more thorough application of both operative habits: The entire series shows a steady intensification of the procedure or working indirectly by means of the details contained in some consciousness, and so unifying the fiction around a quality of awareness. Too, this increasing exercise of indirection clearly is made possible by various subordinate techniques, some of which are means for more completely exercising irony.

The appearance of changing subordinate means for intensifying the application of the two stable operative habits of indirection and

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Art of Novel, p. 328.
irony is that "growth" of his constant endeavor, or of the single artistic consciousness which is exfoliated by the sequences of the New York Edition.

II

Roderick Hudson (Volume I of the Edition) and The American (Volume II) immediately reveal that their young author clearly conceives the nature of his raw material; for, despite the unrecognized romanticism of the second novel and despite the use of incompatible means by the first, neither novel mistakes American reactions to certain European details for material by which to render either an European "scene" or a contrast of Europe to America. The final subject of these novels is the American sensibility of "Europe" and the American order which accounts for that sensibility. James's accent is steady, in Roderick Hudson and The American, on the Americanism of his central characters and on what seems to them new, unfamiliar or "European" about the stage they walk on. Putting this point another way, both novels are "international" not in the sense that they aim to compare Europe with America, but only in the sense that they employ the American apprehension of such a contrast in order to represent, finally, the

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James's clarity about the nature of his material is surely evidenced by the fact that he keeps the actions of these two novels always focused on central American individuals: The climax of Newman's story does not come with his final knowledge of the Bellegardes, but with his unique way of dealing with that knowledge.
American milieu.

The material of these novels, their specifications, is the differences from America which impress Americans in Europe. But the American sensibility of "Europe" may be portrayed for several ends, and Roderick Hudson and The American show that James has selected one of these possibilities: The purpose may be to delimit that sensibility, to stress the differences of "Europe" from an actuality. The procedure required for this purpose is juxtaposition of the American view of some European details and personages to those same details as seen by other than American eyes and as more than occasions for American response. This kind of juxtaposition may be seen in "The Madonna of the Future" (1873) and, beginning with "A Passionate Pilgrim" (1871), in many of James's earlier stories not finally included in the New York Edition. However, as early as "Travelling Companions" (1870), James had tried another procedure and purpose: through American reaction to "Europe," to stress the nature of some generally American traits and the sources of these traits in general American conditions. With Roderick Hudson, he attempted for the first time a large scale application of the second procedure. In Roderick and in his next novel, The American, James tried to suggest nothing less than the total American order, by the very indirect route of rendering what certain kinds of American individuals feel to be "Europe."

James was aware that to define America, or any subject, solely by what it is not—by its negatives—is perilous. He knew

13 He always was conscious that taking Europe and America simply as contraries is very different from perceiving that each requires
very well that itemizing those features of the European order which America lacks, as he did in a famous passage of his *Hawthorne* (1870), is only to clear the way for real definition of American conditions by first emphasizing the fact of utter difference. In *Hawthorne*, James compiled a list of American negatives with the view of stressing the real problem of definition: the question of what occupies their place for an American novelist. He says that only understanding what Hawthorne employs in place of

no state, in the European sense of the word. . . . No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor personages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; not great Universities nor public schools. . . ; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class--no Epsom or Ascot!

will show the Americanism of his production. In a similar way, *Roderick Hudson* and *The American* define America by providing both separate definition. Many of his fictions satirize the former process. The most famous of these is "Daisy Miller," together with its companion pieces "Pandora" and "An International Episode." In "Daisy Miller," the object of satire is Winterbourne's vision of America or of Daisy as the simple contrary of the Europe he already knows; Winterbourne is inaccessible, for this reason, to genuinely new experience.


Some such list as that might be drawn up of the absent things in American life--especially in the American life of forty years ago, the effect of which, upon an English or a French imagination, would probably . . . be appalling. . . . The American knows that a good deal remains. . . .

In James's opinion, what Hawthorne employed in place of these negatives defines not only the Americanism of his work, but also its quality as art and its weakness as fiction. See James's letter of Jan. 31, 1880, to Howells on Howells's review of *Hawthorne*:

in saying that . . . "we have simply the whole of human life left" you beg (to my sense) the question. I should say we had just so much less of it as these same "paraphenalia" represent. . . . I shall feel refuted only when we have produced . . . a gentleman who strikes me as a novelist--as belonging to the company of Balzac and Thackeray. . . . What is your Cornhill novel about? I am to precede it with a poorish story in three numbers--a tale purely American, the writing of which made me feel acutely the want of "paraphenalia" (*Letters*, I, 72-73).
American negatives and positives. But they provide this combination quite indirectly—by using a selection of European details which certain kinds of American characters meet and apprehend to be unfamiliar: What such Americans respond to as "Europe" performs the negative definition, or suggests what America has no counterpart to. How they respond to the European details, the manner of their apprehension of the details, performs the positive definition of America, or suggests what the American order substitutes.

This likeness of the two novels is but underlined by the superficial differences between their heroes' relations to "Europe." The climax of Newman's story is his "turning away" from revenge on something "European" in indifference to or boredom with it; while the climax of Roderick's is the desperation of his unappeased desire for something "European" and inaccessible to him. Yet both heroes have been initiated into what they discern America totally lacks. That is to say, instead of seeing what they meet as the contrary of some American counterpart, they have felt that it has no corresponding feature in American life. Too, the initiations of the heroes are both emphasized to be limited ones, despite the difference between Roderick's appetite quickly to amend and Newman's slightly more cautious stress on his ignorance.

Still another similarity of Roderick Hudson and The American corroborates that their purpose is to suggest the American order by the

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These statements hold equally for Rowland Mallett, the true center of Roderick Hudson, if not technically its hero. For instance, Rowland learns to understand the Americans Roderick and Mary Garland, but he only feels "Italy" as something simply different—"a past"—from the American conditions behind the American response to Rome.
indirect route of rendering American sensibility of "Europe." In each
novel, James has selected by similar principles his central Americans.
The predominant traits of each are such as clearly result from key
situations within American life, or, to put the point another way, from
those roles which especially can reveal the emphasis and the qualities
of American culture. American entrepreneur, Christopher Newman is
ready to risk largely. American artist, Roderick Hudson's energies
are largely unchanneled and hence undisciplined; he has more ambition
than he has learned to control. American appreciator, and potential
American patron of the arts, Rowland Mallet has grown only half
measures of appreciation of the American milieu, of Europe, and of the
difficulty of the artist's task.

Representative American figures for this reason, the central
characters in addition are "interesting" American cases. They are not
average. Each embodies the most admirable of the personal results
possible from his American situation: Newman is strikingly accessible
to new experience and exhibits a self-reliance (almost in Emerson's
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sense) that keeps him from moral pettiness. Roderick displays the
finest possible result of his upbringing in a small New England town--
an immense appetite for exercise of his plastic sense, and a spontaneity

16 The preface to The American notes that Newman's awareness is
"quite sufficiently wide." His "degree of unawareness" of the forces
he engages with comes only from his situation of outsider. (See
Art of Novel, pp. 37; 22.) This is stressed in the novel by a contrast
of Newman to the Tristrams, who, embodiments only of the American
average, lack his appetite for the different and his eminent capacity
to accommodate it. For the Tristrams, the European order behind the
Bellegardes is designable only by the term "snobbery." The Tristrams'
"Europe" is but the contrary of what they already know--a repetition,
in effect, of the familiar.
of response to sensuous surfaces that any artist might envy. Rowland Mallet too is an eminent case who embodies the finest possible result of his American situation. He exhibits an unusual sense of responsibility to other individuals and an eminent capacity to search his own motives by this light. Rowland's conscience is extremely alert to judge his own treatment of others. Both Rowland and Roderick embody the best potentialities of the America of 1835-1875—Roderick by his artistic appetite and freshness, Rowland by a sense of responsibility keen to forward others' individuality and freedom.

At the same time, other traits of Roderick and Rowland and of Newman are disadvantageous results of their situations within the American order, and the actions of both novels hinge on these limitations and stress their cause. In this way, James is able to emphasize the mixture, in that order, of better and worse: Roderick has little control of his large appetite for the plastic. His artistic sense, though fresh, is grandiose rather than discriminating and sure. Moreover, his suicide fundamentally derives from his

17 Like The American, Roderick Hudson employs contrast between the central and subordinate American characters, in order to stress that Roderick is a non-average American case, even while his situation and his traits are key for understanding American conditions in general. It contrasts Roderick's response to "Italy" with his mother's reactions on the same stage. Son and mother are extreme results, one negative and the other comparatively fine, of "a state of civilisation [not] providing for 'art,'" i.e., of American Puritanism. (Art of Novel, p. 8) Although the contrast may seem carried almost to the point of caricature, both extremes are rather familiar American phenomena: the complete loss of ability to react to any stimulii, and an explosive readiness—overcharged through deprivation—to respond to all sensuous surfaces.

18 Ridden by "duty" of this type, Rowland is briefly contrasted in the novel to his forbears, whose conscience, alert to judge others, had been destructive of their individuality in the guise of feeling responsibility for them.
failure to fathom the relation between art and life—a task for which his American nurturing has more unfitted than equipped him. Rowland's role in the action is somewhat less pathetic than Roderick's, but it also is caused by and points to the disadvantages of his American role. Roderick Hudson makes clear that in America a Rowland Mallet can only have developed a dilettante's appreciation of art and have remained a passive observer of activities not stimulating his full resources. Eventually Rowland suffers from the perception that a merely partial understanding, a less than thoroughly active appreciation of Europe, of America, and of art, has caused him to commit what he had most wanted to avoid. His initial dilettantism had made him interfere unwisely in Roderick's life.

Besides accommodation of the new, the other keynote of Newman's character is "easiness" or assumption of a particular kind. Unlike the Tristrams, who assume that what they don't know doesn't exist, Newman assumes that the amount he doesn't know does not so much count as does his willingness to learn it. This trait reflects the situation of the American entrepreneur. Newman's past concentration on the American business world has taught him that willingness to apply his capacity to learn what is always shifting and always new is the main explanation of success. He has had the experience of conquering, in the new world of opportunity, through his eagerness to learn the unfamiliar and his accommodation of the different. But Newman fails in his quest of a Claire de Cinté partly because of his choice not to anticipate any failure. He assumes that difficulty is slight, that his willingness to be "open" and of itself resolve all
complexity. Both his initiation of the action and his issue out of it show this blend of assumption with accommodation. Newman thus is not a "romantic" characterization like the European figures in the novel. He is thoroughly verisimilar to the American situation projected behind him.

In sum, both novels select central characters from American situations key to understanding the American order, and characters whose predominant traits are the finest potentialities of their American conditions even though their lesser traits and the actions of the novels simultaneously stress that the same American conditions breed, too, much less ideal results. The central characters have been selected to forward Jamesian "irony," and thus to convey the range of American life.

But these novels always represent American life indirectly, that is, through the movements of American characters on an European stage. First, the characters' response to this stage as unfamiliar implies the terms in which America cannot be defined. (Both the strangeness the central characters welcome and the strangeness they reject equally serve to focus the problem of by what positives America can be defined.) Secondly, Roderick Hudson and The American supply the positive definition of America by composing selected European details in patterns that imply the mode of operation, the quality, of Rowland's and of Newman's consciousness. The European details used in these novels are highly selective, and specifications

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Art of Novel, pp. 36-38.
drawn from the American milieu are even fewer. The former details are selected by the principle that they all strike the central American characters as unfamiliar or new, and, in addition, each novel composes its few European details in the manner that an individual American awareness would order or relate them. They are composed to imply the quality of operation of that consciousness. Thus a quite different subject from the European specifications is indirectly rendered by their means.

Using American awarenesses of a non-American stage to represent so large a subject as American civilization requires the selection of central persons who can imply both advantages and limitations of American conditions generally. That is to say, the operative approach of "irony" is crucial to the success of the indirect method of representing the American order behind the American sensibility of "Europe." Through his two operative habits, James achieves some evocation of a very large subject, but without surveying the variety of its surface.

One must note, however, that James's degree of success in securing, in Roderick Hudson and The American, some illusion of an inclusive presentation of America derives partly from his grasp of key characteristics of the milieu. "Indirection" and "irony" cannot by any means be regarded as substitutes for such apprehension. These operative habits are aids to "rendering," in concrete terms whatever is James's vision of America, aids to presenting his vision in the manner of "representation" even though he does not command enough appearances to document the scenes of American life.
The New York Edition does not place Roderick Hudson and The American in their present order for chronological reasons alone. The chronology of James's composition of them is preserved because the present sequence better explicates what are James's operative habits, or his discovery of unique means to Balzac's end. The present sequence also stresses the especial importance for James of this discovery that he could render a large subject—represent with scope—if he composed selected details according to the general procedures I have called working by "indirection" and by "irony." This point will be discussed at length in the course of the next chapter. There we shall see that the New York Edition preserves in its first major unit (Volumes I-IX) the chronology of James's novels through 1899 in order to demonstrate something which has nothing to do with chronology. The sequence of the Edition through Volume IX shows that James's "growth" of two compositional methods for intensifying his stable habits of indirection and of irony—the techniques (1) of giving the fiction a "center of interest" and (2) of "scenic consistency"—enabled him to render themes increasingly larger than the range of areas from which he could draw material.
CHAPTER V

THE "GROWTH" OF A SINGLE "OPERATIVE CONSCIOUSNESS":

VOLUMES I - IX OF THE NEW YORK EDITION

I

In Volumes one through eight of the edition, James places chronologically his novels through 1889, because that sequence explains with increasing clearness two topics: (1) the fundamental operative habits by which he managed to render themes wider than his available range of documentation, and (2) through what subordinate techniques he was able to apply more and more consistently these operative habits.

This arrangement of his novels shows James steadily achieving enlargement of his subjects; they become more universal. If Roderick Hudson and The American portray one social order, The Portrait of a Lady portrays the "quality of consciousness" of a "particular engaging young woman" whose large capacity for life culminates in a choice to love. James manages in The Portrait to present a theme of wider human reference than those of his preceding two novels: the growth of selflessness out of broadened awareness of the world. The Princess

1 Art of Novel, pp. 42; 48.
Casamassima essays a theme of still more universality. Isabel Archer, of The Portrait, at length comes to confront, as her inheritance, the question of how to embrace life while rejecting the injustice and the evil inevitably involved in its opportunities. But from the beginning of The Princess Casamassima, the awareness of Hyacinth Robinson is of "exposure" to the totality of "the world"--to extremities of contrast between opportunity and limitation, the ideal and the sordid, beauty and misery. The Princess probes farther what had been Isabel's final question; it explores more of the perception that opportunity is inextricable from limitation and value from loss. The Princess shows such a mixture to exist everywhere on the scale of "the world," and to be inescapable even in aesthetic experience. Obviously this is a more inclusive theme than that of growth towards perceiving the mixture.

But The Tragic Muse, the fifth novel of this sequence (in Volumes VII and VIII, since The Princess occupies Volumes V and VI, and The Portrait, Volumes III and IV), essays what James called "the greatest" of the five or six "primary" themes available to the artist who paints human life: the necessary conflict between art and other goods of life. The subject of The Tragic Muse is not simply the world's attitude towards art and the artist, though this is one of the novel's subsidiary lines of interest. The theme of The Tragic Muse is the absence of a way to gain all: even the life dedicated to art "pays" for its gains. This theme is wider than even the "primary" one of The Princess, because it shows that the "mixed" quality of life, as

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Art of Novel, p. 79.
represented in *The Princess* is absolutely inescapable; not even the artist, supreme orderer though he be, can order his life for pure gain.

One thing the opening sequence of the New York Edition accents, then, is that chronologically through 1889 James chose "germs" which, having ever more universal reference, increasingly required his evocation of a wide range of human experience. Interpreting human experience ever more inclusively, these motives demanded from the novelist greater command of means to suggest variety--more effect of scope in his representation. The common observation that with *The Princess* and *The Tragic Muse* (as well as in *The Bostonians*, which is omitted from the New York Edition) James moved into a new phase of his career and attempted "social" novels reflects this fact that his fiction through 1889 moves towards larger canvases which seem packed with more various detail.

Somewhat less frequently observed is that although the motive of *The Portrait* requires less of the effect of variety than do the themes of the three novels James next wrote, the impression of variety is more crucial to *The Portrait* than it is to *Roderick Hudson* and *The American*. *The Portrait* must create some effect of a panorama of human experience being unrolled before its heroine. A reader must feel Isabel initiated into the sheer multifariousness of experience. Her climactic choice must be shown to arise from confrontation, at last, of the whole of life. This illusion, necessary to *The Portrait*, of a

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3 When Isabel Archer walks on the European stage, it has to seem wider than when Roderick or Newman is on it. The latter have to confront only details numerous enough to provide American consciousness material
variety of detail James attempts to gain partly by shifts in setting. The novel moves through four milieux: Albany; the English country house, Gardencourt; Paris; and Rome. More important, the shifts in setting are coordinated with the appearance of increasingly complex human beings; and the variety of their relations with Isabel contributes some impression of a range to her experience.

Although neither *The Princess* nor *The Tragic Muse* shifts setting as much as does *The Portrait*, these novels gain still more of a panoramic effect. *The Princess* achieves greater contrast between its London details. A further distance obtains between the Cockneyfied London park, the Muniment tenement, Christina's country house and her several London ones than had obtained in *The Portrait* between Albany and Gardencourt and Florence or Rome. Nevertheless the theme of *The Princess* demands even more illusion of panorama than can be effected by the device of sharp contrast between its presented details. The theme now requires that the scale of "the world" somehow be evoked.

By the time he wrote *The Princess* and *The Tragic Muse*, James commanded a larger range of European details. But increased acquaintance with more varied European appearances was not all that he needed for the expression of "primary" themes and the impression of to work with, and details carefully selected to suggest key American negatives. In these two novels, the European stage can be restricted to glimpses of certain scenes of European life. For instance, nothing would have been gained by taking the reader to Baden-Baden with Roderick. Concentration on the single Roman setting can simultaneously provide the Americans with material for their characteristic mode of perception and offer a type of complexity—a density of plastic appeal—that they perceive America to lack. Similarly, the selection of the one Bellegarde milieu (and of some pieces, also, of the tourist's Paris) is sufficient for James's purpose in *The American*. 
scope or coverage of many types of human situation. James knew that
his command of a greater variety of European impressions, and of some
of the relations of some European facts, continued to be that of an
outsider. Yet, as his preface to Volume XVIII of the New York Edition
underlines, The Princess and Tragic Muse belong in that small group of
his productions which ignores his greater confidence of access to the
relations between American conditions and American traits. The
sequence from The Portrait through Tragic Muse therefore reveals the
artist obliged to find some means to gain an effect genuinely panoramic
or deeply various by using the relations of merely some appearances of
a social order not completely fathomed. This need James successfully
met through increasing irony and obliquity.

The arrangement of the first eight volumes of the New York
Edition shows that approaching his material in the two general ways I
have named "irony" and "indirection" enabled James to gain the
illusion of scope, or steadily to enlarge his themes. The sequence of
novels, together with the preface comments on their relationships, show
that as certain données called forth increased operation of irony and
indirection, certain techniques were yielded for expressing more
universal themes, even though James's command of a range of documentation
did not correspondingly enlarge. For instance, both the order of the
novels and the prefatory remarks emphasize that the technique of giving
to the novel a "center of interest" was perfected for the first time in
The Portrait. The sequence and the prefaces show, too, that this
"center of interest" technique derived from handling the particular
donnée of The Portrait with a greater reliance on indirection and a
greater attention to irony than Roderick Hudson and The American had employed, and that the result was an effect of scope or the successful expression of the more primary and universal subject.

James means by a novel which achieves a "center of interest" one that has fused characterization and action to a particular degree: the nature of a consciousness, or the interior of a character, is the real subject of the novel; yet this subject has been expressed in terms of an external situation between characters and of a shaped movement of this situation--expressed in terms of an action. In such a novel, "interest," or the examination at depth of human motive, has been secured, while at the same time expression of this subject has gained the advantages of composition, for the subject is at the "center" of a genuine "architecture." The three prefaces to the opening three volumes of the New York Edition make clear the above definition of a novel with a "center of interest", and make clear that James first perfected the technique in The Portrait, after having moved towards it in Roderick Hudson and The American.

The preface to Roderick announces James's mature conviction that the "intensity" of the true "Dramatist" derives from his having a center, a "point of command of all the rest," or from a "principle of composition." This first preface also implies that although the James who wrote Roderick had grasped the necessity of organic unity, he also had tended to identify both drama and intensity with a mere "liveliness" of external movement. For example, the young James had

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4 Art of Novel, p. 15.
attempted to express Roderick's interior plight by objectifying it as vividly as possible—by using, that is, mainly Roderick's relation with Christina Light. But despite the contradiction in regarding drama both as unity and as event or lively objectivity, the young novelist had instinctively known that "the center of interest . . . is in Rowland Mallet's consciousness, and the drama is the very drama of that consciousness . . . its movement in the particular connexion . . . really being quite the stuff of one's thesis."  

5 Roderick, James's second novel, opens the New York Edition because it testifies that by 1875 James already was well on the road to a unique means of unifying incident and plot with the exploration of subjective states: he expressed Rowland's interior by the indirect means of using Rowland to mirror an action revolving around other characters. The fusion of action and exploration of consciousness is not complete in Roderick, however, because in 1875 James only partially grasped that his chain of event was a means to illuminate mainly Rowland's awareness. As yet James primarily thought of his action as serving to objectify Roderick's interior and as needing to be vivid on its own account.

The preface to The American again stresses James's matured insight that he best expressed his donnée—"that of a generous nature engaged with forces, with difficulties and dangers, that it but half understands"—by showing the struggle "only as Newman feels it, treats it, meets it." For The American, however, James also claims that even at the time of its composition he had seen that "the effort to get into

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5 Art of Novel, p. 16.
the skin of the creature" could be "by the same stroke, the effort of
the artist to preserve for his subject that unity and . . . that
effect of a center, which most economises its value." What James
had not seen, at the time of writing The American, was that the
precise nature of the forces or difficulties and dangers with which
his hero was to struggle would be important to unity. If Newman was
truly to be the "lighted figure" who "supremely matters," all the
elements of the novel must directly aid in representing him. Since
in art there is no such thing as a neutral detail or one that doesn't
work to some end and have some effect, not only the general shape of
the action but also its content must positively aid in expressing the
theme, in order genuinely to achieve the degree and kind of unity
summarized in the phrase "center of interest."

Whereas the germ from which The American sprang was a
situation that showed the "strong" quality of a certain type of
American consciousness, the germ of The Portrait was neither a
situation nor a representative state of mind but the character of a
young woman whom James's imagination saw as having a great appetite
for life and capacity for experience. This donnée, like those
Turgenev reported for his fictions, was a kind farthest from an
objective event, or from a plot. In the third preface of the Edition,
James records the extent of his debt to Turgenev's practice and theory.

7 _Ibid._, p. 37.
8 _Ibid._, p. 22.
9 _Ibid._, pp. 47-48; 56.
The lesson of Turgenev was no less, and perhaps more, crucial to James than the lesson of Balzac; for, as this preface emphasizes, it was very largely the method of Turgenev that was to point James to his own road towards Balzac's goal of representing the human comedy. Turgenev's concept of characters as "diponsibles" receives the spotlight in the third preface; and this concept does not, as has often been misstated, imply the primacy of characterization over action. Rather it involves the perfect fusion of characterization with action, plus the insight that real characterization means presenting the internal disposition of the figure—his motives and the atmosphere of his interior. James reports the theory of "diponsibles" as meaning that in Turgenev's fiction the incidents were the "right relations" of an individual, the situation that would best express his interior, that is, not only the situation he would probably help to make for himself, but also the situation which most clearly would bring out his qualities. Thus although characterization may be prior in the process of creation, in the product it is perfectly equivalent to and unified with a chain of event. In Turgenev's view, as James reports it, this procedure led, however, to a lack of "architecture," a word used by Turgenev's French critics to mean the graceful proportioning of the action regarded as an aesthetic whole. James was more sensitive to this objection than was Turgenev. Or perhaps it is more accurate to state that the younger writer wanted to show indubitably that Turgenev's procedure

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*Art of Novel*, pp. 42-43.

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could and did yield an "architecture" of the whole work, within which
the action could be as proportioned as all the other indissoluble
elements of the organism.

The preface to *The Portrait* claims that this novel "sticks
to . . . the young woman's own consciousness" for its "center" and by
means of such a ground plan builds an architecture. The structure
erected is a large one, moreover: considerable variety is brought
into unity. The problem of providing for such multiplicity while
maintaining a point of unity inside consciousness has been solved in
*The Portrait* by means peculiar to James; he makes the look and feel
to his central character of external things an indirect instrument
for expressing the central character's view of herself or "her
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relation to herself." Turgenev had given James the crucial impetus
towards better grasping this means already present in *Roderick*,
because Turgenev showed that a novelist's main purpose, even in
devising an action, should be to represent the interior of his
characters. But his way of making such "interest" genuinely central
to a large— that is, to a various— architecture had been James's own
discovery; generally, it was the road of indirection and irony, and
it was first thoroughly vindicated in *The Portrait*.

Building on a "center of interest," or attaining a fusion
between action and presentation of a character's interior, is not
identical with limiting oneself to one character's point of view

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*Art of Novel*, pp. 51-52.

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throughout the fiction. A thoughtful reader of the prefaces at once notes that although the second one stresses how Newman's consciousness remains always the mirror, only in the third one, to *The Portrait*, James claims that a true "architecture" has been founded on his "center." Too, in *The Portrait*, his use of Isabel as register is interrupted abruptly and strikingly at the beginning of Part II. Having a "center of interest" is not exactly the same thing as always employing one central character's perspective on the action. If this point is not grasped, James's later claims in the fourth and fifth prefaces that *The Princess* is written with "scenic consistency" while Hyacinth Robinson is its "center of interest" cannot be understood. We shall see that the technique of "scenic consistency" is not identical with treating "scenically" an event; in the same way, the centering of interest is not restriction to one perspective or point of view. Rather, the fundamental requirement of building in this way is to restrict the material reflected to that which can signal aid in the expression of the quality of one consciousness. Turgenev's achievement gave James the courage to consider that a fiction absolutely unified around this kind of a subject need not lack interest and could provide a lively enough action as well as a proportioned one.

If James's commentary in the prefaces to Volumes I-III makes clear that he first achieved in *The Portrait* the "drama of consciousness" *Roderick* and *The American* had anticipated, the differences between *The Portrait* and *The American* also show how building the novel
on a "center of interest" resulted from the intensification of irony and obliquity, an intensification required so as to treat the new kind of donnée that was the seed of The Portrait. The difference between the germ of The American and that of The Portrait has already been noted. Since the germ of the latter novel is so thoroughly "subjective" (a state or a quality of awareness), a thorough indirection must be exercised to fuse objective event with this subject. A fusion of all the elements of the novel with a point inside Newman's awareness is not attained in The American. Even though Newman is always the mirror, the chain of event is not exclusively selected to reveal his subjective nature. The events of this novel often are selected simply to infuse excitement into a line of action generally moving towards the "turning away" from revenge. To select one instance from among

14 Too often discussions of James's technique, or of his theory of his technique, neglect to emphasize the all-important relation between his method of composition in any one work and the "germ" which he states for that fiction. He was concerned in his prefaces to recover these "productive germs," the "precious first moment of consciousness of the idea to which the fiction was to give form," because, however many transformations they may have gone through, "without them comes no clear vision of what one may have intended, and without that vision no straight measure of what one may have succeeded in doing!" (Art of Novel, p. 79). The italics are mine.

When James states a germ for his fiction, as he does for most of his novels, his method of construction has an integral relation to it. He exhibits several of these methods, not one; and if his techniques developed in certain directions which may generally be summarized, an important determinant of those directions is the nature of the données he successively tried.

15 The germ of The American is an event—Newman's "turning away" from the opportunity to revenge himself, not out of forgiveness but out of boredom—that reveals a strength indifferent to itself which is, in turn, representative of many Americans. The germ of The Portrait is no situation between persons but the quality of an individual young woman who had come to stand in James's imagination for a signal readiness for life, a large capacity for experience.
many, Valentin's duel and his deathbed "apology" to Newman are handled rather to evoke suspense than to reveal Newman's habits of mind. Making Valentin's death occur before Newman knows that Claire cannot fight to keep him, and having Valentin apologize in a way which puts new information into Newman's hands, increases suspense about whether Newman can frighten the Bellegardes. But these maneuvers tend to obscure the quality of the American's reactions. Like James's confused decision in Roderick to gain dramatic intensity by a lively action, and therefore to concentrate on Roderick's relations with Christina Light as the sign and the cause of his demoralization, James's choice in The American to trace Newman's discovery of a Bellegarde secret keeps the focus on an obviously vivid line of action but nevertheless is inefficient for revealing Newman.

The American's bewilderment by the duel's occasion, his inability to accept the motive of this affaire d'honneur as worthy plus his aversion for its waste yet his retention of respect for Valentin (the habit of "sinking" differences), would come into much higher relief if Valentin's death had been placed after the interviews at Fleurieres. If placed after Newman's reasons for soreness and bewilderment have been fully displayed, Newman's reaction to Valentin's fatal duel would more emphatically have brought out the American's habit of "sinking" differences.

Another example is James's designation of what finally puts the Bellegardes in Newman's power: acting, with the help of an old family servant, on Valentin's hint, Newman uncovers a nefarious secret in the Bellegarde past. James's preface notes that this choice of event was non-verisimilar in the extreme, as were the concept of the "power" of one person over another and the Bellegarde decision to reject Newman's suit. Nevertheless, the lack of verisimilitude is not so great a flaw as is the factitious relation of these events to Newman's qualities.

On the other hand, making Newman arrive at a choice either to exert or to remit a power over the Bellegardes could, though non-verisimilar, demonstrate Newman's attributes and awareness. James's preface indicates that if he were re-writing the novel, he would not seek to
In The Portrait, James has almost completely accepted the belief that dramatic "intensity" can only come via increased unity, and has made his point of unity the quality of his heroine's consciousness. One minor qualification to these generalizations must be made however. The treatment of Goodwood's last interviews with Isabel and with Henrietta seems to me to depart from what the preface calls the "general plan" of the novel: representing the excitement of Isabel's processes of "motionlessly seeing." The closing scenes of The Portrait seem a belated, and unfortunate, concession to what James felt to be the demand of his audience for a standard romantic scene and for the kind of amusement or liveliness provided throughout the fiction by Henrietta.

A sizable portion of the preface to The Portrait accents the concern James had felt that his "general formula" might produce a novel not amusing and various enough--that is, "thin." He states that by the time of rereading the work in 1907 he is most struck with "the anxiety of my provision for the reader's amusement," an anxiety which had arisen because he had felt keenly "the possible limitations of my

eliminate this general shape of its action and consequently the fiction's characteristics of romance. He reports that he again would show Newman arriving at his alternatives of revenge or "turning away," but by comparatively more verisimilar means. We can surmise that in such a re-writing, Newman's means of gaining power over the Bellegardes would be as revelatory of him as is his final choice not to use this power. In The Portrait, what Isabel discovers about her marriage--that it was engineered by Mme. Merle in Osmond's and Pansy's interests--is exciting, even lurid; yet it is also particularly relevant to Isabel's awareness: That Isabel can feel compassion for what this discovery reveals about Mme. Merle's situation and motives, keeps the focus on those qualities in the heroine that provide the theme of the novel.

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Art of Novel, p. 57.
The preface isolates those facets of the novel which were the result purely of this anxiety, from those facets which allayed the anxiety yet at the same time carried out James's prime intent. The consciousness to be portrayed in The Portrait was "of a class difficult, in the individual case, to make a centre of interest"--difficult because the "mere young thing," the inexperienced young woman, is not involved in a "hundred relations" which are directly concerned with "great mutations of the world." It is significant that in discussing both the difficulty and the beauty of his donnée, James especially refers to Shakespeare and to George Eliot's Daniel Deronda. The latter had included a classic defense of the growth of the young girl's "treasure of affection" as a subject profound enough to be worthy of the greatest art. Shakespeare's example, too, shows that the young heroine's discovery of love is potentially one of the greatest of themes.

19 Art of Novel, p. 52.

20 Howells recalled that one of his frequent topics of discussion with James in the 1860's was their mutual ambition to expand the possible themes of the novel--to show that the ubiquitous love-story, or young hero and heroine, need not invariably be the center of interest. By the mid 1880's James was confirmed in this ambition. But he had both digested the lesson of George Eliot's and Turgenev's focus on their young heroines, and himself had found the "love-story" an indispensable means in treating such other themes as the plight of the American artist (Roderick Hudson) and the mixed weaknesses and strengths of the representative American.

21 James's preface refers mainly to The Merchant of Venice. He calls Portia "the very type and model of the young person intelligent and presumptuous," and notes that she alone makes the "other lively concerns" matter to us through her concern with them. The Merchant of Venice is a "fine example of the value recognised in the mere young thing." (Art of Novel, pp. 49-50.)
anomaly James stresses is that though Shakespeare and George Eliot may have recognized the interest and value of this theme, they did not fully capitalize on that interest. George Eliot, for example, does not after all make her "frail vessels" her prime centers. She escaped from giving a supremely "close account" of her heroine's growth; she played the "trick" of using predominantly her heroine's effect on others and provided mainly the male's consciousness of the heroine. In this way, the theme of the heroine's development is retained while the world's variety is easily included. Yet the heroines' interiors, which are posited to be supremely important, are not centrally and continuously--i.e., "closely"--presented. James had decided that he could overcome the difficulty of gaining breadth of representation while truly centering in the young girl's consciousness (as only the novel can) if he followed the example of *The Merchant of Venice*. Like Portia, his heroine would be "interested enough . . . in the things that are not herself." In this way he might maintain sufficient variety even while centering inside the young girl; the heroine's consciousness would be presented indirectly through what she encountered. These specifications could at once help to reveal her "complexity," her supreme "charm," and remain variously suggestive of the plenitude of "the world."

Yet, even after he had decided that keeping to Isabel's "relation to herself," pressing "least hard on the consciousness of her

\[\text{Art of Novel, p. 51.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
satellites, especially the male," could achieve adequate amusement for the reader, James was not without fear that his subject would remain too restricted and too "quiet." It is because of this fear alone, his preface tells us, that he gave so much of the novel to the comedy of Henrietta Stackpole. In addition the fear betrayed him into (1) providing a kind of scene between Isabel and Goodwood which he could not handle particularly well and which is not integral to the novel's theme, and (2) closing the novel with another bit of Henrietta's "liveliness." Despite these two flaws, the rest of James's action is "centered" in expressing the quality of Isabel's consciousness and the development of her large capacity to confront life into a choice to love.

Because Isabel's will to love will be most evident if she knows the dangers for her in the choice and has real reasons to suspect affection's ultimate value, James shows us her reactions to two different chains of event: to a perversion capable of exerting, in love's name, dangerous pressure on her (her discovery of Osmond's motives); and to the fact that genuine affection can multiply pitfalls for the person whose good it seeks (her discovery of Ralph's choice to give her his inheritance). In the face of the danger posed by Osmond to what always had been Isabel's motive force, her self-respect, her choice to love Osmond's daughter with the same selfless devotion as Ralph Touchett had shown her indicates the depth of her commitment to

24 Art of Novel, p. 51.

25 Ibid., pp. 52-55; 57.
human affection. In other words, the action of The Portrait is selected to show that Isabel's choice to love has grown from her desire to engage life. Initially Isabel decides to invest her love where she thinks it is most needed, most of a free gift, and where, also, she can feel less committed to any one milieu--less protected from exposure to the whole of experience. Then once again, after having awakened to the fact that such a choice has made her more vulnerable instead of simply strengthened her, she repeats the same decision. All the events of the novel, including those beyond Isabel's control, are selected to reveal her large capacity for life.

Remembering that the one common factor of all of Isabel's displayed relations, those with women as well as with men, is her eagerness for experience--her "imaginative" nature, one more adequately

26 The action moves from Isabel's initial selection from among Goodwood, Warburton and Osmond to her second mocking opportunity to choose again from three alternatives represented by the three men: to console herself by an alliance with Warburton, under the guise of his pursuing Pansy; to retreat to Goodwood's protection, now more clearly valued; and to love where she is most needed--by Pansy--rather than where she herself most needs.

27 James explicitly states this intent in his preface: to represent the development of "the treasure of affection," as George Eliot had called the capacity to love. Gwendolen Harleth, in Daniel Deronda, develops that capacity but to a limited degree, as moralistic commentators (among whom the author herself must be included) never tire of pointing out to us. Like Jane Austen's Emma, Gwendolen Harleth is a flawed heroine, so that a reader has the experience of observing genuine development. Isabel Archer is indeed in this tradition of the "limited heroine," as one critic has pointed out. See Oscar Cargill, "'The Portrait of a Lady': A Critical Reappraisal," Modern Fiction Studies, III (Spring, 1957), 11-33. But it is a mistake to conclude on this ground alone that necessarily Isabel develops as little as Gwendolen or as much as Emma.
can estimate the particular function of her relation with any one character. But much critical commentary has ignored the degree of centering in *The Portrait*. For instance, one simple deduction which has gained much currency, is that Isabel is sexually frigid and afraid of life because she returns to Osmond after having violently rejected Goodwood's offer of refuge and his "overpowering" physical presence. A related interpretation is that Isabel's relation with Ralph is again a flight from sexuality. Yet both Ralph and Osmond share, in an important sense, the same function. They alike serve to pose obstacles to Isabel's growth of the capacity to love: Through Osmond she learns that her desire to give herself entails the hideous risk of imprisoning herself rather than freeing another. Through her relation with Ralph she learns of another danger in love, even if the first is successfully avoided. This second obstacle or danger is that giving to another may only mean suffering with him, since the gift may merely compound his difficulties. Isabel suffers from Ralph's love as she suffers, too, from Osmond's hate. To read her flight from the attraction of the escape Goodwood offers as a rejection of love, in the convenient name of duty, is to fail to look for any light thrown by the final incident of the novel on the common focus of its earlier specifications and events. One should ask whether Isabel's return to Rome especially confirms or especially destroys Ralph's estimate of her

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Ralph's supremely selfless act for Isabel has increased, if it has not caused, the pain of her disaster: Her knowledge of what Ralph had done for her sharpens Isabel's sense that she herself has flung away great opportunities and that she must suffer trying to conceal from Ralph the extent of the waste. And Isabel's love for Ralph increases the pain of his death.
character; and whether her "repulsion" from her response to Goodwood's passion, even while she momentarily clings to Goodwood's support, demolishes Ralph's belief that her mistake with Osmond, because it was generous, cannot hurt her. Her return to Rome for an unstated purpose and an unspecified time means Isabel a second time chooses in the same way: to confront whatever debilitating mixture life is, instead of to be protected from it, and to give in spite of her new doubts about the final efficacy of giving. Whatever course the reader thinks better for Isabel, her decision to face again her choice of Osmond, and for Pansy's sake, reveals more imagination than would accepting Goodwood's means of escape from (not resolution of) the dilemma.

Nevertheless an ambiguity of the wrong kind endangers the essential harmony of the closing events of *The Portrait* with its entire design. In art, the wrong kind of ambiguity is that which disperses

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29 What will be a reader's evaluation of Isabel's quality of awareness, James does not very much attempt to control. Although Ralph Touchett seems to be his mouthpiece, on the whole this evaluation is left to the individual reader. Ralph "appreciates" Isabel's imagination and generosity. He loves her for them, but he recognizes, too, their drawbacks: a generous mistake "cannot permanently hurt" her, he concludes about her case. This undoubtedly would have been Ralph's attitude towards a certain knowledge that Isabel will return to Rome. Ralph could not have blinked the danger of the return, but neither could he have disapproved Isabel's desire not to be protected from her own choices and her generosity towards Pansy. Readers who, unlike Ralph Touchett, do not rate generosity and an eagerness to "affront" experience as goods *per se*, and who would judge the results of these qualities by some other criteria, are left entirely free to condemn Isabel's return as another grievous "mistake." Such readers and critics may not, however, completely ignore the possibility that imagination motivates the return, for this capacity is the major point of the other portions of the novel.
attention among the least relevant elements. Isabel's final scene with
Goodwood is handled so as to emphasize her failure to gain sexual
fulfillment, although the prior scenes with Ralph have, like the rest
of the novel, stressed the problem of her success or failure to gain
any of the "life" she set out for. Not concerned to distinguish sexual
from other kinds of fulfillment, most of the novel raises the two
questions of whether reciprocity is necessary to love and of whether
one person can fulfill himself through giving to another. Thus the
emphasis in the scene between Isabel and Goodwood is irrelevant, an
unfortunate concession to providing some exciting external event.
Concluding with Henrietta's words to the disappointed Goodwood
similarly detracts from the novel's already strongly established unity.
This scene places the reader's attention partly on the comedy of
Henrietta's inveterate optimism and partly on the question of how long
Isabel may remain in Rome. But attention needs rather to be drawn to

30 Paradoxically, James appears to have settled for the
expedient of this kind of a scene because of, on the one hand, his
awareness of the expectations of his audience, and, on the other hand,
because of his own lack of interest in making fiction explore the
physical bases and concomitants of psychological realities. At the
conclusion of The Portrait, he suddenly tries to employ Isabel's
ambivalence towards Goodwood's embrace and kiss to summarize all her
failures yet undamaged capacities. But previously in the novel he so
far merely had implied the influence of the physical dimensions of
Isabel's experience as to make inattentive critics conclude he exhibits
her frigidity. The Portrait is one of the very few of James's
fictions which makes the particular false step of attempting to use,
at a climactic point and without adequate preparation, a physical
relation to stand for a more complex actuality. The Spoils of Poynton,
where the preparation for the procedure is adequate, should be
compared with The Portrait in this respect.
whether we may credit Ralph Touchett's assertion that Isabel's danger "can't permanently hurt" her.

James's attainment in *The Portrait* of an "architecture" centered inside consciousness results from the intensification of his other operative habit of irony, as much as from his greater exercise of indirection. The germ of the novel was a consciousness having great capacity and opportunity for "life" as James understood it. Inasmuch as James himself conceived experience to involve apprehending a contrast between every actuality and its better potential, the expression of the donnée required that irony play an even greater role that it had in James's two previous long fictions. Irony had infused *Roderick* and *The American* primarily by the selection for main characters of representatively American plus "fine" cases. *The Portrait* deepens irony by, for one means, employing images which summarize it. Such figures abound for Isabel's final habitat, as well as come to dominate her thinking. They stress inextricable mixtures of worth, or the concept of a better potential. "Rome" is the major one. Both its "sadness" and its "soothing" quality derive from the dependance, for the present appreciator, of potential beauty and interest on an actual past of misery and violence, on the turbulent density of history. The Roman monuments, tributes to

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31 The problem of how long Goodwood may have to "wait" raises a question of mere duration, one so irrelevant to the nature of Isabel's consciousness that Henrietta's last words seem to obscure the fiction's "center of interest." Henrietta's remark to Goodwood sets a reader to estimating whether Isabel can accomplish anything decisive for Pansy, and, if she can, how long it might take. Attention thus is focused on the form of what Isabel can or can't do, rather than on her return despite her recognition that probably she can't prevent Osmond's control of Pansy's marriage.

32 See my discussion of James's world view in Section I of Chapter Six, pp. 194-202 following.
an aesthetic ideal, simultaneously suggest the human cost by which they were achieved.

The general structure of *The Portrait* is ironic. Thus not only the content of the action but its very shape aids in expressing the quality of Isabel's consciousness. The primary blocks of material, the chapters of the novel, are steps or stages in a forward progression. They construct a march. However, these units also are arranged to contrast two larger blocks of material, which become something more than stages of the action. The grouping of chapters and books into two contrasted larger units is of course stressed by other means than simply labelling these larger blocks "Parts." Not only does a suddenly larger gap of time intervene between the end of Part I and the opening of Part II, but a different point of view, Rosier's, is abruptly (though temporarily) employed at the opening of Part II, and the cast of

33 In *Roderick*, James had attempted to diffuse irony through Rowland's reflections on the Roman atmosphere and spirit. But in this earlier novel, as in *The American*, James had neglected to seize his major opportunities for capturing in single images the ironic vision, and especially had not found such images for the main subjects of the fictions. He had not been able to condense into single "objective correlatives" the ironic kind of relation of the admirable traits of his central characters to their total American background. Later stories such as "Four Meetings" (1879) and "Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie" (1900) capture more forcibly than do either *Roderick* or *The American* the dependence of finer American traits on American conditions of contrasting quality.

One reason for this gain is that later James added to his array of means for representing America in the ironic light a careful selection and handling of the few American details he uses so that they suggest many interrelations of the American order. An example of this technique is the review Strether (of *The Ambassadors*) edits, which has been founded on the profits of a "certain homely little article" made in Woolett, Massachusetts. Another example is the photograph album Caroline Spencer, in "Four Meetings," rejoices over; and a third, the cables of Lily Gunton's grandfather always containing the word "Draw!" Such details in themselves imply how admirable American qualities
Part I of the novel, composed of separate books which trace the development of Isabel's values, concludes with a choice (her marriage to Osmond) summarizing her interpretations and her standards. Rather than a theater for the exhibition of an awareness already formed by American conditions, European conditions are the ground into which Isabel in Part I drops her seeds of appetite and sensitivity, to reap her large crop of ideals. The first half of the novel presents the formation of values by means of the same actuality which the second half shows Isabel reversing her estimation of, in the light of the same values. The novel thus emphatically divides into two halves, which oppose one attitude towards a situation to a more inclusive understanding of that situation—an understanding of how the first attitude has contributed to the actuality. Since Isabel's "complexity" is that she grows to apprehend the ironic nature of experience and that true freedom lies in awareness of the actual as a mixture, this kind of structuring derive from conditions which also have limitations. (The photograph album suggests that the directness and intensity of the American's response to "Europe" derives from his distance from and essential ignorance of it. The cables between Lily and her "family" imply that the closeness and the spontaneity of American ties rests on the fact that they are especially monetary ones.) The American details used in Roderick and in The American are not so well selected and treated that a range of ironic suggestion is "squeezed" out of them. They do not of themselves "reverberate" very far. Instead, the specific reference to American objects serves comedy alone.

In Roderick, Rowland and Newman, James showed qualities enmeshed with American situations which also restrict the efficacy of these qualities. But the portrait of Isabel, because it exhibits the growth of fine traits by means of contrasting material, emphasizes more the dependance of the admirable on its opposite, and so is hung in a more strongly ironic light.
of the action directly aids in expressing her final awareness.

The type of donnée of The Portrait occasioned James's greater exercise of irony and of indirection, and this intensification of his operative habits produced a novel which may be said to build on a "center of interest"—so to make action exhibit the interior of a character that a "drama of consciousness" (the road on which Roderick first embarked) is really achieved. In turn, this technique—conveniently summarized in his phrase "center of interest"—is what enables James to effect the illusion, in The Portrait, of a scope relatively wider than his range of documentation. The illusion of scope derives from the tight relation of all the specifications of the novel to a single center inside consciousness, for the specifications are more saliently distinguished from one another when they are seen as aspects of a center. "Rome" feels so different from Grandcourt and from Albany, because it is a state of mind as well as a setting. Similarly, the cast of characters seems, in the reading, more various than when one simply lists the personae. Again the reason is that "centering" both imparts utmost salience to the variety and makes the variety operative in more dimensions—in kinds of relation to Isabel as well as in surfaces.

The next two novels of the New York Edition, The Princess and The Tragic Muse, exhibit James's achievement of a second technique which he calls "scenic consistency," or writing the novel in conditions as "dramatic" as possible, while continuing to build on a "center of

35 Art of Novel, p. 90.
interest." The dramatic character of these next two novels (comparatively absent from The Portrait, The American and Roderick) again results from James's intensification of ironic and the indirect approaches to his material, in order to meet the demands of two new kinds of donnee. Again, too, the resultant technique of composition—by "scenic consistency" as well as a "center of interest"—may be seen to account for James's feat of enlarging his themes far more than his ability to document widened.

II

The prefaces to The Princess and The Tragic Muse supply the term "scenic consistency." They relate the technique it signifies to the requirements of the germs of these novels, and they make clear that the new kind of composition is not antithetical to building a "center of interest." Rather, it is supplementary to the technique perfected in The Portrait.

At the outset it is important to distinguish James's usage of the phrase "scenic treatment" of an event from his reservation of the phrase "scenic consistency" for a certain type of composition of a whole work. The two prefaces to Volumes V-VI and VII-VIII, together with that to Volume IX (The Awkward Age), do oppose a "scenic" way of presenting a single occasion (or a number of occasions) to a non-scenic way: "Going behind" a character, or providing everything in the terms of his awareness (as James says he does in the famous chapter forty-two of The Portrait), and "treating scenically" are mutually exclusive.
procedures. But composing a work with "scenic consistency" is not the decision to handle scenically one, or many, or all of its occasions.

The preface to Volumes VI and VII stresses that The Princess both has a center of interest and constantly "goes behind" Hyacinth. Yet the preface to Volumes VII and VIII is equally emphatic that The Princess, like The Tragic Muse and The Awkward Age, represents a "scenic" method of composition. The germ of Tragic Muse, James says, demanded to get itself done in dramatic, or at least in scenic conditions—though scenic conditions which are as near an approach to the dramatic as the novel may permit itself and which have this in common with the latter, that they move in the light of alternation. This imposes a consistency other than that of the novel at its loosest, and, for one's subject, a different view and a different placing of the centre. The charm of the scenic consistency, the consistency of the multiplication of aspects, that of making them amusingly various, had haunted the author of "The Tragic Muse" from far back, and he was in due course to yield to it all luxuriously, too luxuriously perhaps, in "The Awkward Age," as will doubtless with the extension of these remarks be complacently shown.

To put himself at any rate as much as possible under the protection of it had been ever his practice (he had notably done so in "The Princess Casamassima," so frankly processional and panoramic); and in what case could this protection have had more price than in the one before us? 37

36 In the preface to Volume IX, James opposes the two:
I myself have scarcely to plead the cause of "going behind" which is right and beautiful and fruitful in its place and order, but as the confusion of kinds is the inelegance of letters and the stultification of values, so to renounce that line utterly and do something quite different instead may become in another connexion the true course and the vehicle of effect. . . . To make the presented occasion tell all its story itself, remain shut up in its own presence . . . (Art of Novel, p. 111).

In the same context, he calls the handling of the presented occasion in the latter way a "guarded objectivity . . . from the imposed absence of 'going behind.'" The preface to Volumes VII and VIII states that he never "'goes behind'" an "objective" Miriam, though he does so present the two men.

37 Art of Novel, p. 90.
"Scenic consistency" is a composition of the fiction so that, while an architecture is built on a "center" inside one character, an "usurping consciousness" nevertheless is avoided. That is, in this kind of composition the center is not the only figure to be presented at depth, even though the whole of the fiction does illuminate his subjectivity. Such composition avoids throwing the weight of the reader's sympathy necessarily with the center. Centering in one consciousness (and thereby capitalizing on the kind of intensity fiction's medium best allows), the scenic kind of composition also gains some of the play's virtue of requiring a spectator actively to judge for himself where his sympathies are to cluster. A novel which is centered in one consciousness gains the latter effect only if a number of other interiors somehow are simultaneously presented. James uses synonymously with the term "scenic consistency" another phrase--"the multiplication of aspects." Too, he says that the key similarity between composing a novel dramatically and composing a play is "alternation." These terms repay much pondering. In sum, composing with "scenic consistency" in fiction involves three complex

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38 The passage, from the preface to Volumes VII and VIII, quoted just above on page 128 continues: "No character in a play (any play not a mere monologue) has, for the right expression of the thing, a usurping consciousness; the consciousness of others is exhibited exactly in the same way as that of the "hero"; the prodigious consciousness of Hamlet, the most capacious and most crowded, the moral presence the most attested, in the whole range of fiction, only takes its turn with that of the other agents of the story, no matter how occasional these may be. It is left in other words to answer for itself equally with theirs.

39 See the passage quoted in the text on page 128.
elements: (1) treating scenically certain occasions when the center has to make crucial choices, and (2) preparing for such scenically handled events by blocks of material which exhibit, alternately, the consciousness of the various characters who are later to figure in the scenically treated occasion. These preparatory, alternating blocks of material do not, as one might suppose, break the centering of the fiction on one awareness. They do not have this effect for the reason that initially the cast of characters is determined by the need to express the center—-is determined by multiplying aspects of his consciousness. (3) Finally, although the center is a wide enough consciousness to apprehend others' awareness (for frequently the center is the reflector of the preparatory blocks of material), the center does not perceive so much of the other characters that he is not subject to bewilderment and party to a predicament.

This description of scenic consistency is much clarified by seeing how, as a type of composition, it derived from the données of The Princess and The Tragic Muse, and by tracing its application in those novels. My first task must be to explicate how all elements of The Princess together build an architecture which is centered on expressing the nature of one genuine consciousness. Only after this fact is clear is one in a position to observe how the architecture also exhibits the new feature of "scenic consistency."

Like the germ of The Portrait, that of The Princess is a state of mind: a consciousness of being "disinherited" from a world which one continues ardently to try to observe as it is. Making such an awareness the "center" of an architecture means making both the
specifications and the shape of the action aids to expressing the particular awareness:

I had had for a long time well before me ... my small obscure but ardent observer of the "London world," saw him roam and wonder and yearn, saw all the unanswered questions and baffled passions that might ferment in him—once he should be made both sufficiently thoughtful and sufficiently "disinherited;" but this image, however interesting, was of course not by itself a progression, an action, didn't by itself make a drama. I got my action however—failing which one has nothing—under the prompt sense that the state of feeling I was concerned with might develop and beget another state, might return at a given moment and with the greatest vivacity, on itself. To see this was really to feel one's subject swim into one's ken, especially after a certain other ingenious connexion had been made for it. ... Accessible through his imagination ... to a thousand provocations and intimations, he would become most acquainted with destiny in the form of a lively inward revolution. His being jealous of all the ease of life of which he tastes so little, and, bitten under this exasperation, with an aggressive, vindictive, destructive social faith ... might be as vivid a picture as one chose, but would move to pity and terror only by the aid of some deeper complication ... .

The complication most interesting then would be that he should fall in love with the beauty of the world, actual order and all ... so that his position as an irreconcilable pledged enemy to it, thus rendered false by something more personal than his opinions and his vows, becomes the sharpest of his torments. 40

This preface statement enables us to see why The Princess is even more centered around the nature of Hyacinth's consciousness than The Portrait is around the nature of Isabel's, for the statement makes clear that the center of The Princess is the sole agent within its action. All the changes in direction of event in The Princess are caused by Hyacinth. Not only is each event of The Princess selected to reveal, indirectly, Hyacinth's awareness; in addition, all the complications

40 Art of Novel, pp. 71-72. (The italics are mine.)
which shape the action derive from him. Every block of this fiction's architecture proceeds from Hyacinth's interior. Whereas Isabel is shown mainly in the "suffering state," i.e., perceiving the bearing of events which only partly have flowed from her character, Hyacinth's reactions to his perceptions always cause the situations to which he again reacts. This difference means, among other things, that economy is signal: no space spent on helping motivate the action by characterizing other persons then requires to be made merely to seem to relate to Hyacinth. Every portion of the material simultaneously shows Hyacinth's awareness even while it motivates the action and exhibits others' awareness. Hyacinth's deeds, the result of his perceptions, create even the field of his choices, or the alternatives among which he must select. In The Portrait, Isabel's alternatives were in large part the product of others' perception of her, so that the amount of space spent in presenting them, or in initiating the action, is not revelatory of Isabel's interior. Thus, even though The Princess centers on the state of mind of a hero who externally is far less free than is Isabel, a reader knows relatively more of Hyacinth's interior from Hyacinth's few choices. The action of

James's intention had been to "press least hard" on the perception of the center by the males to whom she is so important; but, in order to set his action in motion, he had to expand some space on their awareness of Isabel. In this fact was a danger that The Portrait does not, I think, entirely skirt: Ralph Touchett's awareness of Isabel may easily, throughout Part I, operate as a more interesting magnet for the reader than the center's own state of mind. (I think it likely that James is referring obliquely to this danger in the preface to Volume XX, where he speaks briefly of the surprising success of Ralph. See Art of Novel, p. 290.)
The Princess is to a greater degree fused with its subjective center.

Although it opposes the "beauty of the world, actual order and all" to the world's injustices, principally The Princess does not contrast aesthetic to political sensitivity. Objection has been made to the climax of The Princess on the ground that Hyacinth's suicide avoids the very dilemma the novel seeks to explore. But this criticism quite ignores the evidence that the problem James focuses throughout is the nature of effective action, and that he views in an ironic light the answer he provides to this question. The basic irony of The Princess is that a kind of exclusion from the world helps the center to discover, and to develop, his aesthetic capabilities; yet the same exclusion works so to delay his discovery of the world's artistic products that the center wholly commits himself to another mode of "action" than that of art. We must remember that Hyacinth eventually finds himself in a false position rather than in intellectual confusion because his aesthetic sympathies conflict with other of his goals. The insolubility of Hyacinth's problem arises from what had been the precipitantness of his choice of methods of enmity to injustice: he had prematurely and irrevocably pledged himself to one kind of behavior because he had deemed it alone to be adequate: "doing." His belated perception of what may be art's role in so mixed a world, followed by his suicide, tell us that effective action depends on not defining "doing" too narrowly. The novel presents the growth of an understanding that to contrast "being" and "doing," so-called "passivity" of perception and so-called "active" response of aggressive deeds, is dangerously to oversimplify. Hyacinth learns that this dichotomy avoids the complexities of the problem of effective action,
because effectiveness obviously depends on value, and real value lies in quality of response rather than simply in conclusions and dogmatisms.

The theme of The Princess is not the existence of a conflict, insoluble for some persons, between aesthetic exploration and socio-political engagement, nor between a passivity of observation and an activity of deeds. Quite contrarily, the novel is centered on a subjectivity which comes to reject the above dichotomies, and to recognize that a prior acceptance of them has created a present false situation. That the center, and the theme, of The Princess is of this type all the elements of the novel—for instance, cast of characters as well as specification of event—corroborate.

A Paul Muniment, whose goals Hyacinth can approve but whose motivations for seeking them are revealed to be destructive; a Christina Light, who seeks so vainly to substitute for her lost ability to love mere deeds in support of specific opinions; and a Eugene Poupin, whose goals are as contradictory and inadequate as the sincerity of his espousal is somehow fructifying, together provide Hyacinth evidence that the value of "doing" depends on the quality of being. Simultaneously, James uses other characters to help present the problem of effectiveness as something distinct from an action—observation dualism. Pinnie, who rears Hyacinth in an ether of illusions entirely contrary to the facts of his situation; Mr. Vetch, the sceptic, whose desire to save Hyacinth is ineffective because it discounts the actual power of theory; and Millicent Henning, who can penetrate nothing but facts, show that arriving at conclusions consonant with facts is necessary. James seems to be insisting that in order either to "be" or to "do"
constructively, one first must weigh absolutely all of actuality—both external conditions and inward states. Effective action requires thorough perception: One must understand the facts of one's position and what are genuinely one's capabilities and values, then match the directions of his endeavor to all these confrontations.

But the novel does not present effectiveness, in this sense of self-consistent action proceeding from a thorough understanding, as very readily attainable or even wholly controlled by human choice. The Princess emphasizes that thoroughness of understanding is very much dependent on (and is a better potential of) how much happens to be available to perception: Hyacinth's excluded situation, his position of mere observer of the world's opportunities, enables him to discover his capacity for imagination or pursuit of relationships. The confinement to spectatorship also prevents Hyacinth from remaining long a prey to illusion in the manner of Pinnie by whom he has been reared. (Hyacinth's exclusion is so great that he cannot long ignore, as Pinnie does, the tension between his external facts and his desires for greater access to material offering still more interest to his imagination.) But equally, Hyacinth's exclusion causes his precipitant commitment before he knows his real nature. His exclusion makes his final position a false one, if it does not make false and bewildered his final consciousness. Hyacinth's death by his own hands summarizes this irony. Because the situation which enabled the hero to achieve understanding also crucially delayed it, the only result can be a deed
ineffective in itself—suicide.

Thoroughly centered inside Hyacinth's consciousness, the architecture of The Princess as well exhibits a new feature of "scenic consistency." It is more dramatic than The Portrait in a particular sense. The aim of the combined techniques of centering interest and scenic consistency is to capitalize on the novel's special resources for rendering subjectivity yet to gain the advantage of a play that no one consciousness is "usurping" in the sense of presented more fully than that of other characters. At first glance, this aim may seem impossible, for centering around one consciousness may seem to demand probing it at greater depth and projecting it at greater length. However, James felt, just as a play may use its wholly "objective" medium to express a subjective state, so the novel may make an approach to "scenic conditions" or to dramatic quality—to avoiding a "usurping" consciousness even while building on one consciousness as the central subject. Comparing the novel with the play form, the prefaces to The Princess and The Tragic Muse twice cite Hamlet, for Hamlet shows that the nature of the medium need not unduly restrict the kind of

Another objection may be made that the novel does not deal with the most problematic issue concerning the understanding that it presents as the basis of effective action: that the novel does not touch upon conflict between achieving full awareness and fulfilling other human goods. To this kind of objection there can be but one type of reply. The Princess is a successful fiction by virtue of so handling its material to give a reader an intense exposure to the differences between kinds of "action" and to degrees of effectiveness. Criticism of James's estimate of the final worth of full awareness is more relevant to the fifth than it is to the fourth novel of the New York Edition. In The Tragic Muse James takes up the subject of the relation between the developed consciousness (the artist) and fulfillment of other goods of life.
subject which may be rendered through it.

The novel which achieves a centering of interest obviously cannot be exactly a play. It cannot exhibit its center "exactly in the same way" as it does other characters. The dramatic novel attempts only an "approach to" scenic conditions. It does so by alternating between blocks of material which reveal the interior of other characters than the center; these units at the same time have the prime function of illuminating facets of the central consciousness. For the latter reason, James calls the alternation of such blocks "the scenic consistency, the consistency of the multiplication of aspects." In this method of

See the passage quoted in footnote 38 on page 129 above from the preface to Volume VII. James's point is that although Hamlet is a "prodigious consciousness" and "the moral presence the most attested in the whole range of fiction," his consciousness is not presented more fully than is the awareness of his associates. In this sense Hamlet is not "usurping." The presentation of his interior "only takes its turn with that of the other agents of the story."

The preface to Volume V makes clear James's opinion that fiction (by which he means all portrayal of human characters in action) must principally deal with the minds and the feelings of the characters in order to "render" or truly to present their action. Comparing The Bride of Lammermoor with Hamlet, he points out that in the former work "neglect of the 'feeling' question" means that the relation of the lovers is "never shown us as primarily taking place. It is shown only in its secondary, its confused and disfigured aspects!" (Art of Novel, p. 68). Hamlet is selected for the other term of this comparison because James wants to illustrate that the specific medium, whether novel or play, does not alter his proposition. Presentation of the characters' interiors, he thinks, always is necessary really to exhibit a situation between characters and the movement of that situation. He says that when consciousness is not presented, "the centre of the subject is empty . . . the development pushed off, all round, toward the frame." (Ibid.). The "logic of intensity," another way of referring to the center of interest technique, "rests on," James says, "the perception that "what a man thinks and what he feels are the history and character of what he does!" (Art of Novel, p. 66).

Art of Novel, p. 90.
composition, the cast of characters of the fiction must be carefully selected. They must be, in themselves, genuine "aspects" of the unity. There can be no strictly minor characters, in the sense of figures used only for comic or other relief as is Henrietta Stackpole in The Portrait, and no pure ficelles. Every member of the dramatis personae of The Princess and of The Tragic Muse, no matter how brief his appearance or what his other function for varying tone, either parallels or contrasts some key component in the center's kind of awareness.

Still another feature of this method of composition is that the final center of the fiction tends to be the kind of relation to others which is occasioned by the quality of the central consciousness. The point of unity of the fiction is still subjective, but it tends now to be a central figure's subjective relation to the other characters. The fiction ultimately is focused on an interpersonal equation viewed as from inside one of its terms. Finally, despite the important point that "scenic consistency" is not identical with "treating scenically" the occasions of the fiction, and therefore is wholly compatible with "going behind" a character, the technique does involve presenting some pure "scenes," and presenting these in a regular or patterned recurrence: the blocks of material which alternate aspects of the center prepare for the exhibition, by means of pure

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45 The scenic consistency of alternation, James says, "imposes . . . for one's subject, a different view and a different placing of the centre." (Art of Novel, p. 90. See page 128 above)
scene, of the reasons for the central figure's key choices.

In the novel, pure "scene" is using the media of stage presentation, dialogue and gesture. Exchange between characters is uninterrupted by presentation of their thoughts and feelings, which are implied entirely through what they say and do in response to what others say and do. A play achieves such implication not only by careful selection of dialogue and gesture, so that it can rather transparently reflect the relation of behavior to internal state, but equally by the arrangement of what has gone before. In an important sense, the earlier scenes of any play must explain the later scenes, as well as precipitate them. The sequence of scenes must be ordered to enable a spectator to grasp, cumulatively, at least a minimum of implication. James refers to Racine's dictum that drama is "the art of preparations," and says that the art of the novel is similar. Whenever pure scene is employed to convey a subjective state (where, that is, its implications must be extensive), the sequence of prior material is especially important. It can be ordered to aid later implication. For example, the previous units can present the center's awareness of attitudes similar to those of the characters in the later scene—to whose speech he responds, and in relation to whom he adopts a certain position. Thus when the center behaves one way or another towards the other speakers in the scene, his reasons for doing so, the state of consciousness behind his choice, will be implied. Of course the technique demands that the writer determine beforehand precisely

46 Art of Novel, p. 86.
when he will treat scenically one of the center's decisions.

The construction of The Princess illustrates this key and subtle relation between composing with scenic consistency and a regular scenic treatment of at least some of the occasions of the novel. The Princess is structured in six Books, which in turn consist of subsidiary chapters. Each chapter contains some dialogue; a chapter either presents an exchange between persons, or, much more frequently, presents part of a dialogue in which the center participates and accompanies this fragment of dialogue with notation of the center's reflections on it and his feelings. However, the final chapter in each of the six books without fail presents, and by wholly scenic means, some important change in the center's awareness and some choice which affects his external situation. By no means all of Hyacinth's

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The final chapter of Book I, for example, contains Hyacinth's conversation with Mr. Vetch; and this scenically treated occasion marks that Hyacinth now has thoroughly embraced the anarchist definition of an effective stand against the world's injustice, even though Hyacinth's disinterested appreciation of the world also has increased. (These contradictory allegiances both result from Hyacinth's growth, which has been presented in the previous chapters of Book I, away from the daydreams fostered by Pinnie towards an accurate measure of the degree to which he is unmitigably imprisoned because of the world's injustice.)

Book II concludes with, and has built towards, the scenically treated occasion where, at the "Sun and Moon," Hyacinth takes his solemn vow to perform unquestioningly any acts the anarchist leader may specify. (This choice is a result of Hyacinth's enlarged perception—presented in the prior chapters of Book II by his acquaintance with Lady Aurora, Captain Sholto and the Princess—of the scale of the world's contrasts.)

At the end of Book III occurs Hyacinth's other decision actively to seek a closer view of the world to which he has already vowed a particular method of enmity. This decision results from what the foregoing chapters of the book have represented—the awakening of his keen aesthetic preference for Medley Hall over Iomax Place—and again the decision is rendered by an occasion treated as pure scene.
important choices are represented in scenically treated occasions; although regularly some of his key decisions are, as we have seen, so rendered. One must understand this fact in order to understand how the chapters, the fundamental units, of The Princess are related to one another. The larger units, the six books which the chapters build, are forward steps in the formation of Hyacinth's "false position." Like these books, the chapters carry forward the action. But unlike the books, the chapters also are concatenated to contrast the several attitudes towards the world's injustice from among which Hyacinth is seeking to choose. The juxtapositions of chapters stress that some such attitudes merely compound injustice.

48 Although some dialogue occurs in every chapter, normally in this novel, dialogue is interrupted by "going behind," or, if uninterrupted, the dialogue frequently is used merely to introduce and to give concluding emphasis to what "picture" fully portrays by its different means: The eleven chapters comprising Book I include eight distinct conversations in different settings. None of these eleven chapters is without some fragments of dialogue. But in at least eight of the eleven, the block of material is not really presented by scenic means. Even when, as in chapters one, four, seven and ten, dialogue is uninterrupted, its implications form a relatively small portion of what the complete chapter presents. The conversation either introduces or gives accent to some elements of the full "picture" conveyed by the chapter.

A very clear example of this procedure may be studied in typical chapter ten, which mainly consists of "going behind" Hyacinth's "appreciation" of Millicent Henning, but in which such "picture" is preceded by a conversation of Hyacinth and Pinnie about his relations with Millicent. The latter bit of dialogue is not a scenic treatment of this stage of Hyacinth's awareness, for it merely brings out Hyacinth's reaction to Pinnie's misunderstanding of his view of the girl. The function of the dialogue in chapter ten is to awaken interest for the picture, later in the chapter, of Hyacinth's true view of Millicent.
For instance, the separate chapters of Book I prepare for two pure scenes, one in chapters eight and nine, and the other in the final chapter eleven. Chapters eight and nine treat scenically Hyacinth's decision to plead with Paul Muniment for entree to the secret revolutionary party. The reader is shown Hyacinth arriving at the decision to beg this favor from Muniment during the course of a conversation, in Muniment's rooms, between Paul, Rosy and Lady Aurora. The exchange between these three characters shows a spectrum of attitudes towards injustice; it is almost a formal debate between the different stances. Rosy and Paul condemn as ineffective and wasteful the charities of Lady Aurora, while Rosy equally condemns her brother's secret political activities. Because the previous seven chapters of Book I already have shown Hyacinth's evaluations of the same spectrum of attitudes, the small part Hyacinth takes in this conversation can imply his interior state. And the latter is an important turning point of the novel, for, so soon as the conversation is terminated, Hyacinth reverses his previous decision not to ask Muniment about any secrets which are not freely revealed in sign of friendship. The previous chapters of Book I have prepared the pure scene of chapters eight and nine to imply the full interior context of Hyacinth's choice to make an important sacrifice in order to gain access to Paul's mode of combatting injustice. Hyacinth's responses to the three other speakers of the scene parallel his reactions, as previous chapters have pictorially displayed them in turn, to three
attitudes towards injustice. Of Rose Muniment's stand, who accepts the world's injustice to her and uses this acceptance to give the world back its bite, Hyacinth is both awed and instinctively wary—as he had been of Millicent Henning. Lady Aurora's attitude, who appears to mistake her personal sacrifices for some kind of compensation to the sufferers from injustice, both moves and

Chapters one through three have shown the attitude of quiet but stubborn rejection of the world's contrasts, a kind of passive resistance to injustice. They also have presented Hyacinth's evaluation of this attitude's advantages and limitations. For example, chapter three shows the young boy's understanding that Pinnie's stubborn choice to ignore the miseries connected with his origin has been more effective than his mother's violent attack on them, but also that Pinnie's attitude has sharpened his eventual pain by making his experience perforce a shock to mere illusions.

Chapters four and five stress Hyacinth's evaluation of the attitude that, since injustice is natural, one must be prepared to do everywhere as one is done by. Through Millicent's tangle with Pinnie and his own reacquaintance with the girl, Hyacinth perceives that this reaction to the world's contrasts has the virtues of not souring one's tolerance nor undermining one's vigor with illusions. But he also can see that Millicent's anxiety to protect herself first makes her often gratuitously and unintentionally cruel. Like Pinnie's, her attitude too only increases injustice.

In chapter six Hyacinth encounters the Poupins' theory that since the world now is so totally unjust, the overthrow of the social order must soon be at hand. This attitude seems to him far better than ignoring injustice in order to overcome it (Pinnie) or than accepting injustice in order not to be overwhelmed by it (Millicent). The Poupin reaction has for him an additional advantage of being impersonal; injustice is totally condemned in the abstract, but room is left for compassion for persons. But he feels the limitation that the attack on injustice is left, by this attitude, to apocalypse. When in chapter seven Hyacinth encounters Muniment, the attitude of passionate direct attack on the world in behalf of the impersonal theory that its contrasts make an extensive moral wrong appears to Hyacinth to have all the advantages of realism, of sustaining of one's personal good humor and private virtues, and of being more than theory. By these standards he had estimated and found wanting the three other reactions represented by Pinnie, Millicent, and the Poupins.
exasperates Hyacinth—as had Finnie's. The attitude behind Paul Muniment's part in the conversation Hyacinth admires because it seems emphatically to correct the one disadvantage of the Poupin attitude. But by Hyacinth's few moments of "wonder," his bewilderment during certain turns of the conversation, the grounds of his eventual disenchantment even with Paul's attitude also are implied. Conveying scenically the young bookbinder's decision humbly to offer himself to Muniment's secret political party has involved: (1) handling the previous blocks of material, or chapters, to display Hyacinth's other perceived alternatives, and (2) ordering these chapters to contrast the alternatives by whether they comparatively avoid furthering injustice.

In the course of building towards occasional pure scenes, the chapters of The Princess juxtapose to one another attitudes which help to cause and to maintain a central situation and attitudes which, on the other hand, understand that situation's causes. The basic units of composition by scenic consistency bear an ironic relation to one another. Again in The Tragic Muse and The Awkward Age, the fundamental divisions of the material constantly place side by side one attitude towards a situation and another attitude which sees that

50 His puzzlements during the scene come when Paul's words and behavior seem to contradict values which, from the previous chapters, spectators of the scene already know to be Hyacinth's: Muniment's treatment of Lady Aurora seems anomalous as too "rough" a handling of persons, even though Muniment's criticism is specifically only of Lady Aurora's ideas. Too, Paul's participation in Rosy's personal ambition for him (with Rosy, he laughs at Lady Aurora's obvious subjection to him; he laughs at Rosy's view of his future, but does not deny he deserves it) appears perplexingly ambiguous to Hyacinth.
the first one accounts for the situation. The succession of such units amounts to contrasting an actuality with a full understanding of it. Irony penetrates the structure of these novels.

The composition in this way of The Princess seems to be the reason that it gains the illusion of scope appropriate to a still more universal theme than that of The Portrait. Centering in Hyacinth's kind of excluded perspective on both the fashionable world and the anarchist conspiracy, while accenting, too, the attitudes towards other milieux of persons from contrasting scenes, enables James more successfully to suggest the world's variety than he could have done by attempting to document more completely. Since Hyacinth is placed on the fringes only of both scenes, having little direct acquaintance with either of them, violation of verisimilitude is not risked. However, the impression of great variety, of contrasts on a huge scale, is gained because much emphasis is placed on how little persons from one environment know about another environment, on the mutual limitations of contrasting perspectives. For example, by not attempting to provide a wealth of detail about the revolutionary movement in which Hyacinth enlists, by giving only Hyacinth's very

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*In them James shows full consciousness of a phenomenon always to be a possibility of that phenomenon, and a better possibility because complete apprehension locates the deeper causes of any human situation—the unconscious or unadmitted values of those involved in it.*

A greater exercise of indirection also accounts for the dramatic quality James first attained in The Princess, and then heightened in The Tragic Muse and The Awkward Age: Since the blocks of material focus successively on the attitudes or the subjectivity of other characters who are also aspects of the center's total awareness, there is increased reliance on the relationships obtaining between items within a field of vision in order to imply the nature or quality of the perspective.
restricted knowledge of it, James produces an effect of multiple things stirring unseen. As he says, he creates the impression of society listening, as with its ear to the ground, to a quantity of baffling echoes; just as he creates the impression, too, of Hyacinth and others from his milieu "listening" in the same way to the Princess's normal setting. This impression of gulfs and bafflement is the prime one needed for effecting the illusion of contrasts of great size and range.

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Art of Novel, pp. 77-78.

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Comparison with Stendahl's Le Rouge et la Noir and with Turgeniev's Tierres Vierges clarifies this point: Sheer variety of milieux is as much suggested by James's novel, I think, as by Stendahl's more exhaustive definition of the several environments Julien Sorel moves between. Instead of fully documenting distinct milieux, James mainly renders their impinging on one another and merely guessing about one another. Turgeniev's novel also offers an instructive parallel. Tierres Vierges focuses on the effects for individuals of commitment to a brand of subterranean political action; details documenting the requirements of such a commitment therefore are necessary. Since The Princess essays to represent that scale of unmediated contrasts which motivates anarchist striving, an effect of panoramic differences is more apropos than is thoroughness in presenting the political movement its hero joins.

Doubtless, too, James did not forget that Daniel Deronda failed to achieve an effective illusion of great variety by alternating between Gwendolen Harleth's story and Deronda's education in the influence of different environments. In many respects, George Eliot's novel appears to aim for the panoramic effect apropos to the germ of The Princess; and Daniel Deronda also attempts to enforce as the lesson of this scale of contrast the injunction never to assume—or the danger of committing oneself to dogmas. Though James limits Hyacinth's glimpses and accents his exclusions, he gains more illusion of variety than George Eliot does by following Deronda's lengthy "initiations." The Princess manages better to render the world's complexity than does Daniel Deronda, because James centers within one imaginative consciousness in the position to feel acutely the contrasts.
The Tragic Muse also centers inside a consciousness even though that person, Miriam Rooth, is always objectively presented. Miriam is never "gone behind" as are the other personae; nevertheless, her subjective state--summarized in the title of the novel--is the point on which an architecture is erected. James's preface describes this central consciousness as "the uplifted state to which sacrifices and submissions loom large, but loom just so because they must write sympathy, write passion, large," and as the consciousness of "postponing the 'world' to one's individual conception of other and finer decencies." Into such a center of interest are fused two other awarenesses, Nick Dormer's and Peter Sherringham's. That is to say, the unity achieved in the fiction is really tighter than a close linking of the three main figures on the level of plot.

The main concern of the novel is to show the reason that conflict between art and other goods of life is inevitable. Three "typical examples" or equally illustrative cases of the necessary conflict are selected for foreground figures. For the following reason, exactly three such illustrations are needed, instead of two or four: two of the cases are antithetic, both in (1) degree of perception of the truth which the three illustrate and in (2) the side of the conflict which each chooses. The third case demonstrates in one single figure both aforementioned contrasts between the two cases. Comparing Miriam's relation with Nick to her relation with

54 Art of Novel, p. 93.

55 Ibid., p. 92.
Peter, shows one that a conflict between the demands of art and some other goods of life is absolutely inescapable. (She fails to convince either side to the conflict, either Nick or Peter, that art can serve life without a sacrifice of art, or that life can serve art without a sacrifice of itself.) And, comparing Nick's influence on Miriam with Miriam's influence on Peter brings out that full recognition of the inescapable conflict helps to check its damage, whereas denial of the conflict exacerbates it.

Nick Dormer is an obscure painter, and possibly only a minor talent, who has perceived that a sacrifice of something he greatly values (the understanding of those whom he loves) is necessary if he is to make his devotion to art his foremost motive and supreme value. Miriam Rooth is a successful actress of superior gifts. She learns more slowly and less completely than Nick, through the agency of her relations with him, that serving art with adequate devotion means cutting oneself off from other of life's goods. Nick's sacrifice for art makes him personally interesting to Miriam. She conceives of forwarding Nick's art by herself giving up her art of the theater to share his life. At the same time, she is being urged by Peter Sherringham to leave the stage to become a diplomatist's wife. A seeming exponent of the highest standards of dramatic art, Sherringham cannot decide himself to sacrifice for this belief his role in the world. Nick chooses art and Peter eventually chooses the world; but Miriam for a period of time tries to believe either that love is a direct help to art or that a devotion to art is no obstacle to love. When Nick's type of reaction to her implied offer is
followed by Peter's kind of offer to her, Miriam learns that there is no way for her to gain both personal fulfillment (love) and the life of art. The reason for the necessary impasse is that the two kinds of value are equally worthy to be held supreme. Each therefore demands, with equal right and in order to retain its character, to be served foremost.

Miriam confides in Nick that she envisages a happy marriage as a direct gain to her art—or to someone else's. Nick's response to this implied offer shows her what it means to be a serious artist,

James's preface summarizes the central situation of the novel in this way:
If the man, however, who holds her personally dear yet holds her extremely personal message to the world cheap, so the man capable of a consistency and, as she regards the matter, of an honesty so much higher than Sherringham's virtually cares, "really" cares, no straw for his fellow struggler. If Nick Dormer attracts and all-indifferently holds her, it is because, like herself and unlike Peter, he puts "art" first; but the most he thus does for her in the event is to let her see how she may enjoy, in intimacy, the rigour it has taught him and which he cultivates at her expense. This is the situation in which we leave her. . . . (Art of Novel, p. 95.)

It should be noted that James felt this situation had another dimension which, because of his audience—the novel was serialized in The Atlantic—he could not treat. It is specifically love-within-marriage that Miriam learns cannot be chosen as a supreme value simultaneously with art:

Sherringham . . . offers Miriam marriage, ever so "handsomely"; but if . . . nothing might lead me further than the question of what it would have been open to us—us novelists especially in the old days—to show, "serially," a young man in Nick Dormer's quite different position as offering or a young woman in Miriam's as taking. . . . The trade of the stage player, and above all of the actress, must have so many detestable sides for the person exercising it that we scarce imagine a full surrender to it without a full surrender, not less, to every immediate compensation, to every freedom and the largest ease within reach: which presentment of the possible case for Miriam would yet have been condemned . . . to remain very imperfect. (Ibid.)
and in turn makes her response to Peter's offer so clear-sighted about his real valuation of art as to force him for the first time to acknowledge to himself the possible existence of the conflict. The three cases thus are three degrees of awareness of the conflict they all illustrate. They form a hierarchy of degrees of perception of the dilemma to which each equally bears witness. Miriam's counter-proposal to Peter's ultimatum, the suggestion that if he love her he give up his career in the world to serve her art, meets a baffled reception. Peter begins to acknowledge the conflict and that unwittingly he has chosen one side of it. On the other hand, despite the fact that Miriam gains clearer grasp of the conflict, she continues, like Peter and unlike Nick, to try to rid herself (by means of certain rationalizations) of some of its pain. Many of the later events of the novel are selected to oppose the two artists, Nick and Miriam, in this respect.

All the characters of the novel are selected to provide, through their relationships with one another, facets of the central

57 Returning to Nick's studio, Miriam comments on her disinclination to desert the rewards of success on the English stage, despite her desire to learn thoroughly the art of the actor. She admits, uneasily, that she cannot make the sacrifices entailed by returning to Mme. Carré and the French stage; she readily finds the rationalization that she is fighting to change English stage conditions. (She similarly rationalizes the easier course of allowing the pseudo-artist Basil Dashwood to become her manager-husband, as a step in favor of her professional development.) Although Nick is presented with similar opportunities to avert his face somewhat from the conflict so painful to him, he does not take them. He decides to struggle against his "fatal facility"; rejects Nash's asseveration that the artist need not produce; and does not marry Julia Dallow, who now would forward his "success" as an artist. Yet he is the more attracted to Julia.
awareness of an inevitable art-life tension. The entire dramatis 58
personae functions to exhibit antitheses stemming from that source.
Miriam however is the one figure who summarizes all facets of the
conflict; she is the prime representative of the awareness that art
necessarily makes "human and social complications," as James states
his germ in the preface. As "the tragic muse," she is the "inclusive
case," symbolic of the inevitable failure to do away with the conflict.
The lines from King John which early in the novel Miriam selects to
recite to Mme. Carré in fact present the subjective state Miriam later
grows into and on which the novel's architecture centers. These lines
describe the central consciousness, realized in the three foreground
figures (but mainly in Miriam) of the novel:

For grief is proud and makes his owner stoop,
To me and to the state of my great grief
Let kings assemble.

58 Miriam's desire to forward Nick's devotion to art is
balanced by Julia Dallow's desire, at first, for the very opposite.
However, both of these women who desire, for opposite reasons, to
enter Nick's life are equally frustrated by the conflict they try to
compromise in opposed ways. Miriam, whose talent is entirely for
art, is also balanced against Biddy Dormer, whose capacity is for
life exclusively. Miriam, who is endowed to meet the demands of art,
eyarns for a personal relation that can augment her art by providing
her with the goods of life. Biddy, who has no talent for art, tries
to accept as wholeheartedly as her brother the prospect of a life
leaving unfulfilled her real personal capacities.

In one sense, Gabriel Harvey is the antithesis of Nick's
view of an art-life dichotomy. But in another sense Harvey stands
with Nick against Peter's implicit choice: To Gabriel, art is
serious and any other kind of success or life trivial. But, since
art for him is "being" more essentially than it is "doing," Gabriel
recognizes no conflict such as may stem from the choices necessary to
"doing" or producing in art. On the other hand, although Gabriel's
"artist in life" is anathema to Peter Sherringham, Peter nevertheless
argues to Miriam that she can perfectly fulfill her dramatic
capabilities by a success in the world.
The "pride" of real loss consists of unflinching recognition of it as the permanent reality of human life. To "stoop" to confront such grief is therefore to make of it, as Miriam says, a "throne." As well as the grand inexorableness of the art-life conflict, the lines from King John summarize what The Tragic Muse shows to be the nature of the genuine artist: he is one who by confronting life and representing it as it is, transforms its worth.

A later passage in the novel (in the key scene between Nick and Miriam before she receives Peter's final ultimatum) again echoes these lines to show that the artist's key difference from "the world" is his valuation, for its own sake, of fuller consciousness of reality. Mrs. Rooth voices thus the different premise of "the world" or respectability: "I repudiate," she says, "the charge of a false humility. I've been through too many troubles to be proud, and a pleasant polite manner was the rule of my life." "A pleasant polite manner," in this view, takes precedence over confronting experience; such a manner is a "rule," an artificially erected wall between one and the necessity of exercising moral awareness. While the "humility" of which Mrs. Rooth speaks in fact remains a proud refusal to engage

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When Mme. Carré remarks that she prefers to these lines and to Constance's "squatting down on the floor" the "plus belles choses" of Camille, Miriam courageously objects that such stooping is the height of dignity if one "feels" with what directness it embraces experience. See VII, 341.

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VIII, 309.
reality; her daughter, the artist, makes of such painful confrontation and stooping, a "throne." Throughout the novel, the artist's recognition of the art-life conflict is contrasted to the denial by respectability and the world that art is worthy of being one's supreme value and thus inevitably in conflict with other supreme goods of life. It is this opposition which especially suffuses the novel with irony: Denial of the conflict is shown to derive from a failure to confront experience and to examine one's values, and this failure in turn is shown to exacerbate the very conflict it denies. Conversely, recognition of the conflict, whether the recognition chooses art (like Nick Dormer) or life (as eventually his sister Biddy does), transforms the grief in accepting it.

In Mrs. Rooth's bemusement by her own fantasies, and particularly in her vagueness of relation to any actuality, James satirizes—as he does in Lady Agnes's "helplessness" to retain her son though she loses a Member of Parliament—the arch-confusion of respectability: overestimation of its own strength. Because Lady Agnes and Mrs. Rooth dare not face experience and have developed no habit of examining their own values, "art" for them must be either a depraved taste or, at the most, a decorative pastime if it seems to deal with accepted verities.

Those who recognize the conflict have examined their own values strenuously enough to understand that the interpretation of experience always is needed, so that art's representation is worthy of being held a supreme end in itself, even though not compatible with all other goods nor suited to all talents.

If she cannot derive from the part as grand effects as Miriam, Biddy Dormer is, at moments, as much the tragic muse: In her abruptly terminated farewell to Peter, Biddy understands that to "stoop" to penetrate his pleasant mannered disguises (his tacit appeals to the good form of not questioning him further on his motives) and his inconsistencies, in order to try to get at the actuality of his unavowed relation to the actress, is to be dignified rather than ashamed—as respectability would have her be—of her own straightness.
Dramatic art has the central role in this architecture founded on the "human and social complications" of the life devoted to art. For two reasons, an actress rather than a painter or a writer is made the "symbolic" or inclusive case: (1) the theater depends more than other arts—in its practice as an art—on the nature of its public, and (2) for James, the theater shows especially clearly the essence of all art—the creation of an illusion by manipulating material, however intractable. James's dramatic criticism shows that he regarded the theater as the most genuinely popular of the arts, the medium of one of the most exacting arts, and a striking examplar of the creation of an effect quite distinguishable from the material used in that creation. Furthermore, he found the London stage of the 1880's and 1890's the area where British Philistinism paid its most sincere homage to the idea of artistic endeavor but at the same time revealed most clearly the superficiality of its appreciation of any art. The priorities given to lavish scenery, lighting and costume, together with the worship of certain performers, evinced, James thought, a surprising tribute to the idea of representation by a society emphatically convinced of art's unimportance. Yet the same characteristics of course also showed the lack of serious standards in the English theater. If any other art had been used centrally in this novel, the ironic relation between the artist and his public, or the world, could not have been so probed. For both the status of the theater and the actor's situation in English society reveal the gulf between the standards of art and the values of the world even at that point where the artist is most dependent on and most influential with
his public. The stage world can stand as a supreme illustration of
the irony of a dependent relation between the opposed entities.
The Tragic Muse raises the question of whether the stage can truly be
an art, and employs the theater to show art's dependence on, while
constant conflict with, the world. For another reason, the theater
summarizes irony. More immediately than any other art, the stage can
be used to show that value may be created out of material of quite
different quality. The irony of making a valuable interpretation of
life out of mere snippets and snatches of experience, tinsel and rags,
and even from a performer's experience of what may be personally
coarsening, absorbed James as applying to all the arts. By his choice
to make an actress the "symbolic" case of art in The Tragic Muse, he
ensured that images constantly conveying the contrast of a fine
potential to its actuality would dominate in the fiction. He
presented all art in a specifically ironic type of relation to the
world.

As for construction, the shape of the action of The Tragic
Muse derives, still more clearly than does that of The Princess, from

Moreover, had James tried to make Nick Dormer and the art of
painting the central case, the "art" in necessary conflict with its
source "the world" would either have remained relatively undefined or
would have had to be treated by extranovelistic means. Either more
technical exposition of the painter's procedure before his canvas must
have been provided at the expense of the novelist's prime focus on
human character and relations, or "art" must have remained a vaguely
demarcated kind of activity. However, since the actor's medium is his
own speech, gesture, figure and personality, making central the
always-acting Miriam directly gives to the reader in the scenes of the
novel samples of the art she creates. Thus, too, a reader can learn
directly the irony that rich effects may be gained from very different
material.
the nature of the central consciousness. The main figures here are initially far more free than is Hyacinth; James stresses their creation even of their original alternatives. This is his reason for using so much space on Nick's launching a political career of promise, instead of initiating the novel closer to Nick's decision for painting; and for picturing at some length the obstacles Miriam must overcome in order to have the opportunity of attempting to become an actress. Nick's and Miriam's first decisions are not within a field that is given, but from among alternatives which their awarenesses first have located and which they then have sacrificed for. Second decisions then necessarily follow from the first ones to attempt the life of art. At this later stage of the action, the alternatives before any one of the three main figures derive from his previous choices, and from his perception of how these choices have affected others' view of him.

Each chapter of The Tragic Muse is a forward step of its action, a step stemming from one character's way of dealing with the art-life conflict. Each of these steps includes as well the effect of the awareness of the conflict by one of the three cases on another's perception of the conflict. From chapter to chapter, therefore, the novel always juxtaposes a greater to a lesser recognition of the fundamental reality. Its structure always sets exacerbation of the

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The represented obstacles are more internal than external: her ignorance of how much she is a beginner, and her premature pride that the art of acting will give her personal independence.
art-life tension immediately alongside its contrary--transformation of the conflict and loss into a "throne." The basic units of the fiction always enforce irony. Too, the alternation of these chapters, which focus in turn on the consciousness of one of the three cases, i.e., on "aspects" of the central awareness, regularly prepare for the wholly scenic treatment of certain occasions wherein crucial decisions are made. This consistency is especially visible in the fact that all previous chapters build towards a climaxing occasion handled as pure scene in Chapter 45, where Miriam's choice in response to Peter's ultimatum is a counter-proposal that so baffles him. All prior units have, by alternating "aspects," prepared this scene to imply the state of mind from which Miriam makes her decision so to reply to Peter, even though none of the previous chapters has "gone behind" Miriam.

One brief example can be provided: Chapter 44 presents Miriam's second visit to Nick's studio, wherein she determines that Nick is not personally affected by her revelation of Peter's offers to her, by her reaction to Peter's character, nor by her expression of desire for a happy marriage. Chapter 45 next presents Peter's after-theater interview with Miriam at her house in St. John's Wood. Here Peter's finally serious offer to Miriam, and his plea, is baffled, first by Miriam's honesty and then by her scorn for the inconsistencies in his valuation of the theater. Chapter 43 had shown Peter's conversation with Biddy, wherein his denial of any conflict behind his behavior had but increased his own tension, hurt Biddy, and made Biddy misunderstand Miriam. The sequence thus proceeds from a demonstration of how blindness to the conflict exacerbates it (Chapter 43), to Nick's full awareness of the conflict bringing about a similar understanding in Miriam (Chapter 44), which in turn is efficacious in bringing Peter (in Chapter 45) to some recognition. A rendering of how blindness to the conflict increases it is followed by exhibitions that awareness can contain the painful and debilitating effects of the conflict.
III


a group of my productions, here re-introduced, which have in common, to their author's eyes, the endearing sign that they asserted in each case an unforeseen principle of growth. They were projected as small things, yet had finally to be provided for as comparative monsters. That is my own title for them, though I should perhaps resent it if applied by another critic--above all in the case of the piece before us. 66

This sixth preface stresses the existence of an apparent disparity. It insists on the constricted scale of the raw material used by *Awkward Age* (the fact that its situation concerned a very special London group), on the comparatively small importance of its germ (not a "primary" motive like that of *Tragic Muse*), and on the fact that a light tone is appropriate to such a germ. At the same time, the preface in several connections notes how surprising is the length of the novel when one considers both the scale of its material and the weight of its donnée. James states that until his re-reading of *Awkward Age*, in preparing for the Edition, he had tended to accept critical stricture against this disparity. He had accepted the view that this novel, a monster of "overtreatment," violated decorum by

66 *Art of Novel*, p. 98. (The italics are mine.)
"pumping . . . almost gaspingly dry" a small case although not a trivial one.

But also the preface claims that now, by 1907-1908, James has altered that opinion; now he believes Awkward Age triumphanty to succeed in what it attempts, and not to violate decorum. His final view is that its treatment remains appropriately light and that the length of the novel is not at all disparate in scale to the weight of its theme.

Much of the preface is devoted to showing that the import of Awkward Age extends far beyond the presentation of an imbroglio of manners among a special London set. James's preface could hardly be more explicit that the particular situation he uses interests him as a convenient touchstone to the premises of the English order and to the several kinds of loss these bases necessitate. The preface also emphasizes that the theme of a work of fiction may not be identified simply with its raw material; theme is the result of the artist's kind of treatment of his material, and "overtreatment" cannot be decided by comparing the size of the material with the length of the work. Thus the "proper" subject, as James calls the theme of Awkward Age, is intimately connected with its formal properties. The latter have much in common with the preceding two novels in the Edition.

Again according to its preface, the most important formal characteristic of Awkward Age is its composition from units which are "aspects" functioning to illumine, alternately, a central interest.

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This structural plan is prior to, or is even more significant than, the other striking formal feature of the novel: that all its units are "social occasions" scenically treated, so that the novel contains absolutely no "going behind" into any one consciousness. This restriction to scenic treatment of all the material affects its more basic composition by "aspects." For example, some important refinements become necessary of the kind of alternation of "aspects" used in Tragic Muse. Nevertheless, Awkward Age exhibits the same fundamental composition—"scenic consistency" combined with centering of interest—as The Princess and Tragic Muse exhibit. The novel in the ninth volume of the edition is very closely related to the prior two, for it carries to a higher pitch the same techniques they combine. On the evidence of the prefaces as well as on internal evidence, Awkward Age seems simultaneously to climax the sequence of Volumes I through VIII and to open a second unit of the edition.

The similarities in construction between Awkward Age and Tragic Muse have rarely been noted, yet they are highly significant.

68 This very important point is confirmed by the statement in the preface to Tragic Muse that Awkward Age similarly is built on "multiplication of aspects"—which is James's phrase there for "the charm of the scenic consistency." He says at this point in the preface to Vol. VII that perhaps a fault of Awkward Age is its too "luxurious" multiplication of aspects, or his attempt to focus too many other awarenesses besides his central one while yet keeping it central. It should be noted that this doubt about the success of Awkward Age is very different from questioning either the restriction to scenic treatment or the length. This fact is another of the many indications that in James's view the compositional plan of Awkward Age provided its basic "dramatic" quality, and that restriction to scenic treatment was a secondary feature which occasioned further refinements of the basic plan.

69 I do not know of any critical discussion which touches on these similarities.
In both novels, an architecture centers on the consciousness of a character who is objectively presented, i.e., never "gone behind." And in both novels the situation of this center--her position in relation to the other characters of the fiction--comprises her consciousness. Finally, in both novels the center is a case "inclusive" of, or bears a symbolic relation to, the other awarenesses and attitudes presented within the fiction.

For clarity and emphasis, we may put the above points in still another way:

(1) The "different placing of the center" required by an architecture having scenic consistency means that the point of unity is still the interior state of one character, but is especially his subjective relation to others. (This is so because composing with scenic consistency prevents the center from becoming "usurping," and avoids that result by two means. (a) It presents--in turn--other interiors which are also aspects of the central consciousness, and (b) it chooses for the center an awareness capable of penetrating other interiors.) Since within such an architecture the point of unity then is a central person's consciousness of an interpersonal equation, the center of Tragic Muse and Awkward Age is a consciousness of a complex of attitudes causing and maintaining a central situation. To summarize: in both novels the center's position comprises her consciousness.

(2) Choosing never to "go behind" the center of an architecture built with scenic consistency imposes a special problem of unity--or of sustaining "pictorial fusion" of the entire work, as James puts this
point in the preface to *Tragic Muse*. (This special problem of course did not arise in *The Princess*, where the center of the architecture built with scenic consistency is continuously gone behind.) Even though the *dramatis personae* has been selected to be "aspects" of the center, unity is difficult to maintain and to stress when the nature of the central consciousness is never directly presented but always implied through pure scenes. This difficulty of gaining "pictorial fusion" of the scenically consistent work whose center is, in addition, always objectively presented accounts for the fact that *Tragic Muse* and *Awkward Age* employ a symbolic kind of relation between the consciousness of the center (or his situation) and the other awarenesses reflected in the fiction. That is to say, the other characters not only are elements in ("aspects" of) the center's awareness; in addition the other characters represent such attitudes towards a core situation as mirror the essential qualities of that situation. Thus, when such aspects are alternated, they always are strongly felt to be parts of a single picture although the central consciousness has yet to be implied by means of the alternation. A discernible identity between these alternating "aspects" or attitudes and the qualities of the situation they concern means unity always is felt even though the center is not at once and is never directly exhibited.

For example, the center of *Tragic Muse* is Miriam Rooth's painful consciousness that an art-life conflict is inevitable because both terms are worthy of being valued supremely. Since there is no way to gain all, or to make both art and the other goods of life supreme in one's value system, some loss is necessary. Miriam reaches
this awareness through her capacity to understand the relation between Nick's and Peter's attitudes towards the art-life relationship and their behavior to her. Yet this understanding of Miriam's is never directly represented, but always is implied through scenes whose power of implication is prepared for by prior direct representation of the two men's consciousnesses. Miriam's situation is caused by Nick's and Peter's awareness, and her implied awareness is particularly of that causal relationship. Further, the qualities of Miriam's position that are summarized in the title—*The Tragic Muse*—bear another, a symbolic, relation to Nick's and to Peter's attitudes towards the human and social complications which a devotion to art brings about. The three cases in the foreground of *Tragic Muse* have a plot influence on one another, and the three are equally causes of a single result—the position of one of the cases. A second point is that two of the three cases provide the elements of the third case: they are the "aspects" of this central consciousness. In addition, Nick's and Peter's cases equally express the essential qualities of Miriam's situation; the three persons alike reflect what is summarized in the phrase "tragic muse"—that the confrontation of loss as a necessity of experience may in some sense transfigure grief. Here becomes apparent an additional reason that the actress is the unifying center of the novel in place of Nick Dormer or Biddy Dormer, each of whom faces just as steadily and wholly as does Miriam the inevitable reason for the art-life conflict. For, besides being the result of the art-life conflict, Miriam's role of tragedienne particularly well expresses the points that gain may be had only through a highly conscious exercise of
selection and that loss may be the way to a "throne."

It is again true of *Awkward Age*, where again never "going behind" the center has been added to scenic consistency, that the reflected attitudes towards the center's situation not only cause it but also are related in a symbolic way to its essential qualities. The "awkwardness" of Nanda Brookenham's position both is caused by others' attitudes and especially summarizes the ineptitude common to these views. (At the same time the views also represent aspects or parts of Nanda's total consciousness of the situation.) Again the title of the novel summarizes this position which comprises the center's awareness and stresses qualities of her situation which are exactly mirrored in the other exhibited attitudes. In this novel the point of unity is the disorder and the inconsistencies unnecessarily created by, yet unrecognized by, English society: Devoted to compromise and lacking lucidity, the English order involves certain radical confusions and paradoxes which it denominates mere "awkwardnesses."

A special refinement of composition in *Awkward Age* is that absolutely all the awarenesses are implied; none is "gone behind." Purely scenic treatment obtains throughout, so that even the "aspects" of the center are implied. This fact of course means that still more reliance on the order of presentation, on juxtaposition of details and of blocks of material, is required. Although it resembles a stage

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70 In the words of James's preface, these radical confusions are a "compunctious" bravery, a freedom lacking the courage of its condition, and an exposure for protection's sake.
play in the respect that the treatment always is scenic, *Awkward Age* is quite unlike a stage play in the complexity of its structure. Such complexity was necessary to make the central focus thoroughly subjective. The architecture of this novel is founded on a consciousness exactly as much as that of *The Portrait* and to a degree unmatched by the great majority of plays. The architecture is infinitely more complex than any structure designed to be enacted before an audience can afford to try to be. James knew very well that *Awkward Age* was not a play for stage presentation; he was not attempting to make it one. His preface points out that he has attained a far more complex theme than any composition written for enactment can seek, yet that he has gained this intricacy of theme in *Awkward Age* while keeping all the other conditions of a play. (The aim of enactment demands, besides a simpler structure, a faster pace than reading *Awkward Age* submits to.)

The next portion of my discussion will seek to show that the central focus of this novel is far more similar to that of *The Portrait* than to that of a play, and to identify what further modifications in the composition by "scenic consistency" as already developed in *Tragic Muse* were necessitated in *Awkward Age* by a scenic handling of absolutely all its blocks of material.

The germ of *Awkward Age* is that the exposure of an individual and loss for society attends the English combination of ineptitude in theoretical matters with regard for tradition for its own sake—particularly attends the English preference for compromise and the English resistance to theoretical change as both are evidenced in one
English group's conception of how to deal with an "awkward age." In James's own view, embroilment and loss necessarily result because English society attempts what it calls a "compromise" but what really is a muddle in which theory and practice are at odds. Since it does not wish to scale its conversation to the interests and knowledge of the young (as is the American practice), refuses too the French method of making marriage the condition of youth's admission to society, and yet clings to the theory that marriageability consists of ignorance in the female young, English society embraces the absurd stance that knowledge is not really knowledge. The two logical alternatives to the English system which James's preface mentions--giving up any freedom of talk by the circle wherein the young girl is present at her pleasure, and excluding her until marriage has "corrected" her ignorance--are mutually exclusive; therefore, together they reveal the absurdity of an attempt by compromise to retain the theory behind them both. The French, conceiving of "fifty different proprieties, meeting fifty different cases," distinguish the propriety for society—that its talk be "good" (i.e., frank and easy, full of an "explicit interest in life") from that for the young girl, a "proper inexperience." But the English order, wherein "individual appreciations of propriety have not been formally allowed for" despite an acceptance in practice of much eccentricity of behavior, tries to have the young female both

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71 Art of Novel, pp. 104; 102.

72 Ibid., p. 105.
present at the half-free intercourse of experienced persons and plausibly inexperienced. Because of the very subterfuges adopted in the conversation she hears, the young girl cannot remain ignorant. As Nanda points out, she cannot help most noticing what is so "awfully unutterable." Yet her society defines the girl's morality, and everyone else's, in a way that takes no account of the conditions which it has invented. Morality comes to mean preserving in the young girl a plausible appearance of ignorance, and in adults an appearance—such as no one can successfully challenge—of having nothing to hide from the candid observation of the young.

As a result of admitting her to her mother's kind of circle while retaining only one "grand propriety" for the young girl and for everyone else, Nanda is "exposed" to the possible loss of her opportunities for marriage where her affections are most likely to have been placed. Some of the usual English "solutions" to the awkward age dilemma James glances at in his preface to show why they are not "solutions" at all but sacrifices: Frequently the girl is "married off," married that is outside of the family acquaintance, or where her exposure is not so well known. However the "resented interference" is dealt with after a "period of tensions," there has been no solution, for she has nonetheless been exposed to the danger of possible personal

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73 IX, 389.

74 Art of Novel, p. 104.

75 Ibid., p. 105.
loss. This danger of course is not her acquirement of knowledge but how the young men she is likely to know best and to have focused her affections upon will regard that acquirement. The society which deals in this way with the "ingenuous mind" is no less exposed to loss than is the girl, for its compromise has "condemned the freedom of the circle to be self-conscious, compunctuous, on the whole much more timid than brave."

Nanda's mother, for instance, acknowledges that she hasn't the desire or the courage of Lady Fanny Cashmore, a "pagan," to be indifferent to "what people say." Mrs. Brook realizes that the English standard of propriety rests on how few appearances one provides others an opportunity to "say" anything about. Her own circle is based on a thoroughgoing acceptance, even an exhilarated one, of this concept of morality. The necessity of detecting accurately, by means of talk which communicates while preserving ambiguity, the true facts of every case so that the most reliable "front" for the case can be devised, becomes an exciting game. It is a game offering power, too, to him who best masters it. Mrs. Brook's function for her satellites (e.g., Mr. Cashmore and his wife) is, by consulting with her intimates, to supply and to disseminate the view by which propriety can be ensured without sacrificing the utmost freedom of practice. As long as the Lady Fannys cannot be regarded as having "bolted," propriety is

76 Art of Novel, pp. 102-103.

77 Ibid., p. 105.

78 IX, 168; 280.
satisfied so that accessibility to society need not be sacrificed. And Mrs. Brook undertakes to see that the Lady Fannys need not "bolt"; she "sees them through" in this sense. Mrs. Brook's circle does not specialize in flouting violations of propriety; on the contrary, its freedom consists in finding clever means by which that rigid English theory may be retained and supported without involving an inflexible application.

However the greatest ingenuities of this free-talking circle are not exercised on reconciling a diversity of sexual practice to the retention of a single theory of propriety. They are expended to reconcile the absorbing interest in money (and the intense competition with one another for money) to the theory that this pursuit is vulgar. The Brookenhams are most successful at finding a way to "live off" other people without destroying the appearance that they find it deplorable to have to do so. Mrs. Brook's cleverness is not most exercised in finding means of parasitism or of "getting in" before others; such means are relatively easy to find even for stupid Harold. Instead, Mrs. Brook is cleverest at maintaining the appearance of herself regarding her maneuvers as an unfortunate necessity—as a requirement highly deplorable however realistically faced. All the members of her circle, with the exception of Mitchy, find ingenious means to appear to deprecate their keen competition with one another.

Mrs. Brook soothes the agitation of Mr. Cashmore, for instance, by supplying him with what view to take so that he need not try to divorce (and so expose himself) in order to show that he has a sense of propriety: Mrs. Brook supplies him with, and herself disseminates, the attitude that his so obviously uninhibited wife is a "glorious pagan," i.e., that her indifference to appearances guarantees her fundamental simplicity and her having little or nothing to hide.
over their paramount interest, money. They manage to seem to regard this competition as a distasteful fact, and so not the final truth about their relations. Mrs. Brook's method of frankly and immediately avowing all the facts (talking "freely") in order to build up a fiction about her motives—the fiction that she deplores these facts—is "worked" clearly for the first time in the novel in her handling of her son Harold's debts. Remarkably, she implies to Mitchy that she not only knows about Harold's "borrowing" but also has no real wish to stop it; she takes the line that the family impecuniosity, rather than greed, has brought her to this awful pass.

Vanderbank, Mrs. Brook's closest intimate, is a match for the lady at this game. Unlike Mrs. Brook, Van is in a position where, for the time being, he can afford scrupulously to avoid taking money (or its equivalent) from anyone. But he counts on "working" this exemption eventually to the end of being supported by someone else despite his own apparent protest. Mrs. Brook correctly points out that Van is most

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80 Mitchy's attitude, since he possesses a fortune which is the object of much of the circle's struggle, is one of apparently sympathetic amusement both with the imputed "necessity" of the maneuvers, and with the rejection of them as "vulgar." He is especially useful to Mrs. Brook and her intimates because he so completely lends himself to the appearance of accepting at face value their pretense of wishing not to have to take money from their friend simply because he is their bootmaker's rich grandson. Though Mitchy does not entirely let them "off" with this pretense, since he lets them see his amusement with its ingenuity, he is too much of a confirmed and good-natured observer not to enjoy accepting their pretended horror of the process even when the invoked definition of "vulgar" is most invidious to himself. He enjoys, in other words, taking on all the stigma of vulgarity (admitting the power of money), and he dresses self-consciously to accent the comedy of his role.

81 Harold, though far less adroit, takes on some of his mother's brilliance in this line of implication when he indicates to Mr. Cashmore that the indignity of borrowing is forced upon the son by the parental greed for their own pleasures.
disconcerted by the fact that Mr. Longdon's confidence to him that Nanda will receive a marriage settlement makes it necessary that Van, if he wants to get this money, should appear to accept a bribe. Though Vanderbank is clever enough to tell his would-be patron that such an appearance wouldn't make him cavil, we know from a later scene between Van and Mitchy that Van fears exactly the effect of this appearance on the possibility of Mr. Longdon's settling still more money on him. For her own ends, Mrs. Brook most "freely" voices in Van's presence the guess that Nanda will get more out of Mr. Longdon as "compensation" for Van's not marrying her. The mother's avowal of this calculation puts the young man in another ticklish position: if, in order to avoid marrying Nanda, he adopts this convenient and flattering appearance of wanting for the girl a still larger fortune, can he count perhaps on Nanda's generosity to obtain for him from Mr. Longdon at least an equal compensation for not having leapt at Nanda's money? That Mrs. Brook's is the supreme adroitness is perceived by Mitchy, who remarks to Mr. Longdon that there is a greater "cleverness" even than Van's and certainly than the Duchess's.

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When Van stresses to Mitchy that Mr. Longdon sees that Van hesitates to be bribed, Mitchy wonders aloud if the older gentleman knows "how little" Van really does so. (IX, 375-376). The midnight scene between Van and Mitchy exhibits Van to be in conflict between (1) wanting to know Mr. Longdon's exact "figure" for Nanda (since Van guesses it to be only a portion of the benefactor's resources), and (2) trying to estimate whether he might not get more money out of Mr. Longdon, finally, by preserving his appearance of delicacy about money. Mr. Longdon's dowering of Nanda may be only a conscientious, and small, tribute to a past sentiment for her grandmother. Mr. Longdon remembers too Van's mother, Van reflects, and Mr. Longdon may yet prefer Van's delicacies to Nanda's differences from the kind of young girl the old gentleman is used to.
By feeding Van's initial distaste for the idea of marrying Nanda and arousing Van's calculation that he may gain still more money by another means, Mrs. Brook does succeed in gaining all of Mr. Longdon's money for her daughter, even while preserving her own appearance of preferring Van's participation in the available fortune.

Not the emphasis of English society on appearances but rather its singleness of commitment to one kind of appearance or to one standard is the object of James's lively satire in *Awkward Age*. He realizes that disparity between profession and practice is typical of any society, and hence a basis for any social comedy. What strikes James as typical and unusually anomalous about the English arrangement is its failure to project more than one standard. The member of parliament, the young girl, and her "awfully attractive" mother alike are required by the English theory to have the same "morality," or to present the same appearance, save that the young girl also is expected not to seem to understand that it is an appearance. The preface stresses that "the real inexpertness," "the vain effort" of Mrs. Brook's circle towards the courage of "admitting" its peculiarity (its degree of departure in practice from the single English theory) is "precisely part of my tale." At bottom the novel displays the ineptitude of the typical young Englishman's heritage of rigidity in theoretical matters, a rigidity which often results, moreover, in a

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84 *Art of Novel*, p. 105.
moral obtuseness. Van cannot easily accept Nanda as his wife because of his theoretical prejudice against the inevitable result of conditions which he himself has fostered and continues to foster. Nanda's only plea for herself to Van—that she "cannot help knowing" and is even less responsible than Van for the issue he dislikes—falls on deaf ears because the young man's theory of one propriety is unalterable even by his perception of Nanda's real character. Van is genuinely prejudiced; whereas the figure of Mr. Longdon, who tells Mitchy that he is no observer but a "hater" who has a mass of prejudices against the present manners, is employed in the novel to reveal that a devotion to standards or to propriety need not lead to moral insensitivity. Mr. Longdon's reactions to Nanda indicate that theoretical rigidity and prejudice such as Van's is quite different from possessing concepts of proper behavior; and that in "an epoch of transition" the framing of new standards which take into consideration both the realities of changed social conditions and permanent moral values is more needed than is a simple reduction of all morality to what was the older propriety.

85 IX, 123; 152.

86 *Art of Novel*, p. 103.

87 By his contrast of Vanderbank, the normal Englishman, with Mr. Longdon, James presents much the same criticism of the English view of the "gentleman" made by Cardinal Newman in a famous passage. The novelist goes further in relating this moral deficiency to an intellectual one. The English seemed to him lacking in capacity for "play of mind" (or English institutions minimized this capacity) though also possessed of other kinds of genius.
Nanda's situation results from the interplay between all these motives, and the novel centers on her consciousness of that causal relation. The action built on this center moves towards Nanda's and society's loss; it also is the development of Nanda's (and Mr. Longdon's) understanding of the reasons for both these losses. Presenting with "scenic consistency" this action centered on Nanda's consciousness of how the interplay between attitudes of the others makes her situation, requires the alternation, as in *Tragic Muse*, of the other attitudes which are "aspects" of Nanda's total consciousness. The additional fact that *Awkward Age* throughout uses only scenic treatment requires two other maneuvers: first, that these occasions be selected to show one at a time the attitudes towards Nanda's situation; second, that the occasions and aspects be carefully ordered so that the sequence of conversations gradually can imply the more complex of the attitudes. Very much the same characters take part in every occasion that is a "lamp" on the center. Yet each of the books of the novel, presenting a different occasion, is named for one character: the occasion of that book especially forwards towards control of the situation his attitude towards the awkward age dilemma.

Book I is named "Lady Julia." Although she does not appear on stage (she is Nanda's maternal grandmother, whom the girl so much resembles physically), the book establishes her as a symbol of past conditions in which the dilemma was avoided because the nature of society's intercourse was entirely compatible with keeping the young

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*Art of Novel*, p. 110.
girl ignorant however much present. But the title of Book I is "Lady Julia" not simply because its occasion expositions this past alternative to Nanda's situation. (Like any competent playwright, James does not hold up his forward action for such exposition.)

Book I forwards towards control of Nanda's situation an invidious judgment, in the light of the "Lady Julia" past, of the girl: The social occasion of Book I is Vanderbank's "taking up" of Mr. Longdon's appeal to him for guidance: the initiation of their intimacy on certain grounds, and therefore of a particular opportunity for Vanderbank. Mr. Longdon's visit to Van's rooms forwards the young

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89 In Book I, Mr. Longdon's initial point of view, formed by the past of which Lady Julia is the symbol, is that there can be no better place for Nanda to await marriage "all in good time" than the "home circle" where the girl surely must be known and loved for herself, and which certainly can hold no harm for her.

90 One of the grounds is Mr. Longdon's frank admiration of Van's seeming confidently "in" his age--easily able to cut a prominent figure in it, as Mr. Longdon didn't himself deal with his youth's era. Another ground for the intimacy, one that especially strikes Van because it implies both Mr. Longdon's financial resources and the premising of his behavior on his sentiments, is that Mr. Longdon once had wanted to marry, when she first was widowed, Van's mother. Of course he had wanted even more, Van learns, to marry Lady Julia and yet distinctly has not offered his intimacy to Mrs. Brookenham, so that Van has himself to create the most certain ground of Mr. Longdon's interest in him—that the young man seems to share with the older the "Lady Julia" standpoint. Van learns of Mr. Longdon's chilled reaction to the changes in manners, and accordingly Van accents his own sincere judgment that the undeniable change has been for the worse.

But Van does not fathom that the "Lady Julia" attitude is not precisely Mr. Longdon's, or rather that it does not comprise all of Mr. Longdon's view. Mr. Longdon makes an invidious judgment of the present by the light of the past much more provisionally than Van realizes: We learn in Book I that the older man was an anomaly in his past, too, because he set so much store on feelings; and a reader of the book already meets evidence that Mr. Longdon is ready to criticize the present only where it endangers and distorts personal feeling more than had the past order. Nevertheless, Van succeeds in gaining Mr. Longdon's close interest. He convinces Mr. Longdon that, because the young man dislikes the features of London modernity in which he is plunged, he may yet be saved from their bad effects.
man's opportunity to gain Mr. Longdon's ear—and perhaps some of his fortune—merely by revealing part of what is Van's real opinion of his London life. This latter is the sentimentally nostalgic opinion that the present is worse than the "Lady Julia" past simply because the present is less simple. The conversation shows Van dealing successfully with an obstacle to his gaining the foremost place in Mr. Longdon's attention. Since the old gentleman is so much struck by Nanda's physical likeness to Lady Julia, perceived from Nanda's photograph, he perhaps might find her even more interesting than he finds Van. Book I shows Van gaining an advantage over this particular obstacle to his becoming Mr. Longdon's foremost intimate. For by stressing the difference between Mr. Longdon's memories of Lady Julia's environment and the present conditions of her granddaughter, Van prepares Mr. Longdon to be greatly struck, too, by Nanda's unlikeness to her grandmother. Book I forwards Van's access to Mr. Longdon's help. It forwards the possibility that the old gentleman's ultimate judgment of Nanda's dilemma will be similar to Van's—that it will be, in the light of "Lady Julia," an invidious one.

We can point to other examples of the fact that James names the books of Awkward Age for those attitudes towards its central situation which the occasion in each book helps towards eventual dominance of the situation. Book V is called "The Duchess" because its social occasion, the weekend at Mertle, forwards the Duchess's contention that a girl in Nanda's situation is exposed to personal
unhappiness by a particular hypocrisy of English society. The Duchess makes it explicit to Mr. Longdon in Book V that Nanda's so public lack of isolation may destroy her prospects of marriage with the young man she desires (Van), because Nanda's society credits appearances alone, but is unwilling to acknowledge this fact. Although this attitude is more unequivocally stated in Book V than it has been previously, and although it helps to precipitate a complicating step taken by Mr. Longdon, two other conversations are as prominent in Book V as his with the Duchess. One of them, Mr. Longdon's talk with Nanda herself, equally contributes to the step he takes. One wonders why the book is named for the Duchess since it opens with a crucial revelation of Nanda's feelings towards Van; next emphasizes Nanda's degree of likeness to Mr. Longdon, despite her superficially different manners; and then closes with Van's reception of Mr. Longdon's "attempt . . . at a compact." Moreover, Mr. Longdon already has thought of his step, to dōter Nanda and inform Van of this fact, well before the Duchess names it to him.

All four conversations of Book V confirm that Nanda is exposed to just the danger Mrs. Brook has contended non-existent, and exposed

91 Throughout Awkward Age the Duchess comments, not always good-naturedly, on the failure of English society to admit frankly and to remember clearly that after all it deals in mere appearances. She is entirely unperturbed by implications that her anxiety about her niece's associations ill sorts with her own concealed behavior, for in the Duchess's view, propriety clearly is but appearances alone. A consistently impeccable appearance of ignorance in the young girl, she therefore feels, can only be secured by a greatly ostentatious insistence on the girl's isolation from any means to penetrate society's appearances.

92 The Duchess of course has her own reasons for insisting thus explicitly to Mr. Longdon. She wants to remove the possibility of Nanda's marrying Mitchy (getting his fortune) and guesses that Mr. Longdon will try to make it possible for Nanda to marry her preference between Mitchy and Van.
for the reason the figure of the Duchess always suggests—that society is a complex tissue of appearances alone. At Mertle both Nanda and Mr. Longdon, in their different ways, learn surely for the first time that Van's personal response to marrying Nanda, regardless of what else he knows of her character, is thoroughly conditioned by what she appears to the rest of society. Too, the conversations of Book V (Nanda's with Van, Nanda's with Mr. Longdon; Mr. Longdon's with the Duchess and Little Aggie; Mr. Longdon's with Van) contrast Van's overriding need always to preserve an agreeable appearance with Nanda's opposite compulsion to let her friend Mr. Longdon see her exactly as she is, to reveal the full—and to him shocking—extent of her knowledge of the realities behind many of the social disguises.

Book V implicitly opposes the frankness which is the base of Nanda's intimacy with Mr. Longdon to the deviousness Mr. Longdon can perceive in Van's relation to him and which is driving them apart. By the end of the book, if Mr. Longdon wants to help Van, it is because he wants above all to help Nanda—a radical alteration (still unperceived by Van) of Mr. Longdon's attitude towards the young man throughout Books I-III.

Book V is titled "The Duchess" not only because application of her prescription for Nanda's case is attempted within the book, but, more importantly, because the Duchess's analysis of the causes of Nanda's exposure is corroborated by the increase of that danger which takes place in the occasion of the book. The weekend at Mertle forwards

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Nanda here discloses to Mr. Longdon her understanding of the Duchess-Petherton intrigue.
Mr. Longdon's and Nanda's loss of any illusion that Van can love Nanda, for Van is revealed fully to share English society's muddled attitude towards Nanda's appearance.

But if each book of this novel presents an occasion which demonstrates and helps towards dominance one attitude identified with one character, we have still to seek the principle by which these aspects have been selected and, especially, have been ordered. Since Little Aggie represents the Duchess's "alternative" to the English arrangement, does Book II, "Little Aggie," really provide a different aspect or "lamp" from that of Book V, "The Duchess"? Is the attitude in Book VI, "Mrs. Brook," truly distinguishable from that of Book VIII, "Tishy Grendon," which presents the occasion wherein Mrs. Brook so successfully ensures her plan for Nanda's future?

We first may note that the books are grouped in contrasting pairs. The "Lady Julia" attitude of Book I, for instance, is immediately followed by the opposite way of avoiding Nanda's situation, as summarized in "Little Aggie," Book II. Book III, "Mr. Longdon," and Book IV, "Mr. Cashmore," juxtapose the pretension at first cultivated by Nanda's mother—that her daughter is present but does not truly

94 Although they react to it in different ways, Nanda and Mr. Longdon also learn in Book V of Van's willingness to sacrifice to appearances his feelings towards everyone else, particularly his "friendship" with Nanda's mother. After Mr. Longdon learns from the Duchess what already he has seen for himself, that Van has an especially intimate relation with Mrs. Brook, he hears Van "give away" Mrs. Brook by suggesting to Mr. Longdon that she will oppose his marriage to Nanda. More than by anything else, Mr. Longdon is shocked by the fact that Van's innuendoes sacrifice Mrs. Brook to his appearance of delicately considering Mr. Longdon's proposal. Similarly, Van is caught by Nanda in the inconsistency of offering to her a present of particularly "personal" meaning to himself (a silver cigarette case) out of his desire to impress the girl with the gracefulness of his treatment of her.
understand all she hears—with the perception by Mr. Longdon that somehow the daughter may be knowledgeable without yet being spoiled. Books V and VI, "The Duchess" and "Mrs. Brook," oppose Nanda's exposure through her society's unwillingness to admit to itself that it credits appearances alone, to Nanda's similar exposure should her society frankly acknowledge that its basic interest is money. The dominant attitude of Book VII, "Mitchy," that Nanda loses because of factors beyond her responsibility, is the contrary of the emphasis in Book VIII, "Tishy Grendon," that Nanda herself chooses not to compromise with the demand for appearances. Books IX and X climactically contrast society's loss (Book IX, "Vanderbank") with the girl's individual loss (Book X, "Nanda") from Mrs. Brook's "solution."

It seems clear that the books are ordered so as to bring out, for one thing, wide differences between the central situation's possibilities. This statement should not be understood to mean that principally the novel contrasts different methods of handling the awkward age. Though such opposition is present in Awkward Age, it does not determine the novel's fundamental design or structure. By claiming that the blocks of material from which the novel is built are

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95 As he points out in his preface, James constantly gains an ironic effect by keeping within his reader's attention those arrangements, and their results, which are eschewed by the English system. (These alternatives are mutually exclusive, yet clearly the English system tries to retain the theory behind both of them.) His cast of characters—the Duchess and Little Aggie particularly, plus the characterization of Mr. Longdon as an older gentleman in touch with the different English past—is determined by the need to permeate the novel with a "light and ironical" tone such as will result from accenting the logically opposed alternatives which the actual situation under scrutiny tries to compromise. (See Art of Novel, pp. 105-106.)
ordered to contrast the possibilities of its central situation, I mean that each pair of books juxtaposes to the English attitude which has created Nanda's situation some degree of understanding of the situation's ineptness. At the same time, the succession of pairs moves the reader towards a widening perception of the full ineptness and of its causes. Each pair of aspects or attitudes or books is a gradation within a total and radical contrast between understanding of why Nanda's situation exposes both her and society, and the attitude towards Nanda's situation which causes and maintains it. At the

96 This succession first presents, in Books I and II, the contrary alternatives which the English system claims to compromise. Then the succession reveals the proposed English solutions of the dilemma to be no solutions at all. (The contrast of Book III with Book IV makes clear that the "solution" of regarding Nanda as present in her mother's drawing room without understanding what passes there will make Nanda marriageable only to someone who does not know her well enough to like her for herself. The juxtaposition of Book V with Book VI stresses that another "solution" of getting Nanda money instead of marriage violates the girl's real desires.) It next presents English society's refusal of a greater flexibility of theory, in order to take account of the real conditions—the necessity for any true solution. (This is accomplished by the contrast of Book VII, Mitchy's idea of what constitutes a young girl's propriety and marriageability, with Book VIII, Mrs. Brook's successful evocation of the established theory.) Finally, the succession demonstrates that loss results for both the interests which the arrangement for Nanda tried to compromise. (The result for society is in Book IX, and that for Nanda in Book X.)

97 For example, the "Mitchy" attitude of Book VII that through no fault of her own Nanda is condemned to love "in vain" (through the priority her society gives to appearances without acknowledging the fact, and through her society's exclusive interest in money) is paired with the opposing attitude in Book VIII, "Tishy Grandon," that Nanda loses through her own choice to ignore appearances. But in addition, the Mitchy attitude, Book VII contrasts—in the degree of its understanding of all the facets of Nanda's position—with the attitude of Book V that Nanda's exposure solely comes from her society's giving to appearances an unadmitted priority. In Book V, Mr. Longdon and Nanda learn that Van cavils at Nanda's appearance; in Book VII, Mitchy
climax of this structure, Book X, "Nanda," is opposed to the dominant attitude of Book IX, "Vanderbank," that the girl's presence had destroyed the virtue of her mother's circle (its original "freedom" of talk) and nevertheless made Nanda entirely, and inappropriately, like her mother. Book X presents an understanding of the central situation which is wider than was the "Mitchy" attitude of Book VII. For this last book displays the girl's grasp of all the reasons for the failure of the compromise arrangement. It shows Nanda to have adopted, even more thoroughly than Mitchy had in Book VII, the one understands that Nanda's happiness is endangered whether or not Van cavils at the appearance she makes.

As I have previously claimed (see page 165 above), so intricate a structural plan, or this complex an alternation of units that are "aspects," is necessary once the decision has been made to keep the central focus of the fiction inside a consciousness--to "center interest," to keep that center from "usurping" all interest--or to gain "scenic consistency," and yet at the same time to present all the material of the fiction by a purely scenic mode of treatment. The resulting complexity of compositional plan makes Awkward Age an experiment within the novel genre, instead of a transcribed play, but does not prove Awkward Age an abortive experiment or a "mere" technical exercise unless one adopts J. W. Beach's premise that one "cannot regard any novel as supremely good in which one has to dig so for what he gets." (James himself had concluded that the intricacy of his form partly enabled him to combine the scene's immediacy of appeal with an unusually large quantity of "ground for interest," and that reader of Awkward Age does not have to be more active than is necessary for the attainment of this rare combination.)

In discussing Awkward Age as a "technical exercise," Beach in 1918 attributed its intricate structure generally to the same causes I have noted: "anyone familiar with . . . the intense subjectivity of his present theme, will realize the enormous effrontery of his undertaking to convey it in a vehicle so limited." Beach also had sketched the nature of that structure somewhat in the same manner as I have done: "the later scenes, in the usual manner of James, throw light at last on the earlier ones. But it is a long wait from the sixth book to the ninth--so long one must stay for an explanation of the policy, and so of the character, of Mrs. Brook." (Joseph W. Beach, The Method of Henry James [New Haven: Yale, 1918. Reissued with Supplementary Notes, Philadelphia: A. Saifer, 1954], pp. 245-249)
attitude which could solve the dilemma. The constantly opposed pairs of aspects are arranged for an ever more radical contrast of an attitude such as causes Nanda's situation to an attitude such as penetrates the contradictions and the reasons for the situation. This is to say that the novel's succession of units is in every respect ordered to communicate the wide difference in worth between an actuality and that complete understanding of it which is its potential. The Jamesian kind of irony is fully incorporated into the very structure of The Awkward Age.

IV

Two things are notable about the placement of Awkward Age as Volume IX of the New York Edition: First, its position at the end of a chronological series of James's novels before 1900 culminates what is also a steady intensification in the exercise of irony and indirection, to meet the demands of new données. The result and the

In Book X, Nanda carries out (and Mr. Longdon reaches with her) the conviction that she must not hesitate to appear as fully initiated as she really is. In the social occasion here (Van's visit to Nanda in her own drawing room upstairs and at her request), Nanda once more places before Van two facts: her extensive likeness in manners and the conditions of her life to her mother; and her profound difference of motivation—her essential consideration of others—or her moral innocence. Along with Nanda and Mr. Longdon, Mitchy himself perceives in Book X what he has not perceived in Book VII—that though Nanda has lost Van by expressing so her attitude towards her situation, she is not "abject." While the perception of Book VII had been that Nanda loses whether she marries or fails to marry Van, Book X exhibits the understanding that, in the most crucial respects, Nanda cannot be pitied but herself does the pitying.
sign of this steady intensification is a compositional scheme which, first, builds a "center of interest" and next adds "scenic consistency," together with the subordinate techniques required for such architecture. By each of the successive novels in Volumes I through IX, the architecture and techniques are exhibited more thoroughly.

But in a second sense, Volume IX breaks the sequence developed throughout Volumes I - VIII. For the theme of Awkward Age is not nearly so universal as that of Tragic Muse, even though there is a remarkable gap between the breadth of import in Volume IX and the size of the raw material used in attaining it. When one compares the real subject of Tragic Muse, one of the "half dozen great primary motives" James thought available, to the widest possible implications of the situation handled in Awkward Age and to the gradual enlargement of theme throughout Volumes I - VIII, it becomes clear that Volume IX also represents some significant break in the Edition's opening series.

The theme of The Portrait, the growth of an individual into her heritage of embracing life actively despite all shocks to her capacity, is more "primary" than is the final subject of Roderick Hudson and The American—the combined weaknesses and strengths of the American social order. However, this more universal motive of The Portrait is achieved out of roughly the same "international" material as had been used by Volumes I and II: the material of an American entering upon the stage of Europe, confronting its denser

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99 Art of Novel, p. 79.
phenomena. The greater breadth of theme in *The Portrait* is made possible by the centering of interest, which in turn results from a greater exercise of irony and of indirection in order to express the new kind of germ James started with in *The Portrait*. *The Princess Casamassima* and *The Tragic Muse* quite obviously use more and more various specifications than does *The Portrait*; they testify to James's grasp of a greater variety of European phenomena, to an enlargement of his acquaintance with his chosen stage. Less obvious except to the analytical reader is James's growing success in making material count. Such a reader can see that *The Princess* and *Tragic Muse* suggest a greater variety than actually obtains between the details they employ; they suggest a stage larger than their number and range of specifications. Both novels gain this effect of large-scale panorama by intensifying the indirect and the ironic approach to material. "Scenic consistency" is added to the structure which centers interest.

The preface to *Tragic Muse* explains when James felt prepared to handle its most "full" of "pregnant" or "primary" themes. He early had located the germ of art's "human and social complications," and he commanded more details for rendering the artist's life than he

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100 One can immediately see that his ability to present the milieux of American tourists in Europe has been supplemented by an acquaintance with several other European scenes.

101 *Art of Novel*, p. 80.
did for many another motive. Nevertheless, he did not feel prepared
to treat the donnée until he had determined whether the human and
social complications of art were necessary ones and, if they were,
what was the better potentiality of this inevitable conflict. That
is to say, he needed to be able to compose his subject in the light
of irony, as well as to "double the value" of his available details:
"just this question of the essence and the reasons of the opposition
had shown itself to demand the light of experience. . . . It had
waited for that advantage." Upon an invitation from The Atlantic
Monthly for a novel, and after his acquaintance with the paradoxes of
the London "social" passion for "the things of the theater," he
decided to attempt the donnée. But he had still a "fear of too ample
a canvas," and of the need for "big" cases of the art-life conflict
as well as for the effect of great variety of representation. This
fear, however, "dropped" upon his determining that the novel would
weave together "three typical examples" plus determining how the
three could be selected so as to keep the work genuinely unified while
bringing out "the reasons of" the conflict. The provision for
increasing "scenic consistency" to the point of centering in a
consciousness never "gone behind," and in this way attaining genuine
unity of the three cases, overcame his scruples that the theme
demanded illusion of great scope within a single picture.

In contrast to its immediate predecessor, which uses the
most "pregnant" of all "primary" motives, the theme of Volume IX

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See also Letters, I, 66.
concerns again the nature of one social order. And this motive it articulates by using not "big" cases but a very small one. The placement of Awkward Age at just this point in the New York Edition presents again to critical attention the same artistic problem and the same solutions to it as had been implied by the earlier novels. The difficulty that James commanded an amount and range of details which was limited in comparison with the effect of scope demanded by his chosen germ had appeared with Volume I. The problem had been kept to the fore by the order of novels through Volume VIII—a sequence wherein ever larger themes were represented by more thoroughly working the same operative habits. The intensification of irony and indirection, in the form of the techniques of centering interest and scenic consistency, continues in Awkward Age. Significantly, too, the distance of the size and weight of the raw material of this novel from the theme finally yielded by its treatment is wider than any such gap yet encountered in the New York Edition. Despite the limited area of English life it draws upon, Awkward Age exhibits the sources of English institutions or the characterizing tendency of English society, just as Roderick Hudson and The American represent the American order.

Since the New York Edition places a novel having what James felt the richest of themes immediately before a novel showing great

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The situation of Roderick Hudson—the exposure of an American artist to a density of plastic appeal, or to Italy—is larger than Volume IX's central situation—the need to deal, in certain contemporary English drawing rooms, with the irruption there of unmarried young females. But the real subject of Awkward Age, as its preface stresses, is inseparable from the treatment of its small situation, and is as large as the theme of Roderick.
disparity between the "minor" status of its material and the far
from trivial theme finally yielded, the sequence of Volumes I
through IX suggests that the Edition means to impress its reader with
the close relation between the writer's forms and his work's final
importance. *Awkward Age* is placed in Volume IX not because of
chronology nor because of its length, but because it is a particular
kind of fiction: one using the same operative habits and techniques
of Volumes I-VIII to gain an important or weighty theme from
restricted material.

The kinds of composition developed in Volumes I-VIII gained
an effect of scope despite the use of a comparatively small amount of
material of limited variety and peripheral in kind. In *Awkward Age*,
these kinds of composition enable the writer to represent a theme
more disparate in size from its material than yet had occurred in
any fiction of the Edition. In this view, Volume IX stands as a
bridge into the further volumes and a new unit of the Edition; at the
same time it culminates an opening unit, I-VIII, by summarizing the
main point of that sequence.

In accounting for the sequence I-IX, the question remains of
why James did not place these novels in order of ascending breadth
of theme. If placing *Awkward Age* after I-VIII emphasizes why James's
solutions to the problem of limited material were more than adequate,
he still might have made the same point by initiating the Edition
with *Awkward Age* (and with nouvelles and stories showing a similar
disparity between kind of material and scope of theme), then next
presenting those of his fictions which attain his most "primary"
themes by the same operative habits.

The reason that such an alternative order is not employed by the Edition is only partly, I believe, the desire to preserve some chronology. It is true that the advantage of clarity is gained by placing first in the Edition those early novels where most obviously the writer needs better to render his subjects—to represent them more fully and more centrally—and where quite apparently he is searching among means to overcome that want. In Roderick Hudson and The American, a critic more easily can detect the reasons for James's obliquity, what are his ways of gaining a greater degree of it, and his increasing provision for an irony that will suggest extremes in experience. The present sequence of novels facilitates the reader's grasp of what was James's continuing problem, and of the essential nature of the techniques he developed to meet it.

In addition to providing a clearer introduction to the artistic problem of material more limited than one's artistic ambitions, and to the methods of composition by which eventually the problem was met, the present sequence stresses for the reader of the entire Edition that those methods (and the operative habits from which they sprung) accomplished something else while meeting the problem. Placing Awkward Age between James's earlier novels and (in Volumes X-XII) certain nouvelles from the middle period of his career, implies that the centering of interest combined with scenic consistency enable James to find almost any material ore for the extraction of a kind of theme which is highly special to him, a sign of the nature of his artistic case, and a common interest behind all
his later fiction. The final subject of *Awkward Age* is the fruits
of a thorough understanding of the characteristic tendency of English
civilization. Because Nanda gains understanding of why and how much
she loses, she is not at all an "abject" victim. *Awkward Age*
disengages this subject of what is gain and what true loss in human
experience—the subject, that is, of how genuine value or "life" is
best obtained—by applying to its germ irony and indirection in their
most developed forms. This theme of how genuine value may be wrested,
how "life" may be attained and true gain achieved, is still more
clearly articulated by the nouvelles of Volumes X–XII.

The sequence from Volume I through Volume XII indicates that
the operative consciousness which James, in his unique artistic
situation, developed (working through consciousness—through "a near
individual view," and for irony—"a campaign . . . for the better")
could, when it was applied to germs of relatively light weight and—
as in the compressed nouvelle—to material likely not to require a
large canvas or big effects, yield a theme quintessential of the aim
of fiction to render the scope of contemporary human life.
CHAPTER VI

FORESHORTENING THE DRAMA OF "FREE SPIRIT":

VOLUMES X - XII OF THE NEW YORK EDITION

The first major unit of the New York Edition, Volumes I-IX, shows that James increasingly was able to produce that illusion of scope which is necessary to render a universal theme as increasingly he composed by "indirection" and by "irony," his two fundamental operatives. For the reader who examines their collocation in the light of their prefaces, this opening series of novels enforces a significant generalization: the point that a steady intensification of composing on the bases of indirection and of irony, an intensification which is implied by a series of structures first evincing a "center of interest" and then adding to it "scenic consistency," accounts for the widening gap that is to be noted in James's novels through 1899 between the range and weight of their raw material and the breadth of the theme actually wrought from such material.

Volumes X-XII of the New York Edition constitute, I believe, 1 the second major unit within James's total design. My hypothesis is

1 My view is that Volume IX equally may be considered part of the first or part of the second unit of the edition. The previous chapter has discussed why Awkward Age may be considered the climax of the opening series. The present chapter will discuss the second point.
that in these volumes James brings together fictions which are still more thoroughly composed by indirection and by irony than are the novels in the first unit—that in X-XII he collocates fictions all so "centered" within a consciousness and so constructed with "scenic consistency" that as a group they exhibit what he called "foreshortening." An equally crucial part of my hypothesis is that the nouvelles and stories in Volumes X-XII alike render the same theme, a theme which may be called James's characteristic one. I believe that each of the ten fictions in these three volumes mainly aims to articulate a theme or "proper" subject which stands in archetypal relation to the import of all of James's work; and I also would propose that James designed his edition so that its second main group of fictions, or Volumes X-XII, unmistakably connects his rendering this kind of theme with his carrying indirect and ironic composition to the degree he named "foreshortening." In each of the fictions of Volumes X-XII, James achieves, through "foreshortening" a small amount of material drawn from very few areas, a subject that is his interpretation of what is the main issue in all human experience.

The present chapter will attempt to support this hypothesis, which has many far-reaching implications, by examining four things: the nature of each of the ten nouvelles and stories, their grouping

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2 It is important to note that this further intensification (over that steadily displayed in the opening series of novels) of composing indirectly and ironically occurred when for several reasons James concentrated his endeavor in fiction on the short story and the nouvelle, and that in these same years (the late 1880's) there occurred, rather suddenly, a contraction of the publication space available to James—a contraction even of the space for his stories. This phenomenon includes both his difficulty in getting fictions of any type accepted by editors of periodicals and their coolness towards short stories and nouvelles exceeding certain numbers of words.
within three separate volumes, the order of these volumes, and the kind of points made by James's three prefaces to the volumes. The order of discussion in the chapter requires explanation.

My first section will summarize what is the theme common within Volumes X-XII—the theme of "free spirit" and of worthwhile or increased "life"—and will outline what seem to be the metaphysical bases of this theme. (The reason for this procedure is that it may help emphasis first to isolate so complex a subject and its premises.) A second portion of the chapter then will concentrate on examining the three prefaces to Volumes X-XII. For two reasons I shall undertake this examination of the prefaces alone before turning, in sections three and four of the chapter, to the fictions themselves and their relation to the prefaces. Because some of their statements have been understood by many readers to deny the existence in the edition of a stable design, the three prefaces may seem to present an especial obstacle to my general hypothesis about the second unit of the edition. Secondly, I believe I can show that the three prefaces in truth assert a stable design throughout the edition, and that, while they do not explicate the principle of that total design, they do provide (in James's difficult critical terminology) the rationale behind its second unit. The three prefaces present Volumes X-XII as containing very closely related fictions; the prefaces imply that the ten fictions alike articulate a theme of "free spirit" and alike exhibit "foreshortened" composition. Too, the prefaces suggest reasons for the separation of the ten fictions into three volumes succeeding one another in a certain order. Thus my examination, in section two of the
chapter, of the evidence of the prefaces alone aims to perform preliminary exposition of my hypothesis about Volumes X-XII in the course of providing only some of the support for that proposal. The final two sections of the chapter then will attempt together to supply the major portion of the proof.

I

James's "freedom of spirit" refers solely to moral liberation. For the following reason James's "freedom" refers to being exempt from restriction only within that dimension of experience indicated by conceptions of "better" and "worse": In the moral realm, as in the realm of perception, is exercised the capacity to choose, a specifically human power. Forming his value judgments draws upon the unique capacity of man to organize and to select. But, too, there is a crucial difference between perception in general and the framing of one's values. A human being may escape every external constraint, be subject to absolutely no external restriction and completely untouched by necessity, only in his process of conceiving a "better" and a "worse" or only in the formation of his values. Complete choice, in the sense of independence of factors originating outside the chooser, rightly may occur only in his evaluations, only in the moral dimension of experience.

But James's view also is that one can achieve a greater or a lesser degree of "spirit" and that there may be more or less freedom within the moral realm. This second point is the difficult, and the
crucial, part of James's definition of "free spirit." Since James feels that choice or the potential of complete exemption from external constraint primarily characterizes all moral conceptions, James's view that some moral creation is more free than other moral creation is a real paradox. It is to be resolved by realizing that for him the concept of choice logically implies another concept of uniqueness or of individuals. Thus James stresses that even a man who genuinely elects his own values may not fully express or realize the fact of choice, and hence his own freedom, if the kind of value system which he frames does not rest centrally on the concept of the uniqueness of all human individuals. Even though one may frame for himself his own moral conceptions, these may to different degrees be logically coherent with the idea of unique individuals which is involved in the fact of choice characterizing the moral realm. One's value judgments therefore may be greater or less expressions of the very basis of the moral realm, and may to greater or lesser degrees realize its possible unalloyed freedom.

In James's analysis, serving the uniqueness of all human life is a man's means to the greatest freedom, or to the highest degree of "life." The means, again, is selecting for one's principal moral value the forwarding of a like moral freedom in all other individuals. Only framing a value system on this one basis is possessing "free spirit."

The kind of value structure that James finds a logical necessity of attaining greatest freedom is one in which all other values, whatever they may be, are subordinate to a central decision
always to regard all human experience as unique and hence to value all human individuals *qua* individuals. There are two concomitants of this central decision: the choice, too, to behave towards other persons as potential explorers of their own moral realm, or to act always to encourage their own exercise of choice (which is their individuality and their freedom); and the recognition that the choices and the behavior of other persons cannot be judged (however much one must "know" his own standards and values). Altogether, this analysis sees the highest attainable degree of human freedom as the assumption of a far-reaching responsibility for never obstructing other individuals' power of choice.

Such an analysis obviously echoes the conclusions of several of the world's philosophies. (It particularly reflects the thought of Henry James Senior in stressing that exploration of the individual self can provide the only sure bonds of social cohesiveness, and that freedom's ultimate function is to forward a genuine Society.) The originality of James's fiction lies in the extent to which his art aims to make its audience embrace various opportunities for moral choice, recognize the implications of their choices, and directly perceive what is his "free spirit." Even more than for the theme it celebrates, James's fiction is notable for the powerful clarity of the artist's grasp of his subject, the consistency of his own exercise of "free spirit" in relation to his material, and his dedicated ingenuity for making readers "live," in his sense, through his work. In it they are compelled themselves to make choices or to create their values, and to do so in contexts which illumine the nature of choice or of freedom.
The theme of the fictions that James collects in Volumes X-XII consists of more than defining worthy or increased life as the above kind of "free spirit." These ten fictions also emphasize how rare is such achievement in the contemporary world; and they surprisingly attribute that rarity to the unconstrained, though not always conscious, decision of many individuals not to embrace their natural heritage of possible freedom. However much James's "free spirit" agrees with conceptions developed within many philosophies, this second half of his theme is far less familiar: He represents "free spirit" as very infrequently created, yet as a potential that the forces of nature and even the strong pressures of contemporary society on its members more encourage than hinder. Especially unfamiliar is the reason James offers for the low incidence of his "free spirit": a failure of sufficient exertion. Presenting freedom as rare within a context rendered as not insuperably hostile to it, the ten fictions of Volumes X-XII emphasize that freedom can and always must be elected.

James's fiction reflects a complex of thought that, thoroughly humanistic, omits any perspective on man's condition other than his own.

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3 Since it presents the low incidence of freedom or worthwhile life, James's fiction may be said to reflect experience "realistically." At the same time, the manner in which he presents the rarity of free spirit or the average condition of life, emphasizes both an actual and a potential freedom.

4 In this complex, man's condition may seem like Augustine's description of Adam's state after his "fall": he is a unique individual, "separate," that is, from something he is able to elect or to reject. Yet by all theologies, the separateness or uniqueness of man, as much as it is held an opportunity, is regarded also as a trial, a lamentable phenomenon. The Christian analysis, like that of all religions, I believe, attempts a poise exactly between man's own perspective on his state and
This complex, which is neither Stoic nor Epicurean, regards man's world as inherently good. The body of thought which underlies James's theme of "free spirit" sees the context in which humans live as the favoring ground for their achievement of their highest good. It holds life in this world to be the possession of some freedom and encounter with the possibility of man's creating through his own efforts a total freedom. For the idea of a world offering primarily the temptation to sin and needing divine grace, this metaphysic substitutes the concept of a created world through which men can glimpse a vista of infinitely expanding possibility of good.

a higher one. According to Aeschylus, and to the author of Job, as well as to Augustine, Calvin, and Buddhist thought, man's life is at one and the same time a suffering of separation from the good and a medium for his approach to the good, whether by being the scene of his own efforts or the scene where grace operates. Nature of this world is, from the standpoint of another, impure or "fallen" and tragic; while it is also man's proper arena, his distinctive instrument for knowing God.

But James's presentation of human freedom rests on an assumption that life is not at all tragic in this sense or for this reason.

That is, the analysis denies "evil" its frequent status of a metaphysical principle, for evil becomes the failure to bring into existence, or to "realize," a possibility that is given. The idea of evil is not at all lacking to this body of thought; the major share of attention in fact may be given to particular instances of evil. Yet no specific type of behavior or of attitude is absolute evil, just as perfection is envisaged as the activity of continuing a creative process already set in motion.

Whatever one may consider the weaknesses (either logical or ethical) of such a group of metaphysical premises, its advantages are quite palpable: Foremost among these is that the terms in which "the good" is defined—which necessarily are terms derived from man's experience in this world—do not also have to be terms considered the contrary of the pure good of another world. This is to say that "the good" is defined positively, not negatively. For perfection is enjoined upon us affirmatively when it is held to be further activity of the same type we engage in any time we choose anything or frame any value.
Because James's theme rests ultimately on so unfamiliar a world view, certain features of his theme are very readily misunderstood. They hardly can be too much emphasized. For instance, the point is difficult to grasp that the fictions in Volumes X-XII present an individual's highest moral creation and freedom as his voyage of discovery solely among his own values. The "free spirit" attempts no evaluation of any other human being. That is, the "free spirit" looks upon other persons as genuine individuals, precisely as he looks upon himself. (But this conclusion is not reached by the argument that from the perspective of a divine power all human life is equal. Instead, the ground argued from is man's penetration of his experience: the phenomenon of choice suggests the concept of individuality.)

Another unusual and easily misunderstood point within James's theme of "free spirit" is that creation of full moral awareness means making but one particular value central to one's group of standards. Having "free spirit" in James's sense does not mean having a certain set of subordinate values. (The reason for this point is that the cardinal mark of the moral realm is choice, and choice implies individuality or uniqueness.) James's "free spirits" develop no set of rules which can help direct their behavior into conformance with their prime aim to forward every individual's power of choice. If a group of commandments, a code regulating conduct, is what one means by an "ethic," then one may not properly say that James's "free spirit" refers to the possession of any one kind of ethic. The "free spirit" rather is he who creates for himself any system of values which keeps foremost an aim of forwarding other individuals' exercise of their own moral choice. Thus
the "free spirit" cannot guide his practical behavior by any stable body of rules. He signally lacks any short cuts. Since the cardinal value of the truly free human being is to foster the like freedom of other persons, with every choice to act the "free spirit" first must deal with the myriad concrete expressions of the motives of those others with whom he is involved and whom his act may affect. In order to determine whether or not his projected behavior might have the result of encouraging others' choice, he first must sort out these expressions of motive as accurately as possible. And, since life rarely or never offers the opportunity of satisfying by one action all of one's values, with each act the free spirit must will to subordinate his other aims, whatever these may be, to the cardinal one that is the logical expression of his freedom. In each one of his choices, the free spirit recreates his entire value system.

To summarize these points: increased "life," for James, occurs in the area of one's evaluations; and it calls for an extraordinary expenditure of effort both to observe others and to relate consistently the data of these observations to a central aim of encouraging others' exercise of choice—"lucidity" as James often called such consistency. Conversely, "free spirit" does not involve the application to one's

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7 This is the main reason James's characters are so concerned with each others' motives, why his seems so exclusively social a world. The focus on relation between persons is, in reality, an interest in the means of approaching or forfeiting individuality. And frequently James underlines a distinction between trying to estimate the motives of others in order to judge them, and seeking to become clear about others in order to direct one's own acts towards providing a neutral ground for others' exercise of choice.
behavior of rules that can conserve effort. Nor does it involve any kind of judgment of others. (Although observation of others is absolutely necessary, it is data relevant only to one's own choices.) By the same token, "free spirit" cannot be a choice to sacrifice oneself for others. To try to expiate for them is to deny them freedom, and so to lose one's own. In James's view to treat other persons as one does oneself is neither enlightened self-interest—that is, a precept sanctioned by practicality, as in the Stoic utterance of the same insight,—nor one sanctioned by the model of an expiating divinity. James assumes that respecting one's neighbor as oneself is a possible human creation—much like an artistic construct—which will most express the reality of human choice.

It must be stressed, too, that such freedom is not escape beyond all kinds of constraint. For example, the free spirit is an active maker of the moral dimension of his own experience; yet this very activity may tend to make the content of his experience, as distinguished from his evaluations of it, controllable by the conflicting wills of other individuals. The tendency occurs because the free spirit by definition cannot act ever to limit the exercise of choice by others. Frequently he may be caught in a caged position: subject for the content of his experience to the expansive will of persons who chose less freedom. Through intelligence and luck, the free spirit sometimes is able to locate effective means for forestalling, yet without obstructing others' choice, the aggressive will of the less free from control of his own situation. At other times, all the ingenuity of the free spirit is barely sufficient to deal with a situation which seems to offer only
one means to prevent others from controlling his situation: the forfeiture of his own real freedom in the moral realm.

The fictions in Volumes X-XII each define free spirit in this way, and they usually present a free spirit whose position must remain caged because he has chosen to let it be influenced by persons who finally are less free than he has hoped and wanted. In these stories, the choice to love dares to risk (and generally results in) a superficial kind of imprisonment to whatever experience others would give one. But quite another choice, the individual's evaluation of his experience, fully decides whether he truly is caged or is liberated into freedom of spirit.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the ten fictions in Volumes X-XII in common disengage, and with exceptional clarity of focus, the above theme concerning the incidence of "free spirit" in the contemporary world. My ultimate purpose, of course, is to show that these volumes form a second major unit within the total series of the New York Edition, a unit whose nature and placement aids James's main design to unfold the nature of his artistic "case."

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8 Whether the content of the free spirit's experience is determined by other persons or wholly controlled by himself, the shape or form he gives to his experience, through his values, must be his medium for achieving true freedom.

Thus for the free spirit, his relations to others function in much the same way as sensuous appearances for the artist. He cannot control these relations, nor does he alone make them; but he is not subject to them as to confines. He uses them as the forms through which he expresses his freedom. Increase of "life" in James's sense is equivalent to an artistry of life—if we remember that by art James meant a receptive saturation by one's material so as to yield a personal interpretation of it.
II

The ten fictions in Volumes X-XII range from nouvelles of various degrees of economy to short stories of varying word count and degrees of compression. The ten are: "The Spoils of Poynton," "A London Life" and "The Chaperon" (Volume X); "What Maisie Knew," "In The Cage" and "The Pupil" (Volume XI); "The Aspern Papers," "The Turn of the Screw," "The Liar" and "The Two Faces" (Volume XII). Most of these date from the 1890's, but their order completely disregards the chronology of James's "middle years." In addition, the second fiction in Volume X plus two in Volume XII antedate even Volumes VII-VIII (The Tragic Muse, 1889). Since the heterogeneity in date and genre of Volumes X-XII is unanticipated by the opening series of the Edition, many readers conclude that James could have pursued no single or unified purpose in the Edition.

Furthermore, by anyone unaccustomed or hostile to James's density of statement, his prefaces to Volumes X-XII may seem to state that the "congruities" accounting for his separate volumes are but casual, and overlapping, categories. These three prefaces may appear to say that the Edition is a mere collection of groups of fictions.

9 The briefest of the short stories, "The Two Faces," also is one of the most economical in the entire Edition. The distinction between economy (compression) and length of word count is very important to understanding the function of this portion of the New York Edition. It is discussed in Section IV of the present chapter. See pages 314-316 above.
derived by shifting and unrelated criteria, instead of a true design.

But the preface to Volume X cites an interior harmony in that volume and in fact implies that James regarded all his volume divisions as marking the basic units of a genuine architecture. For, after discussing the "growth and predominance" of Fleda Vetch, the "free spirit" in *The Spoils of Poynton*, he remarks:

I may perhaps speak of it as noteworthy that this very volume happens to exhibit in two other cases my disposition to let the interest stand or fall by the tried spontaneity and vivacity of the freedom. It is in fact for that respectable reason that I enclose "A London Life" and "The Chaperon" between these covers; my purpose having been here to class my reprintable productions as far as possible according to their kinds. The two tales I have just named are of the same "kind" as "The Spoils" . . . . 10

Still, many readers of the prefaces may decide that the implication of a single classification system, and of an architecture of "kinds" which are logically related categories, is invalidated when in the later preface to Volume XII James speaks of "The Chaperon" in quite another way:

I arrive with "The Liar" (1888) and "The Two Faces" (1900) at the first members of the considerable group of short, of shortest tales here republished; though I should perhaps place quite in the forefront "The Chaperon" and "The Pupil" at which we have already glanced. I am conscious of much to say of these numerous small productions as a family. . . . 11

James's qualifications "perhaps place quite in the forefront" and "class my reprintable productions as far as possible according to their kinds" are obviously important, but their exact bearing is extremely

10 *Art of Novel*, p. 130.

difficult to assess. They either indicate that the groupings of the Edition invoke a number of unrelated principles, or, in a manner that is not immediately apparent, they support the suggestion of the terms "purpose" and "class" that the groupings are derived by a stable principle of division.

Moreover, James does not define in the simple manner readers might prefer the "kind" of fiction he says Volume X classes. Two factors make his prefatorial discussion difficult: the compression of his prose style, and his habit of conducting the commentary in terms alternately of technique and of theme. He uses these two modes of explication interchangeably. If a reader does not perceive that James's explication of like structural features distinguishing the fictions of Volume X from any others in the Edition also implies a distinction in subject or theme, the same reader necessarily is bewildered when James acknowledges their thematic likenesses in some respects to other fictions outside the volume. A reader thus bewildered may draw the mistaken conclusion that by a "kind" or class of tale in Volume X James means a group formed by reference to a principle which he entirely abandons when constituting later volumes. But Volume X is, in fact, a category within a true classification system. Whether its fictions are viewed structurally or thematically, some of their similarities relate them to other categories (volumes) of the Edition, while still other of their likenesses distinguish the three alone.

The following passage from its preface both points out what the class of fiction in Volume X is not, and then presents positive
definition of that "kind":

The two tales I have just named are of the same "kind" as "The Spoils," to the extent of their each dealing with a human predicament in the light, for the charm of the thing, of the amount of "appreciation" to be plausibly imputed to the subject of it. They are each—and truly there are more of such to come—"stories about women," very young women, who, affected with a certain high lucidity, thereby become characters; in consequence of which their doings, their sufferings or whatever, take on, I assume, an importance. Laura Wing, in "A London Life," has, like Fleda Vetch, acuteness and intensity, reflexion and passion, has above all a contributive and participant view of her situation; just as Rose Tramore in "The Chaperon" rejoices, almost to insolence, very much in the same cluster of attributes and advantages. They are thus of a family—which shall have also for us, we seem forewarned, more members, and of each sex. 12

The passage tells us that

(1) The class of fiction in Volume X is nor distinguishable by the age and sex of the central figures.

(2) The genus of the class of fiction in Volume X is: fictions presenting persons who have "acuteness and intensity, reflexion and passion," in short, persons who are thoroughly conscious of their situation.

(3) One differentia of the class of fiction in Volume X is:

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Art of Novel, p. 130. The first sentence of this passage summarizes what is the class of fiction in Volume X. But an accurate, one sentence summary of the "kind" requires a highly specialized vocabulary such as James had had to develop for himself. Because in previous parts of this preface, and in prior prefaces, he has already indicated the meaning of such terms, he can employ here such a diction: e.g., "deal with a human predicament in the light ... of the amount of 'appreciation' imputed to the subject of it." With the second sentence of the quoted passage, James begins to re-state the "kind," using now a somewhat less specialized diction. He follows the sequence of all formal definition: negative introduction, followed by identification of the genus and next of the differentia.
fictions displaying a causal movement from "lucidity" to "character" or to "importance" ("affected . . . thereby become characters"), or, otherwise expressed, fictions displaying a process of the central person's "view of her situation" becoming "contributive and participant" in that situation to the point that the central person's "character" and "importance" is fully expressed by the situation.

(4) A second differentia of the class of fiction in Volume X is:

fictions showing that the gain of "character" and "importance" is distinct from the gain of an invulnerable situation.

Like many other of James's fictions, the three in Volume X employ central persons capable of full consciousness. But the three differ from the other fictions sharing this genus, in that they display especially the emergence of such "character" or "free spirit" through the exercise of "high lucidity" or "reflexion and passion" on a situation of exposure. The three fictions in Volume X also differ from other fictions having the same genus because the three in Volume X particularly stress that the emergence of "free spirit" by no means guarantees an invulnerable position.

As we shall see, the preface to Volume XI just as logically defines its class of fiction. In addition, the next preface emphasizes that the "kind" grouped in Volume XI shares the genus of the category in Volume X.

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13 See also the passage quoted (citation: #162) at the top of page 204, where James refers to the category of fiction in Volume X as basing its interest on "the tried spontaneity and vivacity of the freedom." (The italics are mine.)
Yet another feature of James's prefaces gives to many readers the mistaken impression that, even though James speaks of "classing," the congruities demarcated by his volumes are not truly parts of a unified design: the prefaces sometimes mention principles by which the fictions only might have been grouped. But that several systems of classification might have been used does not imply that no one system consistently has been employed. For example, James remarks in the preface to Volume X:

If I speak of classifying, I hasten to recognize that there are other marks for the purpose still and that, failing other considerations, "A London Life" would properly consort, in this series, with a dozen of the tales by which I at one period sought to illustrate and enliven the supposed "international" conflict of manners, a general theme dealing with the bewilderment of the good American . . . in the presence of the European "order." 14

Besides naming a principle not operative in forming Volume X, the above passage implies that at a later point in the Edition fictions which share this "general theme" are placed together. But it is important to note that the passage does NOT attribute that grouping later in James's series to the principle of marking off the "kind" of James's fiction which illustrates and enlives "the supposed 'international' conflict of manners." Rather, the passage

14 Art of Novel, p. 132.

15 In other words, the "dozen or so tales" with which "A London Life" might consort and which appear together later in the Edition have not been so placed on account of the possible principle here named. In the prefaces to Volumes XIII, XIV and XV, James suggests the categories of fictions identified by these volumes. None are categories quite the same as the "general theme" described in this portion of the preface to Volume X: "the bewilderment of the good American . . . in the presence of the European 'order.'"

The preface to Volume XIV stresses that Volumes XIV and XVIII present fictions using "conflicts of manners." But at the same time
simply remarks that "A London Life" might be considered to belong to a class which is isolated by none of the Edition's groupings. By stating in the preface to Volume X that his Edition classifies kinds of his fiction, and then naming a possible category including many more of his fictions than the Edition actually groups together, James emphasizes that the order of the Edition has not been devised to demonstrate the frequency with which he had rendered this "general theme." In effect, the last quoted passage stresses that the arrangement of the Edition ignores the common critical observation that James discovered and exploited the "international" subject.

this preface identifies still other marks distinguishing Vols. XIV and XVIII from fictions which do not use conflicts of manners.

Another reason for naming a similarity not relevant to the Edition's design is to make clearer what Fleda Vetch, Laura Wing and Rose Tramore have in common. Discussion of how far the "international" features of "A London Life" are important gives James an opportunity to make clear that a detached perspective on the milieu is essential to the fiction's import.

The passage from the preface to Vol. XII already quoted on page 204 above, in which "The Chaperon" (Vol. X) and "The Pupil" (Vol. XI) are said "perhaps" to belong with the short stories said to make a "family" in succeeding volumes, is another example of the same procedure: This passage does not imply that the Edition is in fact arranged to isolate fictions similar in genre. James says only that a portion of his series (Vols. XIII-XVIII) contains solely short productions, yet does not contain all the short stories in the Edition. Even the assertion that "The Liar" and "The Two Faces" are the "first members" of a numerous family of small productions--"a family indeed quite organised as such, with its proper representatives, its 'heads;' its subdivisions and branches, its poor relations perhaps not least . . ." (Art of Novel, pp. 177-178)--does not imply that they belong equally well with the fictions in Vols. XIII-XVIII as with "The Aspern Papers" and "The Turn of the Screw" in Vol. XII.

To grasp the full meaning of this passage closing the preface to Vol. XII, one must keep in mind the following: James considers four fictions in Vols. X-XII to be of the short story kind; possibly they might have been grouped together on this basis. Second, he says that two of the four introduce a rather lengthy portion of the Edition
We may summarize that the prefaces to Volumes X, XI and XII identify "congruities" in their volumes which make these volumes true categories of a single system. They do not deny the existence of a unified design in the Edition. Too, the three prefaces invite attention to the fact that James has selected one complex architecture over other possibilities of design. They emphasize that he has chosen to classify his work neither by the rather simple criterion of genre, nor by a criterion which would stress the frequency with which he used "the supposed 'international' conflict of manners." Instead, he has selected a principle of classification he considers more informative about his main concerns and achievements. By the same token, the prefaces to Volumes X-XII do not make impossible the hypothesis that these three volumes are especially closely related and constitute a major unit of the total design.

This latter view, however, is unorthodox. The considerable body of commentary on one or more of the ten fictions in Volumes X-XII has not found them more similar—from either the thematic or the

which contains solely short stories. Third, the Edition obviously has separated all four short stories in Vols. X-XII from those in XIII-XVIII, for a "short novel," "The Reverberator," opens Vol. XIII. (Art of Novel, p. 180.) Fourth, two of the four short stories in Vols. X-XII have been placed together at the end of Vol. XII, and may be the "heads" or "proper representatives of James's kinds of short story. (Among the several things which the groupings within Vols. XIII-XVIII accomplish is to distinguish short stories which are "anecdotes" from others which are "pictures.")

Thus, James focuses attention on the fact that the groupings made by his Edition do not classify his fictions by their genre. Like the passage at the end of preface X, this one closing preface XII indicates that by the design of the Edition James takes exception to a common critical observation. Here he implies that he does not define genre by word count alone—as when the short story is thought to be simply a fiction having relatively the smallest number of words. Although the Edition nowhere classifies by genre, the nature of some of its groups can help to suggest better genre definitions.
structural point of view—to each other than to any others in the Edition. F. W. Dupee has noted in "The Spoils," "What Maisie Knew" and "The Turn of the Screw" a "common subject" of "the fate of the moral sense in a corrupt or obtuse world." This also is the "subject," but "with a difference," Dupee says, of The Awkward Age. Leon Edel proposes that Volumes VI-X make a second unit of the New York Edition—"Scenes of English Life"—after Volumes I-IV have presented American pilgrimages abroad, and that Volume XI be denominated "Tales of the Caged Young," Volume XII "Tales of Curiosity." No reader can wish to quarrel with the observations that Awkward Age, The Spoils, "A London Life," "The Chaperon," What Maisie Knew and In the Cage use English life, and that the first four of these show women pitted against usages of the English monde, while What Maisie Knew and In the Cage show individuals caged by the English order. These likenesses are not sufficient, however, to support a contention that the Edition builds an architecture, like Balzac's, of "Scenes." Neither would many readers contest Dupee's observation


20 In the Cage may as well be called a study of English "society" using the life of one woman as may The Spoils. Were a demarcation of distinct "scenes" of the English milieu the concern of those portions of the Edition, "The Liar" and "The Two Faces" would belong side by side with other fictions utilizing the pursuits of the English monde in London and in the country, e.g., "A London Life" (X) and Awkward Age (IX). What Maisie Knew and "The Chaperon" might well be placed together as presenting the fringes of the English monde; In the Cage and The Princess Casamassima as scenes of the London proletariat in relation to the English monde; The Spoils and Tragic Muse as scenes of domestic relations within English "society."
that *The Spoils*, *What Maisie Knew* and "The Turn of the Screw" alike show the obstacles posed to the capacity to make value judgments. This general likeness seems to apply to all the fictions in IX-XII. But nearly every fiction in the New York Edition may be said to oppose a "moral sense" to "the world." Thus Dupee's generalization is not informative about the import of any one fiction; its usefulness is in relating the largest possible number of Jamesian themes. The similarities pointed out by Dupee and Edel seem to me not truly thematic ones, just as these similarities do not really distinguish from other of James's fictions the groups which the critics cite.

Yet James's own definition of the class of fiction in Volume X when read together with his comments on the congruity within Volume XI marks the presence of quite other similarities between the ten fictions in Volumes X-XII. The prefatory discussion to Volume XII reechoes just these similarities. James's prefaces to Volumes X-XII support my hypothesis that the ten fictions have more in common with each other, structurally and thematically, than any one of them has with any other grouping of fictions within the edition. The three prefaces suggest that their volumes are closely enough related to form a distinct unit. In the remainder of this section, I shall cite the measure of support which is provided for my hypothesis about Volumes X-XII by examination solely of the evidence of their prefaces.

The preface to Volume X defines its class as fictions dealing "with a human predicament in the light of . . . the amount of 'appreciation' to be plausibly imputed to the subject of it." The reader attentive to James's discussion in the earlier portions of this
preface should understand what is meant by "appreciation"; too, he should be prepared later to recognize the close relation between such "appreciation" and that "range of wonderment" which the next preface says is shown in the three fictions of Volume XI. It is the earlier portions of the preface to Volume X which illustrate, through specific discussion of The Spoils of Poynton, what James's summary means by the term "appreciation" and by treating "a human predicament in the light of . . . the amount of 'appreciation' to be plausibly imputed to the subject" of the predicament.

The earlier portions of the preface to Volume X tell us that a family quarrel over possessions was the raw material of The Spoils. The "germ" in this material was the contrast between the beauty of the objects and the sordidness of the human situation concerning them. James quickly saw that he could best unfold such a germ by employing another opposition between someone's understanding of the first contrast and everyone else's failure to "see" it:

what my agitated friends should individually, and all intimately and at the core show themselves . . . would indeed alone make a drama of any sort possible. . . . Fleda's . . . importance . . . had been that she would understand; and . . . the progress and march of my tale became and remained that of her understanding. . . . The thing is to lodge somewhere at the heart of one's complexity an irresistible appreciation. . . . From beginning to end, in "The Spoils of Poynton," appreciation, even to that of the very whole, lives in Fleda . . . the drama . . . of those who appreciate consisting so much of their relation with those who don't. . . . Fleda almost demonically both

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sees and feels, while the others but feel without seeing. . . . The fools are interesting by contrast. . . . and the free spirit, always much tormented. . . . "successful" only through having remained free. . . . Mrs. Gereth. . . . the very reverse of a free spirit. . . . at the best a "false" character. . . . a figure. 22

This passage shows the nature of "appreciation": Fleda's, or the appreciator's, distinction is her play of intelligence to embrace "the very whole" of the situation. Mrs. Gereth, who is both acute and quick of mind, is "clever." She is not appreciative or intelligent because she does not relate the quarrel to its complete context, including the beauty of the spoils. "Appreciation" is grasping every item one confronts in relation to every other. It is a stance of the mind towards conceiving always in wholes. Never neglecting to relate to one another the mind's separate appropriations is what James particularly means when he says that Fleda "sees."

But The Spoils also is called by the preface an "action" having a conflict that comes to crisis and yields a result. It presents the progress of Fleda's "appreciation." This fact must be taken into account in summarizing the theme of the nouvelle. Because Fleda is said to be "engaged" at a crisis with the fact that others do not "see" or are fools, one of the clashing forces moving the action must be Fleda's understanding of the others' incapacity to "see." The opposing force, and the one dominant after the crisis, is stated in the above passage; it is Fleda's continuing to "appreciate" or her remaining

22 Art of Novel, pp. 127-130.
free. We are to understand that the action of *The Spoils* is a march shaped by the opposition between two internal forces—(1) Flea's courage to continue to understand the whole and (2) her desire to remit that activity when she appreciates that others won't try to "see." James's subject is the struggle of appreciation to dominate in an appreciator's "relation ... to those who don't."

Thus, by dealing with a human predicament "in the light of" its "subject's" appreciation, James means the representation of how an appreciator's view of the course of an external imbroglio causes a predicament of his own—tests his choice to appreciate. All three fictions in Volume X represent a final confirmation of a choice to appreciate after a rigorous test consisting of the appreciator's relation to others who fail to do the same and whose acts can influence his situation.

The preface to Volume XI points out that the central character of *In the Cage* is an appreciator. The telegraphist seeks always to relate her experience, so as to encompass a whole. James's alternate term for this play of intellect is "criticism":

> So had grown up . . . the question of what it might "mean" . . . for a confined and cramped and yet considerably tutored young official of either sex to be made so free, intellectually, of an range of experience otherwise quite closed to them. . . . for the writer the danger is inevitably of imputing to too many others . . . the critical impulse and the acuter vision. . . . To criticise is to appreciate, to appropriate, to take intellectual possession, to establish in fine a relation with the criticised thing and make it one's own. . . . 23
The action of the drama is simply the girl's "subjective" adventure—that of her quite definitely winged intelligence.

... A course of incident complicated by the intervention of winged wit. ... 24

"Vision," "intelligence" and "acuteness" are also terms used by the preface to Volume XI for Morgan Moreen of "The Pupil." Earlier in the same preface James had pointed out, however, that Maisie of Volume XI is a non-precocious child who cannot "be conceived to have understood—to have been able to interpret and appreciate." Maisie often "quite misunderstands." Despite these disparities, the preface to Volume XI also makes clear that its three fictions are congruous and are distinct from, while closely related to, those in Volume X.

"Wonder" is the term James uses for Maisie's relation to her world. The manner in which she gives her world steady "attention" recalls the essence of "appreciation". Just as "appreciation" is not intellectual quickness and not simply intellectual accuracy, but is rather a certain play of mind, "wonder" is not simple observation but is a certain play of attention. Like "appreciation" in intellectual terms, "wonder" in the perceptual realm refers to one another every item of its observation. Like "appreciation," "wonder" builds and rebuilds an ever-changing whole. It is "active, contributive, close-circling." For this reason, James applies "wonder" alternately

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24 Art of Novel, p. 157

25 Ibid., p. 145.

26 Ibid., pp. 149-150. For the manner of Maisie's "attention" see also Art of Novel, pp. 143; 145-146.
with "appreciation" to the subjective activity of the telegraphist of *In the Cage* and of Morgan Moreen of "The Pupil":

the range of wonderment attributed in our tale to the young woman employed at Cocker's differs little in essence from the speculative thread on which the pearls of Maisie's experience, in this same volume . . . are mostly strung. She wonders, putting it simply, very much as Morgan Moreen wonders; and they all wonder, for that matter, very much after the fashion of . . . Hyacinth Robinson of "The Princess Casamassima," tainted . . . with the trick of mental reaction on the things about him and fairly staggering under the appropriations . . . he owes to the critical spirit. 27

James's exact diction in the above passage points to the difference between the fictions of Volume X and those of Volume XI. According to its preface, the three fictions of Volume X accent a specific area in which the exercise of appreciation precipitates a temptation to desist from appreciating—the area of one's involvement with non-appreciators. Significant about the three fictions of Volume XI, however, is "the range of" their central persons' wonder. In these fictions, sheer quantity of the items related to one another, and variety of the areas the items are drawn from, is relevant because the persons who do the relating—who "wonder"—are caught in situations which deny them material for their characteristic activity. The concept of "range" has little relevance to the essentially similar "appreciation" of the central persons in Volume X. The especial rarity of Maisie, Morgan and the telegraphist is that their "wonder" is

27 *Art of Novel*, p. 156.

28 When James says that Hyacinth "staggeres" under his activity, the emphasis on "range" is repeated. The word appeared too, we may remember, in his separate comments on *What Maisie Knew* and *In the Cage*: See *Art of Novel*, pp. 154-155.
of unusual range in comparison with their situations: "the luxury
is that of the number of their moral vibrations, well-nigh
29 unrestricted . . . ". This luxury of range of wonder is the sign of
triumphant resolution of an internal conflict over continuing to
wonder, a conflict precipitated by situations which are caged, or
which have absolutely no "range." What Maisie Knew, for example,
represents the child's so successful resistance to "the strain of
observation and the assault of experience" that she continues to be
able to "wonder" until her situation of restriction to a certain kind
of material of observation changes with the death of her childhood.

From the prior course of his discussion in the preface to Volume XI,
it is clear that James has in mind several ways in which Maisie's
situation, and the material of observation which it offers, makes of
her experience an "assault" and tests her choice to "wonder."
Awareness of exclusion from very many items which others continually

29 Art of Novel, p. 156.

30 Ibid., pp. 146-147. (The italics are mine.) James's
extensive commentary at the opening of the preface on What Maisie Knew
makes significant his use of the phrase "range of wonderment" for all
three fictions in Volume XI: Maisie, Morgan, and the telegraphist are
in positions offering them no range. They are caged in two senses.
(1) Their opportunity of direct personal contact with all that affects
them is strikingly restricted. (2) The little they can witness
constantly reminds them of exclusion from what others find most important
and satisfying. Essential to What Maisie Knew is that the child's
attention must play on material which exceptionally "taxes" it.
The active, contributive, close-circling wonder, as I have called
it, in which the child's identity is guarded and preserved, and
which makes her case remarkable exactly by the weight of the tax
on it, provides distinction for her . . . through the operation
of the tax—which would have done comparatively little for us
hadn't it been monstrous! (Art of Novel, pp. 149-150)
refer to, tempts one to withdraw attention. To continue to play wonder on a plethora of mystery surrounding what others obviously enjoy, requires stamina of attention and rejecting the implication that one's own experience is of little intrinsic value. Moreover, confinement to a single kind of item always implying one's exclusion, to little variety of material for observation, also tempts one to withdraw the play of attention. A situation of being shut up to items both repetitive and disdained by others tends to discourage "wonder." The range of Maisie's, of Morgan's and of the telegraphist's wonder is rare because their experience is only of being excluded on a wide front and from much which they feel must be important and pleasurable.

In sum, the prefaces to Volumes X and XI closely relate the two groups of fictions which they identify. For they describe the congruity of each volume so that certain major similarities (along with minor distinctions) stand out between all six fictions. (1) Like *The Spoils*, "A London Life" and "The Chaperon" (Volume X), *What Maisie Knew*, *In the Cage* and "The Pupil" (Volume XI) represent "subjective adventures." (2) All six objectify by the same means these internal conflicts and crises: they show a course of incident initially turned by certain agents in one direction to be complicated unexpectedly by the capacity of other characters to "appreciate" and to "wonder"--to be "free spirits." (The latter are the central or highlighted personages of the fictions. They relate every item they happen to confront, and undergo a test of their continuance in such activity. The external conflict between persons objectifies this internal conflict,
because the central persons at some time influence decisively the
turn of event by their choice to continue to relate or to desist.)

The preface to Volume XII—containing "The Aspern Papers,"
"The Turn of the Screw," "The Liar" and "The Two Faces"—does not
directly name a congruity of its four fictions. However, the key
terms of the previous two prefaces, "wonder" and "appreciation,"
reecho throughout this discussion, especially in connection with two
further terms: "imagination" and "romantic tone."

James summarizes the "tone" of "The Aspern Papers" as a
"romantic harmony," because the nouvelle recreates "the air of
old-time Italy." One detects a rather puzzling distinction in
James's mind between the "romance" of The American, which he had
discussed at length in the second preface of the Edition, and the
romantic "tone" of "The Aspern Papers." The latter accurately presents
manners, this later preface stresses, as The American had not.
Romantic "tone" is described as follows:

right and left, in Italy—before the great historic
complexity at least—penetration fails; we scratch at
the extensive surface . . . we hang about in the golden
air. But we exaggerate our gathered values only if we
are eminently witless. 33

31 Art of Novel, p. 159.

32 Ibid., pp. 161; 166.

33 Ibid., p. 160.
... the sense, in the whole element, of things too numerous, too deep, too obscure, too strange . . . for any ease of intellectual relation . . . 34

A response to "great historic complexity" as impenetrable may seem, superficially, to be the contrary of taking intellectual possession— the opposite of "criticism" and of "appreciation." But James calls this response a conscious "fiction" of "appreciations," a "re-appropriating impulse." A response that is not "witless" before a "great historic complexity" recognizes it may obtain only "glimpses." It celebrates "haunting presences." Obviously, an accurate grasp of impenetrable contexts (those evidencing the influence of something with which they offer, however, no direct contact) takes account of the fact that such material reflects mainly one's interpretation, or the manner of one's response to it.

After the preface to Volume XII has introduced this definition of the romantic "tone" in "The Aspern Papers," it discusses the procedure of the historian. Having spoken of the similarity between the "fabulist" and the chemist or biologist, James now contrasts the

34  
Art of Novel, pp. 159-160.

35  
Ibid., p. 160.

36  
Ibid.

37  
Ibid., p. 159. Nature is posited by the scientist as a field relatively so vast and inexhaustible that he must regard his account of it as his own ordering of something he cannot experience in its entirety. The explorer of nature, James emphasizes, knows he is apt to "find" the unexpected, to stumble upon what the familiar did not predict.
"dramatist" to the historian: The historian posits for the area of his work an exhaustible field—all the documents which may be found. He may, accordingly, tend to regard the complete survey (which is theoretically possible) of this field as all there is to know, instead of as his construction. Seeking certainty "about" the unexperienced past, the historian wants to make it wholly available to the present, that is, he wants to reveal it in terms of the familiar. As a result, he may come to regard his account as "the past," and to lose appetite for the unknown. "History," in this preface, symbolizes the failure really to attend to one's environment—the elimination of the unfamiliar or of the sense of an unknown:

that odd law which somehow always makes the minimum of valid suggestion serve the man of imagination better than the maximum. The historian, essentially, wants more documents than he can really use; the dramatist only wants more liberties than he can really take. 38

The preface had opened with the notation that the germ of "The Aspern Papers" was a curious flower thrown off by "literary history," and one must remember that the narrator of that fiction is seeking to open up the literary history of Jeffrey Aspern. The narrator is not a "man of imagination." His response to Juliana Bordereau's survival is the reverse of James's when he had heard of a similar fact:

I might have "looked up" Miss Clairmont in previous years had I been earlier informed . . . but I felt myself more concerned with the mere strong fact of her having testified for the reality and the closeness of our relation to the past than

38 Art of Novel, pp. 161-162. Of course James is not referring to the great historians, who avoid just this pitfall. Justly or not, James uses the study of history to stand for a certain cast of mind or direction of endeavor.
with any question of the particular sort of person I might have flattered myself I "found."

The preface opposes "the undue simplicity of pretending to read meanings into things absolutely sealed and beyond test or proof" to James's "wonder" in recognizing that Jane Clairmont's survival testified to the presence of an impenetrable entity within the present.

Thus the terms "wonder" and "appreciation," which James has used throughout the prefaces to Volumes X and XI, are associated with "imagination" by the preface to Volume XII. "Wonder" and "appreciation" are said to take possession of (appropriate and criticize) a certain kind of context by not pretending to "read meanings into" it, but recognizing instead the invitation to self-projection.

By his contrast of "pretending to read meanings into things absolutely sealed" with "wonder" and "appreciation" of the same kind of item, James especially emphasizes that his "wonder" and "appreciation" are a making, a creation. For criticism of certain impenetrable contexts does not transliterate their items into already familiar ones. The contrary of "imagination" is transposing reality into one's own image. Regarding absolutely all that it meets as grist for its mill of translation into familiar terms, the unimaginative response cannot conceive that any area may be intrinsically unknowable. Lack of imagination does not deny mystification in the sense of puzzlement. But it does not recognize mystery. It feels only the sense of a delayed

39
Art of Novel, p. 162.

40
Third.
solution in the presence of those contexts where imagination feels the unknowable and therefore is aware of creating what it wants to: "the sense of the past" instead of "the past." Imagination's contrary never **consciously** creates, never consciously romances.

When, later in the preface to Volume XII, James calls "The Turn of the Screw" "pure romance," says that its germ was in "the wonder of the allegations" and the "witheld glimpse . . . of a dreadful matter," a germ which he unfolded into a "fairy tale . . . springing from a conscious and cultivated credulity," and notes, too, that he has kneaded "the subject of . . . the . . . narrator's mystification thick," her record of "anomalies and obscurities" being a "different matter" from her explanation of them, he implies that both this story and "The Aspern Papers" represent unimaginative and non-lucid responses to impenetrable contexts which the author at the same time prods his readers to appreciate imaginatively. This means that the fictions in Volume XII seek to place readers in the position of the central persons in Volume XI--to test readers' choices to exercise criticism, wonder, imagination.

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41 **Art of Novel**, pp. 170-171; 173.

42 A "sealed" or impenetrable context is one offering no opportunity for direct contact with something which has greatly influenced it. Such is any context redolent of the past, offering tangible survivals from the past, or any context felt to have been affected by another world--by "demons" and "presences"--with which one can gain no direct contact. (**Art of Novel**, p. 175) The reader of "The Turn of the Screw" must stand in this relation to the governess's report. The substance of that report must be a "sealed" context for the reader.

43 These fictions confront the reader with manifold ambiguity. By selecting contexts which clearly must remain unknown, and by representing central persons' puzzlement or mystification in such contexts, James
The implications of the preface's brief comment on "The Liar" confirm the above generalization. The personal experience which had yielded his "germ" is all that James tells us about the story. He had found a signal embodiment of the attitude of unimaginative persons towards imaginative ones when he had witnessed a conscientious wife's failure to distinguish her husband's enviable "joy of life" from lying. At a small London dinner party where he made a fifth person, James had met a gentleman "for the first time, though favorably known to me by name and fame, in whom I recognised the most unbridled colloquial romancer the 'joy of life' had ever found occasion to envy." Evidently the gentleman had kept up throughout the dinner his characteristic activity, for the host and hostess and James only listened, while the gentleman's wife marked herself by "not once meeting straight the eyes of one of us." The wife had done "her duty by" the other guests in literally not countenancing her husband's joy; at the same time, by restraining her disapproval to simply being herself "veracious," she had been "most" dutiful to her husband. The

brings the reader to a crisis where he either succumbs to a need for a "solution," or simply enjoys the sense of remaining in the presence of the unknowable.

Contrary to Edmund Wilson's analysis, the thorough ambiguity is calculated by James, rather than unconscious on his part. Mr. Wilson's discussion assumes that the only reason for presenting ambiguity must be to awaken puzzlement ("mystification" in James's terminology), hence that any conscious ambiguity must ultimately be susceptible of solution by a reader. See "The Ambiguity of Henry James," The Triple Thinkers, Revised Edition (Oxford, 1948), pp. 88-132.

44 Art of Novel, p. 178.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid. Probably the most revealing thing which James has to say about this woman is conveyed in the polite phrase: "Under what other conceivable coercion [but finding her husband interesting] . . . had I been invited to reckon . . . with the type, with the character . . . ?"
preface's use of the term "romancer" for the personage who became "The Liar" in the view of the narrator of James's story, and the preface's opposition between "duty" and "joy" closely relate the comments on this story with what James has already implied to be a likeness between "The Aspern Papers" and "The Turn of the Screw."  

The "colloquial romancer" is neither an unconscious self-projector nor a conscious liar. Both of the latter pass untruth for truth. The "romancer" makes no such pretension. He circulates fictions, cultivated credulities. The "colloquial" kind of romancer 48 is simply the man of much social imagination. On certain subjects or in certain contexts, romancing is the only activity which avoids lying. In all the fictions of Volume XII, James employs just such contexts in order to show a capable reader that he too, like the

47In addition, the portion of the preface to Volume XII that concerns "The Liar" contrasts (a) the regenerative effect, for society, provided by imagination enjoying the license of conscious romance, to (b) the isolating and fragmenting influence on the social body by the literal mind:

between whom, while we listened to the woven wonders of a summer holiday, the exploits of a salamander among Mediterranean isles, were exchanged, dimly and discreetly, ever so guardedly, but all expressively, imperceptible lingering looks. It was exquisite... it could but become some "short story" or other... (Art of Novel, p. 179).

Though the listeners' glances were discreet and guarded, they were frequent and "lingering." Recognition of a betrayed weakmess is single, and certainly not for a considerable lapse of time "exquisite."

The listeners were brought into communion (their enjoyment was socially cohesive), save for the isolated wife, on whose account expression of joy in the "joy of life" had to be dim and guarded.

"The Aspern Papers" and "The Turn of the Screw" employ conflicts in which imagination, striving to heal social divisions, almost is able to counter the socially disruptive effects of a literal mindedness unaware of its own romancing.

48In "The Liar," Colonel Capadose very carefully chooses his occasions for romancing, in order to spread an ease among his listeners.
central persons of the six fictions of the preceding two volumes, must elect the effort of relating and composing—rather than rely passively on someone else's mere unimaginative transliterations.

The procedure of the remainder of this chapter for supplying the major proof that Volumes X-XII do in fact, as their prefaces imply, make a unit of fictions all presenting with particular clarity James's characteristic theme of "free spirit," requires some comment: My next section will employ purely thematic terms to discuss the following topics: the nature of each of the ten fictions; the identities within each of the three volumes; the strong similarities and the minor differences between the three volumes; the connection of the order of these volumes both with the kind of theme common to the ten fictions and with successful emphasis on the importance of this theme; the relation of all the preceding topics to James's preface statements. Additional evidence that the ten fictions share a common theme will be provided in Section IV of the chapter, where the argument will be conducted by reference solely to the fictions' formal properties. If we assume, as I think criticism must, that subject and form are alternate sides of the same coin, a discussion of the technical features of the nouvelles and stories in Volumes X-XII can simultaneously perform two functions: it can test the general hypothesis of their making, in all ways, a closely related group. And it can set forth more evidence supporting the specific identifications I shall have made (in Section III) of the three variations, marked by the volume divisions X, XI and XII, on a common subject of "free spirit."
We have seen that James's preface to Volume X defines the congruity of *The Spoils of Poynton*, "A London Life" and "The Chaperon." Examination of these three fictions reveals the striking fact that their heroines, Fleda Vetch, Laura Wing, and Rose Tramore, arrive by the same process at the same kind of attitude towards similar situations. Their very apparent superficial differences make salient their fundamental identities.

Initially, Rose Tramore of "The Chaperon" has everything that Fleda Vetch lacks at the opening of *The Spoils*. With the death of her father, Rose not only inherits a secure status and money enough for personal independence; she also comes into a position where, so soon as she is introduced to society, she may wield the power of her family's collective status. Once introduced, Rose will be the only member of her family in the position to be active socially. Moreover, in contrast to Fleda's unusual physical type, Rose's beauty is easily recognized and acknowledged. Contrarily, Fleda initially is exposed to feeling social pressure. Moreover an early event in *The Spoils* functions, as had the death of Rose Tramore's father early in *The Chaperon*, to intensify the nature of the heroine's initial situation; Rose first becomes potentially more independent and powerful, whereas Fleda, when her sister marries, becomes still more vulnerable to others' pressure. Since the marriage
of Maggie Vetch is "built up around" the idea of a "small spare room" for Fleda (who has managed to get the sum for the marriage by arguing that neither daughter will thereafter have any claim on her father), and since Fleda wishes not to precipitate herself immediately on the newly wed couple, Fleda for a while has nowhere to stay but with Mrs. Gereth. "A London Life" opens with an event showing that Laura Wing has still less "margin" than has Fleda. Her discussion with Lady Davenant shows Laura that her only alternatives are between several appearances of personal independence--appearances particularly

49 X, 148. (See also X, 69.) The details of Fleda's family situation are skillfully worked into the nouvelle in a subordinate way so as not to blur focus on the situation revolving around Poynton. But, extremely important to Fleda's decisions, they are more numerous than the non-analytical reader supposes; and James's timing of his revelation of them is beautifully calculated. Many critics who are perplexed by James's admiration for Fleda neglect, I believe, to relate these details to each other and to Fleda's moves.

Mr. Vetch does his expected "duty" by his daughters, but no more. Fleda's year abroad--a "course" with an Impressionist painter--cannot have constituted training for earning her own living. In giving Fleda this kind of finishing, Mr. Vetch has provided her with means to make her own way in the only manner possible without losing her precarious status by taking a governess's post: she is expected to be able to attach herself to persons with money. The curate Fleda's sister has long been engaged to has a brother who, having solely inherited the family property (an interesting and deliberate echo of the Poynton situation), only "might" help him. The marriage at last occurs only after Fleda has met Mrs. Gereth, has been invited to Poynton for an indefinite stay, and "manages" the sum from her father. How she managed it is indicated by the extent of Mr. Vetch's surprise at Fleda's reappearance on his doorstep when she leaves Mrs. Gereth not long after Maggie's marriage. As soon as possible Fleda plans to occupy Maggie's spare room and to support herself by painting. Fleda looks to this opportunity as a distinct gain of some freedom from dependence on others. But for a while Fleda cannot get even this much independence without treating her sister's marriage as useful to herself.
galling because she has absolutely none of the reality. But the most striking of the apparent disparities between the three heroines is their differing success in seeing altered a situation which they witness and deplore. Rose magnificently brings about what originally she undertakes, the reintroduction of her ostracized mother to society; but Fleda and Laura fail to change the situation they so dislike.

Nevertheless, the fictions show that the three alike are truly "successful only through having remained free." Despite their very different degrees of success in witnessing the alteration of a situation they deplore, Fleda, Laura and Rose develop the same estimate of what is truly "success." Each of the three reaches, too, the conclusion that she has narrowly succeeded in the sense of having held on to her own freedom of spirit—that she has just managed not herself to violate her central aim, which is identical in the three cases.

Each of the three heroines finally regards the situation in which she ends as irrelevant to her happiness. By the conclusion of The Spoils, Fleda has lost the possibility of living in the room at Maggie's; Fleda now is with Mrs. Gereth "always." But this situation Fleda has assumed voluntarily, and will remain in it only so long as

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Lady Davenant's offer to take Laura comes after Lady Davenant ascertains that the girl might be a candidate to marry off. Laura can exchange one appearance of independence only for a more subtle one.

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Art of Novel, p. 130.
Mrs. Gereth now treats her as an individual. Rose Tramore thinks herself fortunate not in having "launched" Mrs. Charles, but in having come to respect Bertram Jay. Laura Wing accepts a position of still more abject dependence than her original one, in order not to help condemn her sister and not to take advantage of Mrs. Wendover's aroused pity. At the conclusion of all three fictions, the heroines are dissatisfied, however, with the situation prevailing between other individuals; and all three fictions epitomize the grounds for the heroines' disappointments by striking reversals. These reversals may profitably be summarized, since they very clearly reveal the causes of the heroines' disappointments, and hence show what it is the heroines value in personal relationships. Mrs. Gereth is clandestinely received at Poynton, where Mona Brigstock now is mistress; and the mother there tells her son that she will never see him again. Lady Davenport is adviser to Mr. Wendover, who before had resisted her patronage by an unconscious American "benevolence." Mrs. Charles Tramore has been introduced, at a crowded official garden party, to her son Eric, after which the son calls on his mother but "observing the shade, the next day but one."

52 X, 233. Mrs. Gereth "takes" from Fleda the information that the girl does not come to her because of guilt, but to prevent Mrs. Gereth from trying to keep alive Owen's communication with Fleda. By not asking any questions about the contents of her son's letter, the frustrated mother accepts these terms of Fleda's.

53 X, 349.

54 X, 499.
A similar situation of the aggrandizement of figures moved by mere instinct by other characters moved more by aggressive will prevails around each heroine. Such exploitation had been prevalent at the opening of each action, and it changes in none of the three fictions, especially not in "The Chaperon," despite Rose's superficial success in reinstating her mother. At the opening of "The Chaperon," Mr. Tramore has sacrificed his children to his status; at the story's conclusion, artless Mrs. Charles Tramore is in "harness" to fulfilling society's will. She had been a demonstration of society's arbitrary boundary lines; now she is one of its star prisoner-entertainers.

55 More significant than his keeping the children from their mother, he has made ostentatious his own failure to remarry and the fact that the children are disposed between the separate households of his aged mother and spinster sister—where he occasionally looks in. This abandonment is taken by Mr. Tramore's society as a sign of his moral rigor. The children become their father's public demonstration of his self-righteousness.

56 Selina, at the opening of "A London Life," gives Laura only what is convenient; at the conclusion, Selina gives Lionel everything he wants—is completely exploited by him. Selina is congenitally "frivolous"; she is impulse completely in the grip of a husband "too frivolous for nature," i.e., more diabolical than thoughtless( X;193). James expected his readers to need no enlightenment on England's divorce laws, which (until 1923) provided that a woman bringing a petition had to prove cruelty and desertion as well as adultery, whereas a man had to prove adultery. The silly American Selina is under the impression that her ability to prove Lionel's infidelities gives her a means to keep him from the initiative in any divorce action. But this idea is fatally superficial. Lionel can bully an undisciplined wife and his scared sister-in-law partly because of the institutions which make him nominally a British form of the gentleman. Laura does not deny Selina's complete irresponsibility; but she also perceives that since the greater power and responsibility is given to the man by the English order, Lionel exploits Selina when he refuses to exercise it.
At the conclusion of *The Spoils*, a character representing instinct, Owen Gereth, is tightly captive to a character representing sheer force of personal will, Mona Brigstock, and to collective social judgment. Throughout the nouvelle Fleda associates Owen with nature made and kept impotent by social means—when society should aid nature to discipline and develop its impetus towards freedom.

Besides similarly recognizing that exploitation of amoral instinct by aggressive will actually has increased in the relations between the persons around them, the three heroines are keenly aware that this aggrandizement has been made possible because the English order regards its conventions as a moral code. The attitude of Fleda, Laura and Rose towards the English order becomes identical. Initially,

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57 This is made most explicit just before the climactic scenes: she had scarcely seen him at all as yet in London form . . . . In the country, heated with the chase and splashed with mire, he had always rather reminded her of a picturesque peasant in a national costume. This costume . . . never failed of suggestions of the earth and the weather, the hedges and the ditches, the beasts and the birds. There had been days when it struck her as all potent nature in one pair of boots. (X, 150)

In the context of what Fleda already knows of Owen's incapacities, and of what she henceforth is to learn, the above passage is latent with a satiric note that "potent" brings into sudden focus. For Owen Gereth is nature domesticated, already captive. His costume is really national rather than natural—indicative of how his society treats instinct. In London, where Fleda's knowledge of Owen is deepened, he appears in "a higher hat and light gloves with black seams, and a spearlike umbrella." James stresses that thus encased in London dress, Owen is not "another person" but quintessentially the same young Englishman: "he showed a recovered freshness . . . ." (X, 150) Many other descriptions of Owen constantly imply the confinement, rather than the flowering, of nature. They stress the presence of restless, recalcitrant impulse beneath social usages operating as an imperfect vise. He is "robust and artless, eminently natural, yet perfectly correct!" (X, 8-9) See also the simile for Owen's "impatience" (X, 47); the description of his room at Poynton (X, 59); and the pattern of references to the conversors' hands in chapter sixteen, particularly to Owen's gestures in his formal dress.
their perspective on it is "critical" in the sense of detached; they become finally alienated from it, in the special sense of continuing to confront it while totally rejecting its premises. Despite their similar and marked respect for the possession of social forms, they come to see the English system as one that maintains aggrandizement of the weak by the strong. Fleda, Laura, and Rose alike have a developed sense of the importance of convention; but they alike see that the particular conventions ruling in the English scene encourage the domination of some individuals by others and discourage individuals from developing further their capacity to choose and to judge themselves. That is, the heroines see that the English order works against the development of a freedom inherent in the natural human power to choose and involving the concept of uniqueness--of individuals. The heroines see certain social practices which they respect because they take them to be expressions of underlying covenants between individuals, regarded by others as guarantees of virtue. Moreover these practices, besides presuming agreements between free parties, give to one the major share of power and responsibility in the relationship. Therefore, if the spirit of their contractual origin is forgotten, such conventions are particularly

58 For instance, Laura Wing is "struck," in the "institutions" of the "English country gentry," with "a sense of ... curious duplicity (in the literal meaning of the word) ... the way the genius of such an old house was all peace and decorum and yet the spirit that prevailed there ... contentious and impure." Laura notes "that perfection of machinery which can still at certain times make English life go on of itself with a stately rhythm long after corruption is within it!" (X, 292)
usable as instruments of aggrandizement. In each case of exploitation in these fictions, personal will manipulates English conventions for its own gain, and is abetted in this procedure by two factors: the convention vests more power in one party, and the general attitude is that simply meeting the convention's surface is virtue. The three young women are alienated from a social environment whose possession of many social forms they respect, but which strikes them as corrupted through a prevalent confusion of convention with morality, so that individual choice is not exercised and exploitation constantly occurs.

Since this final attitude towards the English order emerges by the same process in The Spoils, "A London Life" and "The Chaperon," we can better understand the identity of their heroines in "free spirit" by considering the further parallels between the three fictions.

However different in degrees of power are the initial situations of the heroines, they are all situations "false" in the sense that the element of actual dependence in the situation of the girls is not openly

59 Laura Wing learns that London's practices concerning marriage-divorce and courtship actually encourage irresponsibility and hasten social instability. Laura confronts not just "different" surfaces from those she had been accustomed to in America, but an attitude towards a body of social practices. This attitude encourages bullying by the male, treachery in the female. "The Chaperon" also presents two related practices which offer particularly convenient means for exploitation if they are regarded superstitiously while handled irresponsibly. Rose sees that the conventions governing initiation into and exclusion from her society are means for its members to grasp greater prestige and money, though these same practices are the while claimed to be morality. In The Spoils, Fleda sees that the conventions of "expropriation" of the mother and of engagement settlements (making such agreements into money and property contracts) can endanger—instead of protect—family solidarity if they are not clearly identified as contracts valid insofar as founded on and expressing some degree of trust.
acknowledged by those who intend to use the girls through this dependence. Nevertheless, their habit of relating all the items of their experience enables the heroines to penetrate others' disguise of the heroines' own situation. Thus, the opening of each action stresses the heroine's lucidity, and stresses too that this lucidity alerts her to the danger of being used or exploited. For example, in *The Spoils* Fleda quickly understands that the true reason for her being invited to Poynton is to be used by Mrs. Gereth in limiting Owen's power of choice of his wife—or of who is to be Poynton's future mistress. Though Fleda temporarily has nowhere else to go, she stays at Poynton only because her lucidity shows her a way to make her position less false: it identifies why Mrs. Gereth's strategy to use Fleda against Owen's power of choice probably will not work. Fleda, Laura, and Rose each are contrasted with other characters who are in a dependent and exploitable position but an undisguised one, and yet who neglect to relate the clear items even of these undisguised situations. These contrasting characters mistake their dependence, even though it is undisguised, and so become easy instruments by which characters having power can extend their domination. In *The Spoils*, the attitudes of Fleda's sister Maggie receive for this reason even the small amount of space allotted to them. Miss Steet, the governess, is quite extensively contrasted with Laura Wing of "A London Life"; and "The Chaperon" includes so relatively much about Rose's aunt, Miss Tramore, in order to highlight lucidity as the cause of Rose's attainment of more than a negative and superficial independence. 

Maggie Vetch, Miss Steet, and Miss Jane Tramore are shown to be usable by persons with power because the three do not relate their
experience. On the other hand, the outstanding quality of Fleda Vetch, Laura Wing and Rose Tramore from the beginning is a mental habit of seeing as a whole whatever they do confront—a preoccupation with consistency. Too, the heroines employ this mental habit to the end of avoiding being made to contribute, in any degree, to obstruction of other individuals' exercise of choice. In spite of the fact that they are in exploitable positions, Fleda, Laura and Rose avoid being used against still other persons. This refusal, or avoidance, is both aided by and is a sign of the heroines' focus on consistency: the domination they themselves must resist, they will not increase.

A striking example of the fact that Laura Wing's habit of relating her experience enables her to avoid being used against anyone's freedom is her early decision to "try and be happy" in what she knows is a temporary modus vivendi. Rose's habit of relating or seeing in wholes is especially marked by what she does and does not regret about her departure from the Tramore house at the opening of the story. As early as the second chapter of The Spills, a reader sees Fleda premising

60 X, 332. By seeing in relationships the several facts that Lionel wants his wife's misbehavior and ruin (rather than "justice" or propriety), that Lady Davenant's offer to Laura is in terms of letting Selina "go," and that Selina bows before her sister's demand to swear to her when Selina has no reason to fear any power of Laura's, the girl understands two things: that remaining at Mellow offers no hope of a change (since Selina practices an extensive self-deception, and therefore is unreformable), but that leaving Selina will be tantamount to aiding Lionel's power.

61 In contrast to her aunt, Rose has no illusion that she is performing more than a "game." Rose does not exaggerate either the danger or the worth of her maneuver. But she does have tears for the fact that her grandmother regards her only as an opponent in this game, and tears too for the fact that her aunt is willing to sacrifice to the same cause even Rose's modicum of regard for Bertram Jay.
her own acts on data supplied by the relationships she perceives between other persons' behavior and their statements, as well as between the several motives and the value systems which are suggested to her by others' behavior and statements. Through this activity of extensively relating her observations, an activity which is her lucidity, Fleda estimates that the probable result of Mrs. Gereth's overt offer of her to Owen will be to have made certain Owen's engagement to Mona, since Mona is not motivated (as Mrs. Gereth thinks) by greed. Fleda believes the mother's strategy an unwise one for her purposes, even a colossal stupidity. Relating Mona's silence in the face of Mrs. Gereth's challenges, Mona's conversation about Poynton when she is not wary, and her gestures in response to Owen's eagerness, Fleda concludes that Mona's motivation is neither a desire for Poynton nor love for Owen but the opportunity for opposition. Mrs. Gereth unwittingly shows Mona that Poynton offers what she most wants—the opportunity to beat someone who has challenged her. This crucial analysis of Mona Fleda is from the beginning careful not to communicate to Mrs. Gereth, for, again by her habit of relating, Fleda has penetrated that Mrs. Gereth's motivation is less preserving Poynton's beauty than gaining a veto power over Owen's choice of the mistress of the house.

Possessed of the capacity and the will to relate all their observations, all three heroines witness an imbroglio between others. They see a potential domination, by the will to personal gain, of persons who, merely instinctual and fundamentally amoral, have grown no values truly their own. These quarrels have developed to an
impasse where, if the conflict continues in the same direction, one party to them will completely triumph over the other's power of choice. The heroines manage to delay the coming to crisis of such conflicts; they successfully forestall for a while the direction of the action. Fleda, Laura and Rose "complicate" a course of incident in the sense that they become catalysts to a possible change in the opening situation. The three girls accomplish the same feat of creating simply some opportunity--where none had existed--for the characters who represent nature in thrall to social forms, and who are exploitable for this reason, to perceive that the forms are valid only as agreements between parties who regard each other as individuals and intend to keep faith with the agreement in this light.

For a while the heroines restrain the force of the first "agents" of the actions, or of the dominant parties in the witnessed conflicts, from being exercised. A period of time is thus gained in which the other party to the quarrel might develop real choices of his own. The heroines are able so to delay the conflicts coming to issue for two reasons: (1) The first agents have called upon the heroines for support, thinking they may conveniently be used; (2) By relating items so as to locate the motivations of all the characters involved, the heroines find means (that do not obstruct anyone's choice) to keep the first agents temporarily quiescent. Fleda agrees to see Owen at Poynton in Mrs. Gereth's place because she still has no reason to think he can be personally interested in her, and because

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Art of Novel, p. 157.
she sees that the young man needs a sounding board against which to develop his own judgment. In Owen's presence, Fleda rigorously suppresses any initial indication of her own judgments. As best she can, she keeps Owen's attention riveted on the fact of the quarrel with his mother, agreeing explicitly with those moves he volunteers and which she can applaud. But Fleda removes herself from this position at Poynton when she sees that neither side to the quarrel recognizes that her role is to be only a "medium of communication." Then Fleda's meeting with Owen in London confirms this appraisal: His behavior in Kensington Gardens, where he lets Fleda learn of his interest in her the while that he reiterates his tie to Mona, reveals that he is perhaps inclined to float with any tide, and that his compromise offer to his mother may have derived simply from the instinct to avoid handling trouble—rather than from his own "sense of justice," as Fleda had hoped. Her grasp of all the items means that for Fleda Owen is a "boy"; she sees him as markedly subject to use by others and well content to have them exercise choice for him in fact though not in appearance. Since the girl decides Owen must be helped to a further period of insulation from his mother's power of suggestion and from increase in Mona's pressure, Fleda again becomes (at Ricks) the medium of communication with the son.

63 X, 47.

64 When she makes this decision in Chapter VII, Fleda knows that the combination of what she has learned about Owen from the Kensington Gardens scene, with Mrs. Gereth's removal of the spoils, and with the mother's continued stipulation that she will talk with
In Chapter IX of The Spoils, Fleda rejects the "temptation" to act on Owen's implication that his "honor" might be preserved by a mere appearance of doing all he can to meet his original offer to Mona. Before rejecting this temptation, Fleda relates Owen's manner of suggesting it to his statements about Mona's attitude. By this means the girl perceives that Owen's conscience will remain completely external or conventionalized if she acts upon his implied suggestion. Fleda's decision that "her problem was to reinstate him in his rights" is often misunderstood because readers do not recall its full context: Owen is "troubled" about the question of his honor, and his expression of this difficulty marks the first time Fleda can be entirely sure he is trying to form his own judgment, instead of simply following an instinct. In order to be freed from simply adopting Mona's view of his "honor," the young man must understand that conventions are agreements between individuals and exactly what his agreement with Mona had involved. At present Owen both accepts convention as his only morality and yet constantly violates it, feeling compunction. His

her son only through Fleda makes Mrs. Gereth's strategy (of getting Owen to throw over Mona for Fleda) more likely to work. The mother now has a clear chance of influencing Owen to give into one impulse—Fleda—and drop the other, Mona. Thus Fleda's task at Ricks is to see Owen again without giving him her own judgments and, more difficult, without letting him glimpse her own emotional response to his impulses.

The concept that "honor" is retained by keeping to the engagement to Mona under all circumstances and until she releases him is voiced for the first time by Owen, not by Fleda. And this idea is reported by Owen as Mona's. When with a "gravity" of his own he quotes it to Fleda, she "laughs out." Then she in turn is "grave" at Owen's failure to see the comedy. (X, 91-92).
frivolity towards social agreements in turn only feeds his superstitious attitude towards them. However, by following conventions very literally, he may discover that they premise some trust, and that Mona fails to offer the necessary faith for any valid agreement with her when she refuses to trust Owen to take his own measures for providing Poynton along with himself.

Finally, Fleda buys further time for Owen to learn to determine his own choices (in a situation of least pressure), by using her knowledge of Mrs. Gereth's motivation to keep the mother quiet for another interval. Laura Wing and Rose Tramore also use their relating capacity to neutralize for a while the force of the first agents of the conflict they witness.

But in order to delay the conflict so as to foster others' growth of genuine choice, the three young women have to act in a way that risks the loss of some other things they desire. Maintaining

66 In this interview at Ricks, Fleda for the first time forces Owen to state aloud facts humiliating to him and which already she knows. Her purpose is to make him begin to grasp their relationship.

67 By her bearing under Selina's attack after the museum incident, Laura manages to make Selina aware of her own stupidity, and next agrees to try to help Selina treat her "marriage to a cad" as nevertheless a commitment involving the children.

Rose undertakes to live with her mother for a period in order to forestall society's complete control. This heroine wants both to straighten out her own attitude towards her parents' values, and to see Mrs. Charles win her campaign "in contempt" rather than by grovelling. Rose's ability to put together the facts which indicate others' motives enables her to win her game. But the same ability also leads to her disenchantment with the undertaking.
their catalytic intervention in the action precipitates an internal conflict in the heroines, for it requires the clearer orientation of their own value systems. They must signal reaffirm that encouraging exercise of individual choice is their principal value. Though Fleda, Laura, and Rose alike reaffirm that they most desire to foster others' exercise of choice, so that their internal conflict

Fleda has good reason to respect traditions that seek to preserve property and to disassociate herself from involvement in noisy public quarrels. Yet she rates preservation of Poynton's beauty above the "legality" of Owen's sole ownership. She approves Mrs. Gereth's argument that a society grounded on ignoring such imponderables as beauty must be opposed, and that such a society's judgment that the greatest evil is making a "row" is entirely worthless. (X, 21-23). Fleda also wants Owen's limited capacity for making his own choice, his childlikeness, to be nurtured in a favorable atmosphere. (X, 28; 195; 225). But in order to gain Owen time to try to judge for himself, Fleda has to risk Mrs. Gereth's loss of Poynton, the desecration of Poynton's beauty, and Owen's marrying Mona. When she learns that Owen has developed even less than she had supposed, so that her risks are very great, Fleda reverses her former course of showing Owen none of her own judgments. She also ensures that he will have to exercise only the very minimum amount of choice. Here again she risks her opportunity to preserve Poynton's beauty and herself to protect Owen; but the only alternative to this risk is treating him as far less than a child. The only alternative to the minimum risk is denying Owen any degree of choice.

The minimum risk is drastically limiting, as for a child, the area where Owen will have to exercise a choice of his own, and, further, influencing him by revealing how Fleda herself regards his alternatives: To Owen's "You mean to tell me I must marry a woman I hate!" Fleda unequivocally replies, "No. Anything is better than that." She directs Owen to be "utterly sure" he feels that Mona does not love him. He must "at any rate" be without doubt that Mona does not "love" him. This statement is made after Owen already has defined "real love" as a trust such as Fleda has shown him. Fleda performs one more act of influence; she appeals to a type of weakness in Owen that has been her most carefully protected "secret" from others: she initiates a kiss that holds up before Owen the reward of a passionate mothering, such as he most wants and needs.
is resolved in favor of the heroines "having remained free," the failure by other persons similarly to relate their experience eventually pushes the action again in its original direction of aggrandizement. Since the young women now are more aware of their own opposite commitment, surveying this issue of the conflict requires of them still more courage.

The courage of its heroine is especially emphasized by all three fictions. Each heroine chooses between her own escape from an exposed position, and continuing to exercise her lucidity in relation to other persons whose lack of lucidity makes for a system of exploitation. Her choice of free spirit is made, moreover, in the

69 By repudiating her appeal to Mr. Wendover, and by going to the lovers at Brussels, though she thus leaves the children forever, Laura Wing rates her respect for avoiding scandal (public demonstration of the gap between the appearances and the contentious actuality) lower than her desire to give to Selina some opportunity for second thoughts. By refusing to trick Guy Manger in the way her mother suggests, Rose risks not being able to win her game, in order not herself to be "vindictive." (X, 481). Then, by making her two conditions to Bertram Jay before she agrees to introduce him to Mrs. Charles, and by approving his intention to drop Mrs. Vaughan-Vesey's acquaintance, Rose again risks the opportunity to win her game by means of Jay's presence. She rates the game lower than Jay's exercise of choice.

70 Fleda's delaying effort for Owen is blocked by the confluence of Mrs. Gereth's, Owen's, and Mrs. Brigstock's inattentiveness to the motives evidenced by everyone's behavior. And it is Mrs. Gereth's return of the spoils in order to blackmail Fleda, rather than any decision by Fleda to renounce Owen, which makes the original situation prevail once more. For this restoration of the spoils motivates Mona, as Fleda says, to a return of "good temper" which Owen takes as "love" or sufficient affection for him.

Rose's decision, upon her "deeper understanding" with Jay, to drop her game, and Mrs. Charles's perfect acquiescence in this decision, is contravened when Mrs. Vaughan-Vesey finds Rose's original attitude unusual or "quaint" enough to be a social drawing card.
knowledge that probably others will not follow suit. Fleda, Laura and Rose find the bravery to confront the extent of the world's contradiction of human freedom, and yet to believe, at the same time, in the mere possibility of freedom's increase while they accept the task of increased struggle towards that end.

Constantly Fleda pits her hope against her intelligence of the balance sheet, putting that same intelligence to work for what she knows is improbable. Fleda is not remarkably "fine" for her rigid adherence to a minutely delineated code of conduct, but for the strength of her commitment to life as risk. She has no passion for martyrdom. Rather, her lucidity sharpens her appetite for success, because it can locate some possible means to what otherwise is quite impossible. The capacity to "appreciate" makes Fleda's life an adventure; and the adventure of risking all just possibly to gain all requires from a retiring temperament in an exposed position something far more difficult than renunciation. Fleda's symbol throughout The Spoils is the Maltese Cross, an emblem of heroic bravery, of soldiers rather than passive martyrs of the cross. Laura Wing's

On the other hand, perhaps this object persistently associated with Fleda's story—in many of the earliest Notebook entries as well as throughout the final version—does not have symbolic import. It is not literally a Maltese Cross. If the object is conscious symbolism, James may have stressed that Maltese Cross is a "technically incorrect" term "always" employed by the Gereths, in order to gain a triple implication: (1) Fleda is a soldier-defender, against impossible odds, of non-aggressive values; (2) Everyone but Fleda misinterprets a crucifix. Mrs. Gereth mixes up human and divine attributes; she also treats the crucifix as the "bargain" spoil of a romance of trade. (3) Although Fleda, in true humility, does not seek martyrdom, everyone believes she does. The significations of a true Maltese Cross fit her own view.
case, too, is one of finding courage to penetrate, instead of to run away from, an alien world. At the beginning of "A London Life," Laura is seeking a "noble indifference," or how not to feel "too much." She learns that only feeling and knowing more is a solution to her growing apprehensions. The story centers on Laura's substitution of resoluteness "to know" for an initial feeling of "tragedy." Rose learns the dreariness of a merely disillusioned game to turn the tables on the world. She learns to respect as something more than naivete Jay's confrontation of that world with other weapons than its own. Rose's gain in this kind of courage is reflected in her increasing substitution of the comic view for the purely satiric. She grows more tender both of her mother and of her grandmother. In none of the three fictions is James writing tragedy. In each he celebrates a heroism.

Whereas the three fictions of Volume X exhibit courageous creations of "character" or fully realized freedom, the three in

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72 X, 277; 401; 425-426. (See also X, 286.) The sign of Laura's courage is her refusal of sentimentality, however overwrought she may be. She wastes no tears over leaving behind the children, just as she has wasted few on Selina's weeping "confession." The girl is as distinct from Miss Steet's snivellings, as she is from Lady Davenant's cynicism.

73 The Spoils, because Fleda's test is prolonged and severe, emphasizes the rarity and possibility of free spirit; whereas "The Chaperon" is a very much lighter treatment of the same theme, accenting the comic aspect of the world from which the heroine becomes alienated. Nevertheless, the somberness of the elder Mrs. Tramore's death without any reconciliation with Rose lurks in the background of "The Chaperon"; just as in The Spoils Fleda never loses a sense of the comedy of Owen's courtship of Mona.
Volume XI particularly emphasize that even the kind of world which
free spirit finds alien may be a sufficient cause of true freedom.
The latter three stress that the achievement of free spirit does not
depend on certain circumstances—that it is always a free possibility.
What Maisie Knew, In the Cage, and "The Pupil" meet the objection that
a critical perspective on a world of exploitation can be gained only
by certain persons who have happened to experience some non-aggrandizement.
They show why the seeds of free spirit may be direct and entirely
natural, results—even though not frequent ones—of a world where
individuals only seek to exert power over one another.

Maisie, Morgan Moreen, and the telegraphist develop a "range
of wonder" and grow many "moral vibrations" though they are denied
any other experience than their domination and use by other persons.
Maisie's, Morgan's, and the telegraphist's consciousnesses are thoroughly
conditioned by the same kind of world as Volume X had presented. But
by means of this very soil, Maisie, Morgan and the telegraphist grow
those same seeds from which the "character" represented in Volume X had
been produced: the seeds of lucidity and of a reluctance to prevent
others from choosing.

The environments presented in the fictions of Volume XI are
shown to be more than backgrounds for, and more than mere partial
influences on, the central figures. The central figures are shown so
trapped within but a small portion of their total surroundings that
they seem irretrievably cut off from any possibility of grasping these

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*Art of Novel*, p. 156.
whole. The very constricting environments of the three central figures means that the environments are real determinants of the content and of the shape or quality of consciousness, though not with the result that one might expect. James studies in *What Maisie Knew*, *In the Cage*, and "The Pupil," truly causal effects on the individual of his milieu: Here James selects situations that show very clearly how dependant consciousness is—for the very terms of its operation—on what it happens to meet. Two of the central figures are children whose process of growth by means of their caged environment is the main interest of the fiction. Although the other central figure is a grown young woman, *In the Cage* displays only that part of her awareness which is developed by means of the milieu which the nouvelle also represents.

The situations of the children and the telegraphist are identical. For one thing, all three are relatively without power and exist within a structure of power relationships. They have very little or no opportunity for making others feel their will; meanwhile they are constantly in contact with persons who exert power over them, and who are seeking it over each other. Secondly, two senses in which environments imprison the central figures need to be distinguished: the three are able to confront only what items other persons allow; and the other persons choose to present the three always with the same

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75 Of the three fictions in the volume, only Maisie's growth receives the full scale representation necessary to capture her entire awareness during the period when we see her. But the telegraphist's and Morgan's growth are in the same conditions and take the same directions as Maisie's.
type of item. Because the central figures are so caged, the range of objects of which they are aware is even narrower than the range their age might otherwise allow. In addition, they can only be aware of their own exclusion and isolation. Maisie is imprisoned to the borders of the adult world, on which she is made always to look, but always from "over bannisters." This fact means more than that Maisie is lonely because she is tossed between adults who do not care much about her. It means that, in order to protect his own status within a shifting hierarchy of power, every adult (including even Mrs. Wix and Sir Claude) needs to keep Maisie exclusively in his environs and, at the same time, needs to appear to other adults to have kept the child unenlightened about his central concerns and activities. In other words, Maisie is condemned to relations perpetually with adults and to relations which ostentatiously exclude her. Morgan Moreen of "The

76 XI, 58.

77 That every adult protects his own status by imprisoning Maisie in the ways summarized is stressed by the situation in the prologue's resume of Farange vs. Farange, and by the relation of "respectability" to economics in that divorce case. Not only Beale and Ida Farange but every adult is governed in his treatment of Maisie by these conditions. The main one is that the child has money of her own—a protected income provided by a defunct, "crafty" godmother; and a second one is that custody of the child prevents the stigma of non-respectability. Readers too often overlook these controlling facts. Maisie must live with the adults to guarantee them either access to her support-money or to respectability—by which they can retain or gain money. Since custody of the child is thus a prize, each adult tries to demonstrate that he takes a "care" of her which no one could legally challenge as "improper." The "school," which she wants so much, is impossible for Maisie. Miss Overmore and Beale need her to chaperon them; Beale needs her income; Sir Claude wants his friends to see Ida in the role of devoted mother (XI, 69). Later Maisie's presence is needed for the same reasons by Mrs. Wix and Mrs. Beale.
Pupil" is a boy kept prisoned by adults on the borders of the "respectable" world; he is confined to confronting only the signs of frustration of passions for respectability. He must dwell totally within the adults' illusions; and his typical position is that of an imitation, both of a young patrician and of a "pupil." The young woman of In the Cage likewise is kept to a border post. As telegraphist, she is confined to the function of merely facilitating the relations, and the flow of money, between members of the ruling class. Her typical position is receiving, behind a wicket, messages that are not for her and supposedly impenetrable by her.

Moreover the single kind of object which each central figure is alone permitted to confront is a kind that makes him know how his isolation equals his utter powerlessness. A sense of being in danger through ignorance is produced in Maisie and the telegraphist, as well as in "The Pupil"; and this sense is engendered by the kind of item the three are confined to apprehending. Since other persons confine them

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78 XI, 521; 534; 550.

79 For Maisie, whether she is brought into the drawing room to help adults in contention with one another or left to "teachers" who clearly are preoccupied with their own position in the adult world, childhood is preeminently the state of not being able to command by one's will the satisfaction of any of one's desires. The grownup state is that of "real pleasures and intimacy" (XI, 56). The telegraphist in her cage meets only evidences of her inability to obtain money on the scale required for a status within the class ruling her society: the messages she transmits indicate that fabulous sums must be spent in order to keep or to gain money. This reason for their confinement to lower status is what she tries to communicate to Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Mudge, who prove incapable of comprehending it (XI, 400; 408-410). Morgan confronts only a "worship" of himself that bars his learning what others know of the world.
to the experience only of mere allusions to a rich variety of phenomena which are reputed pleasurable, ignorance becomes the symbol of powerlessness in the mind of all three central figures. Acutely conscious of being unable to experience a great number of things which apparently give satisfaction, the three often adopt, as their means of combatting this imprisonment to mere allusion, a pretense to more knowledge than they actually possess.

80 Since the adults limit Maisie to allusion to their hidden relations with each other, and since she is to this degree "taken into the confidence of passions" (XI, 9) before she can have any of her own, childhood means to her the state of being laughed at while attempting to "find out for yourself" (XI, 24; 219). This latter is Ida's sharp phrase, and, characteristically, it better gives Maisie the essence of her situation than does Mrs. Beale's stress on things not proper for a child to know, or than Mrs. Wix's style of "explanation" through cloudy moralism. (When playing at adult, Maisie uses her mother's phrase.) Maisie also quickly learns to appear to comprehend unknown matters--not to ask questions--in order to prevent adults from breaking off their chains of allusion. The child's conceptions of being "in love" and of "involved affairs" (XI, 97; 75; 114; 51; 90) both adult euphemisms to her for sexual and economic aggrandizements, particularly illustrate her consciousness of ignorance: Maisie interprets both these phrases as referring to some danger for herself because some persons are "afraid" of others. Thus she actually understands correctly the use of sex and money as instruments of power by the persons around her. But at the same time, Maisie also understands these phrases to point to areas obscure to her which she should not appear to try to learn about. For example, adults' statements indicate to Maisie that being "in love" is somehow puzzlingly different from the "love" she urges the Captain to show Ida, and from the "amour" she wonders if Mrs. Wix knows about.

The telegraphist also is confined to allusions (the telegrams she handles) to unknown ways of life having an exciting variety. Her own conversation is even more allusive to upper class mores, for the girl is very aware that her exact degree of knowledge of these will signify her comparative rank within the lower stations. She pretends to more knowledge than she actually possesses, though she is aware of claiming a servant's degree of knowledge (XI, 393-394).

Morgan likes to think and speak of himself as "preparing" for the competitive world, which every move of his family and of Pemberton alludes to as the world that matters, however much they appear to dismiss it as gross. Morgan also pretends to know in order to learn--as when he outlines everyone's motives in order to get Pemberton's reactions.
Caged in these ways, the three central figures at first mirror their prison: the terms or the orientation of their awarenesses repeat the quality of their environments. Primarily, their consciousness is of being embattled, of the need to protect themselves. It is at least clear to them that the unknown is a power structure, wherein individuals either have to bow to the will of others, or can make others do their will. Looking for openings to exert power is entirely natural to Maisie, Morgan, and the telegraphist. They are alert to contend with other wills. Although they develop attachments to those persons who appear least willing to cage them, they expect that these persons too may use them.

After initial "agents" of the actions have chosen to restrict the central figures, other characters (second agents) who do not so much emphasize the central figures' exclusions, appear to offer some chance of access to new experience. But, caught up in struggle with the first agents, the second agents after all let the centers remained prisoned.

\[81\] Maisie neither has lost all wants nor withdrawn from trying to satisfy them, but merely has gone into hiding as her means of fighting. The telegraphist has begun her climb back up the "slippery ladder" of status by exerting what she and others think of as her talent for the "practicality" of locating her best chances for gaining power over others. She also uses a weapon like Maisie's protective concealment--a bluff of more alternatives than she really has. Morgan Moreen insists that he will grow up to compete. Meanwhile, against his world of illusion, his weapon is not concealment but frankness: he articulates as often and as far as he can the unspoken motives of those who deal with him.

\[82\] They are genuinely surprised only at who gains power, and at the one or two instances where someone treats them quite disinterestedly. At the latter points, the centers dare to reveal (and passionately to stress) what is their own will.
A first result of this portion of the action is that the central figure himself contributes to the aggrandizing character of his world, for he becomes an easy instrument in the struggle between the agents—a function which the central figures of Volume X had succeeded in avoiding through their lucidity. This first stage of a represented process is the same, and has the same causes, in What Maisie Knew, In the Cage and "The Pupil."

Since their awareness is conditioned by their milieux of exclusion and domination, the central figures of Volume XI initially grow the same kind of misunderstanding. Initially, each has both a strong desire for self-preservation and a normal capacity for observing and relating. When the latter human abilities have to operate within a milieu that is caged in the way I have described, the effect is logically threefold: misapprehensions of the milieu result, but not mistaking of its general quality. The three central figures do know accurately the polarization of their worlds around power, and they do know their own powerlessness. But they make some inaccurate identifications of what persons have what power and of how power is gained. In addition, the central figures develop many fantasies of escape from their own extreme powerlessness. They dream of entirely different situations for themselves, and they try to imagine what persons not so powerless must experience. James represents this dreaming activity as proceeding in two rather distinct phases. One is the fantasy of themselves exerting power. The other phase similarly is a reversal of actuality, and it is especially connected with the second agents. It is that the centers eagerly spend
much time dreaming that the second agents may be means of deliverance.

The second phase of their dreaming activity enables the central figures gradually to envision the complete contrary of their milieux. That is, they move beyond the fantasy of themselves exerting power (instead of being subjected to it) and come to envision the opposite of a hierarchy of power—to imagine a world of fellowship and equality.

As a result of (1) their normal ability to relate, and so to apprehend the fundamental quality of their cages (2) the appearance of persons who do not very much emphasize what power they in fact exert, Maisie, Morgan and the telegraphist grow to imagine the reverse of the qualities of their milieux, while imagining the reversal of their own status.

(James would seem to be representing that the source of the habit of idealization is the stimulus provided for the ego and for the normal

83 A great deal of Maisie's time comes to be spent in dreams revolving around Sir Claude because he alone combines power with a tendency not to stress her powerlessness. James emphasizes this pragmatic basis of the child's attachment to the second agent. Maisie's "first passion" is for Miss Overmore's beauty, but is checked when, with her marriage, that lady stresses to the child the new power over her. Like Mrs. Beale, Sir Claude has beauty, power, and does exert it on the child; the great difference is that his manner deprecates rather than stresses the fact. Maisie knows that, like the others, Sir Claude breaks promises and essentially bars her from what he nevertheless alludes to; but he is much pleasanter to be with, since he does not drive home these omissions. For example, his way of refusing her information is by pretending boyish equality with her.

Maisie's activity of wishing, and the practicality of the attachment of her fantasies to Sir Claude, is paralleled by the telegraphist's novel-reading, and by the substitution of Captain Everard for the beautiful lady "Cissy-Mary" in the center of her speculations. Both elements are paralleled too by Morgan Moreen's predilection to imagine the life of his grandfather in New York and Pemberton's Oxford life, and by the fact that Pemberton alone (unlike the governess Zoe and unlike the Moreens) at first makes the sacrifice for Morgan of jeopardizing the boy's knowledge of his affection.
ability to perceive by the appearance of any pretexts to hope. He seems to be representing, too, that a natural function of idealization is to transform both wants and dreams into something quite different—into standards or values. The central persons of Volume XI grow, by way of a habit of idealization naturally called forth by a need to protect the self, those same traits which were predominant in the heroines of Volume X.)

But this process makes the centers more easily usable by the second agents. Maisie again is the most fully developed example, but the actions of In the Cage and "The Pupil" proceed identically: Maisie's misunderstanding of who holds what power in the "in love" relations around her, together with the attachment of her dreams to Sir Claude, make her the more usable by Sir Claude against others. The child does not know, and never learns during the period we witness, either the sexual factor in the state of being "in love" or the complexities of her society's attitudes towards sex. Because of this crucial ignorance, Maisie particularly misapprehends what is the distribution of power in the Sir Claude-Mrs. Beale relation. This misapprehension leads the child to make two moves on behalf of Sir Claude, moves which unwittingly endanger her own paramount desire to remain in his presence. Since in

Even at this stage of the action, however, Maisie does resist use of her by Sir Claude against herself: she refuses him information crucial to him whenever she feels that the result may be to cage her further. She refuses to tell him what she has learned from the Captain about Ida's plans, because she feels this information will increase the hostility between husband and wife and therefore will intensify her own danger in the middle of violence (XI, 156-158).
reality power is evenly divided between Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale, both of Maisie's acts at Sir Claude's behest enable the struggle between him and Mrs. Beale to continue at an even higher pitch, with the child in between. As in Maisie's case, the telegraphist's misapprehensions, when they are combined with her attachment of her dreams to Captain Everard, cause her unwittingly to help Everard to increase the

Of the two, only Sir Claude has money. But Mrs. Beale uses the coercions of sex and of propriety: she refuses to live openly with Sir Claude, and she argues the impropriety of Maisie's living with him when a female relative is available.

In returning to her father's, as Sir Claude wants, and in backing up his statements at Boulogne to Mrs. Wix, Maisie is not consciously renouncing for Sir Claude's sake. She is doing the very opposite. At the time of returning to her father's house, Maisie interprets that Mrs. Beale wants to see much of Sir Claude and that Mrs. Beale's power is greater than is Sir Claude's. (Maisie knows that "in love" means a power relationship, and she has had from Sir Claude's lips that he "fears" for this reason all three women in his life, although he can "square" both Mrs. Wix and Ida.) At the time of her second move supporting Sir Claude's wish, Maisie interprets Sir Claude's power now to be greater than Mrs. Beale's, so that he can keep her from controlling Maisie even if she lives with them. Maisie is thoroughly acquainted with the relation of money to power, and she has learned from her father that he is leaving Mrs. Beale without money. "What can she do but come to you if papa does take a step that will amount to legal desertion?" Maisie remarks to Sir Claude (XI, 207).

If Maisie had finally chosen as Sir Claude wanted, the even balance of power between Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale would have continued, with the child in the middle. In making her choice, Maisie does not know, I believe, the sexual reasons for the evenness of power she now correctly perceives. A recent interpretation that at Boulogne Maisie learns of Sir Claude's subjection to sex and then attempts to offer herself (R. W. Wilson, "What DID Maisie Know?" College English, XVII, 279-282) overlooks the facts that in the last scene Maisie is still puzzled why Sir Claude should not tell her he has been in Mrs. Beale's room, and is suddenly fascinated by something "new" in the lady's face when Sir Claude states he will never leave her yet has sided against her.
exploitation rife in her world. Morgan Moreen's misunderstanding that the competitive "respectable" world offers opportunity for the reward of sheer effort and merit combines with the centering of Morgan's dreams on Pemberton to make the tutor able to abet the play of Morgan's satire on the Moreen family—whose difficulties are rather more formidable than the boy realizes. When Morgan sees that the Moreens are finally willing to give full custody of him to Pemberton, that they finally will express gratitude to the tutor, and that the tutor hesitates to be glad of gaining Morgan on such free terms, the boy receives the shock of a truth he hitherto had not penetrated. This shock is that Pemberton cares for him relatively less than does his family, and it is too much for Morgan's weak heart.

Usable because they misunderstand and dream, the central figures enable James to underline the aggrandizing quality of their environments.

87 The telegraphist does understand clearly that her society is organized around hostilities between individuals and groups, rather than around responsibilities. But she underestimates the degree of irresponsibility that actually obtains through the domination of money considerations over all other ones. Particularly she does not conceive that in Everard's class, as in Mr. Mudge's and hers, attachments are governed by money. Thus she thinks agallantry makes Everard reluctant to leave Lady Bradeen's side when actually he feels partly dependent on Lady Bradeen's money. In remembering for Everard the telegram he so desperately seeks, the telegraphist helps Everard to get out of a coercive power of Lady Bradeen's. But at the time the girl believed herself to be rescuing both lovers from the exposure of Everard's illegal business. (Putting together the facts of the nouvelle, I conclude that since the telegram Everard seeks knowledge of is one sent by Lady Bradeen to the address having to do with Everard's love affairs, Lady Bradeen is claiming to Everard that he must marry her because her husband had collected evidence which, upon his death, may come to light and compromise her.) His escape from this danger means that Everard feels safe to marry Lady Bradeen for her money alone. The telegraphist corrects her misapprehension only when Mrs. Jordan is able to communicate the rumor that Everard is suddenly marrying Lady Bradeen because she saved him from some danger.
In fact he shows them as helping, for these reasons, to increase that aggrandizing quality. Yet James also represents these central figures as simultaneously growing a potential for criticism of their world, and growing this capacity for the very same reasons that they first had helped increase exploitation.

However inaccurate are the dreams which the centers attach to the second agents (inaccurate about the motives and the situations of these agents), these dreams remain conscious hopes rather than become real delusions. The central figures consciously romance. They dream that the second agents deliver them, but they do not confuse this wish with present reality nor distort evidence in the direction of the wish. The actions James devises show that two forces prevent central figures from unconscious wish and from delusion: One force is the fact that Maisie, Morgan, and the telegraphist so much lack power within their power-ridden worlds that they can never ignore this position and their danger from it. If any one of the three possessed any small degree of power, he could prevent some of the persons with whom he must associate from using, or at least from ever emphasizing, power over him. But the latter position or degree of power belongs to such characters as Mrs. Wix, Pemberton, and Mr. Mudge rather than to the central figures of the fictions. The central figures occupy the very bottom rung of a represented hierarchy of power; hence, in a power ruled world they are not allowed by the other characters to ignore this actuality. A second force which in each fiction equally contributes to deny delusion to the central figure is the great vividness of his own desire for self-preservation. The three centers evince a similarly tenacious vigor of
response to the demands for endurance in their hostile worlds. James's three actions employ various means to stress the existence of this second force, and then to stress how it encourages awareness that one's dreaming is only a kind of hoping.

The three fictions share one means to stress how both the forces I have named prevent the centers from being deluded; the centers each share much of their dreaming activity with another character who contrarily does exhibit Bovaryism, who possesses a small amount of power, and who uses this power to try to make the central figures share also the Bovaryism. Yet Maisie, Morgan, and the telegraphist resist accepting the delusions of their confidantes. Because even the latter persons use their power over the centers, who are thus constantly aware of their ignorance and wary of their danger through ignorance, the centers always know that to dream is to envision a non-existent

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In What Maisie Knew and the other fictions of Vol. XI, James accepts the premise of French realism that casual interaction between the individual and the milieu is the focus of interest; and he selects an extreme example of subjection to an immoral milieu—a caged situation within it. But he then is concerned to show why this situation can of itself cause a moral potential (however infrequently it may do so)—to show that a Flaubert may be produced as naturally as an Emma Bovary. James did not accept the assumption of naturalism that art should represent the average, though he did accept the view that realistic fiction concerns itself with relations between environment and character.

The point that What Maisie Knew especially may be seen as a critique of the assumptions of French realism and naturalism receives perhaps some extra support from the fact that in "The Art of Fiction" (1884) James summarized Edmond de Goncourt's Chérie as "having failed deplorably in tracing the development of the moral consciousness of a child" (The Art of Fiction, ed. M. Roberts [New York: Oxford, 1948], pp. 19-20).
condition. In contrast to Mrs. Wix's deluded expectation of "reforming" Sir Claude (i.e., making him feel the attractiveness of being guided by her into Parliament), Maisie's conscious hope is that if Sir Claude wielded the greatest power in her world, he would exert it to prevent other individuals from gaining power over one another. When Sir Claude takes Maisie to Folkestone, she envisages herself as about now to be a "partner" with him (because of his ability to "square" everyone else), in a Utopia from which no one will be excluded who will accept an equal position. The telegraphist consciously cultivates a dream that the sphere which Captain Everard and Lady Bradeen inhabit does not touch them with other pressures so that the two take risks purely out of their love for one another. Inspired by this vision of an opportunity for supreme cooperation from which she feels cut off, the telegraphist determines nevertheless to act in the same spirit. Morgan grows a hope of Pemberton's coming to feel the gift of the boy's devotion sufficient "reward" for risking a fellowship with Morgan in the competitive world.

The telegraphist resists Mrs. Jordan's delusions that persons of their status are accepted as equals, for their refined qualities, by the upper class, and that at one time they were of the highest station. Morgan resists Pemberton's self-delusion that he is leaving Morgan solely in order to earn money for Morgan's future--for no other reason. Maisie of course must resist the manifold delusions of Mrs. Wix, particularly those that Sir Claude can make the child his "life" and that Mrs. Wix's attraction to Sir Claude is entirely different in quality from Sir Claude's attraction to Mrs. Beale.

XI, 572. (See also XI, 577.)
The second agents make the actions come to a crisis which a choice by the central characters must resolve. At this point the center learns that his hope is entirely contradicted by actuality. He perceives that absolutely all of his environment, including the second agents, violates his vision. *What Maisie Knew*, *In the Cage*, and "The Pupil" alike move towards a climax delayed until the very last of their pages--a climax hanging on the choice of a central character who, up till then, has had no opportunity of determining the course of incident which affects him. In these fictions, the crisis is not so delayed through the intervention of lucidity; rather, the conflict between the agents prolongs itself because of an even distribution of power on both sides. Eventually, however, the second agents attempt to triumph over the first ones by the means of giving the central characters a chance to influence the direction of the action. In offering this chance, they both allow the centers to retain misapprehensions and misinform the centers, who detect this step. Thus the central figure learns that the agent to whom he has attached his vision chooses contrarily to that vision--chooses to cage him.

Nevertheless, the center himself chooses in consonance with his vision, for he has come to fear "himself" even more than he fears the power of others. In each fiction, the central figure's ignorance, because of his caged position, is not replaced by his knowledge of the total of his surroundings. Instead, a passive ignorance changes into a choice by the central figure to act against the aggrandizing character of the portion of his world which he does know. At the conclusion of each fiction, its central character continues to face what he is aware
of as a large unknown. Yet he does know both his own vision and his own temptation to violate it. He has gained the prerequisites for any criticism of his world, or for any grasp of it as a whole. What Maisie knows, finally, is twofold: (1) her hope that the opposite of a power hierarchy might be established and (2) her own temptation to violate that ideal, in order to be sometimes in Sir Claude's presence.

Maisie learns neither the lesson Mrs. Wix wants to teach her— to judge others, nor to fear others more than the lapse of her own consistency, as does Sir Claude. Instead Maisie grows lucidity and a principal allegiance to fostering everyone's exercise of his own choice—the seeds

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Climactically, Sir Claude gives Maisie the choice of remaining with him and Mrs. Beale or going with Mrs. Wix, because Sir Claude hopes that the child's election of the former course will enable him to satisfy his passion for Mrs. Beale as well as his affection for Maisie. (Maisie's choice to remain with them would ensure that Mrs. Beale's ace of refusing to jeopardize her "propriety" can always be trumped by Sir Claude's control of Mrs. Beale's source of propriety, Maisie's income.) By questioning Sir Claude, and by putting together his answers with what she has seen, Maisie learns that Sir Claude's power would not be greater than Mrs. Beale's, as he had implied, but only equal, and that he accepts the dispossession of Mrs. Wix from money. Sir Claude's exposition of her alternatives to Maisie initially glossed over the fact that remaining with him and Mrs. Beale actually means Maisie's living with Mrs. Beale while he lives "around the corner" (XI, 334). How frequently Maisie will be with Sir Claude will depend on Mrs. Beale, for the three will be "regular" (XI, 336)— a term of Mrs. Beale's well known to Maisie for the domination of her own wants by Mrs. Beale's need for respectability. Maisie learns that her vision of a Sir Claude ensuring equality by his dominant power has no basis in fact. Yet Maisie herself chooses to meet that vision: She agrees to the dispossession of Mrs. Wix only if it can obtain the partnership with Sir Claude which she had envisaged.
of free spirit.

Thus all six fictions of Volumes X and XI draw a contrast between central figures who, because of their mental or perceptual habits of relating all the items they meet (their "appreciation" or "wonder"), act to support individuality, and other characters who both use and judge others. By all six fictions, too, the kind of choice made by the central persons is shown to be a rarity in their milieu, and yet always free or undetermined. For these reasons, the thematic similarity between Volumes X and XI is far more fundamental than are the differences. However, both their similarities and their differences help to explain why the group composed of The Spoils, "The Chaperon" and "A London Life" precedes the group composed of What Maisie Knew, In the Cage and "The Pupil." Instead of undergoing a test of conflict between several of their values, the central persons of the latter three fictions undergo

When Everard treats the telegraphist's help as a service essentially due him from a susceptible, though clever, female lower in the social hierarchy, her assessment that they are in the cage of a confining social order so that he will not treat her as other than a light flirtation, is confirmed. Though disappointed, she chooses herself to serve him in the disinterested spirit she had imagined to be his. But the climax of the nouvelle comes in the girl's response to learning that Everard does not even cooperate with Lady Bradeen. Here the telegraphist becomes ashamed of her own behavior to Mr. Mudge. It is clear that her decision to marry Mr. Mudge at once fulfills her vision of a gallantry nowhere operative in her world, for she already knows that Mr. Mudge's attitude towards her is wholly one of prudent calculation, without a grain of chivalry.

Given an opportunity, Morgan chooses to clear the air of illusion by incisive questioning. He makes the Moreens finally state the truth of the situation: that all generosity (and reward) for taking Morgan would be Pemberton's. In combination with Pemberton's hesitancy, the parents' willingness to forego their comforting illusions in order to secure Morgan's support, reveals a further truth to the boy.
a test of preserving the capacity to relate their worlds. Though they may not be said yet to have created "character," they have confirmed their continuance in the lucidity which the fictions of the previous volume have shown to be the prerequisite of free spirit. The placement of the contents of Volume XI after those of Volume X emphasizes that men always have freedom to gain freedom, since Volume XI shows that even milieux which cage free spirit cannot prevent its appearance and thus may not be said to cause its infrequency.

However diverse "The Aspern Papers," "The Turn of the Screw," "The Liar" and "The Two Faces," which are collected in Volume XIII, may seem at first glance, their central figures alike embody the very reverse of the major traits of the central persons of Volumes X and XI. For one thing, all four fictions of Volume XII present centrally the consciousness of characters who are attempting to get at something which is hidden, and for the purpose of making an invidious judgment of other individuals.

That the narrator of "The Aspern Papers" wants to get control of the private possessions of Juliana Bordereau is very plain. It is less frequently noticed, though it is just as clear, that from the beginning of his campaign the narrator wants the Aspern papers in order to market a sensation; he wants to be the first to reveal to the world a kind of material about the unconventional life of the dead poet which will meet the demand of a broad public to be both thrilled and made to

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Volume XII has been named "'Tales of Curiosity'" by Leon Edel. See Chapter II, p. 33.
feel self-righteous. In sum, the editor's true aim is to establish himself in the public mind as the arbiter of Jeffrey Aspern's life: to be the apologist of the poet's relations with women. The editor's attitude towards the Aspern papers and his purpose in seeking to get

The editor-narrator claims that the purpose of his struggle is to serve art. In several respects this statement is inaccurate:

At their best, the purposes of the narrator are those of a literary "tailor," as Juliana summarizes (XII, 90). He wants to compare Aspern's poetry with "esoteric knowledge" about his life (XII, 44). For example, he wants to glimpse Juliana's eyes so as to measure whether or not Aspern's lyrics have been "overdone" about them; and the narrator remarks that he would regret having to judge Aspern severely for saying something simply to make a better poem (XII, 104; 147). This is the editor's way of appreciating Aspern's art—his "mystic companionship" (XII, 143) with the poet, in contrast to Tina's way of memorizing Aspern's lyrics.

But at his worst, the editor is a "publishing scoundrel," for his main purpose is not to forward the appreciation of Aspern's poetry even by the indirect route of arousing public interest in Aspern's life or by a misconception of what a lyric poem attempts. His refusal of Juliana's offer to let him try to sell the portrait of Aspern for her shows that the editor is not most interested in uncovering biographical information. Rather, he most wants to get control of relics and documents at his own price. He primarily desires that he be the one to reveal them to the world and to own them.

This kind of profitable enterprise (using art as its material) is what the editor already has done in the past. Together with the English John Cumnor, the editor already has revealed most of the facts of Aspern's life, including his acquaintance with a Miss Bordereau in Venice in the 1820's, and other facts about Aspern's intimacy with many other women. Although Aspern had written a few exquisite lyrics in which a "Juliana" figures, there was no evidence of the specifics of an affair with Miss Bordereau. It is indicated that the already completed biography had emphasized details most likely to titivate a scandal-loving public, by the editor's statements that he'd found himself able to "acquit" the poet of trifling with affections and to consider the women around Aspern "Maenads" seeking their prey (XII, 7). If only he and Cumnor could have obtained any slight evidence that Miss Bordereau was more than an acquaintance of Aspern's, they would have been able to make lightly veiled hints (XII, 9; 7; 8).
hold of them are significantly paralleled in his relation to Venice, for what he feels to be the essence of the place is non-respectability. He conceives both unknowns, Venice and the papers, as simply the unconventional, particularly as what is interdicted by Anglo-Saxon sexual conventions. He is titillated by the opportunity to see and to judge the socially forbidden.

The governess-narrator of "The Turn of the Screw" seeks to uncover the hidden reasons for the events at Bly. She gradually develops a belief that these events indicate the children's eager and secret association with their dead mentors. The governess states that her main and overriding purpose is to protect or "save" Miles and Flora from danger, particularly from the danger of moral evil, and thus to earn the commendation of her own conscience in addition to that of her employer.

At once I should emphasize that for several kinds of reasons I agree with neither of the following two interpretations of "The Turn of the Screw": (1) that a careful reader must conclude that the governess has projected from her own subconscious the apparitions she meets and all of the mystery of Bly, and that she herself finally endangers Miles and Flora through her attempt to impose on them her own projections; or (2) that because a reader must regard the apparitions as originating outside the governess and many of the events at Bly as truly inexplicable, and because he must recognize that the governess's conscious intention is to combat moral evil on the children's behalf, the reader must conclude the governess the "good" champion of a fairy tale. Nor is my position that any "compromise" between these two
interpretations can be satisfactorily asserted and proved.

I believe that both of the above readings of "The Turn of the Screw" neglect to place central emphasis on its real crux and almost equally distort its main theme, because both of these readings centrally base themselves on an hypothesis about the source of the apparitions—
to the relative neglect of framing any hypothesis about the consistency of the governess's behavior with the nature of her own conviction that the children are in moral danger. The voluminous commentary on the story has tended, I believe, to proliferate around one critical controversy to the comparative neglect of another set of critical questions which a close reading equally should pose. Many commentaries on "The Turn of the Screw" allot most of their space to trying to ascertain, from the facts included in the governess's report, what are the more probable of the several possible causes of the events which she believes to support her specification of the evil at Bly and of the children's need. Critics mainly attempt to estimate the governess's reliability as interpreter, and even her reliability as witness of fact. In my opinion the focus of critical controversy so largely on the question of whether the carefully responsive reader should specify the governess's subconscious, or supernatural evil, to be the source of the apparitions is an unfortunate emphasis. It has tended too much to obscure another critical problem about the story: the problem that regardless of what is the source of the apparitions, every reader should

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See the summary of the directions of much of this commentary that is offered by Alexander E. Jones, "Point of View in 'The Turn of the Screw,'" MLA, LXXIV (March, 1959), 112-119.
try to evaluate whether her entire report substantiates the governess's assertions that (a) her main purpose was to protect the children, and (b) that only the overconfidence of youth, then a vanity fearful of the display of her inexperience, led her to choose the least effectual of her limited alternatives for saving Miles and Flora. For a reader to evaluate these two assertions of the governess, he must compare her behavior to the children with her own identification of the nature of their danger. The governess's treatment of Miles and Flora must be examined for its consistency with her theory that the danger they are threatened with is an overwhelmingly insidious moral one (the attraction to, and covert enjoyment of, what they know is wrong) and that repentance signalized by confession of a sense of wrong is the prerequisite for defense against such danger.

I disagree, too, with the specific conclusions that are reached within both readings of the story outlined on page 266 above. The view I would instead uphold may be summarized in this way: The careful reader must and should regard Peter Quint and Miss Jessel as totally mysterious phenomena whose origin is unknowable. He should do so because James deliberately contrives that the evidence in the story cannot verify either the governess's interpretation of these persons she sees (and of

96 The governess has concluded that she could successfully have protected the children from moral evil only by reporting in person to her employer at the time of Flora's refusal to stay with the governess. She reasons that she could have effected a last minute rescue of Miles and Flora only by giving up her charge of them at this point while reporting her experience to the uncle, and that she "ought" to have taken this course instead of the only other course she claims was open to her—the course of testing whether Miles could confess to her the secret solicitings of the spirit of Peter Quint (XII, 254; 199).
their motives) or any other possible interpretation. But a reader, enjoyably absorbed in this mystery and its kind of horror, also should apprehend the counterpoint of another kind of fear, suspense and terror which is built up by the details of the story. Throughout its progression a careful reader should more and more recoil from a second fear that the governess's lack of "lucidity" (in James's special sense) and of "appreciation" and "wonder" may cause her desire to save her charges from a possible moral evil to produce behavior which in fact eagerly seeks to convict the children of commission of certain particular evils and of a refusal to accept judgment by herself as their one route to repentance and absolution. In short, I believe that a careful reader should experience the terror of witnessing what possibly is innocence, or possibly is an early awakening of moral consciousness, become pushed by overwhelming pressures of adult authority and power towards learning to identify conscience with this external authority and towards learning to identify repentance with a purely external act rather than with an attitude.

The following discussion first will outline my own evaluations of the governess's two assertions about her main purpose and about the main causes of her failure to save Miles and Flora. (I shall supply the full evidence by which I reach these evaluations at several points later in my discussion, in connection with still other points about the likeness of "The Turn of the Screw" to the other stories of Volume XII.)

When one does compare the governess's behavior to Miles and Flora with her own theory that they are threatened by the moral danger of failing to repent of covert enjoyment of moral evil, it becomes clear
that primarily she does not want the welfare, the moral salvation, of her charges. The inconsistencies between the two sets of items show that her principal motive really is to rid herself of some stubbornly remaining feelings that her hypothesis about their danger may be incorrect. For, the governess repeatedly neglects to take advantage of her chances to try to obtain what, according to her own conscious theory, would truly be a moral rescue of the children; and she repeatedly sacrifices these opportunities to another kind of chance to obtain complete verification that a moral rescue indeed is needed because the moral danger is of a specific kind such as she has in mind. Again and again she sacrifices her opportunities to try to obtain the spirit of confession and the attitude of repentance, even though she claims the children first need repentance. Moreover, at each point she neglects these opportunities in order to be able to follow up another kind of opportunity—the chance to prove indubitably to herself that she has correctly specified the exact nature of the deeds and the thoughts of which Miles and Flora need to repent. The governess comes to behave as though Miles and Flora most require the moral purification of being brought to confession to her of specific acts and to judgment before her, rather than most require the purification of judging themselves. Therefore we can say rightly that she most wants to be sure of finding at Bly an absolute certainty of her own superiority.

97 The governess at first views (and for valid reasons) a successful defense of the children as requiring a general verification of her theory that they are in moral danger. Her reasons are that if Miles and Flora are not in communication with evil, she will be culpable for frightening them unduly. She first must ascertain the reality of what she suspects. And if the children deliberately conceal their communication with evil, they must be placed in the position of having
Oliver Lyon, the painter-narrator of "The Liar," similarly desires, so that he can substitute a feeling of superiority for his acute (but entirely unadmitted) feeling of inferiority to the Capadooses, an increasing amount of proof of an invidious theory about the couple's private relations to one another: a verification which he claims would enable him to protect the wife. Still more clearly than the governess, the painter does not rest content even when he has obtained what he takes to be sure evidence that Everina Capadose is ashamed of her husband. Lyon most wants Everina's explicit admission to him of a shame which he feels she already has obliquely signalled to him; especially, Lyon wants Everina to discuss with him those details of her husband's behavior which evoke in her, as Lyon thinks, a regret and humiliation. This narrator's formulations of his main purpose change throughout the course of his account, and his behavior throughout has the unexpressed goal of humiliating publically two persons whose marriage and status to acknowledge a sense of wrong, as the necessary condition of rejecting evil. But this does not mean that the governess's treatment of the children cannot be examined for its consistency with her own principles. The governess most wants herself to witness the children in the act of receiving the evil spirits' solicitation. This is shown by her neglect to take the opportunity offered by Miles in the churchyard scene for discussing the subject with him without alarming him, and by her next decision to leave Bly and the children because she is endangering her own reputation by staying where she is of little help. The latter reasoning is a deliberate contrast with Mrs. Grose's attitude during both Quint's reign and that of the present governess: Mrs. Grose stayed, and stays, despite her own guilt for not halting that which she fears. When the governess stays, it is to get Miles to justify her, and to get him to show to her the precise phenomenon which may stand behind the sense of wrong to which he already has confessed.

Lyon speaks disparagingly of Everina to his dinner partner (a stranger to him) even before he meets Colonel Capadose; plies the wife with veiled insults as soon as the Colonel re-introduces him to Everina; makes no effort to ascertain the other guests' view of Capadose's talk (by which the wife is supposedly threatened); and plans himself to initiate a public disgrace for Capadose.
"The Two Faces" gives a further twist to the same situation. Shirley Sutton pretends to join society in awaiting some sign of what he already feels is Mrs. Grantham's privately vindictive reaction to Lord Gwyther's having dropped her—pretends to watch for a sign of her true "nature." But society (in the person of Miss Banker) also is only pretending to watch for whether Mrs. Grantham will give herself away. In reality, Miss Banker is watching Sutton, who is known to be Mrs. Grantham's present intimate, to see whether his responses to Mrs. Grantham's actions will give away his "nature." In Miss Banker's presence, Sutton pretends to pass a moral judgment on Mrs. Grantham. This pretense is his attempt to protect his own status from the lowering of Mrs. Grantham's because of the too great obviousness of her revenge. (Sutton had warned her that, in order to protect his own dignity, she must find a means to take a revenge which everyone can see but none can easily call a revenge.) The young man's attempt to protect himself fails, however, because he does not realize that Mrs. Grantham has succeeded in putting him on the same spot on which Lord Gwyther had put her. Sutton's pretense of moral judgment of Mrs. Grantham, or

99 By the world reflected in this brief comedy, the realm of private relations has been almost completely suppressed. It is of far less moment than the public "face" put on those relations. In this world, everyone pretends to be observing others' "nature" or private character. In reality, everyone assumes others to be fighting, like himself, for status; and everyone watches solely for the degree of cleverness with which others manipulate their public faces.

100 Just as Lord Gwyther manages to put Mrs. Grantham in a position where their former "private" relation must become the subject of a public performance by her, she in turn musters the cleverness to put Shirley Sutton in the position where their present "private" relation must be the subject of his public performance.
Sutton's public face, enables Miss Banker to judge him far less clever than Mrs. Grantham and Lord Gwyther. Since Sutton most prides himself on his cleverness, the twist of the story is complete. By the same token, the similarity of "The Two Faces" to the other fictions in Volume XII is striking, for Sutton epitomizes the subconscious desire of their central figures to be able to triumph over other individuals on the pretext of morality, and in the guise of a hunt for something concealed that actually is no search at all but his unwarranted assumption that others' motives repeat his own.

Shirley Sutton of "The Two Faces," Oliver Lyon of "The Liar," the editor-narrator of "The Aspern Papers," and the governess of "The Turn of the Screw" are all unusually defensive about their status in "the world." All fear immensely the hierarchy of social power above them. Unlike the free spirits of Volume X, and unlike the caged and dreaming centers of Volume XI, these central awarenesses in Volume XII are preoccupied with the limitations to their own small degree of power--preoccupied to the extent that each of them fears his status to be threatened by situations which would not endanger it if he did not act in a way that tries to allay his fear.

The details of each fiction in Volume XII mark its central person's absorption with the question of his status, together with each center's compulsion to deny to himself frequently and explicitly that he has this kind of preoccupation. The extent of Oliver Lyon's fear of society is shown everywhere in his behavior during the weekend at Stayes in the first part of "The Liar," and also by what we learn of Lyon's kind of artistic product--his function of "society painter." James first shows Lyon in relation to other persons than the Capadoses. The
painter's discomfort in social contexts is the opposite of the Colonel's ease, and derives from an opposite source. The painter's style of conversation, that of veiled attack, is the same as his artistic style. His portraits are beginning to be known for their "cleverness" of reference to whatever is invidious in the current talk about their sitter. In order to excite comment, Lyon paints the most invidious of the social views of his subject. He relies on properties and poses to make such allusions-in-oils. The governess's fear for her status is indicated throughout "The Turn of the Screw." This preoccupation is established well before she confronts the spirits, by the very fact that

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We learn of Lyon's style of portraiture not only from what he tells us about the Colonel's portrait and about his difficulty with the child's, but also from his ruminations on the problems presented by the commission of elderly Sir David Ashmore's. Do the younger Ashmores, who have "carte blanche," want the old man caricatured? Have they really engaged Lyon because of his reputation for cleverness? Even before he meets his sitter, the painter is concerned about what is wanted of the portrait by whoever has most power. The second problem is that since Sir David is no longer seen in society, there is no "view" of him for Lyon to get hold of. However, having learned from his dinner partner that the old baronet objects to being painted (as his son has ordered), and above all objects to his invalidism, Lyon solves both problems by posing Sir David in his dressing gown.

The description later of Lyon's studio and of his procedure with the Colonel's portrait lays stress on the painter's reliance on properties to give his productions topicality. James has fun suggesting that the small but important part (making "all the difference") of the masterpiece which is to make Lyon's reputation at the Academy, the part that can be painted in rapidly in the sitter's absence, will be a property identifying him as "The Liar"—a property that can be no other than the "long bow" old Sir David has mentioned. Lyon thinks of his masterwork as like Moroni's "Tailor," identifiable as a tailor only by his shears. James's comments on the Moroni's of the National Gallery and on contemporary portraiture illuminate the satire on Lyon latent in his story. See especially: The Painter's Eye, ed. J. Sweeney (London: Hart-Davis, 1956), pp. 122; 178-182; 203-4; 214-215; 228.
she accepts the position at Bly and then by her first responses to her reception there. Her persistent feeling of masquerading at or of being an "actor" of a position of authority also shows us the extent of her anxiety about her status, for the reality of her "office" is flattering for everyone at Bly. This office she feels threatened (1) by the apparitions, and (2) occasionally by her own incapacities, through her training and background, to prepare for their position such superior children. She also feels her status endangered by the kind of governess's post she has taken—by being relegated to a child's world so soon after she has left home in order to enter the adult one. The extent of the editor's fear of society is clear from the many details in The Aspern Papers revealing the strength of his covert attraction to the non-respectable. Greatly drawn to the unconventional, he is nevertheless most concerned not to risk any public comment on himself. The "awkwardness" of being "caught" in a lie, and

102 The lonely position in the country with the condition of never bothering the employer is not attractive to any applicant and especially not to this governess who has just escaped from Hampshire to see the world while earning money. Yet she accepts it out of deference to the glamorous young gentleman who interviews her, and with reluctances and regrets concerning whether the unusual condition showed her sufficient respect (XII, 158; 162: 287). Before she meets Mrs. Grose, she is intensely worried about whether she or the housekeeper will truly be in charge, and very aware of her inexperience of the way of life in a great house like Bly.

103 Her use of such phrases as "the grownup dining room" marks her sense of having been consigned again to limbo. When, with a strange relief, she feels her pretense of being a governess lifted by Flora's removal (XII, 294), the governess for the first time feels free to "demand" service as an adult in this dining room. But she might, at any time, have ordered any service at Bly.
of not seeming to be "decent," is foremost in his mind. His attitudes towards money and towards women are especial focii of his feelings of vulnerability to society and consequent defensiveness through an exaggerated punctilio. Details showing his attitude towards servants function to reveal the same things.

The details of each fiction in Volume XII make clear that its center regards as an especial threat to his own status that person or persons about whom he wants to find something hidden. But,

104 He is shocked by the overtness of Juliana's references to money (XII, 28; 31); and, though he clings to Mrs. Prest's hospitality, he is highly annoyed by her quick perception that he desires to feel he can make a "conquest" of females and yet lacks "the courage of your curiosity." (She soon changes her term "curiosity" to "immorality" XII, 13 ). His reaction to Mrs. Prest's acuteness is characteristic of his relations with women: He generally does not make conquests of them. His account peevishly puts some blame on Mrs. Prest for a project she clearly disapproved of (See XII, 112; 2). Similarly, he considers that Aspern had surprising "patience" with the women in his life (XII, 7).

105 See XII, 41; 107-108.

106 The governess can pride herself solely on her delicacy (and "sensitivity"), since she is uncomfortable both about her inexperience and about her position of a higher kind of servant. But Miles and Flora make her look coarse to herself, because of their quickness of perception and their perfect tact, plus familiarity with the great house (XII, 245; 249; 297; 305). Everina Capadose had unconditionally refused Lyon's proposal of marriage, however ridiculously she had allowed him to paint her; then Everina had married another poor man. (Lyon's version to his dinner partner is that Everina's social ambition had refused the struggling painter.) But Lyon's desire to have a detailed admission from Mrs. Capadose of her regret really dates from the cleverness of her retort to his insulting allusion to her past motives: by speaking of Lyon's portrait of her she manages, without perceptible impoliteness, both to remind Lyon that she had predicted his success in the world and to indicate that she didn't personally prize his painting. (Since the portrait Lyon had presented to the reserved Everina was of her as a "Bacchante," it is no wonder she was able to predict his later success as society painter.) It is Mrs. Capadose's successfully defensive maneuver against his attack that particularly exacerbates Lyon's need to
strikingly in despite of their fear for their status, all four central figures neglect to spend sufficient attention on certain items they meet that directly concern or directly will affect their status. They do not relate to one another all the items of their experience—a failure of lucidity which very clearly derives from the strength of their fear, for those items which they ignore or conveniently forget always are ones indicating their status to be vulnerable. In each case, too, the central figure rejects certain moments of insight which come to him, and clearly rejects these because they show him how far his status already has been endangered purely by his own acts.

Lapse of lucidity because of a fear to judge the self, and preoccupation with a vulnerable status, are the major similarities between all four centers in Volume XII. This syndrome makes them, of course, the contraries of the central persons in the previous two volumes. In Volume XII James presents the reverse of attaining free spirit.

Because of his disproportionate fear of the fact that his position is not an invulnerable one, the narrator of The Aspern Papers first feel he can threaten her social position. Shirley Sutton himself explains to the reader of "The Two Faces" why his status is dependent on Mrs. Grantham's handling of Lord Gwyther's request: he reflects on his own adroitness, however, to keep afloat within the "high social code" of his world (XIII, 399). Since by the code of this world relations between men and women are "protected" in the sense that frequent exchanges of partners is accepted but each temporary coupling is also expected to be binding on both parties for its period (liaisons, that is, are put into the same strait jacket as marriages; and marriages become present liaisons), such relations are regarded purely as instruments of status. One is always either "practised on" by one's partner in them having seized the initiative in breaking the relation, or oneself playing a trick on the partner by retaining the initiative. Status is estimated by the previous couplings and by who initiates the changes.
forgets some items, and then weaves a web of patent contradictions; and he becomes the more enmeshed in this tangle as, necessarily meeting more evidence of his own incoherence, he flees the moments of his own recognition of his endangered position by the means of extending his delusions. The editor's contradictions always widen immediately after he momentarily begins to recognize some of his own responsibility or some of his own guilt. By employing this kind of pattern, James stresses that the basic source of lapse from lucidity into delusion is cowardice. The pattern of the editor's reflections and acts very obviously exhibits his compulsion to shift his guilt upon others; he cannot bear to acknowledge himself in the wrong in any particular, and especially he dares not admit to himself any threat to his status through others' judgment of him. The inconsistencies between the

107 His most culpable decision is that he will make Tina think he accepts her offer of marriage, so as to obtain the papers, and then skip. Although he cannot act out this decision because of Tina's prior move, one should note that this choice succeeds his fleeting recognition of his cowardice in not returning to Tina to amend the manner of his refusal. Similarly, his return for the papers after Juliana's death follows his momentarily shamed decision to leave Italy altogether; and his attempt to rifle Juliana's cabinet succeeds his statement to Tina of his real identity.

108 He writes his account to show that, far from trifling with Tina's affections, he was almost the victim of a ridiculous spinster's inexperience; that Tina came to her senses to forgive him after all; and that the "worst thing" he did—to try the lock on Juliana's cabinet—was in the service of art (XII, 115). (He adds "yet there were extenuating circumstances.") In fact, his behavior was the immediate cause of Juliana's death, impoverished Tina, and stimulated longings in Tina that he then frustrated. Although he interprets his score with Tina to be even, first, because she always forgives, and second, because she accepted the money he forwarded, he "admits" to Mrs. Prest that the Aspern portrait he told Tina he could not accept as a gift but would try to get the highest sum for, he has kept for himself at his own modest price (XII, 143). Even yet he is deceiving and exploiting Tina.
governess's behavior and the content of her own theories and evaluations make her resemble this editor to a certain limited but nevertheless significant extent. The governess too exhibits a variety of self-contradiction. And by a pattern remarkably similar to that employed in The Aspern Papers, James also in "The Turn of the Screw" shows that the governess's particular species of self-contradiction—not so obviously avoidable as that of the editor and infinitely more pitiable or understandable—intensifies immediately following each of a series of moments in which she begins to recognize some of it.

By the time of recording her story, the governess has come to blame herself for such an excess of desire to help the children that she finally had acted too impetuously in enthusiastic support of their achieved moral good, for inexperience, and for a youthful vanity not carried to the point of selfishness. All of these motives or traits, she concludes, had made her attempt to save Miles and Flora inefficient. For, although Miles is morally redeemed, his death also results, perhaps needlessly. We know that such is the governess's final evaluation of her youthful "ordeal" because at two points in her report she comments on what she "ought" to have felt or "ought" not to have done. For one thing, she has concluded that so soon as Miles raised the question of his return to some formal schooling, she "ought" to have wished for his uncle's coming to Bly, even though this kind of "solution" would involve the uncle's "treating" with her about the horrors she was trying to battle alone. At this point her fault lay, she now thinks, in the fact that she "could so little face the ugliness and the pain of it that I simply procrastinated and lived from hand to mouth." Moreover the "it"
within this statement refers, as we learn, not so much to the content of her beliefs about the children's moral state as to discussion of those beliefs with the indifferent and probably "derisive" uncle. A second criticism of her past acts or feelings which the mature governess supplies is that she "ought" to have stopped her kind of discussion with Miles at a certain point in their last interview. She had not treated Miles's statement that he had to leave school because he "said things" as the confession of a "surrender" to her and to a sense of moral guilt that she now thinks the statement "practically" was. Instead she had continued questioning Miles, and, "blind" with elation at the explicitness of his next exhibition of shame, had sought even more explicitness in the sense of wanting to hear him voice Quint's name and wanting to see him engage in a vain attempt to look for the exorcised spirit. She had been imprudently desirous of unnecessarily explicit signs of Miles's already effected moral conversion, the governess finally thinks.

But at the same time that she draws these particular lessons of her culpability merely for an inefficiency derived from youth, from some vanity, and from an imprudent excess of enthusiasm in the course of undertaking a very difficult and dangerous moral task, the governess reports facts of her past behavior whose combination suggests still another conclusion about the nature of her fault. The following are

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XII, 254; 240.

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XII, 306.
some of these facts:

(1) When, in the churchyard, Miles stated he wished to return to formal schooling and showed no alarm over discussing with the governess what obstacles might make this return difficult, she neglected to seize the opportunity to create an atmosphere in which the boy might generally acknowledge that his past behavior had been wrong. Instead she "feared" at this point even to name to Miles his expulsion; and she feared mentioning the expulsion, she says, because it would enable Miles eventually to force a discussion between her and the uncle about the "horrors" that stand "behind" the expulsion. Previously, the governess had stated to Mrs. Grose that if Mrs. Grose intends to communicate with the uncle, the governess will "leave both him and you" on the spot. The children's moral danger had not been foremost in the governess's mind at this point, nor was it foremost in the later churchyard scene.

Still another reason (besides that of fearing to bring on herself the amused contempt of the uncle) for not voicing to the children her uneasiness about them had earlier been supplied by the governess. This reason, too, ignored the children's great danger. It was that voicing to Miles and Flora the governess's frequent awareness that the apparitions are present would be an injury that "might prove greater than the injury to be averted." She explained that the injury which is possibly greater than the one of having the children respond still more to the evil solicitation is the injury of having herself to be the first to name Quint and Miss Jessel. The latter naming is not, however, a great danger because it may unduly terrify the children if they are innocent. Surprisingly, the naming of Quint and Miss Jessel at this point appeared a great danger to the governess because it would "help them the spirits to represent something infamous," the "something infamous" being next explained as an exhibition that the governess has no such degree of "manners" or "instinctive delicacy" or subtlety as do the children (XII, 245 ).
(2) From the nature of Miles's statements in the churchyard scene it became clear to the governess that she could not long prevent some communication with the uncle taking place, and so could not absolutely ensure that she would have the opportunity to gain the children's confession specifically of commerce with the spirits before she might have to discuss with the uncle her reasons for not having tried to place Miles in another school—her reasons for "the way you've let it all drop." Her first response to this realization was the thought of leaving Bly altogether, an act which she says will "end" her ordeal or problem. However her decision is that such flight would be "cynical"—presumably because it would leave the children yet exposed—and that she will herself initiate sending for the uncle. But her explanation to Mrs. Grose of her fundamental reason for now wanting to perform what both Mrs. Grose and Miles had plead for again reveals that the boy's physical and moral danger is not foremost in the governess's mind. For she says that she now is eager to send for the uncle only in order that Miles and everyone else understand how easy is her own conscience about already having performed everything that is possible for the children's welfare. Even should the uncle be derisive about the

113 XII, 265.

114 XII, 255 . As I have mentioned previously, this decision of the governess, and its causes, contrasts sharply with Mrs. Grose's continuous choices to stay at Bly for the children's sake even though Mrs. Grose constantly suffers guilt for having no way actively to help the children and suffers insult from Quint, reproach from this governess.

115 XII, 256.
"horrors behind" the expulsion and think them a crude female ruse to get his attention, the uncle will not be able to deny that she is justified in not having tried to send Miles away to another school:

"... his uncle shall have it here from me on the spot (and before the boy himself if necessary) that if I'm to be reproached with having done nothing again about more school..."

"Yes, Miss..." my companion pressed me.

"Well, there's that awful reason... the letter from his old place." 116

(3) The governess explained to Mrs. Grose that the following reason justifies her having regarded the letter from the former school as sufficient reason for making no attempt to place Miles in another school:

"I can't undertake to work the question on behalf of a child who's been expelled... For wickedness. For what else... when he's so clever and beautiful and perfect? Is he stupid? Is he untidy? Is he infirm? Is he ill-natured? He's exquisite—so it can be only that..."

In this statement, her basic assumption is that positions of social authority—the English "establishment" as embodied in Miles's school—also automatically represent moral legislation and guarantee moral infallibility.

(4) The governess did write a "bare demand for an interview" to the uncle, contrary to Mrs. Grose's and to Miles's apparent assumptions

116 XII, 260.

117 XII, 261.

118 XII, 292.
that her letter either will mention Miles's expulsion or will in some way justify itself at the expense of predisposing the uncle to judge adversely the children. Thus, this action by the governess means that all prior indication that she is not thinking most of the children's danger is not sufficient to settle the question of her principal intention, for she does now exhibit the courage to act against her strong desire to please the uncle. Still, the governess next gave frankly as her double reason for remaining with Miles at Ely even after Flora has been carried off to the uncle: (a) the desire to try again to help the boy to salvation, and (b) the desire to have the boy "justify" her in the sense of making her able to feel that the one route to his salvation (his confession to her of the spirits' solicitation) which she had concluded open to her had indeed been her single, and the right, alternative.

(5) When, in their last interview, Miles asseverated that he desired the governess to be the one to help him, told her he took her letter, showed her his shame at this act, and then stated to her his "guess" that he "ought not" at school to have "said things," she did not accept these clear signs of an attitude of contrition as sufficient confession. If she was indeed joyful at his attitude of contrition (however faint its beginnings), nevertheless she did not act or speak so as to emphasize to Miles the significance of shame itself. Rather, she pressed him for

119 XII, 261; 304-305.

120 XII, 288-290; 300-301.
"What were those things?"

(6) Further, although she claims to have been exultant for Miles's sake that he no longer could see the reappearing but exorcised Quint and to have gained positive certainty that she alone now faced the disappointed apparition, she next acted so as to be able to witness Miles looking vainly for the apparition and so as to test whether Miles would voice Quint's name in response to her stating the presence of the "coward horror." She chose this course instead of immediately removing the already purified child from the dangerous spirit's presence.

In my opinion, "The Turn of the Screw" does not show that the governess is deluded about what she sees, and certainly does not present in the governess a specific neurosis; but it does present the governess as having moved perilously further into a kind of self-contradiction, a confusion about the bearing of her own acts and about her own fundamental motives. This interpretation seems to me indicated by a comparison of the above groups of facts in her report (and of other facts) with two other things: with her analysis that the children need to be brought to moral salvation out of the moral danger of hiding their own attraction to "the imagination of all evil," or need confession to a sense of wrong, need contrition; and with the conclusion of her own culpability merely for inefficiency which she finally has drawn from the facts.

121

XII, 306-308.

122

XII, 308-309. Compare a much earlier statement by the governess: "Say that, by the dark prodigy I knew, the imagination of all evil had been opened to him: all the justice within me ached for the proof that it could have flowered into an act (XII, 269)."
Witnessing this movement of the governess into a kind of self-contradiction, and apprehending the possibilities of its adverse effects both on the children and for the governess herself, is the source, I believe, of a second type of terror for the reader of "The Turn of the Screw." This second kind of terror, or of "an excited horror, a promoted pity," counterpoints another kind which the reader shares—in part—with the governess: the terror of facing an inexplicable evil, a moral danger that is unknown. But, whereas the governess's reaction to unknown moral danger is one of mystification (she moves, that is, against this evil as it were knowable; and in her acts seeks to verify a specification of it that is in terms suggested by the known or by her own experience of life), the responsive reader's reaction is rather the confrontation of an impenetrable mystery. Thus the responsive reader experiences a far more intense quality of pure horror than does the governess, for the evil dangerously abroad remains for him present but completely inexplicable throughout the story. In addition, such a reader also experiences another terror that the governess's combination of fear and self-righteousness possibly may effect another type of knowable moral evil. When I assert that these two types of horror counterpoint one another in the story, I do not necessarily mean that evocation of terror at a knowable evil is James's principal effort. But I do mean to propose that the story has been patterned so that some apprehension of this second type of horror is necessary if the reader is to gain the most intense possible experience.

123

*Art of Novel*, p. 177.
of the first type of horror. If he does not perceive some of the key imperfections in the governess's character, a reader does not feel so fully as he is meant to that (a) her reaction to dangerous mystery is to try to solve it in terms of the familiar, and that (b) on the contrary, the danger cannot be lessened and certainly not in her way.

Just as the editor of The Aspern Papers is shown to glimpse, at times, a very minor part of his culpability and then either to extenuate himself or to flee recognition even of that minor portion, the governess's several moments of insight into her self-contradiction immediately are followed by some expression extenuating her culpability or by some behavior and statement intensifying the contradiction, or by both these defenses. Too, her moments of insight never are ones perceiving the full extent of her self-contradiction, for at these moments she rather reflects upon what may be involved for her own status than considers what she may have made the children's position. For instance, "Where on earth then was I?" epitomizes what is her major concern after she has had an "appalling alarm" that Miles might be innocent. Like the editor's, the governess's courage consistently to acknowledge that her status and her power is vulnerable is very small, however much daring she shows to handle concepts of salvation and damnation, to entertain immediate and startling ideas about others' "moral" state, and to give "another turn of the screw to ordinary human virtue."

124 XII, 307.

125 XII, 295.
Such a combination of social defensiveness with an ethical dogmatism is not unusual in the daughter of a "Hampshire parsonage," where novel reading is forbidden and great houses like Bly are viewed as the recipients of "spiritual" direction and of votes. James sufficiently suggests that the governess's demand to be judge as well as confessor, and to receive confession of specific acts (instead of seeking to encourage an attitude of contrition and welcoming that moral sense), derives from the pressing quality of her social position. Her confusion of "morality" with the externals of a code, the kind of ethical legalism which Henry James Senior and his son both so opposed, is completely compatible with the few details of her social background that are employed in the story. Moreover, a connection between her fears for her status and her view of morality is underlined by the passage which I have already cited to show her premise that social authority is moral infallibility. She may implicitly criticize (but with a notable mildness, compared with her moments of severity on Mrs. Grose's lapses) the moral irresponsibility of the children's uncle; about the moral authority of Miles's school, however, she has no doubts, because the training of young gentlemen for their status is the cornerstone of the English system of social authority: "I can't undertake to work the question . . . on behalf of a child who's been expelled. . . . For wickedness. For what else—when he's so clever and beautiful and . . . perfect?"

126. It seems to me significant that in a single Notebook entry for October 18, 1895 (the germ situation of "The Turn of the Screw" had been recorded the previous January 12, and the story was written in the autumn of 1897), James combines the following two
Oliver Lyon of "The Liar" also moves further into self-contradiction. In addition, like the editor of The Aspern Papers but unlike the governess, Lyon moves towards delusion about actuality. He rejects more and more evidence that his beliefs are wrong. At first the painter simply ignores certain items, items which make extremely improbable his theory of Everina Capadose's danger and attitude, and items which others press upon his attention. Then, as he begins to act upon his interpretation, Lyon uncovers more facts that do more than make it improbable; the new facts violate his theory. But his response now is to view these new facts as support for something they blatantly disprove. Lyon eventually becomes utterly indiscriminate about that part of actuality which most concerns him: how others regard him.

themes:
The little subject there may, somehow, be in the study of a romantic mind--That term is a very vague and rough hint at what I mean. But it may serve as a reminder.

The idea of the picture, fully satiric, in illustration of the 'Moloch-worship' of the social hierarchy in this country--the grades and shelves and stages of relative gentility--the image of some succession or ladder of examples, in which each stage...has something or someone below him...on whom, the snubbed and despised from above, may wreak resentment by doing, below, as they are done by. They have to take it from Peter, but they give it to Paul...the tall column of Peters and Pauls.
(Nota b u e k s, p. 220).

127 Whereas the narrator of The Aspern Papers writes his account to extenuate his guilt, and the narrator of "The Turn of the Screw" records hers to explain a self judgment that is not a confession of her greatest fault, Lyon tells his story as one "on" the Capadoses. But the hearer of Lyon's story can see that the one Capadose "lie" to Lyon is a fiction designed to preserve the painter's dignity and to smooth social intercourse between the three (since Lyon yet forces himself upon them and relies on their hospitality), while Lyon's own final lie to the Capadoses is both a veiled challenge or attack and a revelation to them of the extent of his lack of honor.
Shirley Sutton matches the painter in carrying non-lucidity to the point of bringing on himself the very social exposure which he believes he accomplishes of others. This young man prides himself on his cleverness in playing the game of disguises, or of manipulating "faces." But Sutton gets fatally absorbed in the game because his fear of losing it is so inordinate; he fails to perceive Lord Gwyther's and Mrs. Grantham's cleverness in manipulating appearances, and gives Mrs. Grantham the ideal opening to continue to do so at Sutton's own expense.

Between The Aspern Papers, "The Turn of the Screw," "The Liar" and "The Two Faces" the similarities are much more extensive than commentary usually has remarked. Not only the major traits of their central persons, but, in addition, the actions of these four stories reverse—and by identical means—the actions of the previous six fictions in the New York Edition. Employing its own distinct mode, Volume XII thus exhibits the same theme as had been represented in Volumes X and XI.

The four fictions in Volume XII alike trace the free creation of the very opposite of "character." They show their centers growing in (1) non-lucidity either to the point of self-contradiction or to the point of real delusion about actuality, and in (2) commitments to obstructing other persons' exercise of choice. Moreover, the four fictions stress that this growth results from the center's free choice not to risk even a minimum amount of exposure to the power of others. The center is brought to a position where the attainment of his actual purposes (of gaining sure evidence of his own power, and of ridding himself of any sense of danger from others) is very probable if he simply will renounce any further effort to produce that evidence by more
exploitation. However, because he fears to take even this minimum risk, the center unrealistically tries to exert a power he does not really possess. The result of his choice not to desist from any further aggrandizement is complex, but identical in the four stories: In addition to remaining the more captive to a complete lack of insight into his own motives and to delusions about his past experience and how others regard him, the center fails in his stated purpose but himself recognizes only part of this failure. He does not claim the success of what he describes as his original mission; but the failure he identifies is only a small portion of his total one.

An opposite achievement from that portrayed by the fictions of Volume X is represented in the central characters of Volume XIII. Simultaneously, however, a process like that traced in the fictions of Volume XI is represented in the other characters of the fictions in Volume XII. They all show the growth of courage, by persons who are exposed to the center's aggression, to exercise lucidity on their danger from him. Those persons exposed to the center's aggression choose to risk further association with him, and to be lucid about that relationship. By this means, they so effectively resist being merely the instrument of the center that they bring him to a point which clearly tests his choice to continue in the opposite of free spirit.

The narrator's cowardice in The Aspern Papers is brought out by the courage of both the Bordereau females. Another contrast between the Bordereau's growth towards supporting other persons' exercise of choice and the editor's growth in aggrandizement is less frequently noticed. Juliana Bordereau is at first willing, like the editor, to
use others. But from trying to dominate Tina in order to accomplish her own conception of Tina's welfare, Juliana moves towards giving to Tina the choice of her own means and goal. Tina is regarded by the others as abnormally timid, but she demonstrates more courage than anyone else. Whereas the narrator can't bear to blame himself, Tina finally is willing to risk carrying the editor's guilt as well as her own. Like the central persons in Volume XI, first Tina resists both the editor's and Juliana's "wanting"; she wonders at it. Then she learns (like Maisie) the strength of her own desires, and to fear herself. Miles exhibits a "bravery" to address openly the governess about her purposes, and to remain with her. After avoiding her for the day after the debacle with Flora, he returns to speak directly of the other child's departure and of his concern for the governess who "would do anything for him":

"I'll tell you everything," Miles said--"I mean I'll tell you anything you like. You'll stay on with me, and we shall both be all right, and I will tell you--I will." 129

The boy finally risks judging himself wrong--"I guess I ought not to have," but the governess only makes a further attempt to have him "justify" her.

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128
XII, 112. (See also XII, 129; 134.)

129
XII, 302.

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XII, 288; 290.
It is the children's and Mrs. Grose's choice not to judge the governess that causes her test; for, even as Mrs. Grose says Flora off to the uncle, she says the governess won't need to gain the position of Miles's judge, in order to retain her post as governess: "I'll save you without him!" she cried as she went. The boy, as we have seen, decides not to join Flora's complaint to his uncle. Thus the governess has the opportunity to retain her post, to keep Miles's company and her influence with him and Mrs. Grose if the governess will but risk not having the "justification" of Miles's confession specifically to past communication with an apparition already exorcised. Similarly, in "The Aspern Papers" Tina shows the editor that he has only to risk Juliana's control of her possessions during the probably short remainder of her life (for she is already ill, weakened by the shock of realizing all that the editor really wants) in order to gain Tina's later breaking Juliana's will for him. Because he cannot bear to take the chance of waiting the few days, he attempts to open Juliana's cabinet, telling

131 XII, 292.

132 Tina first promises not to help Juliana destroy any documents, and she spies on her aunt to ascertain that this destruction has not yet been accomplished. But then Tina's conscience recoils from this denial of choice to Juliana, and the niece tells the editor "You must wait." Such is not much of a risk because, as Tina has emphasized, her aunt loves the papers too much herself ever to destroy them. And Tina does clearly imply that she will forego any scruples about going against her aunt's will after her death. Tina's own bargain offer to the editor, repeating Juliana's, does not occur until he has made very plain that he was not in the least interested in the spinster for her own sake. Naming the price of marriage for the papers occurs after the editor calls her faithfulness a "treachery" (128), her generosity with the portrait a "bribe" (131), and says that "naturally" he leaves Venice immediately.
himself that this is what Tina really invited him to do for her.

"The Liar" contrasts Lyon's growth towards delusion about actuality with Everina's growth towards sharing more the attitude of her husband towards society. Shirley Sutton's lesser courage to play the social game is contrasted with Mrs. Grantham's in "The Two Faces." Unlike Mrs. Grantham, Sutton does not dare to risk an appearance of capitulation, so that the other party must deal with his public appearance of triumph.

Another important similarity between the four fictions in Volume XII is their common atmosphere. Each evokes the presence of something intrinsically unknowable. Although "The Turn of the Screw" is the only "ghostly tale" among the four, its companions in the volume—including even the brief comedy of manners that climaxes the group—also deliberately awaken the feeling of confronting a mystery to which unusually few clues are provided. This is not to say that the main appeal of the four stories is that of the detective story—the appeal to solve a puzzle or figure out an answer. Quite the reverse is, in fact, the case, and for a reason intimately connected with James's theme of "free spirit" as the means to increased life.

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133 Everina seems to gain proficiency in her husband's style (which literalminded Lyon calls "lying"), if we compare the satiric manner of her first remarks to Lyon at Stayes with her finally ironic "cher maître," which is worthy of the Colonel himself (XII, 387-388).

134 The reason for the separation of this one from James's other stories using the supernatural, which are gathered mainly in Volume XVII of the Edition, can only be implied by the present chapter. I shall discuss the point directly in the next chapter.
James's principal aim in the four stories is indeed to create in his reader a high pitch of attention, suspense and curiosity. But the kind of suspense pervasive in the fictions of Volume XII is distinct from the suspense of the detective narrative, for these stories refer to a mystery in areas about which they provide little or no enlightenment, in however indirect a guise. Also, each story brings to attention a markedly incomplete body of facts, and the frame of each story deliberately prevents us from verifying the causes even of those facts. The audience is positively prevented from the kind of satisfaction peculiar to the detective genre of narrative: the satisfaction of solving a puzzle by oneself. When a reader approaches any of these fictions as if it were of the detective genre, invariably he has to rest content only with a "solution" which other readers find controversial.

Thus their readers are in much the same position as are the central personages. These central persons attempt to verify a specification of the nature of the mystery yet are denied—to our sense, if not to theirs—such certainty. Not only "The Turn of the Screw" but the other fictions of Volume XII are pieces "of ingenuity . . . of cold artistic calculation, an amusette to catch those not easily caught . . . the jaded, the disillusioned, the fastidious." To take them as stories which aim to suggest one answer is to fail in a test which they make of each reader.

But this test is not directed against the reader. The fictions are not designed to be traps for the reader, but amusettes testing him. That is to say, James clearly wants the reader to pass the test, for he

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*Art of Novel*, p. 172.
does all in his power to help the reader be "caught" in a conscious enjoyment of his own romancing. Distinctly James does not encourage the reader to propose one solution as to a puzzle, and to feel that it may be absolutely verified. All four stories are, as James says of "The Turn of the Screw," studies of "a conceived 'tone,'" "the tone of something suspected and felt," something of the "incalculable" sort: "the tone of mystification." They represent why "mystification" is a completely inadequate response to certain contexts. "Mystification" is experienced by the central figures, who try to explain the unknowable. The contrasting characters exhibit instead a capacity to enjoy, to play freely, to pretend.

Consideration of what areas these theories of the central persons concern ought immediately to reveal to us that the centers are seeking to verify a specification of something that intrinsically is impenetrable by any outside observer. The fictions invite the reader to develop his own interpretation, but simultaneously to realize that this can be but his own invention. They help the reader towards a conscious romancing if he can be so inclined. (But a great many, perhaps most, readers prefer self-projection like the central figures of the stories; they prefer to romance unconsciously.) The pervasive unknowable area which The Aspern Papers creates a "sense of" is the "visitable" past:

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Art of Novel, pp. 172-173.
the Byronic age for Americans in Venice. The impenetrable in "The Turn of the Screw" is the impingement of another world on this one--a spirit world where "nature" is suspended. The hidden area in "The Idar" is the private relation of a husband to a wife; all we can see in the story is their social behavior to the narrator. The unknowable area in "The Two Faces" is everyone's (except for Sutton's)

137. The editor himself acts to destroy the "sense of" the past and to substitute for it his simple specification of what had been Jeffrey Aspern's relation with Juliana Bordereau. But James utilizes the editor's language, especially in his references to the Venice background, to obtain associations of impenetrability and mystery. See the discussion in the next section of this chapter, pp. 329-331 following.

138. The specifications the story does make are all selected to suggest the unnatural by means of heightening the natural to a unique degree: e.g., Bly is an Eden, and the children quite exceptionally gifted, affectionate, spontaneous.

By a number of means within the story James finely distinguishes between the governess's "mystification" and what in his preface he calls her "authority" for distilling for the reader a sense of absolute or metaphysical evil (Art of Novel, p. 174). One means which helps to draw the line between mystification and recognizing absolute mystery is Mrs. Grose's responses to the governess's reports. Contrast between the governess's specifying and acting and Mrs. Grose's awe (and the children's world of play) helps distinguish enjoyment of the unknowable from mystification about it.

139. Even in the one scene where we overhear the Capadoses' conversation when alone, this conversation concerns their reaction to Lyon's character and the wife's reaction to society. The Colonel's very conscious romancing for purposes of social entertainment is contrasted with the painter's addiction to solving mysteries of haunted rooms and the like, his detective thrill in "finding people out" as he believes. This contrast is dramatized in the story by two incidents extraneous to Lyon's relations with the Capadoses: by Lyon's conversation with his host at Stayes and by the "Geraldine" episode.
true "nature" beneath the masks of the social game.

Their invitation to the reader to give his powers of imagining a conscious stretch, is one main reason that the stories of Volume XII follow the six in Volumes X and XI. The rationale of James's sequence in Volumes X, XI and XII derives from the different routes these fictions take to represent the same thing. The three volumes are ordered to unfold James's essential theme of "free spirit" and to stress that he felt his art especially needed by the contemporary world because it needed impetus towards electing "free spirit." The order of Volumes X-XII places a progressive emphasis on the portion of James's

140 This story confines us to a series of disguises. In each of its three parts, we witness only conversations whose seeming privacy is emphasized by their being snatched among a crowd of persons, but conversations which--other details show--will be reported immediately to that crowd. We witness "protected" exchanges which really are public performances. And the story contrasts Mrs. Grantham's taking a "prima donna" role in the very center of this stage (XII, 409) with Sutton's furtive acting of secrecy with Miss Banker. The young man acts the role of a mere private observer; Mrs. Grantham plays to the hilt, much more enjoyably, a role of entertainer-actress in the social game.

141 The ten nouvelles and stories all portray the essence of what James considered worth in human experience. By claiming that the ten compose one major unit of the Edition, a unit that identifies James's "characteristic" theme, I mean to point out that every one of them particularly sheds light on the question of how worth may best be obtained. Other of James's novels and nouvelles may equally well suggest his definition of man's true freedom, but they combine this intention with other thematic interests. The ten in Volumes X-XII successfully concentrate on articulating the subject always latent in any of James's representations.
theme which is most likely to be misunderstood and is most crucial. The sequence also stresses the importance of art, and of James's kind of art, for a world in which free spirit is always a possible creation yet is a most infrequent one.

The order of volumes in this unit of the New York Edition unfolds the theme of free spirit towards its crucial component or premise: the fact of human choice. Volume X represents the heroism of the rare achievement of steadily confronting an alien entity: the achievement of "criticism" of a social order that imposes its usages as moral values and that devises the usages to bolster exploitation. The Spoils, "A London Life" and "The Chaperon" emphasize that development of the freedom potential in human nature is a rarity because the development requires the courage of continual exertion—of never being through with one's tests, a soldiership instead of a martyrdom.

How the sequence places increasing emphasis on the most crucial and most often misunderstood component of the theme of free spirit may be seen by recalling the minor differences in subject between Vols. X and XI; and by comparing these with the equally minor differences between Vol. XII and the preceding two volumes: Even more clearly than the fictions in X and XI, those in XII locate the issue of life in the fact that an individual is entirely free to exert his given capacities of perception. These four stories study individuals who chose to repeat rather than to respond to the new, who, deluded, project their own feelings into an unknowable in place of experiencing it. The origin of their projection clearly is a failure of courage to expose the self. The centers in Vol. XII have been frightened out of choosing to perceive and to live. This fear is their own election, for other personages in the same fictions who are much more exposed to a power to be feared make the opposite choice and preserve lucidity, like the centers in Vol. XI. Also, it is clear that the centers in Vol. XII chose not to risk even a minimum amount of exposure. Thus Vol. XII places still more stress on a question of bravery or fear, which underlines the concept of choice—of the individual's responsibility for his directions of growth.
The three fictions of Volume XI particularly uphold the fundamental assumption behind the definition of worth already articulated in Volume X: the assumption that worth is creation which better expresses, or which further realizes, that which is already given, and that men are endowed with an ability to achieve freedom that no social order can contravene. *What Maisie Knew*, *In the Cage* and "The Pupil" represent this premise by tracing the process of growth, even in environments that make a prison, into lucidity from the normal ability to perceive and from the instinct of self-preservation. They show that lucidity and unwillingness to obstruct others' individuality can result from a milieu unlighted by moral awareness, even though consciousness is thoroughly

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in "terms of" its milieu.

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143 The three fictions in Volume XI, more directly than any others in this unit of the edition, represent life as a mixture or irony; for they deal with a world that the free spirits in X find alien as the ground or sufficient cause for a contrasting potential. Volume XI stands at the center of the New York Edition, and its preface contains one of the few loci where James designated a subject present in great art: "No themes are so human as those that reflect for us, out of the confusion of life, the close connexion of bliss and bale, of the things that help with the things that hurt, so dangeling before us for ever that bright hard metal, of so strange an alloy, one face of which is somebody's right and ease and the other somebody's pain and wrong. To live with all intensity and perplexity and felicity in its terribly mixed little world would thus be the part of my interesting small mortal..." (Art of Novel, p. 143).

A fundamental in James's own world view, and basic to his characteristic subject of the heroic choice of increased life, is that reality is opportunity for creation that is its logical fulfillment. (James's interest is always in coherence, which is not so much a logical quality as the aesthetic property of order. This is to say that he seems to have sensed reality in a way—perhaps derived ultimately from his father's philosophy—that made it always the ground for personal formations such as would "express" it. To represent such a reality in art is to represent a "mixed" world, where the better is a potential in the actual.) Irony, as has been discussed in previous chapters, is always one of the main operatives of his artistic consciousness. But the fictions of Volume XI particularly take irony, or the contrast in worth between a ground and its full realization, for their subject.
By actions in which certain characters bravely choose to exercise lucidity and so provide for other, aggrandizing characters a possibility of attaining security if they will merely forego further exploitation, and by the choice of the latter characters not to take this risk, the fictions of Volume XII show that the opposite of "free spirit" originates in an effort to gain absolute security--originates in fear. The stories in Volume XII further connect fear with a compulsion to repeat the familiar when in the presence of the new and strange. They contrast literal mindedness and unconscious projection with enjoyment of man's formative capacities purely for the sake of that activity. Climaxing this second major unit of the New York Edition, Volume XII coaxes a reader to expand his tolerance for the new. It emphasizes the imaginative element in all art which makes art a means to encourage more general recognition of "free spirit."

Volume IX, *The Awkward Age*, shares with the ten fictions in Volumes X-XII a function of demarcating the outlines of the common theme of free spirit. *Awkward Age* contrasts an individual whose allegiance to fostering others' exercise of choice becomes confirmed through her effort of lucidity, with individuals who try to obstruct individuality by employing the forms of their social order. Nanda Brockenham is the center of interest, although the novel does not exclusively use a central consciousness nor even the "picture" of several awarenesses but instead is wholly "scenic" in treatment. Nanda is unique in her situation and in her constant choice to let others make their own elections, a choice very difficult to apply in her kind of world. The other characters are merely clever in their attempts to use social forms
against one another's freedom. Nanda (with Mitchy and Mr. Longdon in her wake) always looks at her situation as a whole. Therefore she understands that it is unique because of contradiction in her society between (a) retention of a single standard of propriety ("morality") and (b) changes of usage or practice. She knows the result that she can only be its victim. Accordingly, too, she sees other persons whom this contradiction affects as potential victims, whose behavior always needs to be related to their conditions. She reveals, especially to Mr. Longdon, their conditions as the explanation of their behavior; and she makes no effort to judge them. Although the other characters, Mrs. Brook and Van in the main, are well aware of the contradiction between social usage and the theory of propriety, they do not admit that this contradiction victimizes persons. Since Van and Mrs. Brook judge other persons by how publicly questionable is the gap between their behavior and the theory of propriety—that is, by their cleverness in manipulating appearances, Van's and Mrs. Brook's "aspects" create the

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In the several conflicts arising out of the girl's situation, most of the agents attempt to obstruct others' choice, in order to get for themselves better access to Mr. Longdon's or to Mitchy's money. But Nanda withholds information from others when they would use it against others' freedom, or when such information might make them judge others; and she makes sure they realize her degree of knowledge when they might act on a belief in her ignorance. Such maneuvering on the girl's part calls for a great deal of "appreciation."

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Van "deplores" the situation, but contributes to it. Mrs. Brook denies that it is more than an "awkwardness" to be managed. Both expend their gifts of perception and their energy on disguising the rift between practices and the single theory. (Van and Mrs. Brook parallel Shirley Sutton and Mrs. Grantham in "The Two Faces."
world we glimpse later in "The Two Faces" closing this unit of the Edition.

Volume IX introduces the second major unit of the Edition, and, equally, climaxes the first major unit. This novel both dramatizes the choice of free spirit and stresses the forces in contemporary society which prevent recognition of that freedom which is created by a few. The Awkward Age, that is, represents particularly those elements which help to make James's audience resistant to grasping his characteristic theme. The fictions in Volume XII, at the climax of the second unit, all provide encouragement for consciously free play of the reader's imagination. They create the "tone" of romance, capturing the "sense of" the unknowable. The fictions of Volumes X and XI, and the novel in Volume IX, strive quite otherwise for what might be called the romance of the real--strive to convey the adventure of penetrating the unknown (not the unknowable) or strive to create the "air of reality," a phrase James uses synonymously with representing

146 Nanda's possession of free spirit precipitates imbroglios between the other characters rather than, as in the actions of Vol. X, delaying these for a period. Nanda's free spirit unavoidably creates conflicts between other characters because her social order denies the possibility of "individual appreciations" (Art of Novel, p. 105). Working on the false assumption that Nanda also is but manipulating her appearances, in order to gain security, others devise strategies that bring them into conflict with each other quite unnecessarily. Yet these conflicts Nanda's lucidity cannot forestall because she has no opportunity to do so without herself victimizing still other persons. By everyone except Mitchy and Mr. Longdon, and by too many of James's readers, Nanda is viewed only as a finally more clever Mrs. Brook. Thus, like the centers in Vol. XII, Nanda's society condemns itself to the fear of perceiving differences. It cuts itself off even from such an exclamation as Mrs. Gereth's to Fleda--"I don't understand you!"--and from such limited wonder as Mrs. Wix's at Maisie (XI, 363; X, 222).
that adventure. He considered that the most important of fiction's tasks, the one which most gives art a civilizing function, is stimulating the reader's ability to feel penetration of the knowable unknown as an adventure. But his placement of Volume XII at the climax of this unit of his Edition, together with his prefatorial comments on the fictions of Volume XII, indicate his keen awareness that cultures alien to free spirit peculiarly need the imaginative exercise provided by fictions studying and evoking romantic "tone." Art which addresses itself to such audiences must take special pains to make contagious the excitement of conscious creation.

James's "Utopia," Theodora Bosanquet surmised, "was an anarchy where nobody would be responsible for any other human being but only for his own civilized character." And she notes how little those international relations that engaged James's attention mattered to his genius. Wherever he might have lived and whatever human interactions he might have observed, he would in all probability have reached much the same conclusion that he arrived at by the way of America, France, and England. When he walked out of the refuge of his study into the world and looked about him, he saw a place of torment, where creatures of prey perpetually thrust their claws into the quivering flesh of the doomed, defenceless children of light. He had the abiding comfort of an inner certainty ... that the children of light had an eternal advantage ... 149


148 "The Art of Fiction," The Art of Fiction and Other Essays, p. 16.

This is the mode of summarizing the essential Jamesian theme of the creation of "free spirit" employed by one who had a rare opportunity to observe both the writer and his fiction in process:

The essential fact is that wherever he looked Henry James saw fineness apparently sacrificed to grossness, beauty to avarice, truth to a bold front. He realised how constantly the tenderness of growing life is at the mercy of personal tyranny and he hated tyranny of persons over each other. His novels are a repeated exposure of this wickedness, a reiterated and passionate plea for the fullest freedom of development, unimperilled by reckless and barbarous stupidity.

He was himself most scrupulously careful not to exercise any tyrannical power over other people. The only advice he ever permitted himself to offer to a friend was a recommendation to "let your soul live." Towards the end of his days, his horror of interfering, or seeming to interfere, with the freedom of others became so overwhelming that it was a misery for him to suspect that the plans of his friends might be made with reference to himself. 150

There are, of course, multiple ways in which commentary can point to this theme, and to its ubiquity in James's work. But the order of the New York Edition is one of our best helps in locating the fundamental outlines of the subject. The Edition places together, to form its second major group or unit, fictions which both unfold the theme and suggest, through the relationship given to them by James himself, what importance it had in his estimate of the significance and of the directions of his art.

A critic's evaluation of the viability of this theme for fictional purposes must, at the least, reckon with the writer's evaluation of that same point, particularly when the writer is so deliberate a practitioner and so formidable a critic of other fiction

as was Henry James. The grounds for his own estimate that the subject of free spirit was a keystone in his production of the equivalent of a *comédie humaine* are implied in his arrangement of his definitive edition.

Some critical argument, besides neglecting to deal with the grounds for James's own estimate that significant fiction could represent the theme of free spirit, even more fundamentally neglects to discuss sufficiently the relation between the critic's own grounds for considering that theme unviable and the exact premises of James's theme. For example, Mr. Marius Bewley argues that sometimes James's focus on the problem of "appearance" and James's tendency to represent disparity of social forms and life-giving values prevent James's producing (especially in his later work) either true fiction or a finally satisfying criticism of human life and of any one social order. James's fiction, Mr. Bewley summarizes, exploits "the ambiguities of experience for the purpose of revealing, of showing up, 'the world's artificial system'; James "calls into radical question the validity of the relation between appearances and the reality they profess to represent." The critic argues that this motif or preoccupation reflects so strong a desire to escape from "'the world's . . . system'" that James's aim frequently is at variance with his chosen genre. Moreover, the critic also thinks that James's imputed

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151 "Appearance and Reality in Henry James," *Scrutiny* (1950), pp. 91-92. The phrase "the world's artificial system" is from Hawthorne's "The New Adam and Eve."
desire to escape from "the world's . . . system!" means that moral
"uncertainties" which "seem to diminish human nature" often get the
upper hand in James's representations. Mr. Bewley believes that
"a certain ambiguity rests at the very heart of James's moral
meaning . . . throughout his work." This reasoning rests on the
critic's beliefs that (1) fiction "depends . . . on the permanence of
certain social . . . appearances, and on the assumption that they
somehow present reality," and that (2) "in the world as we live in
it, values are known through appearance, and it is impossible to
question the one without casting suspicion on the other." He seems
to believe, also, that the proper province of fiction is the type of
critique of society that satirizes. And the critic equates a novelist's
possession of moral certainty with his fiction's implying, or otherwise

152 Bewley calls the desire "a deep, a downright fantastic
perversity of temperament that is positively American." "Appearance

153 Ibid., p. 91.

This later article lays less stress on an American desire to escape
from forms or from "the world" as the source of James's moral ambiguity,
more stress on the problem posed for the artist by the poverty of forms
in the American scene: "In such a tradition it is hardly remarkable
that the artist . . . arrived at his positive concept by saying what
life was not." When James "endeavors to give us his positive values
straight," his fiction "breaks down." (Ibid., 183).

155 "Appearance and Reality in Henry James," Scrutiny (1950),
pp. 101-102.

156 Ibid. (The italics are mine.)
referring to, an ethic in the sense of a complete code of behavior alike applicable to every character in every situation. He says that because in James's fiction "cads and gentlemen are made such by the social perspective in which they exist," James exhibits a moral "astigmatism ... in viewing any given context of appearance and reality."  

However, the arrangement of the fictions in Volumes X-XII of James's New York Edition attempts to underline for us a theme of "free spirit" which squarely contradicts Mr. Bewley's assumptions that moral awareness is possessing a complete code by which to judge everybody and that when social forms are a perfect maze of disguises the possession of sure values is impossible. James's commitment to what we might call individualism is indeed radical, and may be "American." But, in the course of evaluating the viability of this world view for purposes of significant fiction, a critic should discuss the relation of his own principles of evaluation to the criticism of them implied by the view under discussion: James's theme claims that the emergence of increased life or freedom of spirit cannot be hindered even by a social order which does not recognize it. But Mr. Bewley finds James's moral "uncertainty" embodied in James's depiction of "the very substance of society as so perverted and warped that an apparent lie, in such a context, is often the shortest way to truth, and what

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157 "Appearance and Reality in Henry James," Scrutiny (1950), p. 90. I find reflected throughout the article these assumptions that fiction must criticize society by satire and that moral certainty is possessing a complete code of behavior.
looks like truth is often the most egregious lie." Although arguing here against James's metaphysical premises, the critic has not made clear that such is the province of his argument and then does not argue rigorously within that province. He implies, too, that the above described effect of James's work is often not a fully conscious one nor tied to a deliberated theme.

The design made by the nouvelles and stories in Volumes IX-XII shows that James considered his fiction an important criticism, though not in the mode of satire, of the English order in particular, and of the relation of moral awareness to any society. The appeal to James of London was immense. The "dusky Babylon" concentrated a quantity of material for the novelist—forms, manners, institutions. Also, it exhaled an attitude towards this material that was greatly useful to James's dramatization of a contrary "free spirit." The fictions in Volumes IX-XII mainly draw on English life; but their common subject or theme is more universal than their material. They are not "Scenes

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"Maisie, Miles and Flora, the Jamesian Innocents," Scrutiny, XVIII (1950), 258.

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Strangely, it is only in his wider generalizations that Mr. Bewley approaches Lyon's premises. He summarizes very clearly that "the essential question is: Who is the Liar?" and that Lyon "is on the point of committing that crime which for both Hawthorne and James was the worst possible: of violating the integrity of another man's personality, of seeking to take possession of it through false images and conventional lawst" ("Appearance and Reality in Henry James," p. 95); The critic also sees that Mrs. Capadose is not "a contaminated character" but "an early forerunner of Maggie Verver in 'The Golden Bowl.'" (Ibid., p. 96) Yet both Mrs. Capadose's final use of irony, or a "lie," and Maggie Verver's employment of disguise the critic finds productive of James's moral ambiguity.
of English Life" in the Balzacian sense, but representations of how worth or "life" is related to human existence within any scene.

In addition, this unit of the New York Edition suggests that James's art especially maneuvers to encourage the exercise of imagination by an audience already committed to values radically different from the writer's. James knew that, in order to make his theme of free spirit even remotely available to readers committed to moralism, he had to persuade, and almost to trap, the members of his audience into the joy of exerting their own shaping capacities. His aim was to entice a reader into enjoying either a "sense of" the unknowable or a recognition of the infinite expansibility of the knowable: that is, his aim was either to evoke "romantic tone" or, on the other hand, to convey "the nearer distances and the clearer mysteries" which--as the next chapter will show--he felt to be the "air of reality."
The construction of the ten fictions in Volumes X-XII supports
the hypothesis that these volumes make the second major unit of the
New York Edition, a unit whose three subdivisions are arranged to place
increasing stress on the essence of James’s art and on its especial
importance for the contemporary world.

In structural terms, the fictions of Volumes X-XII alike are
distinguishable from those in Volumes I-IX because they are
"foreshortened." At the same time that they are "little dramas"
exhibiting the same compositional methods of "centering interest" and
of "scenic consistency" which had been illustrated by the sequence of
Volumes I-IX, the fictions of Volumes X-XII also are "richly summarised"
dramas. The type of composition appearing here for the first time in
the New York Edition aims both to represent with scenic consistency
the interior of characters (to dramatize consciousness in the way
Volumes I-IX show that James had developed through intensification of
his two stable operative habits of indirection and irony) and to
compress this kind of drama into much shorter space. The new type of
compositional plan is termed "foreshortening" at the close of the
preface to Volume X:

... those richly summarised and foreshortening effects—the
opposite pole again from expansion inorganic and thin—that
refer their terms of production, for which the magician has
ever to don his best cap and gown, to the inner compartment of
our box of tricks. From them comes the true grave close
consistency in which parts hang together even as the
interweavings of a tapestry. 161

160 *Art of Novel*, pp. 131; 157.

And in the preface to Volume XI, this new kind of construction is attributed to

the author's incorrigible taste for gradations and superpositions of effect; his love, when it is a question of picture, of anything that makes for proportion and perspective, that contributes to a view of all the dimensions. Addicted to seeing 'through'—one thing through another, accordingly, and still other things through that—he takes, too greedily perhaps, on any errand, as many things as possible by the way. It is after this fashion that he incurs the stigma of laboring uncannily for a certain fulness of truth—truth diffused, distributed, and, as it were, atmospheric. 162

The term "foreshortening" sometimes is used by James for composition in general. "The Lesson of Balzac," his 1905 lecture, distinguishes "two elements of the art of the novelist which . . . present . . . the greatest difficulty" and phrases one of these elements as

that mystery of the foreshortened procession of facts and figures, of appearances of whatever sort, which is in some lights but another name for the picture governed by the principle of composition, and which has at any rate as little as possible in common with the method now usual among us, the juxtaposition of items emulating the column of numbers of a schoolboy's sum in addition. It is the art of the brush, I know, as opposed to the art of the slate pencil. . . . 163

"Foreshortening" is "another name for" the general presence of composition, but only "in some lights." For James often reserves the term for those types of composition which seemed to him most to intensify the general principle of a thorough organization. His


163 "The Lesson of Balzac," The Future of the Novel, ed. L. Edel (New York: Vintage, 1956), p. 121. The other most difficult task of the novelist, according to this lecture, is representing "the lapse of time, the duration of the subject."
prefaces to the New York Edition frequently employ the term "foreshortening" in contexts defining kinds of composition which constantly present the reader with several simultaneous angles of vision on the same facts. I conclude that the term may mean composition in general, but especially refers to composition by "superpositions" that achieve "a view of all the dimensions." It especially refers to compression, or to taking "as many things as possible by the way... laboring uncannily for a certain fulness," through kinds of structure which intensify the general principle of thorough organization.

Beginning in the 1880's, and continuing throughout the 1890's, a new condition of James's career appeared at the same time as the maturation of his artistic powers: smaller space than he previously

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Rene Wellek in "Henry James's Literary Theory and Criticism," American Literature, XXX (November, 1958), 293-322, identifies only James's use of "foreshortening" for "the author's skill of subordinating some events and characters, the perspective created by a focus of narration." Wellek notes only the term's use for the unity of general composition.

In "Henry James and The Art of Foreshortening," RES, XXII (1946), 207-214, Morris Roberts has defined the term as "an art of economy" that gives "the sense of present action without an elaborated scene," and so animates or "dramatizes" every part of the fiction without expanding each detail into scene and dialogue. "In some sort the equivalent of drama," Roberts says, is attained by James in each closely packed sentence, often by imagery. Intentional ambiguities and discrepancies in the handling of time also create the effect of "uninterrupted action" or "drama." So also does James's handling of the "picture" of prolonged moments of reflection by "subtle gradation in the use of verbs" to keep "the sense of a present unfolding."

The techniques pointed to by Mr. Roberts' article are highly important in my opinion, as is his statement that these techniques create "the sense of present action" without the substance. But I believe that James uses the term "foreshortening" distinguishably from what he meant by "drama" or dramatic quality.
had used now was available for the magazine publication of his fiction. After 1888, James felt the squeeze of opposed pressures: the drop in a market for his longer fiction, and a need to consolidate his artistic reputation. He felt a danger of wasting himself on any but what he considered "fundamental" themes, or subjects with "importance, emotional capacity," necessarily requiring "big" treatment. The only solution to the conflict of this later aim with the new condition was to put important themes into something close to the space editors might accept from him. Of course James never completely resolved the problem. Even after he stopped seeking prior magazine publication of his shorter fiction (in general, after the turn of the century), the question of available space remained with him. Lifelong conditions led him to formulate and to pursue the goal of aesthetic economy. Nonetheless it is a fact that James's circumstances in the late 1880's and in the 1890's favored his more single-minded pursuit of composition carried to the point of compression. They favored "foreshortening."

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The day was passing for both the "three-decker" novel and for serial publication of long fiction as a regular feature of the magazines. Editors tended to want fiction for single issues, and wanted even this space cut. (See John Carter, Books and Book-Collectors New York: World, 1957, p. 115.) This condition was intensified by James's own decision, as a result of the unpopularity of his fiction with a wide audience (particularly the unpopularity of his long novels The Princess Casamassima and The Tragic Muse), to put his main effort into learning to write for the stage, and to confine his fiction to short productions for a number of years.

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Notebooks, pp. 166; 231-232; Letters, ed. Lubbock (New York, 1920), I, 231-232; Selected Letters, ed. Edel (London, 1956), pp. 123-125. See also the preface to The Tragic Muse, which discusses James's feeling that, with an apprenticeship well over, he was ready to give to wider subjects a large-scale treatment.
As the preface to Volume IX had done, the preface to Volume X stresses James's effort to produce small fictions for the market and his deliberate choice, for this purpose, of germs mined from single situations. The preface to Volume IX also states, however, that with the \textit{Awkward Age} the Edition re-introduces "a group of ... productions" having in common that their germs developed an "unforeseen principle of growth." This statement does not mean that the fictions of this group that Volume IX opens grew longer than was necessary or longer than was economical. The statement means only that the fictions of this group grew longer than James first had anticipated ("projected as small things") and longer than editors liked ("had finally to be provided for as comparative monsters").

The true scale of any fiction is not to be determined by its word count. A fiction's scale is its ratio of number of words to the quantity of material it includes. Measuring in this way, James himself considers \textit{The Spoils} only "modest" in scale. \textit{The Spoils} treats a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{167} \textit{Art of Novel}, p. 98. The same emphasis on an "unforeseen principle of growth" continues throughout the prefaces to the next two volumes: See \textit{Art of Novel}, pp. 124 (preface to Vol. X); 140 (preface to Vol. XI).
\item \textbf{168} See pp. 158-159; above in Section III of Chapter V.
\item \textbf{169} \textit{Art of Novel}, pp. 124-125: "To my own view, after the 'first number,' this composition ... conformed but to its nature, which was not to transcend a modest amplitude; but ... it felt itself eyed, from month to month ... with an editorial ruefulness excellently well founded—from the moment such differences of sense could exist, that is, as to the short and the long. The sole impression it made, I woefully gathered, was that of length, and it has till lately ... been present to me but as the poor little 'long' thing."\
\end{itemize}
large amount of material in comparison with its number of words. "The Chaperon" and "A London Life" similarly foreshorten "simple" or single actions. For this reason, they are of like modest scale with The Spoils, although of different--smaller--word count. But the modest scale of the three does not mean that they produce a subject of modest weight or importance. Their form allows for immense "value," or for representation of a large theme, despite the use of a modest scale.

The compositional plan of the three fictions in Volume X may be described as centering the fiction in and unfolding with scenic consistency one consciousness that is aware of the consciousness of several other characters, or that is a perspective on many narrower perspectives. The structural differences between The Spoils, "A London Life" and "The Chaperon" are only the degree of consistency with which they execute this plan and the word count or space they take for it. (In scale, the three are alike.)

Except for one portion of "A London Life," James limits his material in these three fictions to that confronted and interpreted by

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Art of Novel, p. 135.

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The first topic of discussion in the preface to Vol. X is the saving economy of art in general (Art of Novel, p. 120). "Economy" is also the topic with which the preface to Vol. XII closes--this time the signal amount of compression in "The Two Faces."

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A second and equally important feature of the "adopted form" in Volume X is to present a series of social occasions to which the center is party and by which she learns the nature of other persons' awareness. These social occasions also are selected to evidence to the center the stages of a struggle between the other characters. The

The interview between Lady Davenport and Mr. Wendover in "A London Life" violates the plan of using only Laura Wing, the center, as the "medium" of the action. James' preface notes that all the information given to a reader by means of this interview might have been conveyed without violating his "adopted form."

Each of the fictions in Vol. X gathers suspense by the omission to present directly certain events which the reader learns, with the center, to have taken place, events which, if directly witnessed, would have made clearer some crucial motivation of other characters. This suspense is not generated simply for its own sake, and there is no failure to show any crucial event which the center might have witnessed. The kind of suspense achieved is a kind normal to our everyday lives. For example, early in The Spoils, Owen's private announcement to his mother of his engagement is omitted. If directly witnessed, this event could have indicated how much Owen's secret preference for Fleda derives from his dislike of trouble. This is the question Fleda is in greatest suspense about until Owen does not break with Mona; and which a reader gains full light on only with the final events of the nouvelle.

The preface stresses that "The Chaperon" follows this form with complete consistency. It is obvious that in "The Chaperon" and The Spoils, as had been true too of The Princess Casamassima, decisions affecting the direction of the action often occur within the scenic treatment of social occasions; but such pure scenes are preceded and followed by other patches of dialogue interrupted by the center's interpretations of it. (See pp. 127-130 and 138-145, Chapter V.) Passages containing solely the center's reflection on what he has learned via the exchanges link both kinds of dialogue. Thus, in James's use, the limitation to one point of view on an action as the medium for representing that action requires also a determination of what exchanges the center can have with what other characters so as progressively to provide his consciousness with material that makes the stages of his awareness constitute a direction of movement. As James uses the device of limited point of view in the fictions of Vol. X and in The Princess, it functions always in concert with other techniques. It is a medium for representing an action, never an end in itself; and to be the medium for representing an action, the determination of a certain kind of series of social occasions has also to occur.
preface to Volume X summarizes one advantage of its compositional plan as making the author's "attack on the spectator's consciousness" less "immediate" or noticeable—less like a "rap." In other words, verisimilitude is gained. As has already been indicated, another advantage is a type of suspense normal in our everyday lives.

The third and most important feature of the construction in Volume X is that the center is a special kind of awareness. He is conscious of other perspectives on items, instead of conscious of mere items. In this way, the reader's "sense of the facts" is "enhanced" and "intensity" is gained. Because these centers are more capable of relating what they confront than is many a reader, a more complete apprehension by the audience of what motives have been evidenced in the dialogue is better guaranteed. The use of centers who are "interesting" for their attention to and apprehension of others' consciousness also allows James to compress more material. The presentation of a more inclusive awareness of several lesser perspectives makes possible the inclusion of very many relationships within relatively brief space. Increasing the number of relations indicated "through"

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175 Art of Novel, p. 137.
176 Ibid., p. 138.
177 For instance, Fleda Vetch becomes aware of Mrs. Gereth's and of Mona's value systems: of their stances towards the world, or their angles of vision, rather than simply of their acts and statements. By giving Fleda's awareness of how Mona and Mrs. Gereth relate their worlds, James draws several relations between money and sex within the social order they inhabit:

Fleda penetrates that, for Mona, sex is a means to a domination or power, of which money is the main instituted symbol. Money and sex are brought into further relation by means of Fleda's understanding, too, of Mrs. Gereth's perspective. Mrs. Gereth
one another compresses the subject.

Although Isabel Archer and Hyacinth Robinson are certainly "interesting" in that they are imaginative, and although in The Princess James combined "scenic consistency" with the centering of interest so that Hyacinth's consciousness may be called the "medium" for the action of The Princess, the method of composition used by the fictions of Volume X is different from that used by The Portrait and The Princess. Hyacinth is denied access to certain kinds of material which would enable him to appreciate the whole of the conflict in which he is involved. The Princess centers on and represents with scenic consistency an awareness which is developing a wider view. One force in the conflict moving the action of this novel is an act by the center based on his earlier perspective. But the fictions of Volume X portray a "straight" action by using always an inclusive consciousness of a conflict for the medium of the portrayal. This form maintains scenic consistency at the pitch exhibited in The Princess, The Tragic Muse and Awkward Age, but in continually "going behind" one inclusive consciousness it differs from

has gathered together her collection of spoils by years of "bargaining" on little money. The beauty she has created is for her the symbol of those past fierce triumphs of trickery, and of her passion to win. Money, for Mrs. Gereth, is a means to domination; and "passion," either aesthetic or sexual, is but her symbol for power. These relations suggest others between the still largely Philistine 1870's and 1880's, and the fin de siècle 1890's, which pretend to exalt beauty but in fact merely substitute it--in the place of money--as the symbol of domination or power. Mrs. Gereth seems much more "civilized" than the crude Mona; but Mrs. Gereth is nevertheless Brittania--in the style of Burne-Jones or Rosetti, rather than of the marketplace. (This range of suggestiveness, so that The Spoils includes a critique of a whole social order and of a shift in its fashions, is accomplished in the same space James might have required to represent an action throwing light on but one portion of a society.)
the course taken by *Tragic Muse* and *Awkward Age*—that of representing the center completely "objectively" or indirectly. Obviously, the form in Volume X also foregoes the other structural refinement of *Awkward Age*: employing solely "scenic" presentation of the social occasions. Therefore the nearest parallel to the structure of *The Spoils*, "A London Life" and "The Chaperon" is that of *The Princess*; but the significant differences are that (1) the centers in Volume X are perspectives inclusive of other characters' angles of vision on the action, and that (2) an external conflict between these other characters is made to precipitate an internal one of the center. Hyacinth of *The Princess* is not a medium for the representation of an external conflict which also precipitates his internal struggle. Just these differences enable the fictions of Volume X to be far more economical or compressed than is *The Princess*, and yet to center inside consciousness and to have scenic consistency.

The fact that the compositional plan employed throughout Volumes X-XII retains scenic consistency and dramatic quality even while it centers on a consciousness which often is "gone behind" is much stressed by the prefaces to these volumes. The three prefaces, together with that to Volume IX, offer a definition of "drama" and of "dramatic intensity" which corroborates, and importantly supplements, the definition of scenic consistency I have already presented in Chapter V. The kind

An important preface comment of the form in Vol. X is that its beauty derives from the fact that its parts are in "abject dependence." Although any kind of form is a "contrived harmony," harmony is the especial beauty of "a thing of this order" (*Art of Novel*, pp. 136-137). This implication requires close examining, since it is not readily apparent that any one type of composition may, more than any other, emphasize that it has
of form James uses in Volume X has the dramatic quality of making cross-relations all on the same plane of exhibition. This form builds the "chain" of an "interesting" consciousness. Its audience is "shut up to" references to items previously within that awareness, or to cross-relations all within its movement. The successive interpretations by the one inclusive consciousness are related only to one another and

unity. In the previous preface to Vol. IX, James had pointed out that dramatic form, or composition by the "principle of the stage play," places strong emphasis on the fact of unity: "The dramatist has verily to build, is committed to construction, to architecture, at any cost" and "... an imputed defect is never, at the worst disengageable ... my claim for that felicity of the dramatist's case that his synthetic 'whole' is his form, the only one we have to do with" (Art of Novel, pp. 115; 109; 118).

James's view is that the dramatist is committed to building on what has preceded--to arranging his material so that by the phenomenon of succession alone he draws his relationships. James speaks of the dramatist as knowing "the beauty and the difficulty of ... escaping poverty even though the references in one's action can only be ... to each other" (Ibid., pp. 113-114). The "straight-jacket" of having to depend only on succession to accomplish one's composing has a corresponding advantage, however, of eliciting great "attention" (Ibid., pp. 112-113). The spectator or the reader of "drama" is "shut up wholly to cross-relations." An alternate way of stating this fact about dramatic form is that in it everything is on the same "plane of exhibition":

the references in one's action can only be, with intensity, to each other, to things exactly on the same plane of exhibition with themselves. Exhibition may mean in a 'story' twenty different ways ... the play consents to the logic of but one way. ... We are shut up wholly to cross-relations, relations all within the action itself; no part of which is related to anything but some other part--save of course by the relation of the total to life (Ibid., p. 114).

According to this analysis, dramatic form achieves strong emphasis on the fact of form, or on unity, because the witness of dramatic form himself must draw the relations. Due to succession, they really take place in his attention. James concludes drama "capable of affecting the form-lover, I think, as really more of a projected form than any other" (Ibid., p. 111).
only by their succession: they are on the same "plane of exhibition."

The fictions of Volume X build the "chain" of a consciousness which has been selected to show, by composing for us still other perspectives, "all the dimensions" of a group of facts. The links in the chain of this consciousness are related solely to one another and related solely by their succession. But also, these links are each constituted of the relationship between several perspectives. For these reasons James speaks of the fictions in Volume X not only as "little dramas," but also as tales in which the "question of perspective rules the scene." They have both dramatic form or scenic consistency and the compression of seeing everything "through" another: more than usual multiplicity held in tight unity and represented within brief compass. This compositional method is different from any employed by fictions appearing hitherto in the New York Edition.

The structural features common between the three fictions in Volume XI, and between the four in Volume XII, make basically the same compositional method for "foreshortening" the drama of consciousness as was adopted by the fictions in Volume X. In all ten fictions of the three volumes, the plane of exhibition is one consciousness; the reader

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This is to say that readers can understand any one link in the chain of the center's awareness only by reference to all the preceding links. For instance, The Spoils is so constructed that Fleda's awareness at any one moment is impossible to comprehend without cross-relating all preceding items.

If we mistake the use of "scenic" treatment of occasions for James's conception of dramatic form and "the principle of the stage play," we are likely to be quite baffled by his insistence that the fictions in Vols. X and XI are dramas.

Art of Novel, pp. 131; 157.
is "shut up to" the cross relations between the stages of one awareness. While the common form is dramatic for this reason, each of the ten fictions simultaneously presents relations between several perspectives or compresses many "dimensions," for an effect of "truth diffused and atmospheric." That is, the reader sees things "through" one another—sees as many things as possible in this way.

Differences between the compositional plans adopted in each of the three volumes are quite evident, but they are not fundamental. Structurally, the volumes take merely different routes towards foreshortened drama.

What Maisie Knew, In the Cage and "The Pupil" structurally differ from one another only in scale and in word count. Their structural similarities show that the form in Volume XI exhibits scenic consistency as do the fictions in Volume X and The Princess: presented alternately are (a) social occasions to which the center is party, and (b) the center's interpretations of these exchanges. Too, these alternations are arranged to prepare for a purely "scenic" handling, at differing intervals, of certain of the social occasions. But the preface to Volume XI also makes a special point of the fact that its three fictions undeviatingly employ a regular alternation of a "scenic" type of treatment of the included social occasions. The preface is most explicit about this common structural feature, which is different from

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As the preface to Vol. XI remarks, "The Pupil" is only a "minor result"; technically speaking, this story is included in the volume because its form is particularly revealing of the bent of the constructive plan in the fictions of the volume (Art of Novel, pp. 151; 153).
scenic consistency and from dramatic form. These latter do not logically involve a recurrence at uniform intervals of purely scenic treatment. In *What Maisie Knew*, *In the Cage* and "The Pupil," however, a "treatment by 'scene' regularly recurs" along with scenic consistency.

The reason for this second feature of the form in Volume XI becomes clear when one notes still a third characteristic of its

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*The Princess* and the fictions of Vol. X do exhibit some (but not a regular) alternation between exchanges scenically treated and another kind of dialogue accompanied and interrupted by the center's reflections. Some scenic treatment of the social occasions is necessary to attaining "scenic consistency." See the discussion on pp. 140-141 in Chapter V.

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*Art of Novel*, pp. 157-158. James's preface to Vol. XI stresses that its fictions have both "general scenic consistency" and a regular scenic presentation:

renewed recognition of the inveterate instinct with which they keep conforming to the "scenic" law. They demean themselves . . . as little constituted dramas, little exhibitions founded on the logic of the "scene," the unit of the scene, the general scenic consistency, and knowing little more than that . . . the light it has once for all adopted . . . the scenic system at play.

The treatment by "scene" regularly, quite rhythmically recurs; the intervals between, the massing of elements to a different effect and by quite another law, remain, in this fashion, all preparative, just as the scenic occasions in themselves become, at a given moment, illustrative. . . . The point, however is that the scenic passages are wholly and logically scenic . . .

The great advantage is that we feel, with the definite alternation, how the theme is being treated.

In interpreting this passage, one must remember that James also has called the fictions of Vol. X, where the social occasions recurring are not "wholly . . . scenic" or not always treated as pure scene, "dramas" (*Art of Novel*, p. 131), and that he has attributed dramatic quality and "scenic consistency" to *The Princess*, *Tragic Muse* and *Awkward Age* because there is alternation of preparative blocks of material with "illustrative" social occasions. Thus "regular" alternation of purely scenic treatment is NOT identical with what James means by dramatic form.
fictions: the consciousness dramatized is not an inclusive awareness; the central awareness is "interesting" in another way than for its breadth or for its ability to compose for the reader several lesser perspectives on the same body of facts. Each fiction in Volume XI employs an "ironic centre." In structural terms, this means that the center offers us a perspective emphatically contrasted with the other angles of vision also included in the fictions, and contrasted by other means than through the center's location of the other perspectives. This point may be stated in another way: the center's vision is narrower than is the perspective on the action which nevertheless is imparted to the reader; still, the only medium for conveying the more inclusive view to the reader is presentation of what the center witnesses and of the center's interpretations. Even though he uses as his medium a consciousness which is not able to compose other persons' angles of vision, James achieves the contrast of perspectives, so that the center is an "ironic" one. He gains this contrast of perspectives by alternating at uniform or regular intervals between purely scenic handling of the social occasions and other passages which employ language that clearly is the author's summary of the center's

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*Art of Novel*, p. 147. This phrase is used of Maisie, but is equally true of the telegraphist and of Morgan. ("The Pupil" is a special variation on the basic form adopted in *What Maisie Knew* and *In the Cage*: the fact that Morgan's awareness is dramatized and that the story centers on his consciousness, although Pemberton's awareness is the medium will be discussed shortly.)
interpretations and of his stage of awareness. Although James does constantly employ Maisie's own "terms" for what she witnesses, he never at any point provides Maisie's own summary to herself of her complete view of others or of the stage of the action. Still, we do receive such a summary of Maisie's awareness at each of its stages, but through terms the author uses about it. These are always discriminated from the language the child herself has picked up from other characters and uses. In What Maisie Knew, the author's voice--through the frankly editorial "I" and through figures and terms very obviously not the child's--is always immediate in a reader's

Of the compositional plan in What Maisie Knew, James's preface says:

it is Maisie's relation, her activity . . . that determines all our concern . . . even though it is her interest that mainly makes the matter interesting for us, we inevitably note this in figures that are not at her command and that are nevertheless required when ever those aspects about her and those parts of her experience that she understands darken off into others that she rather tormentedly misses. All of which gave me a high firm logic to observe. . . . (Art of Novel, pp. 145-146).

The crucial chapter twenty of What Maisie Knew (before the decisive events at Folkestone and Boulogne) includes a passage summarizing the child's view of her situation, but summarizing this emphatically in the author's voice: "It was granted her at this time to arrive at divinations so ample that I shall have no room for the goal if I attempt to trace the stages; as to which, therefore I must be content to say . . ." (XI, 202). And a few paragraphs further James again stresses that the author is addressing directly the reader: "Oh, decidedly I shall never get you to believe the number of things she saw and the number of secrets she discovered!" (XI, 205). This procedure is so rare in James's canon that its use at this point in What Maisie Knew excites much critical remark. Usually, commentary concluded that the maneuver was a necessary but an unfortunate resort. However, the author's presence for the reader does not appear here for the first time in What Maisie Knew. The preface underlines as much when James says that he early decided to follow the "high firm logic" of employing both Maisie's own language and other terms showing that she misunderstands--terms which must be an omniscient author's for her stage of consciousness. The prominence of the author's voice in this way plainly is part of the structural principle of all the fictions in Vol. XI.
A witness of pure scene always may locate contrasts between the implied motivations or the angles of vision of several characters. But far more than had been the case in *Awkward Age*, such contrast is highlighted for the reader of *What Maisie Knew*, *In the Cage* and "The Pupil" by constant preparation for the purely scenic passages with

In two highly interesting and carefully detailed articles on "*What Maisie Knew*"—"*Henry James's "What Maisie Knew": A Comparison With The Plans In The Notebooks,*" *PMLA*, LXVIII (1953), 371-381; and "*A Cut Version of "What Maisie Knew,"* *Am. Lit.*, XXIV (1953), 493-504—Ward S. Worden has argued that somewhere in the process of writing the novel, James's intentions shifted towards "the attribution of a real, conscious and independent knowledge to Maisie, leaving her in the end the master of the moral situation." Worden believes that this shift required not only an unanticipated extension of the novel, after Chap. XIX, "in structure and bulk" but also a mixture of the "scenic" method (which this critic identifies with dramatic form) and of "working in Maisie's consciousness descriptively." In the passage which I have referred to (in footnote #185 on page 326) from Chap. XX, Worden sees James marking the transition to his new intention. And this commentator also finds that in the abridged version of the novel that appeared in *The New Review*, February-September, 1897, a cutting probably done by the author, the omissions generally amount to "a technical experiment to determine how much of his meaning would survive the condensation into a fast-moving scenic treatment," or "a strict limitation to non-narrative presentation." Worden concludes that the intention is but weakly conveyed in the cut version of the novel; and he hypothesizes that even in the full version, James's meaning perhaps is not "as forceful as it should be" because of the aforementioned mixture of methods.

My discussion intends to make clear why I disagree with this hypothesis. I think that we can take at its word James's preface indication that the alternation of "treatment by scene" with working in Maisie's consciousness (in a particular kind of way that does not involve "going behind" it) was quite early a part of his plan of construction; for I believe it has been used quite consistently throughout the novel. Although I find shrewd Worden's guess that James's intentions shifted somewhat in the course of writing, I do not think this shift caused the mixture of methods Worden refers to. Nor can I agree that James's constructional plan to alternate pure scene with something else causes a less forceful import.
other passages which represent the center's stage of awareness both in his own language and in the author's language about that stage.

Because of the presence in them of the author's voice, the non-scenic and preparatory passages suggest to the reader a broader vantage point from which he may always locate the relation between those perspectives of the characters which are implied by the purely scenic passages. The reader can focus these "dimensions" because of the manner in which the center's consciousness is presented. He constantly sees everything "through" something else. For instance in "The Pupil"

187 This point is confirmed by examining the points that James's preface calls his "type-passages" (for several reasons) in What Maisie Knew (Art of Novel, pp. 147; 149): One is Maisie's final interview with her mother in the garden of the Folkestone hotel, and the other is her earlier meeting with the Captain whom she and Sir Claude come upon with Ida in the park. Both exchanges are close to pure scenes, with stage directions; they are very brief scenes into which James shades almost imperceptibly from a dialogue accompanied by Maisie's terms plus his own language for her stage of consciousness. The author's metaphors for Maisie's impressions and emotions prepare a reader not to miss the contrasts implicit in the uninterrupted dialogue that follows. (See XI, 143-145, before Chap. XVI.)

And Chap. V of "In the Cage," preparatory to the scenes in Chaps. VI-X where the telegraphist "breaks out" to Mrs. Jordan and to Mr. Mudge on the quantity of money she daily sees spent, intersperses many other terms than hers with some notation in her own language of how she reacts to the spectacle from her cage. Such figures as "the revelation of the golden shower flying about without a gleam of gold for herself," and such words as "Olympian," are not her own terms: "the brazen women, as she called them . . ." One critic has commented on the important relationships compressed into this nouvelle by language echoing the Danae myth (Albert C. Friend, "A Forgotten Story by Henry James," South Atlantic Quarterly, III (1954), 100-103). Such language is always the author's about the centre's awareness, and always is clearly demarcated from the centre's own terms. Combination of the two at each stage superimposes a more inclusive perspective on a narrower one, and prepares for contrasts of perspective in the scenes. Combination of the two languages in chapter five of "In the Cage" suggests several relations between money and sex in the telegraphist's society. As in "The Spoils," the configurations of a complete social order are compressed into this small a compass.
everything that readers confront by means of Pemberton's consciousness. The scenes show the boy Morgan learning from and about Pemberton although Pemberton never is aware of as much as is Morgan. Instead of simply an observer's vision of a central person, actually we receive in "The Pupil" Morgan's "troubled vision" reflected "in" Pemberton's vision of it. That is to say, the boy's vision is not identical with his tutor's view of the boy's awareness; but the tutor's view of his pupil's perspective is the reader's means for locating this difference, and for seeing why Morgan's vision is "troubled" in a different manner from the tutor's. Pemberton is "gone behind" constantly; Morgan is not. Yet the author's language accompanying the notation of Pemberton's interpretations enables us to see a contrast, in the regularly recurring pure scenes, between Pemberton's vision of the boy and Morgan's actual angle of vision.

The form adopted by the four fictions in Volume XII is very similar to, although not identical with, the plan used in "The Pupil." In Volume XIII, the stages of one consciousness are dramatized as the medium for a dramatization of yet another awareness of a struggle. Through one character we witness events that the other characters do not witness. Nevertheless, we confront through him only material which the included scenes show others learning from and about him. One character's interpretations, and the scenes at which he assists, convey the effort of wider perspectives than his to deal with his angle of vision. In the fictions of Volume XII, the central consciousness, which

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is the "medium," is often "gone behind." This structural feature is similar to one feature of the form adopted in Volume X. But in the form used in Volume XII pure "scenes" rhythmically recur, as they do in the form displayed in Volume XI.

The type of construction in Volume XII may be summarily described as effecting a constant superposition of perspectives yet as ensuring that this superposition takes place peculiarly within the reader's attention: In Volume XII, the language used to trace the central awareness is always indubitably the center's own language.

The author's voice never summarizes any stage of the medium's awareness. Yet the language assigned to the center has a special kind of evocativeness, in that constantly it connotes another perspective quite contrary to his interpretations. And the language used by other persons in the recurring scenes similarly implies an angle of vision that contrasts with the center's perspective. The center's terms carry conflicting associations; and one strand of these connotations dovetails with the language used by other characters, to make a pattern or network of relations that amounts to a perspective identifying the center's

One illustration of this procedure may be cited from "The Turn of the Screw": Since Mrs. Grose is so inarticulate, the governess supplies most of the formulations in which the dialogue of the scenes proceeds. But, even in the first of these exchanges, the housekeeper demurs specifically from some of the governess's terms (she takes exception to the words "injury" and "corrupt" for Miles); and in later exchanges, Mrs. Grose supplies—infrequently but all the more strikingly—terms of her own that contrast sharply with the governess's phrasing. Mrs. Grose uses "accuse" (XII, 483) for an activity that the governess has just named "watching"; the housekeeper substitutes "angel" for the governess's "fiend" for Miles (XII, 482), and supplies the adjective "cruel" charge, for what the governess has called a "search" (XII, 452).
vision as limited. Thus only the total pattern of denotation and connotation effects the contrast and superposition of included "dimensions" in the fictions of Volume XII. Their construction especially urges the reader to connect the pattern of association of one portion of the fiction to the patterns of connotation in other portions.

The slightly different routes taken by these three methods of construction to the same end of a "richly summarised" drama of consciousness account for the exact sequence in which the New York Edition places them. The selected order of Volumes X-XII puts progressive stress both on

(1) the essence of James's composing technique (on his love of "superpositions" in an attempt to "take as many things as possible by the way," on his effort to compose as much as possible in order most to economise multiplicity—an aim he called composition by "foreshortening" rather than gaining unity by selection and omission), and on

(2) the importance of this compositional bent to the final significance of James's fictions (the important relation

For instance, in The Aspern Papers the editor uses a language about Jeffrey Aspern which connotes both mortality and divinity, both violability and inviolability: the women in Aspern's life the editor calls "Maenads" to his "Orpheus"; the narrator and Cumnor are Aspern's "appointed ministers"; (XII, 6-7). Aspern's face is "immortal" (XII, 42), and he wrote "divine" lyrics about a Juliana of "impenitent passion" (XII, 48). One strand in this contrasting network of connotation is reechoed in Tina's statement: "... he was a god" (XII, 64). The net effect of this pattern is to make the editor's effort to judge Aspern the man seem an irrelevance, and an impossibility.
of his interest in structure to his themes).

Structurally speaking, Volume XII appears last in the sequence because its compositional method particularly shows that "foreshortening" involves even more "projection" of the form into the reader's active response than does dramatic form alone. The compositional plan of the fictions of Volume XII especially reveals the incorporation of the reader into James's fiction, and that this phenomenon is not due to any one type of material. For two structural reasons, Volume IX precedes Volume X, even though Awkward Age was written after most of the fictions in Volumes X-XII: (a) Volume IX strikingly introduces the fact that James's concern with structure contributed to the final significance of his work. A trivial theme is not "overtreated" by Awkward Age; rather, a "quantity of finish" makes trivial material able to suggest a much larger theme. This novel, James says, shows the "maximum" of the value of composition. (b) The structure of Volume IX does NOT compress the included dimensions or "aspects" but presents them one by one, the cross-relations between them making the drama. Since its word count is so strikingly disparate not from the importance of its theme but from the size and weight of its raw material, Awkward Age prepares a

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A topic of James's preface to this volume is that his fiction does after all take a hold even on readers who object to its insignificance, and does induce them to pay some attention. The "friend" whose response to "The Turn of the Screw" James quotes at some length in the preface was H. G. Wells. (See Henry James and H. G. Wells, ed. Edel and Ray [London: Hart-Davis, 1958], pp. 55-58.)

Art of Novel, p. 99.
reader of the New York Edition to see the signal compression beginning in Volume X and extending throughout Volumes XI and XII. An equally important structural reason for the internal order of this second major unit of the New York Edition is that it lays clearer stress on the fact that "foreshortening" is the source of any disparity between the weight of raw material and breadth of final subject or theme.

By the dramatization of perspectives which simultaneously compose for us several narrower angles of vision, the fictions of Volume X, regardless of their modest scale, achieve the theme of "free spirit" critically confronting an entire social order. By a dramatization, using regular alternation of pure scenes and preparatory non-scenic passages employing both the center's language and the author's terms for the center's awareness, the fictions of Volume XI manage constantly to contrast several perspectives, so as to convey "the full ironic truth." The form utilized by the fictions of Volume XII makes any reader to some degree compose and relate several perspectives on the same group of facts, regardless of whether these fictions present the reader with relatively few specifications (with "values" that are "blanks") as in "The Turn of the Screw," or present the reader with more minute detail like that of the comedy of manners—as in "The Liar" and "The Two Faces." This sequence of volumes stresses that composition of material may make any area of raw material yield significant theme. "Foreshortening" kinds of composition do so even in reduced space.

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Art of Novel, pp. 142; 148.
Summary of the chapter

Either from the structural point of view or from the thematic one, the fictions of Volumes X through XII are so closely related that they form a major unit distinguishable from that group of fictions in Volumes I-IX. Volumes X-XII, the second major unit of the New York Edition, exfoliate the foreshortened drama of "free spirit." They exfoliate (1) the theme and (2) the compositional effect discernible in all of James's productions. The latter is as much economy as is possible of a maximum multiplicity held in emphatic unity, or composition which "foreshortens" the drama of consciousness. The former is the theme that increased "life" is to be gained through the freely possible election to exercise "lucidity" or "appreciation" on one's relation to other individuals in order to forward their exercise of choice.

The prefaces to Volumes X-XII suggest that neither James's characteristic theme of "free spirit" nor his characteristic compositional effect had been grasped by critical commentary on his fiction up to 1907, for in this commentary James's artistic case mainly had been identified as the use of "international" subjects and "overtreatment" of trivial or of too small areas of life. Together with its prefaces, the design of the second major unit of the New York Edition suggests that the foreshortened drama of "free spirit" appeared with the intensification of James's stable operative habits to meet a condition of which he was much aware after 1888: the condition of
working on aesthetic and moral premises entirely different from those of his audience, and therefore having, for publication of his fiction, to work within limits of space not determined by the ideal of artistic economy in representing important subjects, plus having to encourage his readers actively to exert their own given capacities for individual choice.

The first nine volumes, or the first major unit, of the New York Edition showed that James's "centering" of his fictions inside a consciousness and his working with "scenic consistency"--altogether, his achievement of representing the drama of consciousness--resulted from his intensification of two fundamental and stable operative approaches to material. These approaches were that of "irony" and that of "indirection," and the total "operative consciousness" was a result of interplay between James's conditions of (1) desiring to produce fiction which would "represent" in Balzac's sense (2) ability to handle details and "appearances" from only a limited number of areas of human experience, and (3) the possession of much imagination or capacity to pursue many relationships between the items of his experience. In addition, the first nine volumes showed that the "growth" of James's stable "operative consciousness," so that he was able to represent the interior of characters with scenic consistency, yielded fictions whose significance or breadth of theme was not affected by the kind of material available to the writer.

The second major unit of the Edition next reveals that James's further intensification of the same "operative consciousness" in response to his fourth condition of not sharing the aesthetic and the
moral premises of his audience (in response to the conditions of little space and of readers both literal minded and given to moralism) yielded "foreshortened" dramatizations of the theme of "free spirit." These may be observed to stand in archetypal relation to all of James's fiction. The foreshortened dramas of free spirit in the second unit of the New York Edition are the especial mark of James's artistic "case."