1939

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THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND IN THE NOVELS OF HENRY JAMES

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
English Department
Butler University

Indianapolis
1939
The author wishes to express her gratitude of long standing to Doctor John S. Harrison for his kindness and ever-helpful suggestions in the preparation of this work and for his inspiration throughout her graduate work.

V. C.
CONTENTS

PREFACE

To Olive Eleanor Williams
this work
is lovingly inscribed.

Chapter I: The Conception of
the Child

Chapter II: The Birth of the
Child

Chapter III: The Care of the
Child
CONTENTS

Chapter I: Introduction

(1) Influence of the Father in Shaping the Mental life of His Children

(2) The Change in Henry James's View of Europe

(3) Literary Influences

Chapter II: Henry James's Treatment of Manners

Chapter III: Henry James's Treatment of Characters

Chapter IV: Henry James's Treatment of Localities

Chapter V: Conclusion

The Effect of James's Preoccupation with the European Scene on his Conception of American Life and Character; and Its Effect upon his own Life

Bibliography

Index of Characters
CHAPTER I

INFLUENCE OF THE FATHER IN SHAPING THE MENTAL LIFE OF HIS CHILDREN

One generation of diligent application to intellectual concerns resulted in the flowering of a family of minds, the James family, among whom were two who gained international renown, William James, the philosopher, and Henry James Sr. (1843-1916), the novelist. Henry James Sr., who was a Swedenborgian by faith, was devoted equally to the education of his children. Because he thought and to the education of his children. Because he spent his life trying to evolve a philosophy which would place man in a moral relationship to his Creator, thereby eliminating the old beliefs of relationship of fear and enmity, he lived separated from the world about him. When politics was a general concern, that is, during the Civil War, and when business was expanding on all sides, his life was designed to mark him off from the rest of men.

Under the kind of family leadership the children of Mr. James were rare outside social contacts aside from the great literary friends of the family, among whom was Emerson, a frequent visitor at the James's home. Here the atmosphere was another generation of diligent application to intellectual concerns resulted in the flowering of a family of minds, the James family, among whom were two who gained international renown, William James, the philosopher, and Henry James Sr. (1843-1916), the novelist. Henry James Sr., who was a Swedenborgian by faith, was devoted equally to the education of his children. Because he thought and to the education of his children. Because he spent his life trying to evolve a philosophy which would place man in a moral relationship to his Creator, thereby eliminating the old beliefs of relationship of fear and enmity, he lived separated from the world about him. When politics was a general concern, that is, during the Civil War, and when business was expanding on all sides, his life was designed to mark him off from the rest of men.

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literary with boundless interest in things of the mind and
with endless curiosity about the ends of life and the meaning
of it—all of which were disconnected from the outside world
or the business life which had so engrossed William James, his
father before him. The world of "careers" was ever a sealed
book to the James children. When the James boys tried to
find out what, in their playmates' language, their father
pretended to do or to be, their father instructed them to "say
I'm a philosopher, say I'm a seeker for truth, say I'm an author
of books if you like; or best of all, just say I'm a Student."¹
To the question, "What church do you go to?", Henry was in-
structed to say "that we could plead nothing less than the
whole privilege of Christendom and that there was no communion,
even that of the Catholics, even that of the Jews, even that
of the Swedenborgians, from which we need find ourselves
excluded."²

As a child Henry heard the vulgar ideal of success ridic-
culed; he was never to expect to make a career on the "narrow-
ing basis of a profession" in competition with others. Henry
James, Jr., recalled that "what we were to do ... was just
to be something, something unconnected with specific doing,
something free and uncommitted, something finer in short than
being that, whatever it was, might consist of."³

A cosmopolitan in his thinking and living, Mr. James was

2. James, A Small Boy and Others, p. 234
6.

a diligent follower of the products of the English press, feeling as he did that America was not fruitful of reading matter and that American authors were of little importance. Consequently, young Henry's earliest recollections were of English magazines, especially of "Punch," which contributed to his sensitive imagination a series of impressions of London scenes that stayed with him throughout his life. Henry's early world of impressions included three types of people: the Busy, a hazy idea of the business type; the Tipsy, those blighted creatures who filled him with forebodings about careers in America; and the Daniel Websters, who represented politics in a vague way. To his childish imagination, the world was a mass of impressions, a moving, fascinating pageant.

When Henry, Jr., was twelve years old his father wrote to Emerson:

"... considering with much pity our four stout boys, who have no playroom within doors and import shocking bad manners from the street, we gravely ponder whether it wouldn't be better to go abroad for a few years with them, allowing them to absorb French and German and get such a sensuous education as they can't get here."¹

Those "shocking bad manners" were learned from those boys from New York's most gentil families, little scions full of false notions and false standards in regard to business,

¹ Grattan, op. cit., p. 124
politics, and religion.

Thrown upon themselves by their frequent residences in Europe, the Jameses drew upon their own resources for entertainment and stimulation. As a result they developed the ability to draw from one another the greatest amount of stimulation by the interplay of wits. In these contests the father assumed no larger place than any other individual and demanded no respect he did not exact from one for another of his children. The result was "rapier-like contests of keen and exuberant minds." T. S. Perry wrote:

"There were always books to tell about and laugh over, or to admire, and there was an abundance of good talk with no shadow of pedantry or priggishness."

These family discussions were important in shaping the ideas and standards of Henry James's writings. To prevent any wrong moral attitudes from developing in his sons' minds, Mr. James made certain that a distinction was drawn between morality and moralism. Early in life young Henry learned that morality was an intellectual quality with its meanings rooted in a man's philosophical view of the world. This was different from the flagrant conception of moralism consisting of rules of conduct as distinct from a religious life.

The world of Henry James embraced no realities; instead, it was comprised of floating pictures, impressions in relation

1. Grattan, op. cit., p. 225
2. Ibid.
to which the boy stood as spectator, an attitude which he later considered important in his acceptance of Matthew Arnold's doctrine of culture. The questions arose: what was culture, and where was it found in New York? It wasn't in "The Tribune", in the theatrical exhibitions, nor in the current art exhibitions. The American culture did not satisfy. So it was that Mr. James, in seeking different environment for his children, deliberately exposed them at an early age to the European atmosphere and culture with a view to forming new backgrounds of appreciation and evaluation.

The years from 1855 to 1869 held valuable experiences for Henry James, because it was in this period that he made three trips to Europe. These were interspersed with return visits of one to two years or more at home where he dipped into various educational and literary ventures. The three years from 1855-58 proved to be critical in determining Henry James's career, for it was then that he absorbed the "European Virus", the nostalgia for the old world, which made it impossible for him to rest in peace elsewhere. These early years abroad were little different in schooling from those in New York because the education of the James children was always a haphazard one which went forward under various private tutors—which meant that Henry had ample time to learn very much as he pleased, the father believing that they should stay nowhere long enough to receive any formal imprint. In accordance with this principle he settled his "stout" sons first in
Geneva that they might study languages, and then after a short time swept them away to London and Paris.

Even at so young an age Henry, Jr., early reacted to the wealth of European art and felt the absence of such cultural wealth in America. Of Switzerland he wrote:

"I had never before lived so long in anything so old, and, as I somehow felt, so deep; depth, depth upon depth, was what came out for me at times of my waiting above, in my immense room of thick embrace... That was the sense of it—the character in the whole place, pressed upon me with a force I hadn't met and that was beyond my analysis—which is but another way of saying how directly notified I felt that such material conditions as I had known could have no depth at all."\(^1\)

In Paris the Institute Perandie proved profitable to the James children until they discovered there was more for them to learn at the Louvre and Luxembourg. It was to this experience that Henry James ascribed his first conscious perception of what might be meant by the life devoted to art. This is extremely significant in the light of his constant and life-long endeavor to attain such an ideal in his own writings.

The imaginative side of the boy Henry had an opportunity to flourish during his visit to Paris where, "he wandered in the corridors of the Louvre awe-struck by the magnificence, the far-flung glory, the heaped up accumulations of so many centuries of artistic endeavor."\(^2\) C. Hartley Grattan said that the progression of Henry James's earliest characters through

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1. James, op. cit., p. 254
2. Grattan, op. cit., p. 219
Europe was almost the progression from picture to picture, from artist to artist, and even the extent of their mental development was measured by their reactions to the collected masterpieces.¹ "I shall never forget how," Henry James writes of the Louvre, "they filled those vast halls with the influence rather of some complicated sound, diffused and reverberant... They only arched over us in the wonder of their endless golden riot and relief, figured and flourished in perpetual motion, breaking into great high-flung circles and symmetries of squandered pictures, opening into deep embrasure that threw off the rest of monumental Paris somehow as a told story... I inhaled little by little... a general sense of glory. The glory meant ever so many things at once, not only beauty and art and supreme design, but history and fame and power, the world raised to the richest and noblest expression."²

Paris outside the Louvre was another world of sensations to add to the collections of impressions:

"... a day of hanging about and waiting and shuffling in dust, in crowds, in fatigue amid booths and pedlars and performers and false alarms and expectations and renewed reactions and rushes... the vision of the whole, I say, comes back to me... with its effect of something long and dense and heavy, without shades and undertones, but immensely kept up and done."³

Not only of the masterpieces of art did Henry James acknowledge a felt influence, but also from the French school

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¹ Grattan, op. cit., p. 219
² James, op. cit., p. 347
³ Ibid., p. 333
he recognized a benefit from his short study there. Writing of his brief stay at College Communal in Paris, he says:

"Not one of these treasures (stale academic art) in its habit as it lived, do I recall; yet the sense and the "note" of them was at the time . . . not so elusive that I didn't somehow draw straight from them intimations of the interesting, that is revelations of the aesthetic, the historic, the critical mystery, and charm of things . . . that added to my small handful of the seed of culture."1

In review James saw his youthful tendency, even then, to be aware of atmosphere and character: "These images (of Paris, its people, children, streets, parks, colleges, etc.) were but drops in the bucket of my sense of catching character that began even . . . in our own habitation, the most spacious and pompous Europe had yet treated us to."2

Aside from the study of languages in Geneva little otherwise was accomplished in the way of formal education during the European stay except young Henry's translation of La Fontaine's Fables into English and his first attempt at writing dramatic compositions. During this time, however, his literary consciousness was alive, for then he read Ruskin, George Eliot, and Anthony Trollope; and later in Bonn, where he studied German, he came to know the works of George Meredith, Charles Reade, and George Du Maurier.

Following this period of his European experiences, Henry James spent nine years in America, which was a time of various changes in his life. The Civil War left its mark. Harvard

1. James, op. cit., p. 401
2. Ibid., p. 405
Law School made little impression upon him. But the purely literary circle to which he was introduced in Boston and Cambridge had a lasting influence in the life-long friendships of Professor C. E. Norton and Mr. William D. Howells, the latter encouraging Henry James to make writing his career. Beneath these activities there was a growing desire to see Europe again, which resulted in his return there in 1869. Although this stay was only for a year, followed by frequent returns, it marked a change in his view of the European scene—a view which was more mature and which impressed him so deeply that the following six years were spent in "rapturous and solitary wanderings," absorbing the atmosphere of the old world preliminary to his beginnings as a writer of fiction.

This first mature visit to Europe found Henry James first in London; later followed visits to Geneva, Venice, Florence, Paris, and Rome of Italy, which made a deep and final impression for which he was so well prepared, he said: "I feel my bow beneath her weight settle comfortably into the water."

So deep was this Italian feeling planted in his consciousness that upon a short trip to America he wrote the following: "I enjoy America with a poignancy that perpetually surprises me; but the wish—the absolute sense of need to see Italy again constantly increases."

Everywhere Henry James went about steeping himself in the romantic and the historic of the old world around him. In a

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2. Ibid., p. 12
letter to his brother, William James, he describes a slow train ride from Rome to Florence: "Anything more romantic, more deeply and darkly dyed with the picturesque and all the happy chiaroscuro of song and story it would be impossible to conceive. . . . aloft on sinking mountain spur—girt with your time-fretted crumbling bastions, incrusted with the rich deposit of history. . . . Never have I seen local colour laid on so thick. They reek (little towns, churches, etc.) with antiquity. The whole place is like a little miniature museum of the genre, a condensation of the elements of mediaevalism."

Of Rome itself he owed the greatest debt for his wealth of impressions. Something of the spirit of that great city, its centuries of history, the richness of its past gave him a feeling of new life. Again in a letter to his brother, he says that "at last—for the first time—I live." "I went reeling and moaning through the streets, in a fever of enjoyment . . . the Forum, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Capitol, St. Peter's, the Column of Trajan, the Castle of St. Angelo—all the Piazzas and ruins and monuments. For the first time I know what the picturesque is . . . . Even if I should leave Rome tonight I should feel that I have caught the keynote of its operation on the senses."

It is interesting to note that overwhelmed as he was with his emotional and spiritual reactions to the glories of Italy,

1. Lubbock, op. cit., p. 314
2. Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, I, 314
3. Lubbock, op. cit., 12
Henry James still cared to know things Italian only in so far as they shed light upon life about them. In a letter home regarding his stay in Florence, he wrote that he "became interested in the place and attached to a degree that makes me feel that it has really entered into my life, and is destined to operate there as a motive, a prompter, an inspirer of some sort . . . . I doubt that I shall ever undertake—shall ever care to study Italian art, Italian history, for themselves; or with a view to discoveries or contributions, or otherwise than as an irradiating focus of light on some other matters." Whether or not this was his final judgment, it is noticeable that Henry James carried out this conviction in the novels of his earlier period, especially in *The Portrait of a Lady*, in which the Italian art and history served chiefly to furnish an aesthetic background for his characters, a type of background necessary for the tone of the story and the ultimate revelation of character.

1. Perry, op. cit., p. 318
Much as Henry James was filled with the beauty of Italy, he recalled to a greater and deeper extent his love for England. The unrest following these recollections resulted in his return to that country in 1869. In Italy he was aware of a feeling to which he could not completely surrender, and which he indicates as follows:

"Taine . . . speaks of Venice and Oxford --the two most picturesque cities in Europe. I personally prefer Oxford. It told me deeper and richer things than any I have learned here (Italy) . . . I can't for my life frankly surrender myself to the Genius of Italy, or the Spirit of the South, or whatever one may call the confounded thing; but I nevertheless feel it in all my pulses . . . . This Italian tone of things which I then detected, lies richly on my soul and gathers increasing weight, but it lies as a cold and foreign mass never to be absorbed and appropriated. The meaning of this superb image is that I feel I shall never look at Italy --at Venice, for instance--but from without; whereas it seemed to me at Oxford and in England generally that I was breathing the air of home. Ruskin recommends the traveller to frequent and linger in a certain glorious room at the Ducal Palace, where Paolo Veronese revels on the ceilings and Tintoretto rages on the walls, because he 'nowhere else will enter so deeply into the heart of Venice.' But I feel as if I might sit there forever . . . . and only feel more and more my inexorable Yankeehood. As pulling, pining Yankee, however, . . . I enjoy things deeply."

The second trip in 1869 that Henry James made to Paris enroute to England, resulted in a different reaction from that
of his first visit. French life took on a new meaning as he recorded:

"At first glance I found Paris strangely hollow and vulgar; but after a lapse of a few days... I began to enjoy it, to admire it, and lo! before I left, to esteem it. From Nice to Boulogne I was deeply struck with the magnificent order and method and decency and prosperity of France—with the felicity of manner in all things—the completeness of form...

Once away from Rome and on his way to England, Henry James experienced a variety of sensations regarding Italy. These sensations are important in revealing his ultimate conclusions regarding the European scene, and his final preference of country. Speaking of his departure, in 1870, he refers to it as "the deliberate, cold-blooded, conscious turning of my back on Italy—the gradual, fatal, relentless progression from Florence to Malvern—many a keen emotion and many a deep impression... I mean simply that you feel the interest of Italy with redoubled force when you begin to turn away from it and seek for the rare and beautiful in other lands. Brave old bonny England of ten short months ago—where are you now? Where are the old thrills of fancy, the old heart beats, the loving, lingering gaze, the charm, the fever, the desire of those innocent days?... They lie nestling away with the blossoms of the hedges—they sit waiting in the lap of the longer twilight, and they'll burst forth once more in the green explosion of April. This I firmly count on..."²

1. Perry, op. cit., p. 305
2. Ibid., p. 317
The same something in the Italian picture that had held such a strong attraction for him in his earlier years had a depressing effect upon his maturer creative ability. In a letter to his brother, William, in 1873, Henry James made one of the few references to this change of feeling regarding the charm of Italy:

"The keen love and observation of the picturesque is ebbing away from me as I grow older, but I doubt whether a year or two hence I shall have it in me to describe houses and mountains, or even cathedrals and pictures."\(^1\)

England spoke directly to Henry James, called to his heart in a way that left no doubt as to his deeper love and his own satisfaction with this decision. In 1877 he wrote the following:

"I am more and more content to have come to England, and only desire to be left soaking here for an indefinite period. I positively suck the atmosphere of its intimations and edifications."\(^2\)

This final decision growing out of his maturer evaluation of Europe indicates a growth from his earlier pleasure in the objective picturesque as in that of Italy to a quiet love of the English feeling of things as they reacted upon his subjective consciousness, and this same difference revealed itself gradually in the handling of his novels in later life.

1. Perry, op. cit., p. 345
2. Ibid., p. 375
LITERARY INFLUENCES

From a very early age, Henry James was influenced by other writers, so much that it is said that he owed the formation of his literary outlook to a number of outstanding authors. George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, with its treatment of lower class rural life, first brought him face to face with the idea of social classes. The realism in her writings and the accompanying strong ethical content are thought also to have found an echo in the James novels. This echo has its foundation in their mutual belief in a moral world. In a critical analysis of her works, Henry James commented as follows:

"The world was first and foremost, for George Eliot, the moral, the intellectual world; the personal spectacle came after; and lovingly human as she regarded it we constantly feel that she cares for the things in it only so far as they are types."  

Like George Eliot, Henry James used character or principle from a clearly defined social class to illustrate his conception of morality. To him, this conception was a deeply embedded sense of right and wrong, an intellectual rather than an emotional attitude.

In Paris, Henry James was introduced to a French literary circle, association with which both profited and disappointed him; for here the issue of difference was the subject of morality. "The collective sin," (of the French writers), he wrote, was

1. James, *Partial Portraits*, p. 51
"in the circumstance that when they lay their hands upon
the spirit of a man, they cease to seem expert." Flaubert's
circle, considered the center of French literary life, gave
him but one important lesson, the unity of tone. From Al-
phonse Daudet, Henry James received light on "how to reproduce
the delicate shades of the actual." Searching through their
mastery of form and style, Henry James looked for something
deeper and subtler. He found "a remarkable art of expressing
life..." but in comparison the deeper, stronger, subtler
inward life, the wonderful adventures of the soul, are so
little pictured that they may almost be said not to be pic-
tured at all." Zola, he described as "lacking in taste" and
Maupassant as a "brilliant and powerful writer but with no
have created a considerable council instran-
windows on the moral side of his mind, just a blank wall." Henry
James objected to these men because they did not know
George Eliot so well as George Sand, because they lacked finer
tastes and feelings which had come to dominate his judgments
of all life and activity about him.

With the possible exception of Turgenev, no other one
writer so left his mark upon Henry James as did Matthew Arnold
with his ideas on culture. At an early period in his literary
life, Henry James became acquainted with Arnold's doctrine
which defines culture as an effort toward perfection "through

1. Crotten, op. cit., p. 250
2. Ibid., p. 250
3. Ibid., p. 250
4. Ibid., p. 251
all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, as well as of religion.\(^1\) He also points out that culture works for both inward expansion in the individual and for general expansion in society. To him, culture was a healing power for times troubled by restless agitation; it was a "pursuit of our total perfections by means of getting to know on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world . . . \(^2\)

Henry James also reflects the ideas of M. Renan whom Matthew Arnold quotes in *Culture and Anarchy* regarding America and what it lacked:

"The countries which, like the United States have created a considerable popular instruction without any serious higher instruction will long have to expiate this fault by their intellectual mediocrity, their vulgarity of manners, their superficial spirit, their lack of general intelligence."\(^3\)

Arnold found America lacking in culture, for one reason, because America lacked an established church as England had:

"And as we have found that the strongest and most vital part of English Philistinism was the Puritan and Hebraising middle class, and that its Hebraising keeps it from culture and totality, so it is notorious that the people of the United States issue from this class, and reproduce its tendencies; its narrow concept of man's spiritual range and of his one thing needful . . . I mean, when in the United States any spiritual side in man is awakened to activity, it is generally the religious side, and the

1. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, Intro., p. 9
2. Ibid., p. 14
3. Ibid., p. 15
religious side in its narrow way. Now, if America thus Hebraizes more than either England or Germany, will anyone deny that the absence of religious establishments has much to do with it? Establishments tend to give us a sense of a historical life of the human spirit, outside and beyond our own fancies and feelings.\(^1\)

This historical life of the spirit of man, Henry James found lacking in the American people who had all "the elements of the modern man with culture quite left out."\(^2\) Further, Henry James enumerated the items which were absent from the American scene:

"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, no manners, nor old country houses, nor personages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, no abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great universities, nor public schools, no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no political society, no sporting class—no Eton, no Ascot."\(^3\)

To Henry James, the spiritual life of man embraced far more than a narrow concept of religion: it included the most discriminating tastes and feelings about all phases of life—of the arts, and of social intercourse. This philosophy became the ground work of Henry James's writings in which he used the cultural background of Europe in contrast to industrial America; and he painted the great fault in his characters as their lack of appreciation of beauty, their crudity in tastes and attitudes, all of which he contrasted with others who represented

1. Arnold, op. cit., p. 19
2. Gratton, op. cit., p. 239
3. Ibid., p. 335
generations of the finest that Europe had to offer.

CHAPTER II

Friendship with Turgenev proved to be a constant source of stimulation to Henry James. At musicales, parties, and in cafes, James came under the inspiration of Turgenev's vivid personality. James departed from private conversations with Turgenev "... in a state of intimate excitement, with a feeling that all sorts of valuable things had been suggested to me..." From this contact he was to carry away two valuable points. One concerned the idea that the plot was not so important but the interaction of small groups reacting against the other, thus working out their own destiny, was more so. Turgenev, who saw imaginative characters subject to chances and complications, worked out their relationships, invented situations they would most likely experience, and watched them act, move, speak, and behave. "To arrive at these things is to arrive at my story... and that's the way I look for it." he said.²

The other valuable suggestion gained from Turgenev was the new attitude toward failure—the fact that victories of failure are as important as the victories of success. This was a point which Henry James came to employ faithfully in many of his novels, especially, The American.

1. Grattan, op. cit., p. 251
2. Ibid., p. 252
CHAPTER II

HENRY JAMES'S TREATMENT OF MANNERS

Henry James's novels contain a broad treatment of manners. As a recorder of international social relations, James reproduces a spectacle of life which is a composite picture of the manners, ideas, and general tone of the social world as he knew it from his restricted view.

Concerning himself with people who are in "society" or on the edge of it, he sees their circumstances so ideal and their relationships so simplified that they are individually free to do and to choose as they will. Naturally, their kind of freedom is the result of a long-established association with the leisure and privileges of the social order; however, these privileges are closely defined and conventionally regulated to fit in with accepted standards and traditions. There is a paradoxical freedom—that which society allows them.

To the European mind, a society without its strict social laws and customs is inconceivable. The Europeans do not dream of trespassing the limits of social etiquette. The completeness of their lives depends upon the social machinery which carries them smoothly through their days of routine affairs. The customs which they have accepted unhesitatingly, through usage have become principles of conduct; and with all of their so-called freedom, they choose to conform to these principles.

The European manners and customs, as James apparently
conceived them, consist of two general divisions, each widely different from the other. One view shows the superficial and exterior manners of the decadent social groups whose lives consist of endless rounds of teas, drawing-room gossip, afternoon calls, and light conversation usually centering around marriage. For them, the social rules regulate their daily duties, determine the tone of their conversation, and limit their ambitions and accomplishments. Life holds nothing for them outside their group, because their minds have never opened to the world outside. They seem so externally refined in conduct and acquired attitudes that they sometimes appear not to be human. Nothing is told of their personal lives or of any activities away from their small circle. Young girls who have been carefully guarded until the earliest marriageable age, are pushed into the scene only to be taken quickly in marriage by those socially-polished men who always know the correct thing to do and say. It all appears to be satire directed at their social perfection.

As if in contrast to this kind of living, James defines the other view concerning the manners and customs which strike deeply into the lives of his people. These customs reach far back into that source which nourishes their very existences and dominates their thinking. Such are the forces which operate in the consciousness of the Bellegarde family,* who value historical connections and family traditions more highly than financial security. In this circle the mother's wishes are law, while the eldest son replaces the father in authority.

*James, The American
Together they form a formidable wall which surrounds and controls the other lives in the family. It was unthinkable that Mme. de Cintre should question their wishes regarding her future husband, or that she should have had anything to say regarding her early marriage which was arranged without her consent. Likewise, young Valentine could never expect to enjoy the freedom of remunerative employment. Nobody in her family line had ever "worked." His career could only consist of a military or ecclesiastical office which was accompanied by social recognition.

Deep in the heart of every Frenchman of the "old school" lies an honor code which seems odd to the average American. At the slightest encroachment by word or deed upon his personal feelings or privileges, a Frenchman's sense of honor is touched. Tradition, coupled with his strange inherent pride, compels him to seek satisfaction for the injury. Dueling is the accepted method of accomplishing this. Valentine Bellegarde lost his life in a duel which seems such a useless and pointless affair to the American mind; but to the European way of thinking, it was the only recourse open to a gentleman.

Everywhere, it seems that the Europeans are restricted in their living and thinking. Even their reasoning follows in the light of established acceptances. Any individual divergences are an indication of questionable character rather than independence of spirit. Daisy Miller suffers defeat from the weight of social disapproval of her unchaperoned visit to the Coliseum by moonlight in the company of a gentleman.
Her independence of spirit and her personal innocence do not combine in the European thinking. Mrs. Touchett remains adamant in her refusal to retire and leave Isabel Archer in the drawing room with her cousin Ralph and his friend Lord Warburton. Conventions would not allow that freedom of association. Like Daisy Miller, Isabel would have experienced, in a lesser degree, the same social disapproval in Europe, where those who do a thing for the sake of the thing itself are always suspected by society.

In the event of the death of the father of a household, English law gives family property to the son when he marries, thus expropriating the mother from the possessions she had a part in accumulating. No account is made of Mrs. Gereth's relation to the Poynton art objects which represent her life's work and into the gathering of which she poured all of her energy and devotion. Accompanying this stringent law is the English custom concerning a common household after marriage, an arrangement which is inconceivable to the English who consider it a mistake and an indication of overstraining sentiment.

Through long observance of those manners grounded in ancient usage, European thinking has adapted itself to the accepted patterns of thought and conduct. Even moral problems are nearly buried under layers of manners. So important are customs and tradition to the average European mind that a society lacking such framework is inconceivable and therefore inferior. To live without a formula is not to appear to live
beautifully nor fully, nor artistically; and in Europe, of all places, appearances must be preserved.

CHAPTER III

HENRY JAMES'S TREATMENT OF CHARACTERS

The characters who fit into the James world are not rugged, naked souls, but are social beings who live distinct, conventional lives, experiencing the relationships of the normal contacts of an organized life. They belong to a system in which, as nursing human beings, they live too ideal lives in settings of beauty. Their world which is the most highly civilized, vibrates with the finest instincts, and the most refined tastes and sentiments. It is a world of art, of intelligence, of learning which has an understanding or tolerance of what they are, the majority or unities. Twix is a world of attitudes; it is the criterion upon which characters are judged and examined, upon their attitude toward the arts, social, political, and tradition.

Above quote from my old, regarding Henry James's work.
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George Bernard Shaw said, concerning Henry James's work:

"In all life that has energy enough to be interesting to me, subjective volition, passion, will, make intellect the merest tool. But there is in the center of that cyclone a certain calm spot where cultivated ladies and gentlemen live on independent incomes by pleasant artistic occupations. It is there that Mr. James's art touches life, selecting whatever is graceful, exquisite, or dignified in its serenity."

Henry James felt that the leisure class was the highest in social development, but in concentrating upon the finest types within this group, he disregarded a world of bare, social forces and contrasting class problems.

1. Quoted in Grattan, op. cit., p. 333
The parade of James' characters embraces a variety of people, and represents types of people from the streams of the social order. Although the range extends from the world of princes and lords to that of bookbinders, tutors, and servants, it is noticeable that almost all of his people are endowed with a high degree of intelligence and culture. James' concern was not so much with the comparison of these classes as it was with the contrast of the American and European ways of looking at life, and mainly upon this criterion his characters divide themselves into definite groups. Since the international theme was his first concern, one which occupied his attention throughout his life's work, although it became dimmer with the passing years, the people in James' novels fall naturally into national classes—the Americans, the Europeans, and the Europeanized Americans—the latter being those who had been away from America long enough to have lost their dominant national characteristics and to have taken on something of the manners, character, and psychology of the Europeans.

...to present to his hero in American City.

The traits of the more undesirable type of American men are exemplified more particularly in the case of Mr. Travis, a wealthy American business man who, having made their fortunes in a manufacturing business or in mines somewhere in the indefinite Middle West, come to Europe for various purposes. Chris-

*The novels in which the following characters appear are listed on page 95.
topher Newman, manufacturer of washtubs, visits Europe for the purpose of enjoying his money and finding a wife. Rowland Wasset, who possesses a fortune at thirty, finds idleness and wealth a better combination in Europe than in America and returns there as patron and financial sponsor of young artist Roderick Hudson, because the idea strikes his fancy and he desires to see what Hudson will do with himself. Mr. Leavenworth, a self-styled, pompous little art patron, who is retired from the proprietorship of his borax mines in the Middle West, visits Europe to study her art and to talk of America's indigenous talent which he has employed to work on his huge mansion in the process of erection on the banks of the Ohio River. Caspar Goodwood, wealthy son of a well-known proprietor of cotton mills in Massachusetts, totally lacks imagination and understanding of the character of Isabel Archer for whom he makes frequent trips to Europe to woo. Adam Verver, who has amassed a fortune in American business, resides in Europe in order to collect art objects to furnish a museum he intends to present to his home in American City.

The traits of the more undesirable type of American men are indicated more than exhibited, as in the case of Mr. Tristram or Jim Pecook, to whom Paris means the gay life. Henry James presents Mr. Babcock, American preacher, satirically when he "mistrusted the European temperament, ... suffered from the European climate, ... hated the European dinner hour." European life seemed to him "unscrupulous and impure."

1. James, Roderick Hudson, p. 92
Among the few who are allowed to pursue their occupations are the journalists and artists, among whom the greater number are Americans. Roderick Hudson, a young man of genius who lacks persistence and moral strength to make the most of his opportunities in Rome, fails because he yields to forces which are destructive to him and to his work. In contrast, Sam Singleton, less highly endowed than Hudson, is an industrious and conscientious artist who makes great strides in his European study and continues to receive benefit from the environment and his experiences. Minor characters, engaged in artistic pursuits, fill the corners of the background, characters like Little Bingham, described as an "intense American" who established himself in the artists’ quarter where he pursued a phase of study, or young Augusta Blanchard who lived alone in Rome on an independent income, while she painted old-fashioned pictures for the English. Henrietta Stackpole, journalist, stands out as the most angular personality among the women characters. A vigorously loyal American, she travels abroad to gather local color for her column in the Interviewer.

Important among the American characters are those men and women, who, having no special occupational or social connections, individually undergo some phase of the European "ordeal", who demonstrate an idea, usually a moral one, or who suffer in some way from the malignancy and treachery of the old world. They are usually young, sensitive, intelligent, and wealthy. The way they work themselves out of their comp-
lications determines their character. Thus, Henry James continues the international idea when he paints the "pure in heart" defeated by Europe. Isabel Archer, one of his most admirable characters, advances toward Europe as though she were rising to meet life itself. With all of her high spirit, fineness, and dignity, she meets her fate in the person of Madame Merle, who leads Isabel through the intricacies of Europe until she meets the most debased of Europeanized Americans, Gilbert Osmond, who marries her for her money. In the same way that Isabel Archer rises to meet life, Milly Theale rises to meet death. Born with beauty, wealth, and a great capacity for life, but living in the shadow of death, Milly wishes to crowd together her experiences and feelings so as to have the sense of having lived fully. She fails through the wickedness of scheming "friends" who want her money, but her spirit shines forth in death to shame them. Maggie Verver, who "wasn't born to know evil", in good faith marries Prince Amerigo, a member of the ancient, sophisticated world, whose standards differ from Maggie's American ones. Through her dark domestic struggle, marked by evil and disillusionment all about her, Maggie proves superior to her husband's mistress in beauty of character and moral courage; and through the generosity of her spirit she wins the first victory in James's major novels.

Lambert Strether and his "charge", Chadwick Newsome, whom Strether goes abroad to rescue from the snares of sinful
Paris, come under the influence of Europe. Chad Newsome succumbs to Parisian life and standards and refuses to return to Woollett, Massachusetts, and to a business career. Although Strether partly surrenders to that beguiling life because of his thwarted desires, he nevertheless holds to his integrity and returns without the woman he loves. Since he failed in his mission, he wanted not to appear to have got anything for himself. Strether, with his imagination, sensitivity to situations, and unselfishness, belongs to the groups of Isabels, Millys and Maggie.

Mary Garland, a heavier, less subtle image of the American girl suffers at the mercy of Europe through the defeat of her fiance, Roderick Hudson, who takes his own life. She was one of the "plain good likenesses for a sitting room", together with Mrs. Hudson, of an older generation, who couldn't understand the European ways.

María Costre, wouter and general guide to Europe, is an American who has lived abroad long enough to have learned European ways and manners. She is here grouped among the Americans, however, because, unlike other world-wide travellers, she has retained her American ways while taking to herself none of the sophistication of the older world. In intelligence and knowledge of Europe, she resembles Madame Herle, but in personal integrity she far excells her compatriot.

Other interesting characters are more or less prominent either through their frequent appearances or through Henry James's delineation of their characters in a few strokes.
Outstanding is Namie Pocock of Woollett, Massachusetts, a girl who exhibits unexpected charm and psychological understanding of the Europeans during her brief visit to Paris. Lawyers and middle-aged travelling companions enlarge the circle of characters whom Henry James uses to present their many-sided national point of view.

The numerous European characters cover an extended social scale and embrace three nationalities—English, French, and Italian—thereby increasing the number of types of people represented. Ranging from the titled nobility to the poorest political radical or humble housekeeper, the characters of Henry James give a composite view of the varied life and thought of the Europeans.

Among the titled group are lords and princes of ancient family lineage who, free from the care of state, find it beneficial to marry wealthy American girls. Italian Prince Amerigo, whose family boasts a diplomat and four ecclesiastics (one a Cardinal), represents the ancient sophisticated world whose ideals differ from those of his American wife, Maggie Verver. The Prince Casamassima, also Italian, worries constantly that his American-born wife may disgrace his family name by lending her support to some vulgar political movement. Lord Warburton alone typifies the ideal English lord with his great wealth, responsibilities, and his share in the public life of his country. Seen in contrast to him are Lord
Deeper still Lord Mark of doubtful means and character who wish to make "good" marriages. Lady Aurora Langrish, a member of a noble family of great wealth, is the only one who deserts her class to enlist her aid and sympathies on behalf of the working people. is likewise devoted to the poor.

Next to the nobility come the upper-class families who point with pride to their historic and aristocratic background. This family spirit exhibits itself in the French Bellegardes whose family name goes back to the time of the Napoleonic wars. Their restricted group of friends likewise are proud of the sanctity of their exclusiveness. The two Misses Molyneux, maiden sisters of Lord Warburton, live in their historic home enveloped by its glamor of antiquity, and seem, like the Bellegardes, to belong to another world.

The political radicals in England depart from any of the types yet presented and stand socially opposed to the classes previously mentioned. Their antagonism takes the form of resentment and a false kind of emotional patriotism.

Hyacinth Robinson, bookbinder, who is the illegitimate son of an English duke and a French actress, illustrates in a personal way the conflict between the nobility and the lower classes. His companions in conspiracy consist of fellow craftsmen, laborers, and inspired idealists who believe heartily in a revolutionary movement to overthrow the wealthy class.

In his personal life, Hyacinth is surrounded by people
who might have sprung, as he does for Henry James, from the streets of London. The pathetic little English dressmaker, Amanda Pynsent, sews ceaselessly to give Myrcinth, whom she rescued from the workhouse, an opportunity to live. Anastasius Vetch, a neighbor who is likewise devoted to the boy, plays violin in a third-rate theatre. Millicent Henning, with her flashy manner and cockney dialect, represents the vulgar type of the socially ambitious.

To the mind of Henry James, the word artist carried a broader meaning than to most Americans. The true artist is capable of re-creating and interpreting, and this sensitive perception is coupled with spiritual and moral discernment. As if to indicate the difference between those who have artistic perception and those who do not have it, James often indicates a moral laxness among those of questionable artistry as in the case of Noemie Nioche of the lower class French, who capitalizes upon her paintings and her attractive personal appearance to achieve a desirable marriage outside her class. M. Nioche, her father, and Mr. Croy resemble each other in the way in which each tries to exploit his daughter to his advantage.

Henry James was an idealist who believed in art for art's sake. One of the major problems in his novels is the conflict between art and politics, or the incompatibility of the artistic and the practical temperaments. The complications in the life of Nick Dormer, artist son of a late,
well-known man in political circles, illustrate that idea. Donner is torn between love of painting and the financial security of a seat in Parliament, which was won through the influence of his fiancée, Julia Dallow. To Mrs. Dallow, who is socially complete but lacking in artistic understanding or appreciation, a political career is the height of achievement. Through devotion to her political salon and circle of admiring devotees, Julia Dallow allies herself with the group of rising diplomats, or those who oppose the world of art. As if to reflect his ideas of art for art's sake, James has Nick give up his political seat and a wealthy widow in order to continue painting.

For three years Henry James interested himself in drama and the theatre, writing plays which were rejected by the public. Because of his interest (taking care to distinguish between "drama" and "theatre") he was attracted to the problems of the people engaged in this form of art expression. Actress Miriam Rooth, of Jewish and English parentage, is the first woman in a James novel whose life is seen in any other light than that of her personal and private relationships. She represents a type of ambitious, talented womanhood who struggles against odds to attain fleeting fame in the dramatic world. Surrounding her is a circle of varied types of people: Mme. Garre, celebrated actress, coaches her; Mrs. Rooth, doting mother, who is anxious to promote her daughter, hovers close to her beautiful child (like Mrs.
Light and her daughter in *Roderick Hudson*); Basil Dashwood, a would-be actor, speaks pretty French and wears his theatrical character on his sleeve. Peter Sherringham, a rising diplomat seen in conflict with the artistic world, wavers (as did Nick Dormer) between official duties and his passion for the art of the theatre as he sees it in the person of Miriam Rooth.

One of the most interesting and most uncertain persons in all of the James album is the cultivated wanderer and philosopher, Gabriel Nash, who belongs generally to England if he belongs anywhere. Nash professes allegiance to the artistic faith, adding that he prefers to "work in life" itself. Upon the strength of that vague occupation he is here classed with the artists. The opinions of Gabriel Nash are an echo from the ideals of Henry James, Sr., who encouraged his boys "just to be". James writes that he actually modeled many of his characters after his friend, Alleyne Otis:

"Alleyne Otis, a figure, almost the figure for supreme sophistication—a rudimentary shade of it—of the old Newport days . . . we owe something always to those who, at the time of our freshness, were revelations, for us, of type, who rendered to our development the service of fitting images to names that were otherwise but as loose labels . . . He did nothing—he only was, which in the antediluvian America was always a note of character, always argued some intensity. He persisted in survival, in idleness, in courtesy, in gallantry, and yet, even though gallant, persisted also, it seemed, in mystery, in independence of apparel, above all in an imputed economy that was his finishing mark and that indicated real sources."  

In answer to Nick Dorner who wished that Gabriel Nash had more to show for his system of thought, Nash says that "having something to show's such a poor business. It's a kind of confession of failure. One does not need to measure one's acts by their consequences. One is one's self a fine consequence."

Nash resembles other characters in the James novels, characters who consider that to do anything more than nothing at all allies them with the vulgar material world which grates upon their sensitive consciousness. Gilbert Osmond (Europeanized American) with his unexplained existence, relates himself to this group through his conscious efforts to refrain from doing anything that would make his life appear less artistic and aristocratic one he would have the world to believe.

The children in the James novels are pictured as delicate little flowers who must be carefully guarded against evils in the social world. Protection takes the form of keeping them in complete ignorance of the ways of society or of its people. Innocence here is synonymous with ignorance. These children understand nothing that goes on about them, while the air is heavy with cross purposes and double meanings. Serving as excellent "bait" for eligible wealthy young men, such children emphasize by contrast the character and morals about them. Such a child is Fanny Osmond who is periodically sent back to the convent when it appears that she declines to

1. James, The Tragic Muse, II, 33
marry her father's choice. Little Aggie likewise appears like a cloistered product of unreality, too innocent even to be allowed to converse with friends across the room from her chaperon. With all of her evident purity and refinement of education, Jeanne de Vionnet, under James's artful pen, seems to shed an almost transparent light. Only little Maisie, who was exposed to the intrigues of her divorced parents, leaves us in doubt at the last as to how much she really knows. Through her purity of motives and sincerity of character, Maisie belongs to the "pure in heart", those who have been defeated in some way by the evils of Europe.

Refined English housekeepers like Mrs. Breed, or the English journalist, Merton Densher, are among other who give new light upon the English characters of James. There is also the brilliant Kate Grey, who schemed to get Milly Theale's money through her fiancée, while Kate's worthless father of no means or morals appears from time to time on the side lines. Companions, like the Italian Mme. Grandoni, play important parts by giving explanation about their ladies. Captain Sholto is a social parasite who lives upon society, drawing upon the strength of his ancestors and family connections which he does nothing to preserve nor improve. The confidantes in these stories play an indispensable part by interpreting for the reader all that which would require tedious explanation from the author. These people are highly intelligent and are closely associated with the main characters.
Mrs. Wix, aged governess to little Maisie Verange, observes and interprets at the same time she tries to shield Maisie from the evil about her; Mrs. Assingham (Europeanized American) is an important link between Maggie Verger and the Prince Amerigo. Maria Costrey also serves in that capacity to Lambert Strether. Not exactly types, except in the purposes they serve in the novels, they view situations objectively and draw startlingly accurate conclusions based upon a few facts and their intuitive awareness of every possible angle to a situation.

Among the English characters there is another group more restricted but more generalized as to types. These people resemble stock types which might be found in any 16th century comedy of manners. Matrons with marriageable daughters hold salons to attract desirable young men who, at the same time, afford the fading mother her last opportunity to exercise her personal charms upon them. Former wives and husbands retreat before the present ones. Governesses and tutors just love their little pupils whose charming fathers lavish attention upon them. Captains, Lords, "American Countesses" and others of questionable rank appear and reappear like characters on a stage. There is also the pathetic middle-aged man of wealth who has long cherished memories of a lost love only to see her reappear in his granddaughter who belongs to an age he can not understand. In the midst of these sordid pictures gleam the angelic young girls whose innocence is too ideal to seem real or lasting.
Finally, among the European characters, James presents, as he does in all of his character drawing regardless of nationality, the type of person who is classified upon the basis of his good or bad taste, who is capable of fine discriminations and subtle nuances. It amounts to esthetic appreciation and a sensitiveness to the beautiful or the common in surroundings or people. This same esthetic quality is usually fused with social charm and moral virtue. Artistic taste unites Fleda Vetch and Mrs. Gereth who both love and appreciate the exquisite art of Poynton. This same taste separates them from Mona and Mrs. Brigstock who saw those priceless masterpieces as pretty objects having monetary value. In the end, Fleda Vetch proves superior to all, even to Mrs. Gereth, because in addition to her esthetic appreciation she had the capacity to distinguish moral beauty.

The Europeanized Americans constitute the smallest of the three groups of James characters. These people have lived abroad long enough to have lost their feeling for America and the American way of thinking. Their manners, customs, and psychology, in most cases, are more European than anything else. They think in terms of England and the European scene; they have become broader in their acceptances and more lax in their condemnations. Their standards are those of the cosmopolitan.

Christina Light, who later became the Princess Casamass-
sima, was born in America but has little or no remembrance of her early life there. Married into an old Italian family, the Princess Casamassima amuses herself with the idea of social reform and the destruction of the class of which she has become a member, in order to devote her time to the working people. Her unpredictable and unstable nature makes her a psychological study more than a representative of a type. Her mother, Mrs. Light, is one of the vulgar, socially ambitious without scruples, who exploits her daughter by forcing her into a wealthy marriage in order to cover her own shady past.

Some Americans become domesticated to the European scene although they are never completely Anglicized after years of living in England. Such folks are the Touchetts and their son Ralph. Mr. Touchett was a successful banker before coming to England, where he met with equal success, while Mrs. Touchett, for all of her travelling seems most unworldly and unimpressed, her intellectual acuteness and vivid personality being the kind which repels changes. Ralph, who first studied in an American college before entering Oxford, is one of the most lovable philosophers in the James gallery. Sickly, witty, and humorous, he covers his disappointments under a cloak of indifference.

Because the novels of James are concerned with people on a high level of refined living and thinking, those undesirables who, under another author's pen might have been drawn as the typical villains, are here presented with all vulgar- ity and offensiveness eliminated. Clothet in the conventional
manner of their class, they appear with their social offenses so strained that even adultery becomes a matter of taste. Rather, they are presented as morally color-blind or lacking in spiritual discernment instead of simply wicked. Thus, Henry James introduces first as charming and impeccable, such characters as Madame Merle or Charlotte Stant who are both cultivated wanderers with shady pasts. It is for the reader to make out later their true characters. Charlotte is a product of a varied European education while Madame Merle, who presents an almost too-polished nature, is the result of European living in its fullest sense. Gilbert Osmond furthers the James idea of the debasing effect upon character of the poison of Europe. Like Gabriel Nash, his position consists chiefly in existing. With no career, no name, no fortune, no past, and no future, he appears to be the essence of honesty and simplicity, which in themselves are poses sufficient to produce his preconceived impression upon others and to capture a wealthy wife. The character divisions of national groups, which contain smaller and more special types, serve, in the light of James's preoccupation with the international theme, as a broad and natural classification of his characters. For some authors, that kind of grouping would suffice; but for his work it seems inadequate not to add, briefly, another and higher method of judging his people. Throughout the scope of the James
novels runs a figure or design which gives life to the whole. Although he is not a moralist in a didactic sense, he does adhere to definite patterns in regard to character, conduct, and some vague but insistent underlying idea which he means to convey. It is upon those finer qualities which constitute a beautiful and noble personality, as he sees that personality in his design, that James makes his final distinctions.

Henry James noticeably favors the Americans by showing them defeated by the Europeans or Europeanized Americans. Those favored few exhibit a kind of spiritual courtesy, bigness of character, generosity of spirit, and psychological understanding, which show them to be superior to those who defeat them. In addition, there is the group who go beyond all others in wilfully giving up or renouncing those desires which had dominated them in order that they might have peace within themselves. They quit fighting, give in to Europe and thereby gain the greater personal victory, even though they lose that for which they were fighting. Isabel Archer, Christopher Newman, and Fleda Vetch belong to this group.

CHARACTER REVELATION

Henry James erected his literary family among the restricted leisure class society of highly developed individuals possessing intelligence and imagination. On this level, his problems are those sensitive ones of man's relation to man; and it is through a delicate maze of personal relationships and discriminations regarding values that he brings
his characters into juxtaposition to watch the interplay of wits and the differences in reaction and evaluation. Always the James people have imagination. Not to have this quality places a person outside his circle. Their thinking ability enables them to grasp fully the implications and overtones of every situation. From the deductions which follow, a gradual revelation takes place.

Henry James delights in placing his people in difficult situations and confronting them with complications. Through their movements and decisions they unconsciously reveal their real character. Because everything was of interest to Henry James, he saw indications of character behind the slightest pose, gesture, or attitude. The individual may find himself facing a tragic problem that requires a sacrifice of some kind, either way he decides. What he decides to cling to or throw away determines his value. Strehler renounces his personal desires in favor of a spiritual gain, by returning to America without the woman he loves. Having failed in his mission for his former fiancee in America, he wishes not to appear to have gained anything for himself. Merton Densher gives up a living love for the memory of Milly Theale who, in death, won his complete devotion. Isabel Archer gives up her freedom to return to Gilbert Osmond in order to keep her marriage vows, her promise to Pansy Osmond, and to be right with herself. Christopher Newman throws away his chance for revenge upon the Bellegardes and thus gains a higher victory. Fleda Vetch
loves the man she loves rather than stoop to deception to win him.

Henry James also liked to bring his characters into conflict with those conventions or traditions which have long been rooted in the social order. In "Daisy Miller" there is conflict between Daisy's misunderstood activity and motives and the established attitude of society. The tradition and heritage embodied in the French Belleleguercs present an impregnable wall to the American understanding.

Sometimes the conflict exists between persons differing in temperament or outlook, thus creating a more psychological or spiritual problem. Nick Dormer's artistic preferences clash with those political ambitions of Julie Dallow. Miriam Rooth's love of the theatre prevents her subordinating her career by marrying a successful diplomat. The predicament may also be one of human nature like that of Milly Theale, who was conscious of a great capacity for life but was early doomed. In the short time left, she wished to live deeply of that life which she loved.

Henry James begins with a dramatic situation or human relationship around which he places his characters as in a picture, with each part related to the other. Each successive stage of revelation is like the unveiling of sections of a painting until finally the entire scene comes into full view. No single part of the revealing is significant or enlightening in itself until the story is told, and even the last scenes
Henry James has been called the most psychological of American novelists. In his writing, he concerned himself with the supremely self-conscious people whose lives are dictated by good taste and imagination which fuse for them into a system of correct conduct. To say that his characters lacked either of those qualities would be equal to saying they lacked conscience. It is their imagination which carried Henry James's people to their peak of mental development. They never act without thinking, because James was interested chiefly in the intellectual life of his people, and the intellectual life in its most analytical sense. James reaches beyond their temperament or the characters themselves to search the corners of their minds, to dig up the secrets of thought and motive which lie at the very base of life itself. They are complex in their thinking and are highly sensitive.

In his psychological aspects it is not James who analyzes for the reader, but the characters themselves who reveal, through numerous episodes and small scenes, their thoughts and reactions. As the reader travels from scene to scene with them, he comes to know objectively their most intimate thoughts. Henry James was not interested in details of appearance so much as he was concerned with the impressions and subtle changes of a personality in its relation to character revelation.
The personal psychology of Henry James is the reflection of his own moral outlook upon life, shaped by his New England background and his early training. This moral concept reflects in his preference for the conventional code and his preference for those characters who exhibit, in addition to good taste, moral beauty in their lives.

The basis of social culture. Although his stories are laid chiefly in England, except for his earlier novels which use the Italian scenes too, we see these countries through the feeling that produced in him. It is the elite or tone of Rome, London, or Paris, which forms the chief background. Galleries and other buildings of critical interest are among some of his "places" but only for the atmosphere of beauty and culture they possess.

The culture of Europe does not exist in the charm of old times and old places, and it is against this kind of European culture that Henry James places his characters in their mind and environment and in their complex situations. It is the great cities of France, of Italy, and of Spain, and of places little known to the world.,
definite localities: but it is the accumulated feelings, the
hidden, mysterious charm of places which form the basis of
the novel and the relationships which it involves.

For his first novel, Roderick Hudson, Henry James takes
the Europe which attracted Henry James was a romanticized,
unreal Europe, the country which created in him a nostalgia for
the home of western culture. Although his stories are laid
chiefly in England, except for his earlier novels which use
the Italian scenes too, we see these countries through the
feelings they produced in him. It is the shade or tone of
Rome, London, or Paris, which forms the chief background. Art
galleries and other buildings of public interest are among
some of his "places" but only for the atmosphere of beauty and
culture they produce.

The allure of Europe consists mainly in the charm of
old things and old places, and it is against this kind of Eu-
ropean background that Henry James places his characters as
they react to their environment and to their complex situations.
Old houses, old pictures, varied art objects, bric-a-brac—
all mellowed by time and association, form part of the picture
that comprises his setting, whether it is England, France, or
Italy.

The names of cities—Venice, Florence, Rome—and of places
—Kensington Gardens, the opera, the art galleries, cathedrals,
Italian ruins viewed by moonlight, the shops, the streets of
London with their carriages—serve to fasten his stories to
definite localities; but it is the accumulated feelings, the hidden, mysterious charm of these places which form the drop curtain to his highly restricted drama of human relationships.

For his first novel, *Roderick Hudson*, Henry James takes his main character from Northampton, Massachusetts, to Rome, which forms the chief setting for his story. From Rome as a center, Hudson travels to Germany and Switzerland for brief periods, where he continues to gather impressions. Italy, nevertheless, is the most active influence upon his consciousness.

Venice, Florence, Naples, Genoa, Milan, where Roderick Hudson indefatigably visits, furnish rich responses. Pitti Palace, Raphael's Madonna of the Chair, the Vatican, Saint Peter's, and the Sistine Chapel, each contributes its characteristic value to the collective glory of Roman atmosphere; while villas, bridges, old houses, scenes from a distance, old walls and courtyards add further to the setting against which Henry James places his American sculptor.

Young Hudson reacted to the appeal of these places, one namely the Villa Ludovisi with its "mouldy little gardenhouse where the colossal mask of the famous Juno looks out with blank eyes from that dusky corner which must seem to her the last possible stage of a lapse from Olympus."  

Of the quiet corners in Rome, he says:

"As you pass away from the dusky, swarming purlieus of the Ghetto you emerge into a

1. James, *Roderick Hudson*, p. 94
region of empty, soundless, grass-grown lanes and valleys, where the shabby houses seem moulder away in disuse and yet your footstep brings figures of a startling Roman type to the doorway. There are few monuments here, but no part of Rome seemed more oppressively historic, more weighted with a ponderous past, more blighted with the melancholy of things that had had their day. When the yellow afternoon sunshine slept on the silent, battered walls and lengthened the shadows, the place acquired a strange fascination. The church of Saint Cecilia has one of these sunny waste-looking courts; the edifice seems abandoned to silence and the charity of chance devotion.  

"He lingered on the bridges at sunset" characteristically describes Roderick Hudson in Italy.

A trip to the Alps opens up new wonders for young Hudson. The Villa Mondragone, with its great terrace looks toward Tivoli and the iridescent Sabine hills. Frascati (and other similar towns) "make infinitely for peace and are rich in the romantic tone."

In Florence, the Villa Pandolfini "leaned largely upon a grass grown piazzetta at the top of a hill . . . . Within was a great cool grey cortile, graced around about with high, light arches and heavily-corniced doors of majestic altitude and furnished on one side with a grand old archaic wall . . . . This garden was a charming place. Its southern wall was curtained with a screen of orange blossoms, a dozen fig trees here and there, large-leaved shade, and over the low parapet the soft grave Tuscan landscape kept you company. The rooms themselves were as high as chapels and as cool as royal sepulchres; silence, peace, and security seemed to abide in the an-

1. James, Roderick Hudson, p. 275  
2. Ibid., p. 227
cient house, to make of it a square fortress against further assault of fortune.¹

Henry James uses this background as a contrast to the American scene, this contrast, being shown by the American's reactions to the European scenes, and as a strong factor in the development and ultimate disintegration of Hudson's character. By contrast, Northampton, Massachusetts, was a "living tomb" without beauty that spoke to the soul, without interesting people, without art or any of the romance of historical association. All that was necessary to feed the soul of an artist was lacking from the American scene.

The reaction of staid Mary Garland upon her first visit to Italy illustrates the effect upon an uninitiated American:

"I'm overwhelmed. Here, in a single hour everything's changed. It's as if a wall somewhere about me had been knocked down at a stroke. Before me lies an immense new world, and it makes the old one, the little narrow familiar conceived one I've always known, seem pitiful . . . But as I sat here just now, looking up at that golden mist in the dome (Saint Peter's) I seem to see in it the vague shapes of certain people and things at home. To enjoy so much beauty and wonder is to break with the past—I mean with one's poor old own. And breaking's a pain."²

As Roderick Hudson is introduced gradually to Europe, its fascination takes hold of him. The art of Italy speaks so directly to him that he finds himself almost helplessly entangled in its sensations, in its laxness, in the feelings of restless-

¹. James, Roderick Hudson, p. 443
². Ibid., p. 333
ness it produced in him, its sadness yet exuberance, so that it influences his life, and is a vital factor in helping to change his character and to mold his destiny. Of Italy, he says:

"Take me, at least, out of this terrible Italy, where everything mocks and reproaches and torments and eludes me. Take me out of this land of impossible beauty and put me in the midst of ugliness."¹

Knowing that he had failed to achieve, Hudson asked Rowland Mallet to remember that "he trembled in every nerve with a sense of the beauty and sweetness of life; ... he rebelled and protested and struggled: ... he was buried alive, with his eyes open and his heart beating to madness."²

Paris, France, forms the chief setting for The American in which there is less use of the historic and picturesque in landscape, but more concerning the history and culture of a French family of noble descent, the Bellegardes. Although Parisian apartments and the Louvre form part of the setting, most of the action takes place in the Bellegarde home, which reflects in its age and austerity the personality of the family which it housed for generations.

Henry James was attracted to the French family, with all the lights and shadows of its multiple customs which he uses in striking contrast to the American standards of Christopher Newman, protagonist, who represents a different social philosophy. The European scene becomes, in this story, a gradual

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1. James, Roderick Hudson, p. 466
2. Ibid., p. 466
revelation of the darkest depths of European life seen through Christopher Newman's consciousness as he receives the impressions.

The faded grandeur of the Bellegarde home becomes a symbol of the culture and tradition they represent. The social setting is laid in the "grey depths of her inhospitable looking house." Here one crosses a court to "... a vestibule vast, dim and cold, up a broad stone staircase with an ancient iron balustrade to an apartment on the first floor ... The chimney piece was in white marble of the Louis Quinze period, but much aloft was a panelling of an earlier date, quaintly carved, painted white and here and there gilded. The white had turned to yellow and the gilding was tarnished. On the top the figures ranged themselves into a shield, on which an armorial device was cut. Above it in relief, was a number—1627."

The salon of the dowager Marquise further revealed the house in all of its ancient grandeur:

"It was a high vast room, with elaborate and ponderous mouldings, painted a whitish grey, along the upper portion of the walls and ceilings; with a great deal of faded and carefully repaired tapestry in the doorways and chair backs; with a Turkey carpet, in light colours, still soft and rich despite great antiquity, on the floor; and with portraits of each of Madame de Bellegarde's children at the age of ten suspended against an old screen of red silk. The dimness was diminished ... by half a dozen candles placed in odd corners and at a great distance apart." 2

1. James, The American, p. 147
2. Ibid., p. 187
Against this background which speaks its own age, the Bellegardes move as a united family, entertaining stiffly and formally, attending the operas, conscious of their heritage, proud of their historic name, critical of others, cold and intolerant. Christopher Newman stands out like a bright light in their dark rooms. He is unimpressed, at ease, possessed of a democratic spirit, native humour, and natural courtesy. According to the French standards, here is an uncultured man who lacks everything they represent. It is these qualities in each which Henry James brings out in striking contrast, seeming meanwhile to make use of setting as one medium for doing so.

In the closing chapter, Henry James uses the setting to emphasize how unsurmountable were some of the obstacles which had confronted Christopher Newman, who later finds peace within the dimness of the walls of Notre Dame, which represents what he had failed to understand—Catholicism as the Europeans lived it.

"At the intersection of two of these streets stood the house of the carmelites—a dull, plain edifice with a blank, high shouldered defence all around . . . . The pale, dead, discolored wall stretched beneath it, far down the empty side-street—a vista without a human figure . . . . It told him the woman within was lost beyond recall, and that the days and years would pile themselves above her like the huge immovable slab of a tomb . . . . He walked through narrow winding streets to the edge of the Seine and there he saw, close above him, high and mild and grey, the twin towers of Notre Dame . . . . there he went in beneath the grossly imaged portals. He wandered some distance up the nave and sat down in the splendid dimness . . . he heard far-away
bells chiming off into space, at long intervals, the big-bronze syllables of the word . . . . But a great church offers a very various hospitality, and he kept his place because while he was there he was out of the world . . . . Somewhere in his soul a tight constriction had loosened."

The social setting of The American reveals within it deeper roots and meanings of greater significance than are seen later in the settings of the British stories. The law of the French family as vested in the mother, the custom of dueling, and the accepted religion speak of a life far different from that of the American. What is lacking from the American scene as a whole is thought to be noticeably absent in a personal way from the American. One sees the countries through the characters, and the past or the lack of a past speaks through them.

The Portrait of a Lady carries the reader from Albany, New York, to an English country house on the Thames River, forty miles from London. Here, the reader's first glimpse of England is at its detailed best, giving a painting of all her charm, the beauty, and the mellowness of a great, old house which stands as a symbol of a beautiful, well-ordered society. This story shows a divergence from James's former novels, which use the international contrasts as the dominant theme of the story. The Americans appear in contrast to Europeanized Americans and the social order of Europe, but beyond that, The Portrait of a Lady contains a great deal of the

charm of European places, and the opening scenes at Garden-
court set the atmosphere which prevails throughout the story:

"It stood upon a low hill, above the river
--the river being the Thames at some forty
miles from London. A long-gabled front of
red brick, with the complexion of which
time and weather had played all sorts of
pictorial tricks, only, however, to improve
and refine it, presented to the lawn its
patches of ivy, its clustered chimneys,
it's windows smothered in creepers. The
house had . . . been built under Edward
the Sixth, had offered a night's hospi-
tality to the great Elizabeth . . . had
been a good deal bruised and defaced in
Cromwell's wars, and then, under the Re-
struction, repaired and much enlarged;
. . . finally after having been remodelled
and disfigured in the 18th century, it had
passed into the careful keeping of a shrewd
American banker . . . Privacy here reigned
supreme, and the wide carpet of turf that
covered the level hilltop seemed but the
extension of a luxurious interior. The
great still oaks and beeches flung down a
shade as dense as that of velvet curtains."

It speaks of a society older than ours, of accumulations of
time, of a different social order and view of life. Other
country houses, customs of English social life, as well as
Kensington Gardens and the British Museum in London are de-
scribed but in a lesser degree.

When the story shifts to Italy, the reader feels keenly
the charm and romance of Florence and Rome, their homes and
gardens, the yellow sunshine, the bright blue sky, the art
galleries, the Forum, and Saint Peter's.

"It is impossible, in Rome at least, to
look long at a great company of Greek sculp-
tures without feeling the effect of their

1. James, The Portrait of a Lady, I, 3
noble quietude, which, as with a high door
closed for the ceremony, slowly drops on
the spirit the large white mantle of peace.
I say in Rome especially, because the Ro-
man air is an exquisite medium for such
impressions. The golden sunshine mingle-
with them, the deep stillness of the past,
so vivid yet, though it is nothing but a
void full of names, seems to throw a solemn
spell upon them. ¹

The home of the Gilbert Osmonds' likewise contains the same
Roman atmosphere:

"... a dark and massive structure over-
looking a sunny piazzetta in the neighbor-
hood of the Farnese Palace . . . . which
had frescoes by Caravaggio in the piano
nobile and a row of mutilated statues and
dusty urns in the wide, nobly-arched loggia
overhanging the damp court where a fountain
gushed out of a mossy niche."²

The lengthy descriptions, however, of the personality of
cities, found frequently in earlier novels, are missing from
emphasized as such; instead, isolated spots are described in
detail. It would seem that Henry James was less interested
in place but more interested in society found in these places
and its effect upon people, because most of the background con-
sists of characters in society, of views of life, and of moral
standards.

There is no problem of an American's reaction to cultural
Europe, but there is the problem of an American girl's reaction
to the darker aspects of social Europe, its morals and its in-
ner life. Isabel Archer's tragic story is laid against the
background of the characters themselves, their lives. With

1. James, The Portrait of a Lady, II, 8
2. Ibid., p. 100
the dark past of Gilbert Osmond and of Madame Merle playing so important a part in the life of Isabel Archer, it appears that Henry James is using the darker and more troubled aspects of the social order for the background of the story.

In *The Princess Casamassima*, Henry James continues his psychological study, placing greater emphasis upon the social classes in England. This story deals with the political and economic situation which he compares to that of France before the Revolution:

"The condition of (the English upper class) seems to me to be in many ways very much the same rotten and collapseable one as that of the French aristocracy before the revolution—minus cleverness and conversation... it's more like the heavy, congested and depraved Roman world upon which the barbarians came down. In England the Huns and Vandals will have to come up—from the black depths of the (in the people) enormous misery... At all events, much of English life is grossly materialistic and wants blood letting."

Concerned with the vast, malignant secret society supposed to underlie modern Europe, Henry James contrasts the upper class with the working class, the world of refinements and leisure to the world of poverty and the mutter of revolution. Against this hazy picture, Henry James places his most perverse character, the former Christina Light of *Roderick Hudson*, now the Princess Casamassima, developed in a more complete

1. Grattan, op. cit., p. 269
The Princess Casamassima represents Henry James's long accumulated impressions of London life. It is in the social order itself that he sees the effect of time, the beauty of life, the orderliness and convenience enjoyed by the privileged few. Hence, it was the feeling of the varied social experiences that interested Henry James. To secure this, he makes use of the contrast of settings to emphasize the vast gulf existing between the privileged group and the submerged groups and the futility of their trying to join hands across the gulf that separates them.

While yet a small child, Hyacinth Robinson was introduced to the gloom of a London prison where his mother, convicted of murder, lay dying. From its cold exterior of "brown bare, windowless walls" he passed to the interior, still less inviting, where he had a "confused impression of being surrounded with high black walls, whose inner face was more dreadful than the other, the one that overlooked the river; of passing through grey, stony courts, in some of which dreadful figures, scarcely female, in hideous brown misfitting uniforms and perfect frights of boots, were marching around in a circle . . . silent women with fixed eyes, who flattened themselves against the stone walls at the brush of a visitor's dress . . . There were walls within walls and galleries on top of galleries; even the daylight lost its colour and you couldn't imagine what o'clock it was."

1. James, *The Princess Casamassima*, I, 42
Later as a young man, the streets of London made their lasting impression upon him as he walked through the "vulgar districts... where the big clumsy torches flared and smoked over handcarts and costermongers's barrows drawn up in the gutter."¹ Hyacinth liked the people who "looked as if they had got their week's wage... and best of all, those who evidently had not received it at all and who wandered about disinterestedly and vaguely, their hands in their empty pockets, watching others make their bargains and fill their satchels, or staring at the striped sides of bacon, at the golden cubes and triangles of cheese, at the graceful festoons of sausage, in the most brilliant windows."² He liked the reflexion of the lamps on the wet pavements, and the effect of the fog blurring the whole picture.

The second-rate theatres, supper at M. Poupin's stuffy apartment, Audley court, the home of the Muniments, where he "had the further drawback that you had to penetrate a narrow alley, a passage between high black walls, to enter it."³—all of these memories and many more such formed Hyacinth's social outlook.

After his encounter with the Princess Casamassima, Hyacinth experiences a conflict in his revolutionary feelings. For the first time he was in touch with the world of refinement and beauty. In her garden he found "a sense of sweet

1. James, The Princess Casamassima, I, 73
2. Ibid., p. 73
sunny air and mingled odours, all strangely pure and agreeable, and of a musical silence that consisted for the greater part of the voices of many birds. There was a world to be revealed to him: it lay waiting with the dew on it under his windows. He rambled an hour in breathless ecstasy, brushing the dew from the deep fern and brochen and the rich borders of the garden, tasting the fragrant air and stopping everywhere, in murmuring rapture at the touch of some exquisite impression. His whole walk was peopled with recognitions; he had been dreaming all his life of just such a place and such objects, such a morning and such a chance.1

Later in his travels abroad, young Robinson visited the monuments and treasures of art, the great palaces and properties "the general fabric of civilization as we know it, based if you will upon all the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies and the rapacities of the past, but thanks to which, all the same, the world is less of a bloody hell and life more of a lark..."2

Whereas Hyacinth once saw life as "an immense underworld peopled with a thousand forms of revolutionary passion and devotion... a wonderful, immeasurable trap, on the lid of which society performs its antics"3 he now sees another side — "not the idea of how the society that surrounded him should be destroyed; it was much more the sense of the wonderful,

1. James, The Princess Casamassima, II, 6
2. Ibid., 130
3. Ibid., 44
precious things it had produced, of the fabric of beauty and power it had raised.¹

Through the use of contrasting setting, Henry James achieves the conflict he desired in Hyacinth's life, the conflict which drove him to his death. The varied effects of setting upon Hyacinth form a record of the happenings in his own tragic life. Its influence becomes the chief motivation in the story.

The Tragic Muse is the first novel of Henry James to deal with all English characters in an English and French setting; also, it represents Henry James's first story dealing with the theatre. In this light, since the subject differs so widely from his previous themes, The Tragic Muse belongs neither strictly to his early stories nor to his later period of writing. In his use of setting, types of character, and parallel plots, Henry James appears to be changing his aims as novelist, no longer employing a psychological study nor international theme.

The conflict is that of art—that of drama and painting—versus politics.

Paris is the scene of the open chapters of The Tragic Muse; and, as formerly, the art galleries, famous cathedrals, and the boulevards are the fascination of that city. The art exhibition at the Palais de l'Industrie gives Nick Dormer more strongly a "sense of the artistic life."

¹ James, The Princess Casamassima, II, 112
"The precinct of the marbles and bronzes appealed to him especially today; the glazed garden, not florally rich, with its new productions alternating with perfunctory plants and its queer, damp smell, partly the odor of plastic clay, of the studios of sculptors, spoke to him with the voice of old associations, of other visits, or companionships that were closed--... somehow identical with the general, sharp contagion of Paris. There was youth in the air, and a multitudinous newness, forever reviving, and the diffusion of a hundred talents, ingenuities, experiments."

The beauty of a Parisian night with all of its illumination gives a charm to the quieter streets, to the rivers and bridges, and to the older and ducier parts of the city, as Nick Dormer and Gabriel Nash come out upon the Seine to catch a glimpse of Notre Dame:

"They had come abreast of the low island from which the great cathedral, disengaged today from her old contacts and adhesions, rises high and fair, with her front of beauty and her majestic mass, darkened at that hour, or at least simplified, under the stars, but only more serene and sublime for her happy union, far aloft;... it greeted... with a kindness which the centuries had done nothing to dim. The lamplight of the great city washed its foundations, but the towers and buttresses, the arches, the galleries, the statues, the vast rose-windows, the large, full composition, seemed to grow clearer as they climbed higher, as if they had a conscious benevolent answer for the upward gaze of men."

The English setting consists of London scenes with its carriages, parks, crowds from the theatre, National Gallery, and Parliament Buildings. The country home of Mr. Carteret at Beauciere gives additional English atmosphere with its green countryside, tufted gardens, crooked lanes lined with

1. James, *The Tragic Muse*, I, 22
2. Ibid., I, 190
cobblestones, and its nearby abbey:

"You say the great abbey from the door-step, beyond the gardens of course, and in the stillness you could hear the flutter of the birds that circled round its arched, short towers. The towers had never been finished, save as time finishes things, by perpetuating their incompleteness. There is something right in old monuments that have been wrong for centuries."

To Nick Dormer, who was sensitive to natural beauty and who reflects Henry James's love of the landscape, because of its associations with English country scenes hold more for him than appears on the surface. Just as the art gallery gives him a "sense of the artistic life", Nick Dormer receives from the natural scenes the "sense of England."

"But there was another admonition that was almost equally sure to descend upon his spirit in a summer hour, in a stroll about the grand abbey; to sink into it as the light lingered on the rough red walls and the local accent of the children sounded soft in the graveyard. It was simply the sense of England ... The dim annals of the place appeared to be in the air (foundations bafflingly early, a great monastic life, wars of the Roses, with battles and blood in the streets and then the long quietude of the respectable centuries, all corn-fields and magistrates and vicars), and these things are connected with an emotion that arose from the green country, the rich land so infinitely lived in, and laid on him a hand that was too ghostly to press and yet, somehow, too urgent to be light."

Henry James's sensitiveness to beauty is ever present in his writing, but it is noticeable that his use of the pic-

1. James, The Tragic Muse, I, 190
2. Ibid., 319
ture at the element is much more sparing in *The Tragic Muse* than in his earlier novels. Setting is not used to influence character through play upon the senses as in the case of Rod-\
erick Hudson, the artist, nor to move a youth to revolutionary action as in that of Hyacinth Robinson. With less of the picturesqueness and with fewer references to cultural appreciation, it seems as though Henry James uses the theatre as the chief background for *The Tragic Muse*. In this, he draws a sharp distinction between the drama and the theatre. Henry James saw the theatre as a commercial and social convenience whose audiences were "squeezed together in a sweltering mass, disappointed in their seats ... timing the actor, wishing to get their money back on the spot—all before eleven o'clock.\" The drama, with its artistic and intellectual appeals, rose above personalities. This conflict forms the abstract setting for the first recording of Henry James's ideas concerning the theatre.

The *Spoils of Poynton*, which claims England as its only setting can scarcely be said to give much of the typical English background as it has been presented earlier. Although the sense of England is present throughout the story, there is no description of cities, of churches, or of places. *The Spoils of Poynton* belongs to Henry James's purely British group of stories, also including *What Maisie Knew* and *The Awkward Age*. This group of novels precedes his mature period of writing in

1. Grattan, op. cit., p. 236
which setting has a different atmosphere and purpose.

Using all English characters, this story is laid chiefly in three houses: Waterbath, the home of the Brigstocks in London; Riches, the former home of Mrs. Gereth's maiden-aunt, in the deepest depths of Essex; and Poynton, located in the south of England. With no picturesqueness in landscape to provide atmosphere, the differences between the feelings produced by the various scenes are much subtler and the description is limited to the furnishings of these houses and the types of people who occupy them.

The spoils of Poynton are the objects of art which Mrs. Gereth and her husband had spent a lifetime collecting, with all the patience, love, and passion of the ardent devotees of the beautiful. The story resolves itself into a battle between the mother and her unappreciative son, about to marry a dull girl, over the possession of these treasures, English law decreeing that property be passed down to the son rather than to the widow.

Henry James uses the contrasts in setting to emphasize like contrasts in the people, beginning with the vulgarities of Waterbath, the home of Mrs. Gereth's prospective daughter-in-law:

"... the ugliness was fundamental and systematic, the result of the abnormal nature of Brigstocks, from whose composition the principle of taste had been omitted ... They had smothered it with trumpery ornament and scrapbook art, with strange excrescences and bunched draperies, with gimcracks that might have been keep-sakes for maid-servants and non-descript
conveniences that might have been prizes for the blind. They had gone wildly astray over carpets and curtains; they had an infallible instinct for disaster, and were so cruelly doom-ridden that it rendered them also tragic . . . . The house was perversely full of souvenirs of places even more ugly than itself and of things it would have been a pious duty to forget. The worst horror was the acres of varnish, something advertised and smelly, with which everything was smeared; it was Poldo Vetch's conviction that the application of it, by their own hands and hilariously shoving each other, was the amusement of the Brig-stocks on rainy days. 1

Poynton is a large country house of the early Jacobean architecture, in which Mrs. Gereth has lived for a quarter of a century in surroundings of the most exquisite beauty. Here are Venetian lamps, rich tapestries, and Italian cabinets, velvet brocades of wondrous texture, and a Maltese cross, "a small but marvelous crucifix of ivory, a masterpiece of delicacy, of expression; and of the great Spanish period, the existence and precarious accessibility of which she (Mrs. Gereth) had heard of at Malta, years before, by an odd and romantic chance—a clue followed through mazes of secrecy till the treasure was at last unearthed." 2

"Poynton was a record of a life. It was written in great syllables and form, the tongues of other countries and the hands of rare artists. It was all France and Italy, with their ages composed to rest . . . . Mrs. Gereth left her guest to finger fondly the brasses that Louis Quinze might have thumbed, to sit with Venetian velvets just held in a loving palm, to hang over cases of enamels and pass and repass before cabinets. There were not many pictures—

1. James, The Spoils of Poynton, p. 6
2. Ibid., p. 37
the panels and stuffs were themselves the picture; and in all the great wainscoted
house there was not an inch of pasted paper. 1

Ricky has a different personality from that of the other
two houses. Lacking the vulgarity of Waterbath and the
collected art of Poynton, it, nevertheless, reflects the
character of a likeable and charming maiden-aunt. It is this
personal quality which Fleda Vetch immediately catches when
she pays her first visit to Ricky, and it is exactly this
same quality of which Mrs. Sereth is not aware in her con-
trasting of Ricky with Poynton. There in its small prim par-
lor with its single plate of window, one flat glass sliding
up and down, Fleda recognizes the possibilities of the place:

"Mrs. Sereth hated such windows . . . es-
pecially when they enjoyed a view of four
iron pots on pedestals, painted white and
containing ugly geraniums, ranged on the
edge of a gravel-path and doing their best
to give it the air of a terrace . . . . The
room was practically a shallow box,
with the junction of the walls and ceiling
guiltless of curve or cornice and marked
merely by the little band of crimson paper
 glued around the top of the other paper,
a turbid gray sprigged with silver flow-
ers . . . It was faded and melancholy,
whereas there had been danger that it would
be contradictitious and positive, cheerful
and loud. The house was crowded with
objects of which the aggregation somehow
made a thinness and the futility a grace;
things that told her (Fleda) they had been
gathered as slowly and as lovingly as the
golden flowers at Poynton . . . They made
her fond of the old maiden-aunt; they made
her even wonder if it didn't work more for
happiness not to have tasted, as she her-
self had done, of knowledge . . . . The

1. James, The Spoils of Poynton, p. 25
more she looked about the surer she felt of the character of the maiden-aunt, the sense of whose dim presence urged her to pacification . . . The poor lady had had some tender story; she had been sensitive and ignorant and exquisite.\[1.5ex] 

Formerly, Henry James used European civilization in its highest form for revealing national reactions and characteristics. Now he uses a similar art idea for revealing the characters of individuals. The spoils serve as the motivating factor throughout the story. The respective reactions of Mrs. Gereth and Fleda Vetch to the former’s recapture of the spoils reveal a moral difference in their outlooks. For Mrs. Gereth, it was not the crude love of possession; “it was the need to be faithful to a trust and loyal to an idea.”\[2.5ex] But Fleda Vetch could not care for such things when they came to her in such ways; “there was a wrong about them all that turned them to ugliness.”\[3.5ex] 

What Maisie Knew and The Awkward Age are entirely British in character and setting, revealing a different phase of Henry James’s writings. The story of Maisie, which seems more like a technical experiment than a novel, is lightly placed in London with no description of places, scenes, or homes. Except for the single sentence references to Kensington Gardens, Piccadilly, Hyde Park, and the Exhibition at Earl’s court, the

1. James, The Spoils of Poynton, p. 64
2. Ibid., p. 53
3. Ibid., p. 92
story might have taken place anywhere.

The theme of innocence in contact with evil is carried out in the character of little Maisie who is hurled back and forth between her divorced parents whose intrigues on both sides further expose her to the moral corruption in the world. Alternating for six months at a time in the homes of her two parents, Maisie learns of further associations between her step-parents.

Through all the elaborate system of explaining and child-like reasoning, Henry James gives the reader a cross-section of the morals of a fast set in London, using Maisie's young mind as a medium for doing so. Truly, the social streams of London and the sinful living within these groups constitute the setting for this unusual story in which "place" is secondary to the world of social affairs. Henry James's Europe is now a society.

The Awkward Age is a comedy of manners taken from London life, in which the social world continues to predominate. Using private homes for the setting, Henry James gives more detailed description than in What Maisie Knew; and in his brief treatment of old country houses he reveals again, as in his earlier novels, his love of old places, especially those reflecting accumulations of feelings. It would seem that his setting is still more of an imaginative structure with certain elements of beauty taken for granted.

The most serious problem confronting the characters in
The Awkward Age is that of marital troubles or of getting married. The numerous small conversational scenes take place in drawing rooms of town or country houses, or in the gardens where the people of Henry James try to reach decisions regarding one another, decisions never concerned with anything more concrete than an attitude of mind.

From the "pleasant ruddy" bachelor quarters of Mr. Vanderbank, James takes the reader to the home of Mrs. Brookenham at Buckingham Crescent, where the hostess surrounds herself with a carefully chosen group of followers, who appreciate her imagination, feelings, and expression. Here, too, Nanda Brookenham, daughter, enjoys the independence of having her own sitting room, which is filled with a wealth of books, flowers, and "the glitter of knickknacks."

Mr. Mitchell's country house provides a meeting place for these social groups, but nowhere does setting seem to serve any serious purpose, to influence the characters or to produce any kind of reactions in them. The importance of the country house in this story is its utility for week-end parties. The description, however, glows with one of James's favorite delights --his sense of a lingering afternoon:

"The lower windows of the great white house, which stood high and square, opened to a wide flagged terrace, the parapet of which, and old balustrade of stone, was broken in the middle of its course by a flight of stone steps that descended to a wonderful garden. The terrace had the afternoon shade and fairly hung over the prospect, beyond the series of gardens, of scattered,
splendid trees and green glades, an horizon mainly of woods ... . She (Nanda) moved from end to end of the terrace, pausing, gazing about her, taking in with a face that showed the pleasure of brief independence the combination of delightful things—of old rooms, with old decorations that gleamed and gloomed through the high windows, of old gardens that squared themselves in the wide angles of old walls, of woodwalks rustling in the afternoon breeze and stretching away to further reaches of solitude and summer."

The drawing room of Tishy Grendon is typical of the luxury and elegance with which this social group surrounds itself; their tastes, somehow, reflect themselves.

"Her drawing room on this January night, showed its elegance through a suffusion of pink electricity which melted, at the end of the vista, into the faintly golden glow of a retreat still more sacred ... .

The walls, covered with delicate French mouldings, were so fair that they seemed vaguely silvered; the low French chimney had a French fire. There was a lemon-colored stuff on the sofa and chairs, a wonderful polish on the floor that was largely exposed, and a copy of a French novel in blue paper on one of the spindle-legged tables."2

Henry James's love of old places for their reflection of age and associations shows in his description of Beccles, Mr. Longdon's country house. Here, again, we are conscious of the genius of "place", the inner life behind the outer scene, and the tranquilizing effect of beauty as Henry James experienced it.

"Mr. Longdon's garden took in three acres and, full of charming pictures, had for its greatest wonder the extent and color

1. James, The Awkward Age, p. 170
2. Ibid., p. 321
of its old brick wall, of which the pink
and purple surface was the fruit of the
mild ages . . . The air of the place, in
the August time, thrilled all the while
with the bliss of birds, the hum of little
lives unseen and the flicker of white but-
terflies . . . Beyond the lawn the house
was before him, old, square, red-roofed,
well assured of its right to the place it
took up in the world. This was a consi-
derable space—in the little world, at
least, of Beccles—and the look of posses-
sion had everywhere mixed with it, in the
form of old windows and doors, the tone
of old red surfaces, the style of old white
facings, the age of old high creepers,
the long confirmation of time. Suggestive
of panelled rooms, of precious mahogany,
of portraits of women dead, of colored
china glimmering through glass doors, and
delicate silver reflected on those impres-
sions of a particular period that it takes
centuries to produce.

The entire story illuminates the social scene and pre-
sents a picture of decadent society which has the wealth and
ample leisure to make possible a kind of superficial living.
The tea table groups, the "evenings" at home receiving guests,
the rounds of afternoon calls, and the week-end parties in
the country comprise the social and personal life of this
circle of dilettanti.

The Wings of the Dove, which is considered the first novel
of Henry James's mature period of writing, is a story which
shows points of similarity to his first contributions. De-
parting from the British group, Henry James again takes his
reader, during the course of the story, to his beloved Italy
to which he periodically returned in his own personal travels.

1. James, The Awkward Age, p. 281
This is not the Italy, however, that flowed in such golden abundance throughout *Roderick Hudson*, nor even the same Roman atmosphere so prevalent in *The Portrait of a Lady*.

The earlier description which painted in detail for the reader's imagination the yellow sunshine, the blue sky, the dome of Saint Peter's, the later afternoon shadows, the smell of the air, and the sounds of voices is all missing from the stories to follow. Instead, Henry James has succeeded in giving the feeling of Italy and England, the richness of Europe, without giving the details of places. Again, he seems to be concerned with the complexities of society, the currents in the social order which directly affect an individual's life. In this respect, *The Wings of the Dove* resembles *The Portrait of a Lady* in theme, showing an American girl in English society; but the similarity stops with the magnificent way in which, as a representative of the new world, Milly Theale, even in her untimely death, defeats the representatives of the old world through the generosity of her spirit. Although they killed her, her spirit lives to shame them. The international theme, too, is present here; but the contrasts of nationalities are so much dimmer than in *The American* and *Roderick Hudson*. It is more the problem of personalities that now occupies the attention of Henry James.

The opening scenes in London give a character sketch of the interior of Mrs. Lowder's house at Lancaster Gate. Using James's own words, "It was the language of the house
that spoke to him, writing out for him with surpassing breadth and freedom the associations and conceptions, the ideals and possibilities of the mistress.¹ The fewer number of details are now used to reflect a personality or to reveal a character:

"Never, he felt sure, had he seen so many things so unanimously ugly—operatively, ominously so cruel . . . he felt it less easy to laugh at the heavy horrors than to quail before them. He couldn't describe and dismiss them collectively, call them either Mid-Victorian or Early—not being certain they were rangeable under one rubric. It was only manifest they were splendid and were furthermore conclusively British. They constituted an order and abounded in rare materials—precious woods, metals, stuffs, stones. He had never dreamed of anything so fringed and scalloped, so buttoned and corded, drawn everywhere so thick. He had never dreamed of so much gilt and glass, so much satin and plush, so much rosewood and marble and malachite. But it was above all the solid forms, the wasted finish, the misguided cost, the general attestation of morality and money, a good conscience and a big balance."²

When Milly Theale and her companion, Susan Stringham, visit the Italian lakes near Switzerland, Milly expresses the ideas and life-long preference of Henry James when she wished for the Europe of people, the human and personal scene and not that of natural beauty. The former filled a need in her personal life.

"It had rolled over her that what she wanted of Europe was 'people', so far as they were to be had . . . the vision of the same equivocal quantity was what had haunted her during their previous days, in museums,

¹. James, The Wings of the Dove, I, 71
². Ibid., p. 71
in churches, and what was again spoiling for her the pure taste of scenery. She was all for scenery—yes; but she wanted it human and personal. ... What she had in mind was no thought of society nor of scraping acquaintance. ... It was the human, the English picture itself, as they might see it in their own way—the concrete world inferred so fondly from what one read and dreamed."

In keeping with this desire, Milly takes up residence first in England, followed later by a short stay in Italy. In the description of her London residence, the scene of several social gatherings, Henry James gives more of the atmosphere than the details of the great historic house which had "for Milly, beyond terrace and garden, as the centre of an almost extravagantly grand Watteau—composition, a tone as of old gold kept 'down' by the quality of the air, summer flushed but attuned to the general perfect taste."\(^1\)

The Italian scenes no longer contain the art appeal of Roderick Hudson, nor the frequent references to public monuments, churches, and places of interest so noticeable in The American and The Portrait of a Lady. The setting is that of private dwellings which reflect the Italian atmosphere.

Merton Densher's rooms, far down the Canal, are in striking contrast to Milly's palatial residence, and yet the same Venetian charm surrounds both:

"The rooms were unoccupied; the ancient palazzo was there with her smile all a radiance but her recognition all a fable; the ancient rickety objects too, refined in their shabbiness, amiable in their de-

1. James, The Wings of the Dove, p. 120
2. Ibid., p. 134
day, as to which, on his side, demonstrations were tenderly veracious. "He had recovered from the first part of his attachment to this scene of contemplation within sight, as it was, of the Rialto bridge on the further side of that arch of associations and the left going up the canal; he had seen it in a particular light, to which, more and more, his mind and his hand adjusted it." 2

In its perfection, Palazzo Leporelli, Milly's Italian residence, reflects a richness, coolness, and quiet beauty which give an ideal setting for the final scenes of her successes and failures. As always, Henry James delights in the historical value of the place, its atmosphere of associations:

"... the warmth of the Southern summer was still in the high florid rooms, palatial chambers where hard cool pavements took reflection in their lifelong polish, and where the sun on the stirred sea-water, flickering up through open windows, played over the painted "subjects" in the splendid ceilings—medallions of purple and brown, of brave old melancholy colour, medallions of old redeemed gold, embossed and beribboned, all tones with time and all flourished and scolloped and gilded about... . . . Palazzo Leporelli held its history still in its great lap, even like a painted idol, a solemn puppet hung about with decorations. Hung about with pictures and relics, the rich Venetian past, the ineffaceable character, was here the presence revered and served." 3

In this story, as well as in others to follow by Henry James, the richness and the feelings of Europe are everywhere just as present as formerly in his work, but it is conveyed in a much subtler manner. Details now dwelt upon have more

1. James, The Wings of The Dove, II, 161
2. Ibid., p. 211
3. Ibid., p. 122
direct bearing on the narrative and the unfolding of characters, and never is the setting separate from or inconsequential to the story proper.

"Paris is the setting for Henry James's *The Ambassadors*, a story which relates the intellectual and spiritual record of one man, Lambert Strether of Woolest, Massachusetts, who goes to Paris on a mission and returns without fulfilling it. This story could not have been told in any other setting. Unlike his treatment of setting in some of the transitional novels pertaining to British life, *The Ambassadors* reflects Henry James's brilliant use of background as seen in this late period of his career.

More than in any book so far discussed, the "genius of place" is felt in this novel. Although Henry James liberally sprinkles throughout the book the names of familiar places in Paris, the reader finishes the story much more conscious of the spiritual Paris, the brilliant Paris, the Paris of lights and glamour, and what was more important—the moral Paris. Henry James uses this view of the city for the purpose of working on the feelings of Strether to such a degree that his moral outlook changes and he finds himself unable to carry out his work. In this way, setting becomes an integral part of the novel, working on the lives of the characters and influencing their attitudes. This story resolves itself into a conflict between open-minded Europe and the narrow prejudices
of Massachusetts, with Parisian setting accentuating the contrast.

Strether's stay in this most cosmopolitan of cities is punctuated with one impression after another. He walks down the Rue de la Paix, passes across the Tuileries and the river to the bookstalls, where the Paris morning sends forth cheerful notes reflected in the soft breeze, the young bareheaded girls, the light on the garden floor, the humble rakes and scrapers, the straight-pacing priest. "The air had a taste as of something mixed with art, something that presented nature as a white-capped master."¹ In a penny chair from his nook in Luxembourg gardens, he passed an hour "in which the cup of his impressions seemed truly to overflow,"² as he viewed terraces, vistas, fountains, and little trees in green tubes. The sequestered garden of a private French dwelling, reached by a long passage and a quiet court, "was as striking to the unprepared mind, he immediately saw, as a treasure dug up."³ Trodding the long dim nave in Notre Dame, he "understood how . . . for a real refugee, the things of the world could fall into abeyance."⁴ In the busy room of the "Postes et Telegraphe", he felt the vibrations of "the vast, strange life of the town, the influence of the types, the performers concocting their messages; the little prompt Parisian women, arranging, pre-texting (sic) goodness knew what, driving the dreadful needle-

¹. James, The Ambassador, p. 55
². Ibid., p. 55
³. Ibid., p. 174
⁴. Ibid., p. 204
pointed public pen at the dreadful sandstrawm public table: implements that symbolized for Strether's too interpretive innocence something more acute in manners, more sinister in morals, more fierce in the national life.  

The atmosphere of Mme. de Vionnet's Parisian home was all of the glamor of the old European world. The people who move freely in her high stately rooms belong to that picture, and further reflect the tone of Paris of which Henry James was so keenly aware throughout his life. The associations of this home, which rise in their imaginations, only add to the physical charm of the place—

"which was in the high, homely style of an elder day, and the ancient Paris he was always looking for—sometimes intensely felt, sometimes more acutely missed—was in the incomparable polish of the wide waxed staircase and in the fine boiseries, the medallions, mouldings, mirrors, great clear spaces, of the greyish-white salon into which he had been shown . . . . he found himself making out, as a background of the occupant, some glory, some prosperity of the first Empire, some Napoleonic grandeur, some dim lustre of the great legend."  

During his contacts with people, Strether becomes more conscious of the open-minded Europe, and of the intellectual freedom enjoyed by the Europeans. It is moral Paris that Strether comes to know and which Henry James intends for the real background of The Ambassadors. In contrast to discussions at Woollett, Massachusetts, Strether relates occasions of discussion when he "had never in his life heard so many opinions on so many subjects. There were opinions at Woollett,

1. James, The Ambassadors, p. 394
2. Ibid., p. 109
but only three or four. The differences were there to match; if they were doubtless deep, though few, they were quiet—they were, as might be said, almost as shy as if people had been ashamed of them. People showed little diffidence about such things, on the other hand, in the Boulevard Malesherbes, and were so far from being ashamed of them—or indeed of anything else—that they often seemed to have invented them to avert those agreements that destroy the taste of talk. 1

The background in *The Ambassadors* may be said to give the predominant feeling running through the narrative. Since the atmosphere of Paris awakens old yearnings within Lambert Strether, causing him to look back upon his own life in which he failed to "live", as he puts it, fully, it is apparent that it is the spirit of Paris which operates upon his senses; and it is the Paris of Europe and not that of France. It seems to be an institution or a force working upon the imagination, and this force makes itself felt in the varied life, activity, and thoughts of its people, and in the series of idylls which suggest more than they contain, suggestions of associations embodied in that city.

*The Golden Bowl*, revealing the most mature of Henry James's attainments in novel writing, is laid in England. It is both city and rural England which form the back-drop to this novel, which is a story of success and the first to have the so-called "happy ending." Previously, Henry James has shown the spiritual

1. James, *The Ambassadors*, p. 119
values to be wrung from failure, but now he presents the
same spiritual values applied to success. For the first time
in any of his works, the old world and the new world, repre-
sented by Europeans and Americans, come to an understanding
and seem to bridge the gap that has always separated them.
The spirit of England with all of her multitude associations
and feelings fills this story, but that atmosphere is more
deftly hinted than described at any time. The sumptuousness
of setting and the beauty of small scenes give to The Golden
Bowl a richness which resembles the splendor surrounding Milly
Theale in the Italy of The Wings of the Dove.

The earlier method of contrasting characters by their
reactions to their cultural and aesthetic environments and to
Europe itself has now changed. Instead, art objects do not
predominate so much physically as part of the background, but
appreciation of art is now the standard applied to people as a
means of estimating the worth of an individual. Adam Verver
regards his son-in-law, with his Roman family dating back into
history, from the standpoint of a collector:

"Representative precious objects, great
ancient pictures and other works of art,
fine eminent 'pieces' in gold, in silver,
in enamel, majolica, ivory, bronze, had
for a number of years so multiplied them-
selves round him, and as a general challenge
to acquisition and appreciation, so engaged
all the faculties of his mind, that the
instinct, the particular sharpened appetite
of the collector, had fairly served as a
basis for his acceptance of the Prince's
suit."

1. James, The Golden Bowl, I, 141
Of Maggie, his daughter, he says that she has "the appearance of some slight, slim draped 'antique' of Vatican or Capitoline halls, late and refined, rare as a note and immortal as a link, set in motion by the miraculous infusion of a modern impulse and yet, for all the sudden freedom of folds and footsteps forsaken after centuries by their pedestal, keeping still the quality, the smoothed, elegant, nameless head, the impersonal flit of a creature lost in an alien age and passing as an image in worn relief round and round a precious vase."  

The London setting, consisting of various scenes taken from the streets of London, and from private dwellings, presents many sides to Prince Amerigo. There are the window displays on Bond Street where "objects massive and lumpish, in silver and gold, in the forms to which precious stones contribute, or in leather, steel, brass ... were as tumbled together as if, in the insolence of the Empire, they had been the loot of far-off victories."  

After a heavy rain, the green of London Park "had been deepened, and a wholesome smell of irrigation purging the place of dust and of odours less acceptable, rose from the earth ... "  

The small shop in Bloomsbury Street, where the Prince and Charlotte Stant met, presents a dim interior, crowded with many objects of questionable value—ornaments, commemorative medals, and quaint rings.

In the frequent references to private homes—Eaton Square,

2. Ibid., p. 92
3. Ibid., p. 93
Cudgon Place, Portland Place—Henry James omits all description. The reader is conscious of the numerous spacious rooms, the balcony over the street, the wide staircases, and private reception rooms. The wealth they represent is felt without the details given. But in the treatment of Fawns, the Verver's country home, Henry James gives the reader a variety of scenes revealing its splendor and beauty:

"... its large clear windows looked out into spaces of terrace and garden, of park and woodland and shining artificial lake, of richly condensed horizon, all dark blue upland and church-towered village and strong cloud-shadow, which were, together, a thing to create the sense... of 'one's having the world to one's self.'"

Fawns, with its high terraces like some castle mounted on a rock, with its gardens, woods and miles of shade, banks of flowers, and peacocks on the balustrade, is one of the most beautiful and peaceful of James settings, and it serves to heighten the pitch of the drama enacted there by the four principal characters—Maggie Verver and her husband, Adam Verver and his wife. Surrounded by so much that is good and beautiful, Maggie comes to see evil all around her as she hovers on the terrace and wanders through the garden.
Chapter V

Effect of James's Preoccupation with the European Scene on His Conception of American Life and Character;
And Its Effect on His Own Life

Early in his childhood, Henry James learned from his father that America was an incomplete environment, a fact which, together with his own half-absorbed impressions of America, started the ripple of discontent that later grew to engulf the mature James. Those early years of travel with frequent crossings to Europe for extended stays, relieved by brief visits home, served to engrave in his mind the sights, manners and customs, and spirit of numerous countries, while he took to himself the deep traditions of none, least of all, those of his own country. Somehow, as he searched diligently and hungrily for the environment best suited to him, and as he tried to probe the European and American scenes, he failed ever to understand his own America which lacked, for him, a "visible Church, a visible State, a visible Society, a visible Past.\(^1\) Always he was impressed with what America lacked, and yet it was the country he was never completely happy without, the country which created within him prolonged periods of homesickness.

1. Grattan, op. cit., p. 342
Henry James was never able to understand American businessmen, nor the core of American energy and power, which stood in such striking contrast to the ideal society he had created. His story reveals an almost life-long struggle in regard to Europe and America. In a letter to his brother, he wrote that it "is a complex fate being an American, and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe." Through his American pilgrim, in The Passionate Pilgrim, Henry James speaks, as if in contradiction, of his reactions which he clearly felt early in his writing career:

"I had the love of old forms and pleasant rites, and I found them nowhere—found a world of hard lines and harsh lights, without lines, without composition, as they say of pictures, without the lovely mystery of colour . . . . Sitting here, in this old park, in this old country (England), I feel that I hover on the verge of what might have been! I should have been born here, not there; here my makeshift distinctions would have found things they'd have been true of. This is a world I could have got on with beautifully."2

Henry James saw both continents analytically, and he assessed the merits and inadequacies of each, superimposing upon them the restrictions of his small group whose standards he used for a measure. He saw that Europe was weighted with accumulated layers of social furniture. He felt there a vague oppressiveness as if one were not, or could not, be free. Turning to the Americans, he saw that their lives were less clut-

1. Grattan, op. cit., p. 239
2. James, The Passionate Pilgrim, 47
tered and weighted with the routine of living. Theirs is a simpler, more honest existence, but it is just this simplicity, marking the absence of all he felt in Europe, which created for him the void in which Americans live their energetic but meaningless lives.

In view of his admirable American women, Henry James must have felt that in America, where institutions lie easily upon the collective consciousness, there are fewer drawbacks to the development of fine characters. However, he uses those same characters to explain that, in his estimation, even defeated as most of them are, their ultimate satisfaction in life could come only in an European environment. This idea he develops through the course of his stories, until it climaxes with the advent of *The Golden Bowl*, in which Maggie Ver- \merger bridges the gap between the American and European understanding to find a new happiness.

Shortly before he was to plunge into the writing of *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James moved from London to Rye where he hoped to recapture something of his former outlook. London had lost some of its spell; America was impossible; and with the death of his beloved sister, Alice, he felt that the last tie with his youth was gone. During this period, Henry James often expressed regret about his life—regret over his choice of career and of his long separation from America. William James, sensing the nature of his brother's conflict, wrote that it was the result of being "weaned for fifteen years at least" from "the vital facts of human nature." \textsuperscript{11}

Whatever the cause, Henry James realized that his long preoccupation with Europe only took America farther from him. The letters and novels of William Dean Howells made him "homesick for New England smells and sounds." 1 He strongly urged his brother to see that his own sons contracted "local saturation and attachments in respect to their own great and glorious country, to learn and strike roots into its infinite beauty, as I suppose, and variety. 2"

After nearly twenty years, and against his brother's advice, Henry James returned to America, eager to replenish his store of impressions and to experience the romantic adventure he was determined to find. It was during this visit that he travelled through the South and to California where he saw the vastness of America's natural scenery. Conscientiously, Henry James tried to arrive at an intelligent and understanding evaluation of social America. He submitted to being lavishly feted; he lectured generously; he made new friends. But all of the old feelings returned, his old impressions and reactions toward America. His formality of speech and his polished European manners did not belong in the American scheme where he found the people "full of that perplexing interfusion of refinement and crudity which marks the American mind." 3 He felt the breach to have widened. At the same time he recognized America's power, he also saw her monotonous level

1. Grattan, op. cit., p. 342
2. Ibid. p. 342
3. James, The Passionate Pilgrim, p. 24
of personalities, and he became ever more conscious of all that was lacking.

Henry James became completely alienated from his native country. His preoccupation with the European theme prevented his having an unbiased conception of American life and character. He could not bridge the gap, although it was the one thing he most wanted to do.

Ultimately James returned to England, the country for whom he gave up his American citizenship.
92.

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INDEX OF CHARACTERS

Little Aggie
Prince Amerigo
Isabel Archer
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Mr. Babcock
Bellegarde
Little Billham
Augusta Blanchard
Mrs. Bread
Mrs. Brigstock
Miss Brigstock
Mrs. Carre
Princess Casassusima
Prince Casassusima
Julia Dallow
Basil Dashwood
Lord Deepmere
Norton Densher
Nick Dormer
Maisie Farange
Mary Garland
Mrs. Geth
Casper Goodwood
Maria Costrey
Mrs. Grandon
Millicent Henning
Mrs. Hudson

The Awkward Ace
The Golden Bowl
The Portrait of a Lady
The American
The American
The Ambassadors
Roderick Hudson
The American
The Spoils of Poynton
The Spoils of Poynton
The Tragic Muse
The Princess Casassusima
The Tragic Muse
The American
The Wings of the Dove
The Tragic Muse
What Maisie Knew
Roderick Hudson
The Spoils of Poynton
The Portrait of a Lady
The Ambassadors
The Princess Casassusima
The Princess Casassusima
Roderick Hudson
Roderick Hudson
Aurora Langrish
Mr. Leavenworth
Christina Light
Mrs. Light
Rolland Mallet
Lord Mark
Madame Merle
Misses Holyneux
Gabriel Nash
Chadwick Newsome
Christopher Newman
Mlle. Mioche
Gilbert Osmond
Pansy Osmond
Jim Poocock
Mamie Poocock
Amanda Fynsent
Hyacinth Robinson
Miriam Rooth
Mrs. Rooth
Sam Singleton
Peter Sherringham
Captain Shalto
Henrietta Stackpole
Charlotte Stout
Lambert Strether
Milly Theale

95.
Roderick Hudson
The Princess Casamassima
Roderick Hudson
Roderick Hudson
Roderick Hudson
Roderick Hudson
The Wings of the Dove
The Portrait of a Lady
The Portrait of a Lady
The Tragic Muse
The Tragic Muse
The American
The American
The Portrait of a Lady
The Portrait of a Lady
The Ambassadors
The Ambassadors
The Princess Casamassima
The Princess Casamassima
The Tragic Muse
The Tragic Muse
Roderick Hudson
The Tragic Muse
The Princess Casamassima
The Portrait of a Lady
The Golden Bowl
The Ambassadors
The Wings of the Dove
Ralph Touchett
Mr. and Mrs. Touchett
Mr. Tristram
Adam Verter
Maggie Verter
Anastasius Vetch
Fleda Vetch
Jeanne de Vionnet
Lord Warburton
Mrs. Wix

The Portrait of a Lady
The Portrait of a Lady
The American
The Golden Bowl
The Golden Bowl
The Princess Casamassima
The Spoils of Poynton
The Ambassadors
The Portrait of a Lady
What Maisie Knew