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THE AWAKENING PROCESS OR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MATURITY IN FOUR NOVELS OF HENRY JAMES

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THE AWAKENING PROCESS OR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MATURITY IN FOUR NOVELS OF HENRY JAMES

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Aos meus pais e familiares.

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ABSTRACT

The tragedy of innocence plays an important role in the works of Henry James. Four of his novels (**Roderick Hudson, The Portrait of a Lady, The Ambassadors** and **The Golden Bowl**) have been selected to present the way James broaches the tragedy under consideration in three periods of his literary career.

James's innocent protagonists have their process into consciousness started when they come from America, the new world that obtained its freedom from Europe, and venture into the great old world. They come to Europe in order to undergo their process into awareness.

The experience the American innocents undergo abroad is portrayed thus in their search for forms on account of their new world freshness. Their fall from innocence, or their fall into consciousness, takes place therefore in so far as the cultural clash is developed in the European setting.

Each of the four novels is analysed one by one in detail through a plot-like discussion in order to detect the peculiarities of each protagonist while they confront the European society. Finally, it is verified what the main character of each novel makes of the knowledge and experience he/she gains in the old world, and the conclusion is that there is an evolution in the characters' profit by their experience - from a total failure to survive in **Roderick Hudson** to a complete harmony of the two worlds in **The Golden Bowl.**

RESUMO

A tragédia da inocência desempenha um importante papel na obra de Henry James. Quatro de seus romances (**Roderick Hudson, The Portrait of a Lady, The Ambassadors** e **The Golden Bowl**) foram selecionados para explicar o modo que James aborda a referida tragédia em três períodos de sua vida literária.

Os protagonistas inocentes de James são iniciados em seus processos de conscientização quando eles vêm da América, o novo mundo que obteve sua liberdade da Europa, e aventuram-se no velho mundo. Eles vêm para a Europa a fim de se submeterem a um processo de conscientização.

A experiência que os americanos inocentes sofrem no exterior é retratada então em sua busca por formas devido à imaturidade do novo mundo. A perda da inocência, ou a queda na conscientização, ocorre portanto na medida em que o choque entre culturas se desenvolve no cenário europeu.

Cada um dos quatro romances é analisado detalhadamente através da discussão do enredo para detectar as peculiaridades de cada protagonista enquanto confrontam a sociedade européia. Finalmente, verifica-se o que o personagem principal de cada romance faz do conhecimento e experiência que ele/ela adquire no velho mundo, e, a conclusão é que há uma evolução no aproveitamento que os personagens fazem de sua experiência - do fracasso total para sobreviver em **Roderick Hudson** à harmonia completa entre os dois mundos em **The Golden Bowl**.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Statement of problem

As James represents the tragedy of innocence through the impact of European civilization on Americans in great part of his works and in many different ways, this dissertation focuses particularly on how James manages to develop the theme of the innocent abroad throughout three periods of his literary career. In order to achieve a general comprehensive view of the considering subject, four novels have been selected out of James's twenty complete long fictional works - **Roderick Hudson** (1875) from his early period, and the first novel in which he broaches the American in Europe; **The Portrait of a Lady** (1881) from his middle period; and **The Ambassadors** (1903) and **The Golden Bowl** (1904 - the last complete work of James's novels) from his late period.

Since the concern of this dissertation resides especifically in the experience the main protagonist in each of the novels mentioned above undergoes in the old world, some questions may be asked to guide this research: In which way is each protagonist incomplete, or innocent? What triggers their journey to Europe? Which conflicts do they face in Europe? How is awareness or/and

maturity achieved? Is the process the same for both male and female protagonists? Is there a pattern for males as opposed to females? How does this process towards consciousness and maturity fit into the theories expressed by critics? These are some of the questions this dissertation poses.

Review of Criticism

In James's fiction this process towards knowledge and maturity is related to the acquisition of the 'conscious conscience' as mentioned by Tonny Tanner in **The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality In American Literature** 1 For Tanner, a conscious conscience is the conscience that has achieved knowledge and experience of the world. With regard to James's fiction, this process is usually developed through the initiation of Americans in Europe. What is meant by initiation here is not simply the entrance into the adult world, but this very "process of maturing" as stated by R.W.B. Lewis in his book **The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century.**2 According to Lewis, James's protagonists have their initiation started when they come from the new world that obtained its freedom from Europe and confront the European society - the world of experience and tradition. James's protagonists then are the product of the new history. They are the new Americans of a new America. As Lewis explains, the intellectual spokesmen of the second quarter of the nineteenth century were mostly interested in the inhabitant of the new world. Their concern with that new man was mostly related to the ideas of innocence and evil. Besides, those are exactly the same ideas which contributed to the

shaping of the story of the new American, or the American myth of the new Adam. For Lewis, the American myth is based on the rejection of all the vestiges of the social conventions and tradition of the old world. Lewis here expands on D.W. Lawrence's idea that the myth of America is based on the 'sloughing off of the old skin' in order to create a new natural world.[3] But of all the inherited notions and practices to be rejected in that new period the most offensive was the Calvinistic doctrine which considered all men sinful and guilty. In fact, that doctrine caused a great damage to the American mind due to the rigidity of Puritanism. Then the new liberated, innocent, solitary, enduring and even heretic man was created. That new man, a man of pure heart and blank mind, was recognized indeed as the new Adam free from his past and any inheritance. In this way, says Lewis, the American myth "saw life and history as just beginning." The new American, as a result, had to be moulded like that:

> an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources.... His moral position was prior to experience, and in his very newness he was fundamentally innocent.... All this and more were contained in the image of the American as Adam.[4]

According to Lewis, the acceptance or negation of that newborn innocence generated the appearance of three distinct parties: the party of Hope, or the party of the future; the party of Memory, or the party of the past; and the party of Irony, or the party of communion. The party of Hope was for the "plain

genuine innocence' of the biblical Adam, and a total rejection of the European culture. The party of Memory was not only for the plain innocence but also for a relation between past (European) experience and the present. But that feeling of freedom from the past called even more attention to tradition, and that kind of helpless innocence just stimulated a new positive sense of tragedy - the one proposed by the elder Henry James (James's father) in the party of Irony. What the elder James meant by positive tragedy was the 'Fortunate Fall' - the clash of that innocence with the experience which was achieved through suffering. With regard to the quotation above, life for the elder James 'flowers and fructifies out of the profoundest tragic depths'. Then the pattern for American fiction was established according to the latter party: tragedy became essential in the theme of innocence, and conscience, rather than innocence, became important as well. Besides, the future of fiction in America depended upon the 'durability of the image of the hero as Adam'; and as a matter of fact, it was the younger James who most guaranteed that position, for he portrayed the Adamic figure in novel after novel during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the very beginning of the twentieth century. As Lewis pointed out, '... James's fiction reflected the peculiar American rhythm... of the foray into the unknown world, the collision with that world, 'the fortunate fall,' the wisdom and maturity which suffering produced."5

In **The Reign Of Wonder**, Tony Tanner is also concerned with the American search for a new vision in the literature of the nineteenth century. Like Lewis, Tanner also states that the new vision consists mainly in the cultural break with Europe. That break then was first imposed by relevant Transcendentalists such

as Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, whose key idea was the establishment of the "naive eye" or plain innocence in American Literature. For those Transcendentalists, the new vision of life consists in the complete absence of wisdom, intelligence, awareness, and experience in the life of an individual.[6] Naivete, or plain ignorance, thus, becomes the important form of wisdom - a wisdom that consists in the inability to see the world intellectually. For James, on the other hand, that new vision consists in the investigation of the formation of the conscious mind. It is a process concentrated mostly on "how - when ... people assimilate, construe and interpret experience ... How do we [or] how should we - look at the world?" James's intention then, says Tanner, is "to involve us in the moment-by-moment efforts on the part of the [naive mind] to discern and decide, to infer and interprete." Unlike Emerson and his followers, James never celebrates the individual's unselfconsciousness and passivity. Instead, he takes that blank conscience and pushes it into a complex society; he shows the individual's mind "bewildered" and at continuous active work.[7] In short, while Emerson and his followers aim at the construction of the unconscious self, James aims at the construction of the conscious self. Indeed, James's protagonists' fall into consciousness, as suggested by Tanner, is the very "fortunate fall" previously discussed by Lewis.

In the article "Freedom and Conscious Form: Henry James and the American Self," Frederick J. Hoffman also discusses the new man of the new world proposed by Lewis in **The American Adam**. Hoffman presents the "New World" as a refuge from old dogmas. In fact, he also points out the break of America with Europe and its tradition for the establishment of that new world - the

rediscovered Eden after Fall towards which the naive American self moved. The naive American then is the new Adam "already grown, though not mature." By rejecting the forms of his past, he can only see rather than understand his present time. Indeed, he is the image of the "child-like mind" which Tanner uses to show the Transcendentalists' ideal new man. However, the image of the American self portrayed by Henry James is not that of the Transcendentalists. Hoffman explains that in James's world "life needs forms" to achieve the human consciousness.[8] Those forms in turn are only acquired in the international exchange (the American in Europe) which provides the"crucial experience any consciousness must undergo." No doubt what James called the "crucial experience" is the very Fall of Adam, that is, the clash between innocence and awareness. Moreover, Hoffman says that for the younger James the "American Adam" had failed in his second chance - besides abandoning all past forms he created no new ones, remaining, thus, even more innocent. In fact Hoffman states that "This is why the American consciousness, which is in itself really more naive than 'free', needs to experience the fixed and established European world."[9] James, in short, focuses on the analysis of the self in development towards consciousness.

Another critic who helped to unveil this aspect of "The International Theme" was Lyall H. Powers. In his book **Henry James: An Introduction and Interpretation** (1970), Powers affirms that James's protagonists initially flourish once they get into that sophisticated atmosphere of Europe. Europe represents then all pleasure they can enjoy - they are delighted by all that rich social experience available to them and the possibilities that open before them. Inevitably, however, the clash between the two

cultures does not take long to come out. All of a sudden the American's simplicity has to confront European corruption and apparently, says Powers, the American "goodheartedness" triumphs over the European evil. Moreover, the confrontation between manners and morals or, rather, that clash of European social manners, conventions and tradition with American behavior causes suffering to the American: the naturalness of the new man cannot work in such highly mannered society. As a consequence of the American insufficiency towards European life, the American is led to the acceptance of "victimization" (a term also used by Hassan that will be discussed later). Indeed the naive American is victimized by those social conventions and customs of Europe. That vigor of manners that is "representational rather than truly expressive" stands for evil itself - the social evil that causes the fall of the American Adam.[10]

In conclusion, Powers says that James is interested only "... superficially in the contrast of national cultures and societies in themselves, that his fundamental interest is with the effect of those contrasting cultures on the American character as a means of expressing his ultimate concern with the question of cultural maturity and its relation to moral maturity."[11] Thus, the international situation or, rather, the act of leaving America and venturing into Europe in James's fiction is the condition to achieve awareness or maturity itself for the naive American.

Maxwell Geismar, in his **Henry James and the Jacobites** (1965), portrays "The Achieved Life `a la Henry James" and raises the question that James's protagonists' fall may not be fortunate at all. Indeed what Geismar calls "The Achieved Life a la James" is rather "the wasted life." He says that the experience James's

protagonists undergo is only psychological. Besides, those protagonists negate all human experience for they are incapable of life and love. Furthermore, "It was the spirit of love and not the act of love that James still praised; it was the sacrifices of love and not the rewards or pleasures of love he still commended ...." [12] Geismar also states that, for James, the American had married too young and austerely to the New England conscience. This conscience, as Tanner points out, is rigid, inflexible, and intransigent. That implies, according to Powers, a life of discipline rather than pleasure. Thus, as Geismar conveys, it is because of the Puritan New England mind that the Jamesian protagonists' attempt for a full life results in a tragic end since love and passion work just as destructive agents in their lives.

The theme of initiation treated by Ihab Hassan in the first chapter of his book **Radical Innocence** (1961) reinforces the idea of tragedy as discussed above. Hassan explains that "the encounter between the self and the world in fiction" or the confrontation of the individual with experience or reality itself may assume the form of initiation or victimization.[13] Unlike victimization, initiation leads to a consecrated knowledge and recognition. The end of initiation then is confirmation in the world - the acceptance of the world. On the other hand, the result of victimization is renunciation. Moreover, Hassan says that although the "neurosis of innocence" represents an impediment to initiation for Americans, their "...transition to victimization is witnessed, paradoxically, in the process of initiation." Hassan means that the American first acquires knowledge and recognition, then he chooses to renounce. Since the American had to struggle against contradictory feelings concerning his place in the world he had to defend himself. Thus, resistance, rebellion, and denial were the defenses of the American self as it had to leave America behind due to the requirements of

civilization. However, in that process of initiation, the acceptance of the civilized world was as necessary as the Fall of Adam for the reconciliation between the individual and the world. According to Hassan, "...James knew that initiation to the world was something tragic, the refusal of initiation was more often pathetic." Indeed, James's great heroes "...show that it is in the sacrifice, and not merely in refusal, that the complex imperatives of self and world are finally reconciled."[14] As a conclusion, Hassan states that confirmation was seldon realized in that characteristic process of initiation for Americans. Instead, initiation for them results in sacrifice, regression, defeat, and renunciation. In fact, that result is of victimization rather than initiation. Then, as mentioned in the very beginning of this paragraph, the theme of initiation treated by Hassan meets with Geismar's idea of "The Achieved Life a la James" in the sense that both see the process as coming to a tragic end - what corresponds, in this way, to the tragedy of innocence that had become essential in the American fiction of the nineteenth century.

Statement of purpose

This dissertation proposes to analyse the awakening process or/and the achievement of maturity in four of the twenty Jamesian complete novels - **Roderick Hudson, The Portrait of a Lady, The Ambassadors**, and **The Golden Bowl** - as regards the experience of the American innocent abroad.

The purpose of this dissertation is to verify whether James keeps the same attitude towards the international experience of his characters throughout his literary career or not. In order to do so, I will investigate how this process into awareness occurs with the male and female protagonists of James's earlier and late periods

and, then, it will be possible to present what they make of the knowledge or experience they acquire in Europe - whether they achieve maturity or not.

Moreover, I intend to demonstrate more especifically the step-by-step moment of the main protagonists' awakening development, and detect how/when their fall from innocence is finally completed in each of the analysed novels. In each chapter of this dissertation, it will be demonstrated this same aspect concerning the way Europe strikes the American protagonists, and the way they resist or conform to European standards of behavior.

It is also worth noting some observations on the methodology I use in the analyses of the following chapters. To begin with, the plot-like discussion I apply to the analysis of each chapter is used to reinforce the full implications of the protagonists' gradual losing of innocence or their progressive suspicions into awareness. Besides, in the first chapter, on **Roderick Hudson**, an emphasis is laid on the young sculptor's works of art because they stand for a sign of Roderick's acquisition of awareness and experience throughout his stay in the old world. As for the chapter on **The Golden Bowl**, the first part of the novel is omitted because it does not concern the innocent American abroad - but the aristocratic Italian Prince.

Finally, I would like to make it clear that I have not had the ambition of exhausting the topic proposed since James's acknowledged ambiguity allows a wide range of interpretations, and his characters' motives are never made explicit, as one shall see on reading this work.

Notes

1 Tony Tanner, **The Reign Of Wonder: Naivety and Reality In American Literature** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 291.

2 R. W. B. Lewis, **The American Adam: Innocence,Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century** (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955) 98.

3 Lewis 103.

4 Lewis 5-6.

5 Lewis 152-3.

6 Tanner, **The Reign Of Wonder** 37.

7 Tanner, **The Reign Of Wonder** 267-8.

8 Frederick J. Hoffmann, "Freedom and Conscious Form: Henry James and The American Self", Virginia Quaterly Review XXXVII (Spring, 1961):270-75.

9 Hoffman 275-78.

10 Lyal H. Powers, "Fiction I: The International Theme", **Henry James: An Introduction and Interpretation** (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970) 22.

11 Powers 48.

12 Maxwell Geismar, "The Achieved Life a la Henry James", **Henry James and the Jacobites** (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965) 263-4.

13 Ihab Hassan, "The Dialectic of Initiation in America", **Radical Innocence: Studies In The Contemporary American Novel** (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961) 34-5.

14 Hassan 40-4.

RODERICK HUDSON

> ... I might produce illusion if I should be able to achieve intensity.
>
> Preface to **Roderick Hudson**

While Henry James sighs for intensity, his character Roderick Hudson has plenty of it. In fact, intensity flows from Roderick's whole nature like an inexhaustible spring at each instant of his existence.

Intensity also is what mostly conveys Roderick's sculpture of the thirsty water-drinker. It seems to symbolize youth, innocence, health, strength, curiousty. The young man is drinking of the cup of knowledge, pleasure and experience (66), as one may deduce from the folowing quote:

> The statuette, in bronze, something more than two feet high, represented a naked youth drinking from a gourd. The attitude was perfectly simple. The lad was squarely planted on his feet, with his legs a little apart; his back was slightly hollowed, his head thrown back; his hands were raised to support the rustic cup. There was a loosened fillet of wild flowers about his head, and his eyes, under their dropped lids, looked straight into the cup. On the base was scratched the Greek word [Thirsty]... (59)

Apparently Roderick's first confrontation with the Old World occurs there, still in America, by the time he gets in touch with Rowland Mallet, who is a representative of the world of experience. Rowland's great interest in and appreciation of Roderick's fine art leads the latter to the recognition of his genius, for he could hardly suspect he possessed any. Besides, when Rowland invites him to go to Europe, he lets the young man know that he has money and time to be his protector and allow him to study the "antique" in Rome.

On account of that early recognition, the beginning of Roderick's thinking and reasoning of his own affairs also causes the beginning of his suffering and first crisis. Roderick begins to suffer since he is already conscious of the value of his genius, and of how hateful it is being forcibly a law-student of Mr. Striker only for the sake of his mother. The turning point of this crisis then breaks out as Roderick shows his productions to Rowland. On recognizing the quality of his work, Roderick lets Rowland know he can see the opportunity he is offered and deals at Mr. Striker's skull a blow (73). The destruction of Mr. Striker's bust thus sets free all the heavy feelings which had been oppressing and weighing upon Roderick's soul and freedom. Besides, as he meets Rowland the next morning, he gives himself up to the outburst of a monologue in which he questions and judges the morality of his mother and the boredom of his own life. No doubt, Roderick is already living that conflict as stated by Hoffman[1] and Hassan.[2] He is confronting the impositions of those contradictory cultures of America and Europe. He feels divided between the new and the old, freedom and authority, instinct and mind, nature and civilization. But since the American

self has to deny, resist and rebel in order to leave America behind to the requirements of the Old World or civilization itself, Roderick concludes his speech by declaring himself "improved" for he smashed Mr. Striker's bust and decided to go to Europe (77).

Despite all danger and temptation that Europe should represent for Roderick, the sculptor's stay in America comes to an end in Chapter 4. He has already bidden his farewell to Mr. Striker: by destroying the lawyer's bust, he destroyed the "voice of duty" which oppressed him; and now, before he should bid farewell to Mary Garland, who represents the American Puritan mind for she is "the daughter of a minister, the grand-daughter of a minister, the sister of a minister" (85-6), and before bidding farewell to his mother who represents all the crudeness of the innocent American world, or rather, who represents the naïveté of his mother country itself, the young man's contentment reaches its climax. In his last talk to his friend Cecilia, moved by his great enthusiasm for the feeling of freedom he longed for, he reveals the great force of his passionate nature: "I want to strike out hard! ... I want to do something violent, to let off steam" (95). Thus, considering that Roderick is bidding his farewell to the American rigidity, puritanism, and naïveté, all that strength, and intensity, conveyed by his words just comes to emphasize his longing for knowledge and experience which he himself suggested in his statue of the thirsty drinker.

In the ship, in their way to Europe, Rowland learns Roderick is engaged to Mary Garland and the sculptor only explains that because of his ridiculous good humour he felt the desire to tell some woman that he adored her (102). Rowland indeed is tremendously stupefied at that senseless declaration. He feels terribly discontented for he sees Roderick cares only about pleasing his big ego. Yet, as if

that nonsense were not enough for Rowland, Roderick asks him very innocently to remind him of his sweetheart if ever he is "... a dull companion and over-addicted to moping ..." (102). In this way, Roderick reassures Rowland that he will be responsible neither for his deeds nor for his own engagement to Mary Garland. Rowland also feels reassured of Cecilia's judgement that Roderick "grew up à la grace de Dieu," as once he himself had judged the young man crude and immature (66-7).

Very soon, in Chapter 5, Roderick experiences a chain of fast transformations both in appearance and ideas. In fact he does everything too fast. Now, after three months only of Roman atmosphere, he declares he has reached the top of the hill" (103). Although he sounds too precipitated or even irrational, he feels ready to start working, and he also feels ready to judge himself, as he talks to Rowland:

> 'It seems like ten years. What an exquisite ass I was!'
> 'Do you feel so wise now?'
> Verily! Don't I look so? Surely I haven't the same face. Haven't I a different eye, a different expression, a different voice?
> '... You are in the literal sense of the word more civilised...' (104)

It is so true that Roderick is more civilized in the literal sense, that he is unable to change his mind about Mary. On account of her living surrounded by ministers, he can only see her as "a stern moralist" who would call him corrupt if she should see him wearing a Venetian watch-chain round his neck and a magnificent Roman intaglio on the third finger of his left hand as if they were a stain of the civilized world (104). At all events, he feels he is living "an intellectual era," and that the more his mind receives impressions

the more it has space for them:

> Roderick so far had justified his confidence and flattered his perspicacity; he was giving a splendid account of himself. He was changed even more than he himself suspected; he had stepped without faltering into his birthright, and was spending money, intellectually, as lavishly as a young heir who has just won an obstructive lawsuit. Roderick's glance and voice were the same, doubtless, as when they enlivened the summer dusk on Cecilia's verandah, but in his person generally there was an indefinable expression of experience rapidly and easily assimilated. Rowland had been struck at the outset with the instinctive quickness of his observation and his free appropriation of whatever might serve his purpose. He had not been for instance half an hour on English soil before he perceived that he was dressed provincially, and he had immediately reformed his toilet with the most unerring tact. His appetite for novelty was insatiable, and for everything characteristically foreign, as it presented itself, he had an extravagant greeting; but in half an hour the novelty had faded, he had guessed the secret, he had plucked out the keener sensation. At the end of a month he presented a puzzling spectacle to his companion. He had caught instinctively the key-note of the Old World. He observed and enjoyed, he criticized and rhapsodised, but though all things interested him and many delighted him, none surprised him; he invented short cuts and anticipated the unexpected. (106)

In his visits to Paris, Genoa, Milan, Venice and Florence, Roderick simply looked, absorbed and reflected on their great art — "He judged instinctively and passionately, but never vulgarly" (107). Only in Rome however he makes his first great discovery. He perceives that Europe is the world of artificial life, conventions, and "aesthetic revel." Besides, he recognizes the Pope as "the most impressive convention in all history," and that sophistication and aesthetics are part of that world. Roderick thus

> declared that Rome made him feel and understand more things than he could express; he was sure that life must have there for all one's senses an incomparable fineness; that more interesting things must happen to

> one there than anywhere else. And he gave Rowland to understand that he meant to live freely and largely and be as interested as occasion demanded. (108)

Those interesting things Roderick supposes must happen in Rome begin to appear very early. In the Ludovisi gardens, Roderick has his first sight of Christina Light and he gets immensely affected by her looks. Although Christina is an American born as Rowland himself is, from his own judgement, Roderick tells Rowland that Christina is a daughter of the Old World - he sees her as a fruit of that artificial world (110). Then due to that bewilderment provoked by such a beauty, Roderick is inspired to produce his first great works in Europe. He models a life-sized figure of Adam "and all the world came to see it." However great his success is on one hand, he fails on the other. He starts to surrender to the temptations of civilization for he owes every franc of the money Rowland should pay him for the Adam. But, as Roderick is initiated into social evil he experiences another great success as he produces the figure of Eve, and he also has a taste of the fruit of Roman society as Rowland

> introduced [him] right and left, and suffered him to make his way himself - an enterprise for which Roderick very soon displayed an all-sufficient capacity. Wherever he went he made, not exactly what is called a favourable impression, but what, from a practical point of view, is better - a puzzling one... Roderick's manners on the precincts of the Pincian were quite the same as his manners on Cecilia's verandah; that is, they were no manners at all. But it remained as true as before that it would have been impossible on the whole to violate ceremony with less of lasting offence. He interrupted, he contradicted, he spoke to people he had never seen, and left his social creditors without the smallest conversational interest on their loans; he lounged and yawned, he talked loud when he should have talked low, and low when he should have talked loud. Many people in consequence thought him insufferably conceited and declared that... he assumed the airs of a spoiled celebrity.... Certainly, among the young men of genius who for so many ages have gone up to Rome to

> test their powers, none ever made a fairer beginning than Roderick. He rode his two horses at once with extraordinary good fortune; he established the happiest modus vivendi betwixt work and play. (112-4)

Roderick indeed reacts very harshly as he faces such a formal society for he simply imposes his own natural way of life - he imposes his freedom to that world as he best pleases. Even his statues of Adam and Eve, who are symbols of the lost innocence, may also convey his rebellion towards the unnaturalness of the European world. And although Roderick's "delighted freshness" was commented upon as well as his "damned impertinence," Rowland knows that the young man "... was impulsive, spontaneous, sincere; there were so many people at dinner-tables and in studios who were not that it seemed worth while to allow this rare specimen all possible freedom of action" (113).

Chapter 6 then begins with the celebration of Roderick's two great productions of Adam and Eve. Rowland offers a little dinner and invites some artistic friends. As one of those artists suggests that Roderick should make a Judas, the sculptor reacts very harshly: "Never! I mean never to make anything ugly." Thus, by refusing to make a Judas, the betrayer of Christ, Roderick refuses to portray the spots of corruption. In fact, he cares only for "perfect beauty." And as he reinforces his ideal sculptures, he declares his art must convey Beauty, Power, Genius, Daring and all the Forces, and Elements, and Mysteries of Nature. He means to do the Morning, the Night, the Ocean, the Mountains, the Moon and the West Wind. He means to make "a magnificent statue of America" (124). All the greatness Roderick's art must convey is as high as his illusory ambitions, for it implies only the illusion of an idealist's innocent nature. Furthermore, Roderick's ambition seems to be an

attempt to ransom that simple natural world which nature and America stand for; yet, by trying to rescue innocence in Europe, Roderick presents himself again as that rebel who is fighting against the artificiality of the civilized world. Later on, as Rowland shows the picture of Roderick's little statue of the youth water-drinker to Gloriani, that clever and solid sculptor gets tremendously impressed: "it's deucedly pretty, ... But, my dear young friend, you can't keep this up.... Here you stand on tiptoe, very gracefully I admit; but you can't fly; there's no use trying" (125). After that declaration, Gloriani repeats that Roderick will not keep that up for three more times, and finally, he tells Roderick that the artist "must learn to do without the Muse." He insinuates that all Roderick has is passion, and passion burns out (128).

A week after the dinner party, Rowland feels that "the fatal hour foretold by Gloriani has struck." As he meets Roderick in his studio, he can see that his young friend is facing his first sense of collapse:

> 'It's no use, ... I give it up!' ...
> 'The difficult place is here!' And he struck a blow on his heart. 'I don't know what's the matter with me. Nothing comes; all of a sudden I hate things. My old things look ugly; everything looks stupid.' (129)

The only way Rowland finds to relieve Roderick's soul is suggesting a trip. But then, Roderick speaks out right that he wants to travel alone. He says he wants to go his own way, to work when he chooses and to loaf when he chooses. He says he simply wants "to taste of perfect freedom" (130). While Chapter 6 comes to the end with Roderick's first crisis in the Old World, Chapter 7 begins with his enjoying the delights of idleness.

After a month they had separated, Rowland writes to Roderick begging some sign of life. In his answer, Roderick says that he has "learned terribly well how to do nothing," and asks Rowland to send him a hundred pounds for he has lost his last franc in glambling games and made "a villainous heap of debts" (136). Right after that, as Rowland asks him to leave Baden, he answers he will leave the city as soon as he receives another fifty pounds for he has gone back to gambling. When they finally meet in Geneva, Roderick looks tired, flushed and excited. "He implied in every phrase that he had done with licentious experiments," for his stay in Baden

> led him to the discovery that to live with ladies who expect you to present them with expensive bouquets, to ride with them in the Black Forest on well-looking horses, to arrange parties for the opera on nights when Patti sang and the prices were consequent, to propose light suppers at the kursaal or drives by moonlight to the castle, to be always arrayed and anoited, trinketed and gloved - that to move in such society ... though it might be a privilege, was a privilege with a penalty attached. But the tables made such things easy; half the Baden world lived by the tables. Roderick tried them and found them at first a wonderful help. The help however was only momentary, for he soon perceived that to seem to have money, and to have it in fact, exposed a good-looking man to peculiar liabilities. (137)

And then, to conclude the narrative of his new discovery, Roderick tells Rowland he has the conviction he possesses "an almost unlimited susceptibility to the influence of a beautiful woman" (139). Perhaps that weakness to the influence of a beautiful woman may also convey a foreshadowing towards the fate of Roderick's genius.

Back to Rome, Roderick begins to model a new statue - a very sensuous woman: "It represented a woman leaning lazily back in her chair, with her head drooping as if she were listening, a vague

smile on her lips and a pair of remarkably beautiful arms folded in her lap" (139). This time he does portray the spots of corruption which he had previously denied. Since Roderick has had that "taste of perfect freedom" he had longed for, his new sensuous figure seems to have been inspired by the experience he has undergone in Baden-Baden. He still seems to be affected by the vices of that place. When Gloriani examines the new sculpture, he reassures for the fourth time that the young sculptor "couldn't keep up the transcendental style," and congratulates Roderick for becoming a practical man (142). In fact, Roderick's ravenous appetite for life denounces his real identity. He is the very image of his thirsty water-drinker, who is drinking of the cup of experience and pleasure. Being conscious thus of the pleasures he has enjoyed, Roderick recognizes his new statue has "fundamental vices":

> '... I have shuffled them out of sight in a sort of way, but I have not corrected them. I can't - I can't - I can't!' he cried passionately.... 'I wish to heaven some person in particular would buy it and take it off my hands and out of my sight!... What am I to do now? ... What am I to do? (143)

The desperate young sculptor faces again another sense of collapse. He perceives his production of the woman in marble is the very fruit of the social evil he has picked in the civilized world. This time he suffers no longer for his necessity of independence, but for his incapacity to win back his old innocence.

In the stir of the crisis Roderick suffers for the second time, he imposes again all his naturalness the world of conventions lacks as he receives a visit of the beautiful Christina Light and her people whom he had seen a year before in the Ludovisi gardens. Considering that he "was not versed in the usual arts of

hospitality," Roderick does not make the least effort to pay any compliment at all to his visitors. While the little group is appreciating and commenting on his art, they look around waiting for him to manifest. Christina's mother then finds the young man in the other side of the studio revolving about Christina: "Ah, he's gone to look at my beautiful daughter; he is not the first that has had his head turned" (148). By this time Roderick's previous declaration that he possesses "an almost unlimited susceptibility to the influence of a beautiful woman" seems do be half accomplished: he has already got Christina's permission to model her bust without ever sending a word to her mother or even to their old companion, the Cavalier Giacosa. Then, as soon as Roderick's visitors leave his studio, Rowland only lets the sculptor know how sorry he is for his having undertaken Miss Light's bust (151).

In Chapter 9 Rowland begins to get worried about Rodrick. All of a sudden, it seems that the young man begins to descend that hill as fast as he had reached its top. Anyway, the extraordinary success of Christina's bust restores indeed the serenity and joy the sculptor had been lacking. Rowland however was sorry for the object of that success, Christina herself, was the uppermost thing in Roderick's mind:

> He asked himself privately how the deuce Roderick reconciled it to his conscience to think so much more of the girl he was not engaged to than of the other... he wondered gloomily at any rate whether for men of his companion's large easy power there was not a larger moral law... (169-70)

Rowland therefore seems really scandalized by his friend's easy-going nature, or rather, by Roderick's easy morality. Moreover, he does not change his mind as regards Christina. He still sees her as

a bad omen in Roderick's life:

> The impression remained that she was unsafe; that she was a complex, wilful, passionate, creature who might easily engulf a too confiding spirit in the eddies of her capricious temper. And yet he strongly felt her charm; the eddies had a strange fascination! Roderick in the glow of that renewed admiration provoked by the fixed attention of portrayal, was never weary of descanting on the extraordinary perfection of her beauty. (168)

In Chapter 10, Roderick surrenders again to the temptation of money and also experiences his hardest confrontation with that world which will lead him to his third crisis.

First, the painter Miss Blanchard introduces Roderick to her friend the American Mr. Leavenworth, who wants to order "an allegorical representation of Culture" (173). Roderick in turn promises "to do his best to rise to his patron's conception." And as soon as the man leaves his studio, he proves he has also learned how to deal with money by exclaiming very ironically: "His conception be hanged! ... His conception is sitting on an india-rubber cushion, with a pen in her ear and the lists of the stock exchange in her hand. I shall have to invent something myself. For the money I ought to be able to" (174). Then, there is Mrs. Light's party where Roderick suffers his hardest trial in the world of manners. As soon as he meets Rowland in that "brilliant ball," he asks him a question:

> 'Have you seen her?'
> 'I have seen Miss Light,' said Rowland, 'She's magnificent.'
> 'I'm intoxicated with her beauty!' cried Roderick; so loud that several persons turned round.
> Rowland saw that he was flushed, and laid his hand on his arm. Roderick was trembling. 'If you will go away,' Rowland said instantly. 'I will go with you.'

> 'Go away?' cried Roderick, almost angrily.' I intend to dance with her!' (179)

By this time the Cavaliere Giacosa, who was watching the young man's impulsive speech, offers to speak to Roderick as a friend. Nonetheless, at this point, the sculptor would care nothing about nothing at all besides his own will:

> 'Oh, speak even as an enemy and I shall not mind it,' Roderick answered frowning.
> 'Be very reasonable then and go away.'
> 'Why the devil should I go away?'
> 'Because you are in love,' said the Cavaliere.
> 'I might as well be in love here as in the streets.'
> 'Carry your love as far as possible from Christina. She will not listen to you - she can't ... I only beg you to believe that if you continue to love Miss Light you will be very unhappy. Have you a princely tittle? have you a princely fortune? Otherwise you can never have her.... But let me entreat you as an affectionate friend to keep a watch on your emotions. You are young, you are handsome, you have a brilliant genius and a generous heart, but - I may say it almost with authority - Christina is not for you!... She must choose a name and a fortune - and she will!...
> 'We shall see!' said Roderick, with and excited laugh.
> Certainly we shall see. I retire from the discussion,' the Cavaliere added... 'You are already excited.' (179-80)

By becoming aware of the powerful role money and title play in such a society, Roderick does rebel against the whole situation which involves those arrangements towards Christina's great convenient marriage and enters his third crisis feeling completely collapsed again.

In Chapter 11 Roderick leaves Rome for meditation. In Frascatti, a Villa near Rome, Rowland meets Roderick and tells him he has told Christina about his engagement to Mary Garland. The young sculptor gets even worse because of the interference of his

friend and condemns him; he tells Rowland how he should deal with an artist, and claims very heartly again for his "freedom of action" (191-2). At this point, Rowland asks Roderick if he really means that he has "an inexorable need of embarking on a flirtation with Miss Light." The sculptor only answers that he is young, ardent and inquisitive. He shall go as far as fancy leads him. If he is to fizzle out, the sooner he knows it the better. And then, he asks Rowland again to let him go out and meet the enemy, and not sit there waiting for him (192). As a last relief, the young man comes to a conclusion: "I can't work any more... you have upset me.... The next time you mean to render me a service pray give me notice beforehand" (193). Although all Rowland does is just to remind Roderick of his engagement according to his own old request, the young sculptor feels helpless the same way. Finally, still immersed in his third crisis, Roderick's sense of collapse comes to a climax. After Rowland lends him the Inferno of Dante, Roderick gets horribly disgusted though he understands that "A sculptor should model as Dante writes" (194-5). He recognizes that the real nature of a sculptor lies in his "plastic vision" of life. He recognizes that as a sculptor "there are so few subjects he can treat ..."; he cannot put for instance the "Mysteries of Nature" into marble as he had covetted so eagerly in Chapter 6. Nonetheless, Roderick is able to overcome his crisis once again. While he and Rowland are still resting in Frascatti, they meet Mrs. Light with her beautiful daughter, the Cavaliere Giacosa, and Prince Casamassima – the most valuable of Christina's suitors. The next morning, since Roderick has had the chance to walk in the woods of Frascatti with Christina, he decides to go back to Rome as he tells Rowland: "I am back to work. I have an idea. I must strike while the iron is hot" (212).

Roderick thus feels as if the muse has visited him. As a matter of fact, Christina Light is the muse who has apparently saved the genius of the young sculptor. Nonetheless, some days afterwards, Rowland asks Christina to leave Roderick and soon after that meeting Rowland learns Christina has broken off with his young friend who in turn enters his fourth crisis and goes to Naples "to drawn his sorrow in debauchery" (239).

In Rome again, Roderick "had lately begun a representation of a lazzarone lounging in the sun; an image of serene, irresponsible, sensuous life... [it] was the flower of a perfect civilization" (240). Over again Roderick's art reflects his own plight. And by the time Mr. Leavenworth learns the statue he has ordered is a drunk fellow, he protests stating that intoxication is a transitory attitude and it is not proper for sculpture. But then, Roderick argues ironically that "Lying dead drunk is not a transitory attitude. Nothing is more monumental" (240). In fact, the young sculptor's drunk fellow is quite ambiguous. It conveys both the fruit of civilization he has picked since he has had a taste of frivolous life in both Naples and Baden, and his own immature and unconscious side - his ingrained innocence. At all events, Roderick feels perfectly comfortable with the idea of being permanently numb. However, as soon as he learns from Mr. Leavenworth that Miss Light's engagement to Prince Casamassima has been announced, he simply has an attack of "Infernal humour." Rowland in turn tells Roderick he is "standing on the edge of a gulf" for he refuses to keep his treat with Mr. Leavenworth and finish his order (244). Anyway, due to Christina's engagement, Roderick declares his inspiration is dead and falls deeply into his fifth prolonged crisis.

Since Rowland first began to suspect Roderick's fate in Chapter 9, that same intolerable weight still remains on his heart throughout Chapter 16. In the previous chapter, Rowland said that Roderick stood on the edge of a gulf. Now, he has a vision of Roderick lying already dead in the gulf. Due to that enduring agony, Rowland feels he should restore his friend to his mother and fiancée by bringing them to Rome. For Rowland's great surprise, Roderick does not even go to meet the ship at his people's arrival. In fact, after being two years away from home, all he says about his mother is an observation on her expression: "It makes [her] a very good face - very interesting, very solemn. It has very fine lines in it; something might be done with it" (261). Since Roderick is already absorbed in that world of formalities, ceremonies and artificialities, he is limited to the beauty of forms, to his own plastic vision of things - he sees everything in terms of aesthetic beauty. He does not see his mother with filial affection, but rather as an interesting figure to be modelled as he sees Christina herself. Roderick indeed has become as superficial as his own plastic view of everything - as artificial as Europe itself. And despite the young man's apparent serenity, Rowland suspects he is not really happy for in his vision, "... the benefits to proceed from the presence of the two ladies remained shrouded in mystery. Roderick was peculiary inscrutable" (275).

The bust of Mrs. Hudson the young sculptor had undertaken is ready by this time. He considers it a masterpiece; and declares that he has "paid the filial debt handsomely" (277). Gloriani, who is a "genuine connoisseur," gets really puzzled and overwhelmed as he sees the bust. He is amazed by the way Roderick produced the lady's small face: "its sweetness, its mildness, its still maternal

passion, with the most unerring art" (281). And finally he declares: "Well, it's deuced perfect, it's deuced simple; I do believe in him! ... It's a pearl of pearls" (282). The perfection of that bust makes Gloriani think that Roderick is very fond of his mother. But what he really does not know is that the young sculptor's passion is devoted to aesthetic beauty in the first place — he is in love with his mother's present expression, in the same way as he is passionate for Christina's beauty. In fact, Rowland's suspicion that Roderick might be unhappy and tired of his folks becomes a reality as the sculptor's "infernal humour" rises up again:

> Your invention is a failure!...
> Bringing out my mother and Mary...
> It's no use! They don't help me...
> Another week of it and I shall begin to hate them.
> I shall want to poison them. (277-8)

Rowland then reminds his friend again of his engagement to Mary Garland. However all Roderick knows is that Mary idolizes him, and states that his mother and Mary are no more for him than a Bible for an atheist (178).

At last, in Chapter 20, Roderick's fifth crisis comes to an end as he learns Christina has broken off her magnificent engagement; and because of that sudden happiness his unlimited freedom also comes to its climax. As the sculptor's attitudes are as cold as the marble of his sculptures, he withdraws for a retreat and leaves his poor mother and Mary in total despair with a simple note that says: "I have something else to do. This will occupy me perhaps a week, and you will not see me. Don't miss me — learn not to miss me. R.H." (301). Then, in order to relieve Mrs. Hudson's soul,

Rowland goes after her son.

> He found him in his sitting-room, which had been closely darkened to keep out the heat. The carpets and rugs had been removed, the floor of speckled concrete was bare, and lightly sprinkled with water. Here and there, over it, certain strongly odorous flowers had been scattered. Roderick was lying on his divan in a white dressing-gown, staring up at the frescoped ceiling. The room was deliciously cool, and filled with the moist sweet fragance of the circumjacent roses and violets. All this seemed highly fantastic, and yet Rowland hardly felt surprised..... [Roderick] was smelling a large white rose, which he continued to present to his nose. In the darkness of the room he looked exceedingly pale, but his handsome eyes had an extraordinary brilliancy. (302)

In truth, as Rowland calls it, the sculptor is making a "great holiday" of Christina's break with the Prince. But despite Roderick's happy celebration, as soon as he learns about Christina's "hurried private marriage," his last enduring crisis, the sixth one, comes up. This time he does not resist anymore. He surrenders completely to that new collapse. Now Rowland goes after him again, but finds the young man in his most terrible and depressing humour:

> ... I am an angry savage, disappointed, miserable man! ... I mean that I can't do a stroke of work nor think a profitable thought! I mean that I am in a state of helpless rage and grief and shame! Helpless, helpless - that's what it is ... A year ago I was a mighty fine fellow; but do you know what has become of me now? I have gone to the devil! ... I am a failure, that's all; I am not a first-rate man. I am second-rate, anything you please. After that it's all one! ... I have done no work!... Couldn't you see I was idle, distracted, debauched?' (321-24)

At this point of Roderick's desperate speech, all the suffering he has been experiencing also reaches its climax as he tells his mother about his passion for Christina and her betrayal:

> I have only been thinking night and day of another woman! ... My head is filled with her: I could think of nothing else; I would have sacrificed everything to her - you, Mary, Mallet, my work, my fortune, my future, my honour! ... She led me to believe that she would send her prince about his business and keep herself free and sacred and pure for me... She did everything to encourage me to hope it would; everything that her infernal coquetry and falsity could suggest.' (324)

Considering that "There was no space in Mrs. Hudson's tiny maternal mind for complications of feeling, and one emotion existed only by turning another over flat and perching on top of it," she simply suggests that Roderick should forget all that and work. Roderick thus is attacked again by another fit of anger: "'Work, madame? ... My work's over. I can't work ... But there's perfect vacuum here!' And he tapped his forehead. 'It's bigger than ever; it grows bigger every hour'" (326). After Roderick had been tapping his forehead so many times as his most valuable thing he seemed to give it up then. The emptiness which is taking possession of him also conveys a foreshadowing of his own gradual end, as if he had already begun to "fizzle out" according to his own prediction.

The next day, after the young man's outbreak, Rowland urges him to make up his mind, as an attempt to make him overcome his crisis: "You must do something ... Choose, select, decide" (328). Roderick however remains that same immature fellow Christina had already urged to choose between her and Mary - he is still unable to make a choice or decide anything. Thus, the burden of that decision is left to Rowland who decides to go with Roderick and his people to the delightful Villa Pandofini which stood "on the top of a hill" near the gates of Florence. The same image of Rowland's previous allusion that Roderick was on the edge of a gulf is repeated again.

Now Roderick stands on the top of a hill. No matter if he is either on the top or on the edge. In either case he is in the end; he is facing his most dramatic trial in the Old World; he is experiencing the turning point of his sixth crisis. It is the trial which leads the young sculptor to his greatest fall - the decay of his genius. Villa Pandofini itself is as beautiful as gloomy. The very place where Roderick and his folks are is as quiet and cold as death itself: "The rooms themselves were as high as chapels and as cool as royal sepulcres. Silence, peace and security seemed to abide in the ancient house and make it an ideal refuge for unsuccessful lives" (333). Certainly, that place is full of unsuccessful lives. Once Roderick cannot succeed with Christina Light he cannot succeed with his work either. Consequently, Rowland, Mary Garland and Mrs. Hudson are also unable to succeed with him. Roderick himself, always dressed in white, reassures that his genius is dead: "... you needn't trouble yourselves any longer to wait something to turn up. Nothing will turn up! it's all over!... I recommend you to set me up there at the end of the garden and shoot me" (342). Of course he was not being serious, for the party goes to Switzerland because of his wish to leave Italy.

In Switzerland they stay in a little inn that stood in a high shallow valley. The image of Roderick on the top, facing his own end, is repeated over again. In fact, the most striking foreshadowing which really annouces fatality appears now, in Chapter 23, while Roderick talks to Rowland:

> Pity me my friend; pity me!... Look at this lovely world and think what it must be to be dead to it! ... Dead, dead, dead and buried! ... I shall never be anything again ... I know what I have lost, and I think it horrible! Mind you, I know it, I feel it! ... Don't say that he was stupefied and senseless; that his perception was dulled and his aspiration dead. Say that he trembled in every nerve with a

> sense of the beauty and sweetness of life; that he rebelled and protested and struggled; that he was buried alive, with his eyes open and his heart beating to madness ... that it was the most pitiful spectacle you ever beheld; that it was a scandal, an outrage, a murder! ... But I am bidding farewell to Italy, to beauty, to honour, to life! I only want to assure you that I know what I lose ... Good-bye, charming world! (348-9)

Although Roderick seems so conscious of the beauty and treacheries of the apparent world, his interior blindness, or his own egotism, does not allow him to think of the people who care for him. He seems to be sorry only for what he loses - for the world he bids farewell to.

Later on, for the young sculptor's great surprise, he meets Christina once more and gets even more restless and unhappy. Even the air, which is usually so fresh at that altitude, is "oppressively heavy" now. The young man then asks Rowland for a thousand francs to see Christina in Interlaken. Rowland however denies it, and urges Roderick to make a decision once again: "If you have the energy to desire, you have also the energy to reason and to judge. If you can care to go, you can care to stay ..." (372). Roderick nonetheless feels able neither to decide nor to discuss the question at issue. He simply protests. Since he can see no woman, no despair, no desire in Rowland's apparent world, he misjudges his friend's conduct. He fails to see that Rowland has been hiding his love and admiration for Mary Garland the whole time, only because of that capricious engagement Roderick himself invented to nourish his vanity. By now, the turning point of that whole affair can not be hold anymore. Rowland finally has an outbreak. He confesses his love for Mary and gives a whole account on the way the young sculptor has really behaved. He says that Roderick knows

nothing about his senses and his imagination - whether he has loved or suffered; that it has been a "perpetual sacrifice to live with a transcendent egotist," for the young sculptor thinks only of himself and believes only in himself. After Rowland's impressive words, Roderick is so stupefied and in such a state of distress that he can only say very few things to Rowland. In fact, very few things can flow from that sense of darkness and suffocation the young man is immersed in:

> 'My indiference, my neglect of [Mary], must have seemed to you horrible. Altogether I must have appeared simply hideous.... I have been damnably stupid. Isn't an artist supposed to be a man of perceptions? I am hugely disgusted.... Nevertheless, I must have seemed hideous ... Certainly I can shut up shop now.... I am fit only to be alone. I am damned! ... There is only one way. I have been hideous!' And he broke off and marched away with his long elastic step, ... and then abruptly turned and disappeared below the crest of a hill. (378-9)

Those were Roderick's last words. After recognizing his wrong and calling himself "hideous" for some five times, he gives himself his final sentence. He is no longer on the edge of a gulf nor on the top of a mountain. This time Roderick's "unlimited susceptibility to the influence of a beautiful woman" is completely accomplished. In fact, he has already been engulfed in the eddies of Christina's capricious temper as foreseen by Rowland in Chapter 9. Now Roderick lies dead in the bottom of a mountain. For Philip M. Weinstein in his book **Henry James and the Requirements of the Imagination**, "Roderick finds ... that experience, as he sought it, has devastated his fragile talent and left him ... with nothing." And in fact, according to Mr. Weinstein, "Roderick has been destroyed by his uncontrolled, egocentric passions..."[3] Now it does not matter

whether Roderick has commited suicide or has simply slipped and fallen from a great height. The only evidence of the matter is that he fails to deal with the reality he is surrounded by.

After pointing out all those step-by-step moments of Roderick in Europe, I arrive at the conclusion that Roderick's process into awareness is demonstrated throughout his sculptures which reveal the several steps of his initiation and his emotional ups and downs in contact with the European world. His first great productions of Adam and Eve, for instance, may represent either his innocent world or his own protest against the lost innocence in the civilized world. Then there is the sensuous woman which is the very fruit of the promiscuous life he experienced in Baden-Baden. After that, he models Christina's bust. Christina Light whom he first saw as an "illusion" and "the incarnation of evil" represents Europe itself and all its aesthetic beauty. She symbolizes all those temptations Roderick does not resist. Quite the contrary, he surrenders to Christina in the same way as he surrenders to the temptations of the European world. Then he makes a Lazzarone - another representation of the corrupt life he experienced in Naples and, at last, he makes the bust of Mrs. Hudson. By modelling his mother, he may be in search of that sublime innocence he once possessed in his mother country. But it is too late. The thirsty youth, or that very statuette which symbolizes the sulptor himself, has already drunk of the cup of knowledge of the world.

Although Roderick consciously rejects the European values, he is really contaminated, corrupted and led by those temptations of the old world. He falls thus in so far as he loses his innocence. He loses his innocence as he undergoes crisis after crisis. And he suffers a crisis in so far as he acquires experience of the world;

as he makes discoveries in the European society; as the unlimited freedom, crudeness and inexperience of the American self confront the conveniences of the Old World. Roderick indeed falls. He does meet evil. And his decisive fall from innocence culminates with the betrayal he suffers on account of Christina Light's sudden marriage with Prince Casamassima. And because of Christina's betrayal, Roderick is led to his last crisis which triggers the complete fall of his genius and his own literal fatal fall from the Swiss cliff. Those crises or falls were thus really necessary for Roderick's acquisition of knowledge - for the acquisition of the experience he got as the result of his exposure to European society. As Philip M. Weinstein himself expands on this subject, he states that "the real experience of [James's] heroes is the drama of their discovery of [inadequate relations], the drama of their illusions, and their disillusionment ... a cerebral drama full of suffering and painful personal growth ..."[4]

At the end of his experience, Roderick denies not only Rome which represents Europe itself but also his mother, his fiancée and even Mr. Leavenworth, who are representatives of the American country. In fact he can tolerate neither the idea of going back to America nor of staying in Rome. He can fit in nowhere in the same way as he keeps neither the Europeanized Christina Light - the light of his ephemeral success, nor the American Mary Garland - the eternal bride who preserves her garland resignedly all the time. In short, he rejects the values of both Europe and America. Europe is corrupt, America is too crude. He remains alone. He can not decide. And that is why he remains incomplete - though he acquires knowledge and experience of the world, he does not achieve maturity. At all events, that intensity Henry James had sighed for is achieved by the

young sculptor. Roderick does experience the fullest intensity his being can bear - though the illusion produced by it makes him lose the very light of his life.

Notes

[1] Frederick J. Hoffman, "Freedom and Concious Form: Henry James and The American Self". Virginia Quaterly Review XXXVII (Spring, 1961) 274.

[2] Ihab Hassan, "The Dialectic of Initiation in America", Radical Innocence: Studies In The Contemporary - American Novel (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961) 39-40.

[3] Philip M. Weinstein, Henry James and the Requirements of the Imagination (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1971) 28.

[4] Weinstein 199.

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

> ... the question here was that of producing the maximum of intensity with the minimum of strain.
> James, **The Portrait of a Lady**

Again there is the naive American in the presence of a world more sophisticated than his/her own. As Roderick Hudson comes to Europe for the quest of aesthetic appreciation, Isabel Archer comes for the refinement of her intellect. And like her fellow countryman, she is also innocent as regards the traditions, manners, and the social conventions of the Old World. On account of Isabel's ignorance of these aspects, she needs to submit to the discipline of European manners. In submitting her natural self to the mode of manners and propriety, she must surrender her personality. Nevertherless, Isabel's own sense of freedom is, no doubt, the chief evidence of her innocence in the Old World. As a mostly common American characteristic, thus, Isabel repeatedly asserts her independence, or at least her desire for liberty, as a general point throughout the first half of the book. In so far as she praises her love of freedom, she reveals how naive she is, or rather, she

reveals her innocence towards the old world.

Isabel's story begins with the news that she is coming to Europe with her aunt Mrs. Touchett. Even before her arrival at Gardencourt, the residence of the American family Touchett in England, the young lady from Albany, New York, is already mentioned as "quite independent," and that "she's just the person to go abroad," for "her love of knowledge had a fertilizing quality and her imagination was strong" (23). Thus, as a first step towards her introduction to the world and the development of her mind, Isabel Archer refuses her first proposal of marriage by the Bostonian businessman Caspar Goodwood and ventures into the cultivated civilization of the Old World.

The portrait of the young innocent lady has its start at Gardencourt: Isabel looks confident, intelligent, excited and high-spirited. From the first, she asserts her free nature to her cousin Ralph by stating to him that "I'm not a candidate for adoption.... I'm very fond of my liberty" (21). And because of her general state of alertness and romantic imagination, Isabel recognizes the old-world quality in everything she sees, besides connecting the idea of Lords and ghosts to the European scenery. While she takes a look at her uncle's gallery of pictures, she asks her cousin about "the ghost" for some three times. Ralph in turn only replies that "I might show it to you, but you'd never see it. The privilege isn't given to everyone: it's not enviable. It has never been seen by a young, happy, innocent person like you. You must have suffered first, have suffered greatly, have gained some miserable knowledge. In that way your eyes are opened to it" (48). On the other hand, Isabel sees Gardencourt itself as "a picture made real" (54) because of its "Edenic quality"1 as suggested by Lyall H. Powers. Moreover, Richard Chase also conveys that Gardencourt stands for "Isabel's

Evelike innocence"2 in his book **The American Novel and Its Tradition**. Isabel proceeds with her inquiry about the English character, the manners and peculiarities of the aristocracy, the way of living and thinking of Mr. Touchett's neighbours. She wants to know if the English people correspond to the descriptions in the novels she has read. At last, she points out that "the English are very conventional", but she is "just the contrary" (58). For sure, this last assertion of her own character echoes the innocent theories Isabel herself preaches:

> ... In matters of opinion she had had her own way, and it had led her into a thousand ridiculous zigzags. At moments she discovered she was grotesquely wrong, and then she treated herself to a week of passionate humility. After this she held her head higher than ever again; for it was of no use, she had an unquenchable desire to think well of herself. She had a theory that it was only under this provision life was worth living; that one should be one of the best, should be conscious of a fine organization (she couldn't help knowing her organization was fine), should move in a realm of light, of natural wisdom, of happy impulse, of inspiration gracefully chronic... She spent half her time in thinking of beauty and bravery and magnanimity; she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action: she held it must be detestable to be afraid or ashamed. She had an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong. She had resented so strongly, after discovering them, her mere errors of feeling (the discovery always made her tremble as if she had escaped from a trap which might have caught her and smothered her) that the chance of inflicting a sensible injury upon another person, presented only as a contingency, caused her at moments to hold her breath. That always struck her as the worst thing that could happen to her. On the whole, reflectively, she was in no uncertainty about the things that were wrong. She had no love of their look, but when she fixed them hard she recognized them. It was wrong to be mean, to be jealous, to be false, to be cruel; she had seen very little of the evil of the world, but she had seen women who lied and who tried to hurt each other. Seeing such things had quickened her high spirit; it seemed indecent not to scorn them... But Isabel, who knew little of the sorts of artillery to which young women are exposed,

> flattered herself that such contradictions would never be noted in her own conduct. Her life should always be in harmony with the most pleasing impression she should produce; she would be what she appeared, and she would appear what she was. Sometimes she went so far as to wish that she might find herself some day in a difficult position, so that she should have the pleasure of being as heroic as the occasion demanded. (50-51)

Indeed, according to Isabel herself, her point of view is "thoroughly American," and according to her aunt Mrs. Touchett, it is "shockingly narrow" (59-60). As regards the young lady's hunger for "the best," the critic Christof Wegelin in his book **The Image of Europe in Henry James**, thinks that "'The best' is part of the facile vocabulary by which provincials and snobs make known their awareness of what goes in the way of 'culture' and social form."3

The first incident as regards Isabel's confrontation with the European manners occurs then when the Touchetts receive their English friend Lord Warburton for a couple of days at Gardencourt. Mrs. Touchett makes a real scene as Isabel decides to stay up longer with the gentlemen: "You can't stay alone with the gentlemen. You're not - you're not at your blest Albany, my dear," she says. And later on, there is the discussion:

> 'Of course you're vexed at my interfering with you', said Mrs Touchett.
> Isabel considered, 'I'm not vexed, but I'm surprised - and a good deal mystified. Wasn't it proper I should remain in the drawing-room?'
> 'Not in the least. Young girls here - in decent houses - don't sit alone with the gentlemen late at night.'
> 'You were very right to tell me then,' said Isabel. 'I don't understand it, but I'm very glad to know it.'
> 'I shall always tell you,' her aunt answered, 'whenever I see you taking what seems to me too much liberty.'
> 'Pray do; but I don't say I shall always think your remonstrance just.'
> 'Very likely not. You're too fond of your own ways.'

> 'Yes, I think I'm very fond of them. But I always want to know the things one shouldn't do.'
> 'So as to do them?' asked her aunt.
> 'So as to choose,' said Isabel. (67-68)

After assuring her aunt of her freedom of choice, Isabel refuses Lord Warburton's proposal of marriage for that very reason: "she had a system and an orbit of her own" (102). Although Isabel is already enjoying the environment of high civilization, and despite seeing Lord Warburton "as a hero of romance" (66), she refuses the aristocratic gentleman. For Isabel, though Lord Warburton is endowed with "great responsibilities, great opportunities, great consideration, great wealth, great power [and] a natural share in the public affairs of a great country" (71), he is also endowed with a very simple and limited mind: "Isabel was often amused at his explicitness and at the small allowance he seemed to make either for her own experience or for her imagination." Isabel perceives indeed Lord Warburton considers her a "barbarian" or something like a savage (70). Moreover, as the young lady declares she wants to see as many countries as possible so that she can improve her mind, the English Lord simply asks her if England is not enough for her. Then, not even the Lord's plea that he does not offer her "any exoneration from life" can change the young lady's mind (131-32). Isabel's cousin himself cannot understand "... what a young lady does who won't marry Lord Warburton" (149). And yet, Isabel insists on her theories of an ideal freedom:

> 'I don't see what harm there is in my wishing not to tie myself. I don't want to begin life by marrying. There are other things a woman can do.'
> 'There's nothing she can do so well. But you're of course so many-sided.'
> 'If one's two-sided it's enough,' said Isabel.
> 'You're the most charming of polygons!' her companion broke out. At a glance from his companion, however, he became grave, and to prove it went on: 'You want to see life - you'll be

> hanged if you don't, as the young men say.'
> 'I don't think I want to see it as the young men want to see it. But I do want to look about me.'
> 'You want to drain the cup of experience.'
> 'No, I don't wish to touch the cup of experience. It's a poisoned drink! I only want to see for myself.'
> 'You want to see, but not to feel,' Ralph remarked. (150)

When the American Caspar Goodwood comes to Europe to make Isabel another proposal, the young lady refuses him again for he "had never corresponded to her idea of a delightful person" (116-17). Besides considering him too straight, stiff, and serious, she judges him as "very simple minded" for "he showed his appetites and designs too simply and artlessly" (117). Isabel thus defends again her ideas on freedom to Goodwood:

> I like my liberty too much. If there's a thing in the world I'm fond of ... it's my personal independence.... Besides, I try to judge things for myself; to judge wrong, I think, is more honourable than not to judge at all. I don't wish to be a mere sheep in the flock; I wish to choose my fate and know something of human affairs beyond what other people think is compatible with propriety to tell me. (161)

Now Isabel is found in complete satisfaction for having refused two ardent suitors. That makes justice to her "love of liberty" - "she had tasted of the delight, if not of battle, at least of victory; she had done what was truest to her plan" (164). And to make Isabel still more fortunate, her cousin Ralph asks his father to make the young lady another heiress of his. For Ralph, "if she has an easy income she'll never have to marry for a support," and by becoming rich, she will be free "to meet the requirements" of her imagination. Ralph wants indeed "to put a little wind in her sails," to see her "going before the breeze" (182-84).

Still at Gardencourt, the cultural clash is firmly established when Isabel meets Madame Merle - the specimen of a genuine European lady. From the first, Isabel perceives Mme. Merle is a cultivated woman of charming manners and large experience. Through further observation, the young lady considers Mme. Merle "the most comfortable, profitable, amenable person to live with... She had become too flexible, too useful, ... too ripe and too final. She was in a word too perfectly the social animal that man and woman are supposed to have been intended to be ..." (191-192). Moreover, Isabel learns Mme. Merle "is incapable of a mistake." That she is "the most tactful woman" who "does everything beautifully"; and finally, "one of the most brilliant women in Europe" (176, 194). Mme. Merle herself says to Isabel: "I belong to the old, old world" (196). No doubt Mme. Merle is Europe personified, or rather, the prototype of the famous "femme du monde" James depicts so beautifully in his works. Indeed, from a discussion with Mme. Merle, Isabel learns (though unconsciously) about the Europeans' attachment, or commitment, to their society:

> I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for things! One's self - for other people - is one's expression of one's self; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps these things are all expressive. (201)

Isabel, on the other hand, without reaching the full depth of Mme. Merle's statement, preaches the individual's break with society, or rather, she presents her own innocent view based only on her free nature and moral spontaneity:

> Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything's on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one. Certainly the

> clothes which, as you say, I choose to wear, don't express me; and heaven forbid they should! ... My clothes may express the dressmaker, but they don't express me. To begin with it's not my own choice that I wear them; they're imposed upon me by society. (201-202)

Concerning thus Mme. Merle's and Isabel's view of the individual-society relation, the critic Gordon Pieri states in his article "**The Portrait of a Lady (1881)**" that "Madame Merle's view has affiliations with conservatism, classicism, pessimism, paganism; it is the realist and, in the Jamesian context, the European view, while Isabel's is romantic, optimistic, Christian, idealist and, in the Jamesian context, American."4 Similar to Gordon Pieri's statement, Frederick C. Crews in his book **The Tragedy of Manners: Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James** asserts that Isabel "sees the individual soul as completely independent of 'society'"; that she "thinks of the soul as a fixed entity, sacred and unalterable," while "Madame Merle sees it as pliable, subject to enrichment or impoverishment by favorable or unfavorable opportunities." Besides, for Crews, while Mme. Merle sees herself from the outside, Isabel sees herself from the inside only. In short, while Mme. Merle's interest lies in the visible and external, or rather, in society itself, Isabel's lies in the essence of the individual only.5

Later on, as soon as Madame Merle learns Isabel has been made rich at the death of Mr. Touchett, the "blackbird,"6 as the critic Gordon Pieri treats Mme. Merle, starts spreading its wings upon Isabel's life, and so, to darken her fate. As "a mistress of the social art" due to her "general performance," Mme. Merle begins to manipulate Isabel, so that the young lady may marry her close friend, the Europeanized middle-aged widower Gilbert Osmond who "has no career, no name, no position, no fortune, no past, no future, no

anything" (197). Isabel in turn, now an heiress, has been taken to Florence by her aunt. By discreet machinations of Mme. Merle, Isabel meets Gilbert Osmond at Mrs. Touchett's Palazzo Crescentini in Florence. During their encounter, both Mme. Merle and Osmond act like "distinguished performers figuring for a charity" in the presence of Isabel (247). And by the time Isabel visits Mr. Osmond at his residence in the top of a hill, which represents "a symbol of his expatriation not merely from America but from all human community"7 according to Christof Wegelin, the young lady feels oppressed and struck by "the accumulation of beauty and knowledge to which she found herself introduced" (263). Concerning Osmond himself, "she had never met a person of so fine a grain" (261); and, for sure, for the first time Isabel is really affected in the presence of a man:

> A part of Isabel's fatigue came from the effort to appear as intelligent as she believed Madame Merle had described her, and from the fear (very unusual with her) of exposing - not her ignorance; for that she cared comparatively little - but her possible grossness of perception. It would have annoyed her to express a liking for something he, in his superior enlightenment, would think she oughtn't to like; or to pass by something at which the truly initiated mind would arrest itself. She had no wish to fall into that grotesqueness - in which she had seen women (and it was a warning) serenely, yet ignobly, flounder. She was very careful therefore as to what she said, as to what she noticed or failed to notice; more careful than she had ever been before. (263)

As regards Osmond's own impression of Isabel, he declares her single fault is that she has "too many ideas" (286). Nonetheless, before Isabel starts out on her travels, Osmond makes himself "a delightful associate" while manipulating and encouraging the young lady to experience her freedom: "Go everywhere... do everything; get everything out of life. Be happy - be triumphant" (309). Then, after

reminding Isabel that "... one ought to make one's life a work of art" (307-308), Osmond gives her his last advice: "Do everything that's proper; I go in for that. Excuse my being so patronizing. You say you don't know me, but when you do you'll discover what a worship I have for propriety." Feeling grave Isabel asks him: "You're not conventional?," to which Osmond only replies he is "convention itself" (312). Though she does not suspect the depth and seriousness of his declaration, Isabel has had her last chance to praise her freedom as she tells Osmond she is glad they are separating.

After "seeing the world" for a whole year on travels, Isabel is able to perceive how much her mind has been improved. Now she feels "... a very different person from the frivolous young woman from Albany who had begun to take the measure of Europe on the lawn of Gardencourt a couple of years before" (319). In fact, her intellectual progress allows her seeing Mme. Merle a little deeper. As Isabel takes another three months' trip, this time with that lady, she perceives "... there was a corner of the curtain that never was lifted; it was as if [Mme. Merle] had remained after all something of a public performer, condemned to emerge only in character and in costume" (324). Although this discovery operates as a shock to Isabel, the young lady becomes engaged to Gilbert Osmond in spite of the disapproval and insinuation of Mrs. Touchett that her niece is going to marry "that man" - "Madame Merle's friend" (333). Isabel indeed ignores not only her aunt's disapproval, but her two sisters', her friend Henrietta Stackpole's, and her cousin Ralph's who "could neither assent with sincerity nor protest with hope" because of his love for Isabel and his serious illness (339). Feeling disjoined from all her folks, Isabel feels even a higher relief for "the world lay before her - she could do

whatever she chose" (322), and "she married to please herself" only (349). Moreover, she decides to marry Osmond because of the "unlimited expansion" she believes his extremely refined aesthetic sense will provide her. In fact, Isabel believes Osmond "knows everything, he understands everything, he has the kindest, gentlest, highest spirit." Besides, her single ambition is "to be free to follow out a good feeling" (346-47). Isabel knows thus that choosing Osmond means to break all other ties. But what she does not know is that getting free from one side means her own imprisonment on the other one, that Osmond "never forgot himself...; and so he never forgot to be graceful and tender, to wear the appearance - which presented indeed no difficulty - of stirred senses and deep intentions" (350).

Finally married to Osmond, Isabel begins to fall - to lose her innocence and her sense of ideal freedom. Through her marriage thus, Isabel starts descending into hell and seeing, at last, where "the ghost" she had previously inquired about is. For sure, after three years as the wife of Osmond the portrait of a lady is almost finished. Isabel has surrendered her old personality, and now, she has another identity. Living in Rome, at Palazzo Roccanera - "a high house in the very heart of Rome," and "a kind of domestic fortress ... which smelt of historic deeds, of crime and craft and violence ..." (364) suggesting both disappointment and depression, Isabel is found as someone who "had more the air of being able to wait" (367), than that "thirsty person draining cup after cup" as she used to be as a single young lady (323). In fact, now she faces a form of imprisonment much worse than the one she had escaped from in Albany, or even at Gardencourt. Lord Warburton himself, who comes to Isabel under the pretence of telling her about Ralph's declining health, finds his old lover castrated, passive and all submitted to her

husband's will. Isabel indeed shows Lord Warburton she is not the agent of her actions anymore: "I enjoy things when they're done, but I've no ideas. I can never propose anything." And she accepts what others propose "for the most part" (385). Ralph Touchett in turn also perceives his cousin would always wear a mask for him, because "there was something fixed and mechanical in the serenity painted [on her face]," which he does not consider "an expression" but rather "a representation" (392). Isabel thus has incorporated herself into the world of appearances; and Ralph does see the character she represents is Osmond himself, since

> ... under the guise of caring only for intrinsic values Osmond lived exclusively for the world. Far from being its master as he pretended to be, he was its very humble servant, and the degree of its attention was his only measure of success. He lived with his eye on it from morning till night, and the world was so stupid it never suspected the trick. Everything he did was pose — pose so subtly considered that if one were not on the lookout one mistook it for impulse, Ralph had never met a man who lived so much in the land of consideration. His tastes, his studies, his accomplishments, his collections, were all for a purpose. His life on his hill-top at Florence had been the conscious attitude of years. His solitude, his ennui, his love for his daughter, his good manners, his bad manners, were so many features of a mental image constantly present to him as a model of impertinence and mystification. His ambition was not to please the world, but to please himself by exciting the world's curiosity and then declining to satisfy it. It had made him feel great, ever, to play the world a trick. (394)

Though Isabel has been submitted to conventions because of her husband, she has also become quite conscious of her plight. Starting into a long reflexion, she perceives she "... became acquainted with revulsions, with disgusts; there were days when the world looked black and she asked herself with some sharpness what it was that she was pretending to live for" (401). And through "a confusion of regrets" and "a complication of fears," Isabel arrives at the

obvious discovery that "a girl in love was ... not a free agent" (404-405). But then as soon as she finds Madame Merle and Osmond alone in the drawing-room of Palazzo Roccanera, "their relative positions, their absorbed mutual gaze, struck her as something detected" (408). She perceives thus that Mme. Merle is a stronger menace to her freedom than her love for Osmond. In fact, Isabel has already discovered that "that personage [Mme. Merle] was armed at all points; it was a pleasure to see a character so completely equipped for the social battle. She carried her flag discreetly, but her weapons were polished steel, and she used them with a skill which struck Isabel as more and more that of a vetereran" (401). Besides, Isabel also perceives that Mme. Merle possessed "clever tricks," and that she "recognized no embarrassments," due to the fine "duplicity" that lady plays so well (402-403). Feeling uneasy about Mme. Merle, Isabel finally suspects that lady has "had a hand in Gilbert Osmond's marriage," but not in hers; that Mme. Merle took a good interest in Osmond's future, but not in hers (404).

Isabel's definitive awakening occurs at last in her long meditative vigil, far into the night, when the truth about her marriage and her husband come to her in Chapter 42. Given up to her reflexions, Isabel's bright inner flame seems to extinguish along with the dying fire she is sitting by. As the wife of Osmond, Isabel does not see life as a synonym for freedom anymore; and neither is Osmond that "delightful" man she had first met. Now she considers

> ... life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end. Instead of leading to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, so that one could look down with a sense of exaltation and advantage, and judge and choose and pity, it led rather downward and earthward, into realms of restriction and depression where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above, and where it served to deepen the feeling of failure. It was

> her deep distrust of her husband – this was what darkened the world. (424-25)

Indeed, now Isabel sees that her ideal freedom of seeing "the cup of experience" without touching it has played her a trick – that it is impossible to experience anything without feeling its taste. And by discovering her husband's real character, she recognizes "she had seen only half of his nature then, as one saw the disk of the moon when it was partly masked by the shadow of the earth. She saw the full moon now – she saw the whole man" (426). Moreover, this time Isabel understands what Osmond had meant when he told her she had "too many ideas" – "what he had meant had been the whole thing – her character, the way she felt, the way she judged... She had a certain way of looking at life which he took as a personal offence." Doubtless what Osmond really takes as an "offence" is Isabel's free nature, her spontaneity, her lack of formality, her disregard to conventions and, in short, her whole American background that confronted with his love for the conventional. And the conventional was "the mansion of [Osmond's] own habitation" to which he had led Isabel into – "it was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation" (429). For sure, Osmond was unable to live without society: "it was altogether a thing of forms, a conscious, calculated attitude. He was fond of the old, the consecrated, the transmitted; so was [Isabel] but she pretended to do what she chose with it" (431). Though Isabel does care about a society more sophisticated than her own, she will not become another slave of its forms like her husband himself. And that was her mistake for Osmond: "Her mind was to be his ... he expected her intelligence to operate altogether in his favour ... He had expected his wife to feel with him and for him, to enter his opinions, his ambitions, his preferences..." (432). If Isabel had been falling into hell, now she

feels inside the pit itself. In fact, Gordon Pieri also interprets Roccanera, the name of Isabel and Osmond's residence, as the "Black Rock,"8 or the dark world. All that is left to her then is to wonder about "what was coming - what was before them? ... What would he do - what ought she to do? ..." As Isabel's lonely vigil comes to the end, a remembered vision also comes back to her mind "- that of her husband and Madame Merle unconsciously and familiarly associated" (433-35). Probably, the burning fire Isabel had been sitting by was the very fire of her innocence that gave way to her growing knowledge while it was dying.

As Isabel still reflects about Mme. Merle later on, she wonders "... whether the most discreet of women might not also by chance be the most dangerous" (484). Her doubt then is completely clarified in Chapter 49, by the time Mme. Merle comes to Rome to accuse her of having prevented Lord Warburton, Isabel's old suitor, from marrying Osmond's young daughter. Because of Madame Merle's insolent and patronizing attitude towards Isabel, the fall of the latter's innocence finally culminates as she suddenly asks the lady: "Who are you - what are you? ... What have you to do with my husband? ... What have you to do with me?," to which Mme. Merle only replies "everything" (517). That is in fact enough for Isabel's discovery that she has been married to Mme. Merle's "closest intimate," and "... that the man in the world she had supposed to be the least sordid had married her, like a vulgar adventurer, for her money" (520). Though Isabel had previously considered love incompatible with freedom, only now does she perceive that it is the mercenary marriage, or convenient marriage, that is really incompatible with love in her very case. As regards Mme. Merle herself, Isabel finally concludes that lady had been "deeply, deeply, deeply" false (519).

Only in Chapter 51 however, at the far end of the book, Isabel's awareness of her plight is fully achieved. This time Isabel learns from her husband's sister, the Countess Gemini, that Gilbert Osmond had betrayed his first wife, and that Pansy is Osmond and Mme. Merle's child. That is why Mme. Merle had conspired the whole thing - for the money Isabel would provide both her lover and her daughter. Countess Gemini then advises Isabel not to give up her journey to England where, by this time, her cousin Ralph Touchett is dying. Though Osmond asks Isabel very hypocritically not to travel for the sake of appearance - for "the observance of a magnificent form" - for the institution that represents their "indissoluble union" (557), Isabel leaves for England with an intense suffering in her bosom - with the pain of betrayal gnawing her soul.

During her journey to England in Chapter 53, Isabel seems to have gone through the whole road that leads to maturity. Through a long reflexion about the use she had made of her freedom, she concludes it had led her nowhere: "... the truth of things, their mutual relations, their meaning, and for the most part their horror, rose before her with a kind of architectural vastness," and "Nothing seemed of use to her today" (560). Not even Gardencourt will either keep Isabel in England or help her. Once her innocence is lost, she feels she does not fit that paradise anymore - for now she has the burden of her responsibility to cope with. In fact, in her last encounter with Ralph at Gardencourt, after their mutual recognition that Isabel herself had been "ruined" for the money she was left, Isabel tells her cousin she should stay in England "as long as seems right" (577). Now she is determined to do what "seems right" and not only what pleases her; for now, she has finally submitted to the discipline of the spirit which does not simply convey a condition to achieve maturity, but rather, a conscious mind. As a matter of

fact, for the critic Christof Wegelin, "... the total emphasis of this novel is on Isabel's capacity for learning." And above all, "she finds out the truth about herself": that she had been both uninformed and incapable of good judgement in spite of her intelligence and good will. Moreover, Wegelin points out that this emphasis on Isabel's inner growth indicates a double transition: "from the blankness or the illusion which is due to the lack of experience to the knowledge which is the result of experience"; and then, "from her passively being to her actively doing ..." "So that the transition is also from her actual weakness to her potential strength," or rather, "from cloistered innocence, which lacks the strength to deal with the world, to the strength which comes from experience and exposure."9

Furthermore, Ralph reminds Isabel of how mistaken she had been about her romantic idea of freedom: "You wanted to look at life for yourself - but you were not allowed; you were punished for your wish. You were ground in the very mill of the conventional" (577). Ralph is right then, for the man Isabel married represents "convention itself," and for the sake of convention, she refuses again the proposals of marriage of Lord Warburton and her persistent American suitor Caspar Goodwood. After dismissing Lord Warburton, not even Caspar Goodwood's ardent appeal can either move or change Isabel's mind: "You're the most unhappy of women, and your husband the deadliest of fiends .... Why should you go back - why should you go through that ghastly form? ... It's too monstrous of you to think of sinking back into that misery, of going to open your mouth to that poisoned air" (588-89). Besides, as Isabel insists that Goodwood should go away and leave her alone, the desperate man hugs her, and kisses her very impulsively:

> His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed; and it was

> extraordinarily as if, while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his face, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense identity and made one with this act of possession. So had she heard of those wrecked and under water following a train of images before they sink. (591)

Feeling thus both offended and violated by Goodwood's manners, now Isabel knows where to turn - she goes back to Rome and to her husband Osmond. Isabel indeed will not let her mask fall down either for Lord Warburton or for Caspar Goodwood; she will never confess to them how unhappy she is. Perhaps she wants only to avoid another mistake for the time being. As regards the English aristocratic Lord Warburton, he is the symbol of another convention of the Old World that would also represent a threat to the freedom of Isabel's spirit. As for Caspar Goodwood, her final rejection of him may be interpreted as Isabel's definitive break with America - with the uncivilized or anti-civilized American manners. Indeed, as a representative of America itself, Goodwood is too provincial for the requirements of Isabel's imagination.

Anyway Isabel has undergone a process of change. She has moved from the state of unconsciousness to consciousness. Her journey towards awareness starts only with her unsuccessful marriage, which was triggered by her ideal concept of freedom, and which led her to the experience of evil. Being from the first deceived by her innocent view of freedom, she discovers later on she has been also deceived by Mme. Merle and Osmond, the two persons she mostly admired. Isabel's fall from innocence culminates thus, with her discovery that the betrayal she undergoes was all conspired for the sake of mere convenience and appearance. Moreover, she finally understands that "the ghost" or social evil itself is under the very shining gloss of European society; that an individual in Europe is

completely committed to society and its forms, as Mme. Merle herself had previously stated to her. In fact, for the critic Philip M. Weinstein, "it is [Isabel's] perceived inadequacy of Osmond himself, the failure of their marriage, the recognition of the blindness of her imagination that give her the measure of what was to be her greatest experience and that most definitively form her."10

Isabel's return to Osmond however does not necessarily mean renunciation to happiness. It may mean her acceptance of evil or of the conventions of the Old World. The acceptance of the conventional then may convey Isabel has opened her mind - she has acquired knoledge of the world, or has learned at least how to play in the European society. Concerning thus this critical point of the novel, some critics consider Isabel's ordeal as a positive experience; but others do not. S.B. Liljegren, for instance, in his book **American and European in the Works of Henry James** points out that "Isabel does not succeed in leaving her whole past behind," because of the rigidity of her puritan "New England" background.11 Similar to Liljegren, Arnold Kettle, in his article "**Henry James: The Portrait of a Lady** (1880-81)," states that: "It seems to me inescapable that what Isabel chooses is something represented by a high cold word like duty or resignation, ... and that in making her choice she is paying a final sacrificial tribute to her own ruined conception of freedom."12 Dorothea Krook presents a more severe criticism in her book **The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James** in saying that Isabel's decision implies her own "spiritual death," or a "denial or sacrifice" in the name of any ideal.13 However, for the critic Lyall H. Powers, Isabel has been thoroughly successful: "She returns to Rome out of no sense of duty to Osmond but out of duty to herself - to that self no longer merely innocent, naive, uninformed, but fully knowing, experienced, informed ... a self on which she can

now safely rely."[14] Frederick C. Crews also agrees that "Isabel's whole adventure may be called a lesson in the redefinition of her self."[15] In this case, some other hypotheses may be expanded concerning Isabel's decision. For Philip M. Weinstein, for instance, it may be an "attempting to salvage Pansy's (Osmond's daughter) future"[16]; so that she can prevent the girl from making her own mistake. On the other hand, though Lord Warburton is already engaged to a lady, Isabel knows Caspar Goodwood will be waiting for her since he possesses "the key to patience" (592). But Mr. Weinstein,among other critics, also attributes Isabel's return to Osmond to a possible sexual frigidity on the part of Isabel. He conveys that "... the sexual menace implied by Warburton's 'big bribe' and more strongly by Goodwood's 'way of rising before her'" makes Isabel flee from them. Since "Osmond's masculinity is rendered as an unthreatening 'manly organism' which she can manipulate and possess,"[17] it seems easier for Isabel to try to conquer her husband by conforming to his own conventionalities, or she will simply take her own time to manage her next step what seems even more convincing. Nonetheless, Joseph A. Ward, in his book **The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James**, suggests that Isabel has achieved success in the sense that she has had the "strength to survive in Europe." On the other hand, Ward implies that Isabel has not risen above her "Puritanism" for the way she combats the evil of Osmond and Mme. Merle is a rejection of her freedom, and that such renunciation represents either a "high morality" or a "moral deficiency."[18] Furthermore, according to the previous quotation which says that "[Isabel] had an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong," it seems that she was too proud to recognize a mistake; then she goes back to her husband not

to acknowledge the failure of their marriage but because "she had an unquenchable desire to think well of herself." Finally, it may be concluded that though Isabel may not have been completely successful in her ordeal, and her decision may also imply the acceptance of her own suffering, that is not her definitive choice because now she finds herself in the "difficult position" she longed for and her time to act "as heroic as the occassion demanded" has come to her then. Besides, what is conveyed by all these interpretations are only possible hypotheses which may explain Isabel's motives since James himself is usually ambiguous towards his characters' motives. At any rate, considering that Isabel has achieved a conscious self and, according to James's preface to this novel, she is a "young woman affronting her desting," the portrait of a lady is finished at last as Isabel

> saw herself ... still in the attitude of a woman who had her life to live ... Deep in her soul - deeper than any appetite for renunciation - was the sense that life would be her business for a long time to come. And at moments there was something inspiring, almost enlivening, in the conviction. It was a proof of her strength - it was a proof she should some day be happy again. It could't be she was to live only to suffer; she was still young, after all, and a great many things might happen to her yet. To live only to suffer - only to feel the injury of life repeated and enlarged - it seemed to her she was too valuable, too capable, for that. (561)

Notes

1 Lyall H. Powers, **Henry James: An Introduction and Interpretation** (Michigan: Holt, Rinehart And Winston, 1970) 68.

2 Richard Chase, **The American Novel and Its Tradition** (London: The Johns Hopkins University press, 1980) 124.

3 Christof Wegelin, **The Image of Europe in Henry James** (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1958) 60.

4 Gordon Pieri, **The Portrait of a Lady (1881), Henry James: Literature in Perspective,** ed. Kenneth Grose (London: Evans Brothers Limited 1974) 64.

5 Frederick C. Crews, 'Society and the Hero,' **The Tragedy of Manners: Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) 14-15.

6 Pieri 74.

7 Wegelin 74.

8 Pieri 74.

9 Wegelin 69-71.

10 Philip M. Weinstein, **Henry James and the Requirements of the Imagination** (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1971) 68.

11 S.B. Liljegren, **American and European in the Works of Henry James** (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1971) 17-18, 35.

12 Arnold Kettle, 'Henry James: The Portrait of a Lady (1880-81),' **An Introduction to the English Novel: Volume 2,** ed. John Lawlor (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1969) 30.

13 Dorothea Krook, **The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 57, 369.

14 Powers 73.

15 Crews 18.

16 Weinstein 68.

17 Weinstein 65.

18 Joseph A. Ward, **The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James** (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1961) 103.

THE AMBASSADORS

> The tone of 'The Ambassadors' is accordingly the nearest we ever come to the very tone of Henry James. It is the tone of large and sociable speculation upon human nature, a tone at once grave and easy, light and yet deep, earnest and yet free from anxiety. It is the tone, most of all, of the leisurely thinker, well-assured that maturity can be the product only of time. And what he offers us are fruits well ripened in the sun of his thought.
>
> Joseph Warren Beach, **Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Ambassadors**

The journey of Lewis Lambert Strether towards maturity is developed in different stages from those of Roderick Hudson's and Isabel Archer's. Although the stay of the innocent middle-aged American in Europe lasts only three months, he achieves greater development than the young sculptor who stays two years abroad and Isabel who is there for some six years. Strether's maturing process in truth is mostly developed through his contact with women in the Old World. On account of those relationships and exposure to that world, Strether learns quite well how to distinguish the European manners and, consequently, is launched

into his search of youth and freedom and into the make-believe game played so largely in the European society.

As an Ambassador of the commercial Mrs. Newsome, the mission of Lambert Strether in Paris is to take her son Chad back to America. Nevertheless, seduced by the European atmosphere, little by little Strether leaves the affairs of Mrs. Newsome apart and starts living his own life through a succession of events and discoveries in Europe.

Strether thus has his process of initiation to the Old World started since his arrival in Europe when he first meets Maria Gostrey in Chester. Miss Gostrey is the first woman he gets in touch with, and the one who first makes him confront the clash between the American and European cultures. In fact, she does strike him as having no reserves about anything due to her "superficial readiness," a "perfect plain propriety," and her "expensive subdued suitability" (7-9). Strether indeed does not take long to perceive that Miss Gostrey knows things he does not. Besides, he recognizes her as "a woman of fashion," and since she is a "general guide - to 'Europe'" Strether asks her to get him out of his general failure - "the failure of Woollett," which seems rather the failure of being an American from Woollett, Massachusetts - a puritan New Englander (14-15).

During his very first hours in Europe, Strether is already able to experience "the full sweetness of the taste of leisure" beside his guide Miss Gostrey:

> She had made him breakfast like a gentleman, and it was nothing, she forcibly asserted, to what she would yet make him do. She made him participate in the slow reiterated ramble with which for Strether, the new day amply filled itself; and it was by her art that he somehow had the air, on the

> ramparts and in the Rows, of carrying a point of his own. (27)

Later on, in London, Strether experiences another confrontation with the European culture as he dines with Miss Gostrey at his hotel. He is terribly struck because he had never had a face to face dinner, at a public place, with rose-coloured shades, and no sweetness at all of that kind with Mrs. Newsome. Yet, those pink lights may also convey Strether's rose-coloured innocence, or even the rose-coloured world he is looking at in that "high picture" produced by his imagination (33). Moreover, while he grows in perceptions, Strether starts comparing Miss Gostrey to the widow Mrs. Newsome. He relates Miss Gostrey to Mary Stuart due to her cut dress, her smoking, and her essential freedom and sensuality. On the other hand, he relates Mrs. Newsome to Queen Elizabeth due to her cold and rigid mannners which were so well expressed in the black silk dress she wore at Opera Houses. According to his previous impression, Strether perceives Miss Gostrey is "more thoroughly civilized" (9). In further conversation with her, Strether is asked if he and Chad's family are sure that Chad's love affair, if there is any affair, is really bad for Chad. Strether in his complete crudity answers promptly: "Of course we are" (37). Certainly, according to the Puritan thoughts of an American, any affair of Chad's in Europe would be entirely wicked. Strether then states he does not like Chad because he has darkened his mother's admirable life, committing again a precipitated judgement due to his great inexperience. As a matter of fact, Strether looks after the Woollett Review - a magazine that is distinguished by its green colour which seems to indicate that Strether himself is green. Besides the fact that Strether lacks

experience, Mrs. Newsome is behind the whole business controlling him and the whole situation; for sure, she is offering him lots of advantages if he succeeds with Chad. Furthermore, as Miss Gostrey asks Strether if Chad likes him, the middle-aged man simply says that Chad ignores them all in America, and then, he gets immensely surprised by a novelty he learns from his guide: he learns that there are "refinements" to be considered in Europe. Miss Gostrey tells him that "... two quite distinct things that - given the wonderful place [Chad is] in - may have happened to him. One is that he may have got brutalized. The other is that he may have got refined." Anyway she also lets Strether know that those refinements constitute perhaps the worst (46-47).

At last in Paris, feeling already improved under the influence of Maria Gostrey Strether is caught by a series of new impressions. In his walk around the Luxembourg Gardens all surrounded by vistas and fountains, Strether feels a great sensation of freedom. Probably it is an escape from his middle-age and his Woollett mind. In fact, "... the cup of his impressions seemed truly to overflow ... and there were more things in his mind than so few days could account for."(53) All the freshness provided by those gardens seems indeed to convey the illumination Strether is experiencing though the green tubs in the gardens may still represent his own incompleteness or immaturity. Besides, those little trees inside the green tubs may also imply that Strether's mind is still little and therefore too limited and immature. Anyway, despite all the limitations of his mind, Strether grows in wisdom and understanding through gradual recognitions. He recognizes for instance he had incurred the ridicule of having his name on the green cover of the Woollett

Review. Yet "He would have done anything for Mrs. Newsome, have been still more ridiculous..." (56). And with the sensation of having been buried for long years, Strether feels he has sprouted to life due to a great ability to compare his present response to Europe to his last visit there when he bought some lemon-coloured volumes - a remembrance that caused him to think of how green he has been for such a long time. By revolving about those meditations then, Strether wonders whether he should renounce all amusement in Paris for the sake of his mission to rescue Chad - whether such renouncement would give him a moral glamour or not.

In Book Second Strether begins to associate Chad with his lost youth. Moved by an impulse to reach the young man, or rather, to reach youth itself, the middle-aged man directs himself to Chad's house and faces another hard experience in the Old World. As he approaches the house he feels it 'sprang' on him because of its high and impressive quality and, of course, because of his own timid nature. That confrontation with Chad's house makes Strether feel as if he were standing before Chad himself: high, broad and clear. That is the way Strether sees Chad's own fortress. Strether even feels insecure by the time he recognizes that the balcony of the house "... didn't somehow show as a convenience easy to surrender," in the same way as he sees Chad himself (64). Stressing then that obstacle concerning Strether's image of the house, a young man appears up there on the balcony causing a striking contrast between himself and Strether who is down on the street. Thus in the same way as the house appearance stands for Chad's character, the balcony, due to its openness and height, stands for a sort of freedom and youth which Strether is longing to reach now. Lambert Strether discovers therefore that "He wasn't

there [in Europe] to dip, to consume - he was there to reconstruct. He wasn't there for his own profit - not, that is, the direct; he was there on some chance of feeling the brush of the wing of the stray spirit of youth" (62). And although he has the sensation of being "too late," he also finds himself so free and so young that everything he wants is to take things as they come. Since he considers he has failed in everything, he decides "to put his scruple to rest.... this long ache might at last drop to rest" (54-55).

In Book Third Strether gets in touch with Miss Barrace. This time he is increasingly struck by some other perception while he breakfasts with that lady and Little Bilham - the young man he had seen on Chad's balcony. Strether understands that "... he was in the presence of new measures, other standards, a different scale of relations..." As regards his impressions of Miss Barrace, he immediately sees her as "the note of a 'trap'" for she is eminently gay, highly adorned, freely contradictious and, in short, she reminds him of some last century portrait of a clever head without powder (74). Besides recognizing how different those people are from himself, Strether feels sure that the central fact of the whole thing is "the fundamental impropriety of Chad's situation," or according to his mind, Chad is leading an "irregular life" in Paris.

Later on, Strether is deeply affected by the time he visits Miss Gostrey's apartment - he is struck by "the empire of 'things'" he sees. In fact, what he sees is Paris itself as an "old empire" full of tradition. By comparing then the lady's place to a temple, a shrine and a pirate's cave, he recognizes all those antiquities as Miss Gostrey's own accumulation of experience and

knowledge. Strether can perceive that those antiquities "brushed his ignorance with their contempt," and he does feel full ecstasy for being so close to such values of tradition he had never seen before (78). And again, in the great gallery of the Louvre, Strether experiences another bright perception. As soon as he and Miss Gostrey meet the painter Little Bilham, the lady recognizes the young man as one of them, or as one of the European or Europeanized men of her own environment. Strether in turn perceives promptly that

> It was by Little Bilham's amazing serenity that he had at first been affected, but he had inevitably ... felt it as the trail of the serpent, the corruption ... of Europe; ... it was by his general exemption from alarm, anxiety or remorse ... that the impression of his serenity was made. (82)

Concerning thus Strether's impressions of Bilham, the young man's serenity is only a gloss upon the corruption of that sophisticated world - that serenity is only a sophisticated way of being corrupted.

Finally in Book Fourth Strether meets Chad in the theater. As Strether's mind has been bombarded with perceptions the whole time, the poor man almost has an attack by the time Chad enters his box so unexpectedly. The fact that they could not talk in order not to disturb the other expectators, makes Strether understand that "... these were the accidents of a high civilization; the imposed tribute to propriety, the frequent exposure to conditions, usually brilliant, in which relief has to await its time" (89). Despite Strether's ironical perception of that society, he longs for his own relief - his so expected talk with Chad, and all he can make of the young man's presence is to

characterize his mere appearance as "refinement" (92). Nonetheless, right after the play, Strether simply has "the indecency" of bringing up the question to Chad still on the street: "I've come, you know, to make you break with everything, neither more nor less, and take you straight home; so you'll be so good as immediately and favourably to consider it" (95). But all the grossness and impoliteness of Strether's manners can only make Chad speak ironically and laugh at his fellow-countryman. Besides, Chad's own behavior causes Strether to have another series of new impressions. He promptly sees for instance that Chad had been "made over" - that was very likely "a speciality of Paris" (97). He also perceives that "The shade of shyness was mere good taste. People with manners formed could apparently have, as one of their best cards, the shade of shyness too." Chad's appearance indeed sprang on Strether exactly as he had been previously struck by the young man's house. Certainly, he sees Chad as a ripe physiognomy, with a certain freedom, a man of the world, brown, thick and strong, with cleared eyes, settled colour, polished teeth, toned voice, established accent and encouraging smile. In short, that look of Chad's dignity, austerity and experience affected Strether as "the way men marked out by women were" (98-9). And although Strether recognizes a sense of self-respect and power in the young man, he reduces his impressions of Chad to an "oddly perverted" and "irreducible young Pagan" (101). Nevertheless, Strether starts, all of a sudden, wondering if Chad is either a Pagan or a gentleman, and he recognizes therefore that the young man's wholly changed state was no more than the "notes of his freedom" (107). Feeling thus the need to remodel his plans as regards his task to rescue Chad, Strether considers the Chad question either a plot or

a game - for that is the sort of life one is supposed to lead in Europe according to his new discovery. Anyway he feels disappointed for Chad is not the "brute" he expected to find in Paris, and he learns from Bilham that Chad's relation to the supposed bad woman is a "virtuous attachment" (117).

In Book Fifth then Strether experiences his greatest confrontation with European society. At Gloriani's party, his growing ability to grasp and penetrate into the meaning of things is sharpened through uncontrolled perceptions. In fact, he is terribly affected by his fellow guests' liberty, intensity, variety and their conditions at large; he feels completely amazed before that show of life he is allowed to witness. And by seeing that party as a show, Strether thinks of "The deep human expertness in Gloriani's charming smile... the terrible life behind." And although he considers all fellow guests "very beautiful, very clever, or even very good," Strether sees all of them as if they were wearing masks; as if they were in disguise in the same way as he sees the celebrated sculptor Gloriani (125, 127). Moreover, he learns that all those people at the party represent "every one." And Strether does recognize everyone there as real characters performing on the Parisian stage every sort of role: artists, ambassadors, ministers, bankers, generals, Jews, and some "awfully nice women" when they did not happen to be "monsters" or "the right femmes du monde." Besides, he also learns how superficial those relations were for Gloriani himself used to make "just a perfect choice" when selecting his guests, and he was the same to everyone and did not ask questions (128). At last Strether gets to know that Mme. de Vionnet is the supposed

"wicked" woman and very likely the "femme du monde" of Chad's life as he asks Little Bilham:

> 'Then they are the virtuous attachment?'
> 'I can only tell you that it's what they pass for. But isn't that enough? What more than a vain appearance does the wisest of us know? I commend you, the young man declared with a pleasant emphasis, 'the vain appearance.'(130)

From Bilham's declaration, Strether concludes his previous idea: he is in a world where "every one" passes for something else. He considers himself before a show and he should gaze at it only as a picture - superficially. Strether in fact feels that he has learned about the European society; he does see what a kind of gloss and evil it is. At Gloriani's garden thus, Strether's awareness achieves a larger dimension though the impressions he receives are not fully revealed to him yet. Anyhow, now he considers life as something one cannot miss and gives a lesson on life to young Bilham:

> Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do in particular, so long as you have your life. If you haven't had that what have you had? This place and these impressions - mild as you may find them to wind a man up so; all my impressions of Chad and of people I've seen at his place - well, have their abundant message for me ... Oh, I do see, at least; and more than you'd believe or I can express. It's too late. And it's as if the train had fairly waited at the station for me without my having had the gumption to know it was there. Now I hear its faint receding whistle miles and miles down the line. What one loses one loses; make no mistake about that... Still, one has the illusion of freedom; therefore don't be, like me, without the memory of that illusion... You've plenty; that's the great thing; you're, as I say, damn you, so happily and

> hatefully young. Don't at any rate miss things out of stupidity... Do what you like so long as you don't make my mistake. For it was a mistake. Live! (140)

The imminent encounter between Strether and Mme. de Vionnet occurs then in Book Sixth. As he visits the lady's apartment, he is again struck by the same impression he first had at Maria Gostrey's. He feels that the place, like Mme. de Vionnet herself, possesses the "air of supreme respectability" (157). Later on, at Chad's dinner, Mme. de Vionnet affects Strether immensely for she appears to him half mythological and half conventional. He compares her to a Goddess, a sea nymph, and Cleopatra. In fact, by comparing her to those figures of the past, he also compares Mme. de Vionnet to an "Old Empire" as old as Paris itself and impregnated with tradition. Besides, he also feels sure she is one of those "femmes du monde" he has learned about at Gloriani's: "She had aspects, characters, days, nights ... She was an obscure person, a muffled person one day, and a showy person, an uncovered person the next" (173). Thus, since Mme. de Vionnet tries to call Strether's attention to her daughter in order to get rid of his suspicion about her relation with Chad, the poor man's excited imagination begins to consider a possible union between Bilham and Mme. de Vionnet's daughter. But then he learns that a marriage involves either "a great name or a great fortune" in that society; that Little Bilham is not the right young man for Mme. de Vionnet's daughter (179). And as Strether still keeps speculating on the relation between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, the innocent man asks Miss Barrace if Mme. de Vionnet will divorce to marry Chad, and learns, thus, that "The wonder is their doing such things without marrying." Nonetheless, Strether fails to understand what

Miss Barrace's statement really means, and declares that Chad and Mme. de Vionnet's attachment is innocent for he sees "the whole thing" (170). Furthermore, he confesses to Bilham all his impression about that attachment:

> I understand what a relation with such a woman — what such a high fine friendship — may be. It can't be vulgar or coarse, anyway — and that's the point.... They've accepted their situation — hard as it is. They're not free — at least, she's not; but they take what's left to them. It's a friendship, of a beautiful sort; and that's what makes them so strong. They're straight, they feel; and they keep each other up. (180, 182)

In Notre Dame church however Strether feels insecure and troubled. He feels sacrificed due to his impulse to let things be their own way or at least pass. And while meditation occupies his mind, he sees a lady placed within the focus of the shrine. When he recognizes her as Mme. de Vionnet, he wonders what such a woman with a discernible faith in herself, a kind of implied conviction of consistency, security and impunity would have come to a church for. At all events, he considers her "worth saving" for all she has done for Chad and, therefore, he decides he would stick — he would give Mme. de Vionnet a sign to catch Chad. The innocent Strether seems indeed to set both Chad and Mme. de Vionnet free to each other as if he were the single controller of the whole situation. And by making that decision, he experiences a feeling of success; he feels he has "touched bottom" and that he had never been so sharp as then (190-92).

Considering however that Strether did not rescue Chad in due time according to Mrs. Newsome's orders, the middle-aged man learns that Chad's mother has sent her daughter Sarah Pocock to be his successor. But despite that dismissal of Strether's charge, he

decides to stay longer in Paris for he does not feel ready yet to go back to America. Besides, he has also succeed in convincing Chad to stay with him. Now Strether looks really divine according to Maria Gostrey's latest impression of him. Strether himself does recognize how improved he is as he tells her: "It's quite true. I'm extremely wonderful just now. I daresay in fact I'm quite fantastic, and I shouldn't be at all surprised if I were mad" (210). Feeling thus he has achieved such a great improvement, Strether delivers himself to a long meditation on Miss Gostrey and his own development:

> He could toddle alone, and the difference that showed was extraordinary... and the time seemed far off when he had held out his small thirsty cup to the spout of her pail. Her pail was scarce touched now, and other fountains had flowed for him... This marked for himself the flight of time, or at any rate what he was pleased to think of with irony and pity as the rush of experience; it having been but the day before yesterday that he sat at her feet and held on by her garment and was fed by her hand. It was the proportions that were changed, and the proportions were at all times, he philosophized, the very conditions of perception, the terms of thought. It was as if, with her effective little entresol and her wide acquaintance, her activities, varieties, promiscuities, the duties and devotions that took up nine-tenths of her time and of which he got, guardedly, but the side-wind - it was as if she had shrunk to a secondary element and had consented to the shrinkage with the perfection of tact. This perfection had never failed her; it had originally been greater than his prime measure for it; it had kept him quite apart, kept him out of the shop, as she called her huge general acquaintance, made their commerce as quiet as much a thing of the home alone - the opposite of the shop - as if she had never another customer. She had been wonderful to him at first, with the memory of her little entresol, the image to which, on most mornings at that time, his eyes directly opened; but now she mainly figured for him as but part of the bristling total - though of course always as a person to whom he should never cease to be indebted. (216)

Strether confesses to Miss Gostrey then that he began to be young the moment he met her at Chester; and now he is making up for what he did not have earlier. Despite Strether's "sense of knowing Paris" or the Old World so well, he looks at it with "fresh emotion," or rather, still superficially. At Chad's party in Book Tenth, for instance, he relapses into the sense that he was free to believe in anything that he happened to see from hour to hour. Nevertheless, still in the party, as Miss Barrace states that Sarah's failure to take Chad home depends on Strether since he is the "hero of the drama," the innocent man experiences another illumination and only answers that "There positively isn't a sign of hero ... the hero's dodging and shirking, the hero's ashamed" (295). Feeling thus terribly frustrated for the "cold clearance" of his discovery that he has been manipulated by those Europeans or Europeanized people just to keep Chad in Paris, Strether decides that he must meet his fate alone - he would be responsible for his own choice as regards his negation to Mrs. Newsome's order, and breaks definitely with both the lady from Woollett and the people in Europe. Finally, waiting for Chad on the young man's balcony, Strether feels free for he is no longer under the influence of either Mrs. Newsome or the people he is surrounded by in Europe. That is the freedom, and also, the achieved spiritual youth he was longing for. In fact, the balcony stands for the high-spirited state Strether was enjoying:

> He spent a long time on the balcony... he circulated and rested, tried to recover the impression that they had made on him three months before ... what he could do now was to think of three months ago as a point in the far past... He felt, strangely, as sad as if he had come for some wrong, and yet as excited as if he had come for some freedom. But the

> freedom was what was most in the place and the hour; it was the freedom that most brought him round again to the youth of his own that he had long ago missed. (317-18)

At this point of Strether's great achievement the situation is reversed as he meets Chad. Strether and Chad change places. While Strether celebrates his independence, Chad simply decides to go back to America - to that system Strether has just got rid of. Strether perceives thus that the "freedom" he had noticed in Chad when he first saw him in the theater was only an escape from the crudity of the innocent New World.

Only in Book Eleventh does Strether undergo his hardest and definite fall. Only now is his innocence completely lost. As he takes a day off in the country on account of his feeling of final relief, he watches a very romantic scene in the river: he sees Chad and Mme. de Vionnet inside a boat, under a pink parasol. Although Strether seemed so aware of the sort of relationship between them, he could never guess his friends were lovers. He is indeed tremendously shocked. He feels lonely and cold. He feels betrayed and calls his friends' affair a fiction, a fable, a lie, a performance, a comedy, and at last a show. For the poor man's mind, "It was the quantity of make-believe involved and so vividly exemplified that most disagreed with his spiritual stomach" (355). Certainly Strether had hoaxed himself for there had been times he believed himself "touching bottom" but he was not. Anyway, in spite of remaining green towards that affair for almost the whole time he spends in Europe, Strether does awake - he does get out of his rose-coloured world since this very new experience he undergoes gives him full consciousness of the reality he was so apart from.

As a matter of fact, Strether's achieved maturity is revealed as he returns to the apartment of Mme. de Vionnet and feels again "the vague voice of Paris"; "the smell of revolution, the smell of public temper - or perhaps simply the smell of blood" (360). His hostess indeed is "dressed as for thunderous times," and all he sees before him looks "something old, old, old" (361). In fact, Strether associates Mme. de Vionnet with old experienced Europe. And again Strether sees her possibly as a performer: she was either really natural and simple or she was just playing "the perfection of art":

> She had never, with him, been more so; or if it was the perfection of art it would never... be proved against her.... What was truly wonderful was her way of differing so from time to time without detriment to her simplicity. Caprices, he was sure she felt, were before anything else bad manners, and that judgement in her was by itself a thing making more for safety of intercourse than anything that in his various own past intercourses he had had to reckon on. If therefore her presence was now quite other than the one she had shown him the night before, there was nothing of violence in the change - it was all harmony and reason. (361-62)

Perhaps that is why Strether reflects that to deal with women "was to walk on water" (367). As he suggests that fearful and dangerous view of Mme. de Vionnet, he is very conscious "that there was always more behind what she showed, and more and more again behind that" (366). Strether concludes at last that Chad and Mme. de Vionnet's lie "... was simply after all such an inevitable tribute to good taste as he couldn't have wished them not to render." He perceives that lying is also part of the wonderful game - it is a matter of "good taste." And despite his disliking of that comedy of which he was the innocent victim, he still feels "he could trust her to make deception right" (362) on account of Mme. de

Vionnet's tact, charm, beauty, refined manners, wisdom, and most important of all: on account of her being a "femme du monde." At all events, although Strether fails to understand that there was no lie at all but his own failure to understand what was behind the "virtuous attachment" between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, he arrives at a further conclusion that Mme. de Vionnet had behaved after all "so awfully well" (363). Yet, Strether himself plays the European game beautifully. When Mme. de Vionnet asks him about his impression of her, he only declares she is "wonderful", re-echoing the way Miss Barrace used to call her European or Europeanized friends. Strether's discovery of the love affair between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet completes thus his awakening process in the Old World. In fact, that is his moment of full consciousness - his definite encounter with evil - the definite loss of his innocence - his encounter with knowledge and truth to which he had been blind or too naive to see. Now Strether learns that refinement, politeness, shyness, serenity, expertness, and respectability, are all a matter of "good taste" for the European manners - that all those virtues make the "perfection of art," or the social evil. Besides, it is that same good taste that involves the make-believe game and makes everyone and everything so "wonderful" in Europe. It does not matter how bad or corrupted the people in Europe really may be - they are always wonderful. Strether indeed recognizes that appearance is all that really matters in the European society; that one can and may perform more than one role in life for it is all a matter of good taste. Now he understands what Miss Gostrey meant when they first met by declaring that those refinements of European society "constitute perhaps the worst." Strether sees in the river scene that "the worst" is evil

itself. His mind is not framed into a rose-coloured picture anymore. This time he really escapes the narrowness of the American mind and discovers Europe completely; and due to the openness of his mind Strether at last is a really free man. A similar acknowledgement has been conveyed by Powers who also asserts that "With both rose-coloured glasses and New England blinkers off," Strether sees his friends' relationship as neither black nor white, but as a variety of shades of gray. Then he concludes that Strether "has at last become conscious; and to have seen ... is to have lived."[1] Like Powers, Joseph Warren Beach concludes in his essay "Full Prime" that "Strether's discovery of the open mind is his discovery of Europe."[2] Joseph A. Ward also presents a similar idea to that of Powers's and Joseph W. Beach's. According to Ward, since Strether must cast off the American evils of prejudice and the "narrowmindedness" of New England (the tendency to condemn the foreign), and then accept the evils of Europe (the "vain appearance" of the conventional world) in order to achieve maturity, his initiation to Europe becomes complete as he accepts Mme. de Vionnet's adultery and learns that "Europe is neither simply good nor simply evil, but something which contains both..."[3]

Later on, Maria Gostrey's "perfection of tact," is revealed as she plays the make-believe game very beautifully with Strether trying both to seduce and to conquer him. But Strether in turn plays his own game still more beautifully according to "the perfection of art" as regards the European manners:

> He found means even to take her to shops she didn't know, or that she pretended she didn't; while she, on her side, was, like the country maiden, all passive, modest, and grateful —

> going in fact so far as to emulate rusticity in occasional fatigues and bewilderments... He proclaimed saciety at the outset, and she quickly took the hint; as docile both in this and in everything else as the intelligent obedient niece ... She left questions unasked - she who for so long had been all questions; she gave herself up to him with an understanding of which mere mute gentleness might have seemed the sufficient expression... He knew, that is, in a manner - knew roughly and resignedly - what he himself was hatching; whereas he had to take the chance of what he called to himself Maria's calculations. (371)

Considering thus that Strether deals mainly with women during his stay in Europe, and that what he learns comes mostly from them, he comes to consider that Chad ought not to leave Mme. de Vionnet in the long run. Strether very likely wants only to prevent Chad from becoming another mere vulgar American money-maker, and save the young man's newly acquired cultivated mind though he still remains a materialist in the very essence of his character. That is why Strether says to Chad: "I feel how much more she can do for you. She hasn't done it all yet. Stay with her at least till she has" (384). Mme. de Vionnet has already "saved" Chad in terms of manners and appearance and, perhaps, Strether hopes she may also save the young man's character: if on one hand Chad has become refined, on the other hand he has become wicked as his own name Chadwick suggests for he uses Mme. de Vionnet for his intellectual and aesthetic improvement, and then, simply implies he is tired of her. As a matter of fact, Joseph A. Ward states that Chad deserts Mme. de Vionnet "because she is old and exposed and because his own interests lie in the gross materialism of Woollett and in another woman."[4] Then although Strether confesses to Chad that "women-too" have made him better and that he also feels indebeted to them, not even Miss Gostrey, who offers him all

her care "for the rest of his days," is able to make him stay in Paris. In fact, because of the insistence of Miss Gostrey on knowing why Strether is returning to America, the middle-aged man tries to explain his reasons for three times. The first explanation is presented by Strether's declaration that "I'm not ... in real harmony with what surrounds me... It makes... a fool of me." Having said that, he concludes his statement by calling himself "square" and "ready for them" (389). The second explanation is presented as it follows in their dialogue:

> ... "To what do you go home?"
> "I don't know. There will always be something."
> "To a great difference," she said as she kept his hand.
> "A great difference - no doubt. Yet I shall see what I can make of it." (392)

For the last time then Strether tries to give a reason for his departure before Miss Gostrey's plea:

> ... "There's nothing, you know, I wouldn't do for you.
> "Oh yes - I know."
> "There's nothing," she repeated, "in all the world."
> "I know. I know. But all the same I must go."
> He got it at last. "To be right."
> ... "But why should you be so dreadfully right?"
> "That's the way that - if I must go - you yourself would be the first to want me. And I can't do anything else." (393)

In all these explanations there seems to be an implication of Strether's commitment to the Newsomes in Woollett: either Strether is still tied to the ghost of Mrs. Newsome with all that strictness and sense of duty of the Puritan mind embodied in her, or he simply wants to prove that now he is free to do as he pleases. That is, perhaps Strether goes back to America for the very fact that there are no more perspectives with Mrs. Newsome,

and so, his freedom is guaranteed. Otherwise, staying in Europe could mean the sacrifice of his just achieved independence because of Maria Gostrey's offer. Moreover, since there is no evidence at all that Strether may be in love with either Mrs. Newsome or Maria Gostrey, his achieved freedom does not consist in renouncing love but rather in preserving his independence from any controller. For the critic Matthiessen in his essay about **The Ambassadors**, for instance, Maria Gostrey "exists only as a confidante for Strether, only as a means of letting him comment on his experience."[5] Another possibility of explanation for Strether's decision may lie in his feeling late and tired to venture such a new life in Europe. Certainly, all that representational world concerning the European manners is a '"too hard" performance he could not bear. Strether indeed is very conscious of his own reality and of what surrounds him; that is why he knows he cannot fit that world. And although he does not remain in Europe, his short stay there provides him with the full knowledge he was in search of – the knowledge of his self. In fact, in his last breakfast with Miss Gostrey, Strether would keep his eyes on a small ripe round melon till Miss Gostrey would liberally cut it for him. She does that as if she were just proving to him he is ripe – he is ready – he is mature now (389). And, for sure, this time Strether would return to America "... with seventy volumes in red-and-gold to be perhaps what he should most substantially have to show at Woollett as the fruit of his mission." Now Strether changes the previous green books for the red ones which also suggest that he himself has got maturity.

Although the critic V.C. Knoepflmacher considers Strether's trial a "belated education in 'life'" in his article "O Rare For

Strether!," he also agrees with Robert E. Garis that 'there has been no education at all,' and that Strether is "a pathetic failure" only in the sense that Strether is victimized by his romantic imagination, and because he "feasts himself on the lives of others" giving nothing at all in return.[6] Anyway, that "pathetic failure" as mentioned by Knoepflmacher does not negate the fact that Strether's has achieved both experience and maturity. In fact, Frederick C. Crews declares that Strether's success "is entirely on an intellectual, philosophical level." For Crews, Strether has achieved "the sense of life ... through the expansion of his social and moral awareness." Although "It is too late to make his life over, ... it is not too late to dedicate himself to an openness of spirit ..." Crews still adds that, for some critics, Strether's renunciation of Maria Gostrey, or Europe, and of Mrs. Newsome is a 'sacrifice of morality to appearance' - so that it will not seem he has got anything for himself. But for Crews, Strether has got everything in the sense that "his final renunciation ... is the perfect, necessary conclusion to the gradual extension of his awareness."[7]

Finally, it may be said that unlike Roderick Hudson and Isabel Archer, Lewis Lambert Strether succeeds very well in dealing with reality as he gains knowledge. Also unlike them Strether is not presented as such a strict idealist who protests against the civilized world most of the time. As a middle-aged man, Strether takes things more easily though he is as innocent as his young fellow-countrymen. And although Strether judges or even condemns the European society and all the superficiality of its values, he is also contaminated by that world like Roderick and Isabel. If he is not really affected, he learns at least how to

play in the European society "awfully well." In fact Strether, unlike his predecessors, escapes the conventions and the manipulation, or the "perfection of art," of those people he meets in Europe and he also seems to escape his moral and intellectual controller, Mrs. Newsome, from whom he has just broken off. Moreover, according to Maria Angela Penafort Soares in her dissertation "The Value Of Perceptual Experience and Rebirth in James's Protagonists (**The Ambassadors** and **The Golden Bowl**)," "[Strether] can accept Mrs. Newsome no longer, because from the perspective he has acquired in Europe he has discovered that she is corrupt; ... and he cannot accept Maria Gostrey because he does not love her."[8] Anyway, on account of this very complete freedom Strether has acquired, he could probably live well in both places - Europe and America, since now he is able to adapt himself to any circumstance. As it happened to Isabel, one may only raise hypotheses about Strether's conduct and final decision since James seems to be purposefully dubious concerning his character's motives.

Notes

[1] Lyall H. Powers, "The International Theme," "A Note on Narrative Technique," **Henry James: An Introduction and Interpretation** (Michigan: Holt, Rinehart And Winston, 1970) 92, 146.

[2] Joseph Warren Beach, "Full Prime," **Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Ambassadors** ed. Albert E. Stone, Jr. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969) 40.

[3] Joseph A. Ward, "Evil and the Major Phase," **The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James** (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebrasca Press, 1961) 119-121.

[4] Ward 126.

[5] F.O. Matthiessen "The Ambassadors" **Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Ambassadors** ed. Albert E. Stone, Jr. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969) 46.

[6] V.C. Knoepflmacher, "O Rare For Strether!" **Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Ambassadors** ed. Albert E. Stone, Jr. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969) 107, 114-116.

[7] Frederick C. Crews, "The Ambassadors" **The Tragedy of Manners: Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) 35-36, 55-56.

[8] Maria Angela Penafort Soares, "The Value Of Perceptual Experience And Rebirth In James's Protagonists (**The Ambassadors** and **The Golden Bowl**)," diss., Univ. Federal de Santa Catarina, 1984, 86.

THE GOLDEN BOWL

> ... the provincial can never understand the cosmopolitan. The moment he does he ceases to be provincial.
>
> Leon Edel, "The Americano-European Legend"

The ordeal of the young American Maggie Verver in the Old World begins only in the second half of the novel, in Book Fourth, when, in the first of a series of confrontations, the beauty of her initial awakening is majestically depicted in the long wait for her husband's return from Matcham. After being unaware of the love affair between her Italian husband Prince Amerigo and the Europeanized Charlotte Stant, her friend and also young step-mother, for some four years since she had been too busy with her intimate relation to her own father, the millionaire art collector Adam Verver, Maggie finally starts doubting "her wonderful little judgement of her wonderful little world" (307). According to her friend Fanny Assingham, "it was as if [Maggie's] imagination had

been closed to it, her sense altogether sealed." But now, "her sense will have to open ... to what is called Evil - with a very big E: for the first time in her life" (310).

Till the Easter party at Matcham place which joined the people from Eaton Square - Adam Verver and Charlotte -, the people from Portland Place - Maggie and the Prince - and also the Assinghams among other guests, it had been noticeable that Maggie's mind "was clearly never ruffled by the sense of any anomaly" (274) as regards her implied incestuous relation to her father, and the adultery between her husband and her step-mother. But then the Princess is found in deep meditative vigil while she waits for her husband who had stayed longer at Matcham with Charlotte. Through the images of the "ivory tower" and the "pagoda" which may symbolize Maggie's previous state of total unawareness, the Princess perceives and recognizes how innocent and unconscious of her private world she had been. She understands that "no door appeared to give access from her convenient garden level" - or rather, her convenient innocence level that "had remained consistently impenetrable and inscrutable" (327). To Maggie's considering mind, she had caught herself in the act of "stepping unprecedentedly near":

> She had knocked in short - though she could scarce have said whether for admission or for what; she had applied her hand to a cool smooth spot and had waited to see what would happen. Something had happened; it was as if a sound, at her touch, after a little, had come back to her from within; a sound sufficiently suggesting that her approach had been noted. (328)

Moreover, the image of the Pagoda in Maggie's "blooming garden" clarifies to her that "she had been able to marry without breaking

... with her past. She had surrendered herself to her husband ... and yet hadn't all the while given up her father by the least little inch" (328). In fact, feeling as if she were moving "in the darkening shadow of a false position," Maggie becomes aware, "almost suddenly," that she is deeply in love with her husband. Besides, "it had come to the Princess, obscurely at first, but little by little more conceivably, that her faculties hadn't for a good while been concomitantly used ..." Now, in the crisis of her drama during the long anxious watching for her husband's delayed return, she does see "she was no longer playing with blunt and idle tools, with weapons that didn't cut" (329-31).

To begin with, at Amerigo's arrival, Maggie is promptly caught by some striking perceptions. She feels that the equilibrium in her relation with her husband was "everything" for her; yet, she discovers it was "practically precarious" (336). It is so true that their relation was precarious that the Prince was permanently away from her, while she herself had ceased to move about her father. As she is led again into another prolonged vigil, Maggie starts wondering about Amerigo's behavior. She recognizes indeed her husband occupies now a superior position in their "funny" situation; that before her father's marriage to Charlotte the Prince used to do as she best pleased. But now, "he could do what he would with her" (340), because he himself and Charlotte had agreed to do the same thing she and her father used to. Then, sitting at home with her husband and their child, the Principino, Maggie seems to see, as she had never quite done, "that their business of social representation ... was an affair of living always in harness" (341). And as a performer on a stage at the peak of her vigil, she elaborates a

plan. She would share with her husband "whatever the enjoyment, the interest, the experience might be - and sharing also for that matter with Charlotte" (343). Verily, Maggie feels there is only one card she can play, "and to play it would be to end the game" (349). From now on, according to the critic Joseph A. Ward, "Maggie becomes deceiver, aggressor, and mistress of intrigue to gain her victory. Employing the techniques of the wordly-wise and practical-minded European, Maggie uses evil means to bring about a good one."1

However, for the Princess' despairing unrest of her present vigil, she discovers that her husband and Charlotte are arranged together in the same way as she herself is settled apart with her own make-believe game. At the dinner in Eaton Square, the Princess' awareness of her surroundings is sharpened. It is clear to Maggie that a difference had been made in her relation to each of her relatives, and now, she would "act for Amerigo and Charlotte with the highest hypocrisy." She would pretend she was unaware of their close relation. But though the Princess is determined to act in favour of an "evil duplicity," she feels too uneasy towards the "inscrutable comradeship" between her husband and Charlotte - whom she considers by now her secret enemy in that game. Maggie's uneasiness however does not prevent her from going forward. In fact, "the intensity of her consciousness, its sharpest savour, was in the theory of her having diverted, having, as they said, captured, the attention of Amerigo and Charlotte," to the point of considering them to have "abandoned their post," and become "paralysed" (361). As an attempt then to gain time and play her own game with Charlotte alone, Maggie suggests to the Prince he should invite her father to take a trip together during the summer. The

Prince in turn, for Maggie's increasing despair, brings Charlotte into the whole arrangement causing his Princess to feel "a slight sense of defeat" (370).

Convinced thus that her husband and Charlotte have neither abandoned their post nor even paralysed as regards their "funny situation," and despite their supposed knowledge of her own knowledge of them, Maggie offers a dinner at Portland Place and attains the "maximum of social glory" (373). Her father himself, who looks rather a mere guest, seems to have joined in that conspiracy — that of preserving appearance at all costs as planned by Maggie. But, even so, Adam Verver may also be regarded as the original Adam who is still living in the garden, because no evidence is shown as regards his being aware of the whole affair. For sure, each (Maggie, Charlotte and the Prince) knows that the other knows something but none knows exactly what the other knows. Nonetheless, the Princess' restlessness persists as she finds it too difficult to separate her husband from Charlotte:

> It might have been an accident and a mere coincidence — so at least she said to herself first; but a dozen chances that furthered the whole appearance had risen to the surface, pleasant pretexts, oh certainly pleasant, as pleasant as Amerigo in particular could make them, for associated undertakings, quite for shared adventures, for its always turning out amusingly that they wanted to do very much the same thing at the same time and in the same way .... [Besides] ... at present Charlotte was almost always there when Amerigo brought her to Eaton Square, where Amerigo was constantly bringing her; and Amerigo was almost always there when Charlotte brought her husband to Portland Place, where Charlotte was constantly bringing him. (372, 378)

Indeed, the only solution Maggie finds to salvage her marriage is the possibility of sacrificing her father, or rather, of sacrificing the old freedom they used to enjoy together. However, perhaps the Princess' decison is a belated one, because their situation has ceased to be simply "funny" to become a very difficult one. As a matter of fact, as she and Adam return from their walk in Regent's Park, they find both Amerigo and Charlotte "perched together in the balcony ... They were gay, they were amused," as if it were their own turn to enjoy a better position than Maggie's and her father's - as if they were "truly superior beings" (393).

Feeling this time more tormented than ever on account of her "thought of how the pair [Amerigo and Charlotte] would be at work," Maggie's intense suffering leads her to the imminent outbreak: "What awfulness, in heaven's name, is there between them? What do you believe, what do you know?," she asks Mrs. Assingham. Furthermore, she asks Fanny: "Help me to find out what I imagine. I don't know - I've nothing but my perpetual anxiety. Have you any? - do you see what I mean? ..." (400). And though Maggie confesses to Fanny how good a performer she has been in trying to disguise her suffering, her unhappiness, her jealousy of Amerigo, her torment, and all her helplessness, Fanny denies all Maggie's suspicions causing the Princess, in this way, to proceed with her own beautiful performance. Fanny indeed, who had arranged both marriages - the Prince's to Maggie and Charlotte's to Adam - since both lovers were too poor to marry each other, tells her husband that they must lie to Maggie - "to lie till [they're] black in the face." Then, "with the biggest lie, on top of all," she will succeed in seeing the Princess through "to the end." That is her way to help and to be

loyal to Maggie (410-11). According to Fanny falsities must reign; so that appearances may be preserved in their best style.

The turning point of the novel comes up then at the far end of Book Fourth, by the time Maggie is found in possession of a great knowledge. In fact that discovery is what mostly scares Maggie by now, and leads her to some deeper recognitions:

> Knowledge, knowledge, was a fascination as well as a fear ... [the Prince] might tell her only what he wanted, only what would work upon her by the beauty of his appeal; and the result of the direct appeal of any beauty in him would be her helpless submission to his terms ... From hour to hour she fairly expected some sign of his having decided on a jumping ... [while] she was learning almost from minute to minute to be a mistress of shades ... but she was working against an adversary who was a master of shades too ... (422-23)

On account of the terror Maggie is feeling inside, she sends for Fanny desperately. The poor lady in turn feels that "... her impossible hour was before her. Her impossible hour was the hour of its coming out that [Maggie] had known of old so much more than she had ever said ..." And Fanny does compare that whole affair to "... the blowing open of a window on some night of the highest wind and the lowest thermometer." Besides, as she comes face to face with Maggie she feels sure of that stormy atmosphere by the way she finds the Princess dressed: "she had put on too many things, overcharged herself with jewls, wore in particular more of them than usual, and bigger ones..." No doubt Mrs. Assingham perceives that Maggie's extravagance in dressing that way is "the refuge and disguise" of the rarest gravity (430). Anyway, Fanny feels ready to receive the news from the Princess in the same way as she knows Maggie herself

is ready for something else. At last Fanny Assingham learns that Maggie had been in search of a precious thing for her father's birthday, when she found a golden bowl and brought it home. But, then, as the shopman came after her in order to warn her about the existence of a crack in the bowl, the poor man recognized the exposed pictures of Amerigo and Charlotte who had been a long time ago in his shop in search of a "precious" object - which would be Maggie's wedding present as she later finds out. But because Amerigo had discovered the crack in the bowl, he refused to let Charlotte buy it. Possessing thus full knowledge of the betrayal she had suffered, the Princess breaks out to Fanny: "he knew her before - before I had ever seen him ... They were intimate ... They went about together ... Before we were married - yes; but after we were engaged" (435-36). Maggie indeed keeps in her room the golden bowl which is not gold but gilded crystal, as a "witness," a "document," a "conscious perversity" of their whole cracked situation - so that the Prince will realize she knows it all. But since Maggie supposes the Prince will keep away from her after being aware of that clear evidence of all falsities involved in their relations, the poor lady dashes the bowl to the ground as if its destruction could eliminate the flaw existent in both Maggie's and Adam's marriages.

The Prince however comes into Maggie's room on time to catch the considering scene, and a prolonged silence is established between them. For Maggie, "... what it came to was that seeing herself finally sure, knowing, having the fact, in all its abomination, so utterly before her that there was nothing else to add..." Besides, "the immense advantage of this particular clue moreover was that she should have to arrange, to alter, to falsify

nothing; should have to be but consistently simple and straight" (453-54). Then, the Princess learns from Amerigo himself that he and Charlotte had not bought the bowl because he had not believed in it. Maggie, in turn, says to him: "... I did 'believe in it', you see - must have believed in it somehow instinctively for I took it as soon as I saw it. Though I didn't know at all then what I was taking with it" (459). The Prince nonetheless, either hypocritically or ignorantly, cannot see "the importance or the connection" of what Maggie is trying to convey; that both Maggie's purchases - the Prince himself and the bowl she brought home were flawed: the bowl with a crack, her husband with a lover. Moreover, the Prince insists on ignoring Maggie's knowledge for he asks her if she will not get the money she paid for the bowl back, pretending not to see that if Maggie does it she must also give him up. But the Princess leaves the Prince alone. For Frederick C. Crews, Maggie knows that "by suppressing her wrath and maintaining the social appearance of harmony she can avoid any disastrous confessions or reprisals, and hence salvage the broken pieces of her marriage ... [through] ... a precious silence, a benevolent hypocrisy."2

In Book Fifth, Maggie's process into awareness is fully achieved while people from both Eaton Square and Portland Place are at Fawns for the summer. On this occasion Maggie starts again into another painful vigil towards Amerigo's behaviour of having had "replied to nothing, denied nothing, explained nothing, apologized for nothing" as regards her "knowing" of his relation to Charlotte (478). Maggie's fall from innocence culminates at last in the evening of the bridge-game. Adam is Fanny's partner, and the Prince is Charlotte's. From Maggie's quiet and discreet observation of the

two pairs, it is clear to her

> the fact of her father sitting, all unsounded and unblinking, between them; the fact of Charlotte keeping it up, keeping up everything, across the table, with her husband beside her; the fact of Fanny Assingham, wonderful creature, placed opposite to the three and knowing more about each, probably, when one came to think, than either of them knew of either. Erect above all for her was the sharpened fact of the relation of the whole group, individually and collectively, to herself — herself so speciously eliminated for the hour, but presumably more present to the attention of each than the next card to be played. (486)

Then, after moving slowly round the room, Maggie goes out to the terrace into darkness. And from there, "in the outer darkness," Maggie keeps watching the bridge-players whom she sees now as performers, and the smoking-room seems rather their stage where each one plays out his own role. And finally there, "in the outer darkness," she experiences "the horror of finding evil seated all at its ease where she had only dreamed of good; the horror of the thing hideously behind, behind so much trusted, so much pretended, nobleness, cleverness, tenderness." Maggie discovers in this way the quantity of make-believe game played so beautifully at Fawns, or rather — in the highly civilized Old World: "here they turned up for each other, as they say, with the blank faces that denied any uneasiness felt in the approach; here they closed numerous doors carefully behind them ... encouraging thus the irruption of society, imitated the aperture through which the bedizened performers of the circus are poured into the ring" (524-25). As the Princess comes into light again in the empty drawing-room, she finds herself in full possession of an acquired conviction — she has left the world

of darkness, of unconsciousness, and has just got into "the lights" of full consciousness. In fact, according to Lyall H. Powers, now Maggie sees that "she must indeed descend into the arena of the world and fight her battle according to its rule ... She holds herself ready to lie and to deceive - and does so, for love - always to the end of triumphing over nothing but lies and deceifulness, and of claiming her husband."[3] Indeed, that is Maggie's plan, her game, and her own ordeal in the old world.

The imminent confrontation between Maggie and Charlotte takes place in that very evening of the bridge-game. Because of the high tension from both sides, their approach resembles the imminence of a storm; but a storm that never comes up for Maggie keeps playing her role of the unconscious or innocent performer. Her ambiguous declaration to Charlotte that "all I can say is that you've received a false impression," negates indeed both her intimate relation with her father and her own suspicion of the adultery between Charlotte and the Prince. Like the Princess herself, Charlotte's acceptance of Maggie's denial "was like a general pledge not to keep things any worse for her than they essentially had to be; it positively helped her to build up her falsehood - to which accordingly she contributed another block," as she replied to Maggie: "It's much more, my dear, than I dreamed of asking. I only wanted your denial" (497-98). Having said that, Charlotte asks Maggie to kiss her as if they were to seal the beauty of the preserved appearance since everything has been denied between them.

At the close of Book Fifth, if there had been a quarrel between Maggie and Charlotte, the Princess would have been the winner. She triumphs over Charlotte for Adam Verver is taking his wife to

America with him. Perhaps Adam's decision to return to America is the result of his own comprehension of what Maggie meant when she confessed to him the way she felt about the Prince: "when you love in a deeper and intenser way, then you're in the very same proportion jealous ..." (506) For sure the two women change places again. Like in the beginning, Maggie possesses the controlling position whereas Charllotte occupies the submissive one. Besides, the book incident in the garden at Fawns comes to reinforce Maggie's victory. Maggie, at the pretext of preventing Charlotte from starting the reading of the wrong volume she had sent to her, goes in search of her step mother:

> I saw you come out - saw you from my window and couldn't bear to think you should find yourself here without the beginning of your book. This is the beginning; you've got the wrong volume and I've brought you out the right. (540)

What Maggie really returns to Charlotte is the right husband, Adam Verver, while she draws her husband back to herself.

In the last part of the book, though the Princess has apparently won the battle against Charlotte, Maggie's hardest challenge is to conquer her own husband. Besides the lasting unbroken silence between herself and the Prince, Maggie finds it difficult even to approach Amerigo who, by now, has kept away from her since he learned Charlotte and Adam are leaving London. Certainly Maggie does not do with the Prince what she best pleases anymore. Now, "... she was seeing him on his terms, not at all on hers, or that, in a word, she must allow him his unexplained and uncharted, his one practicably workable way." Now she sees the

Prince as a fixed "statue" in his place, or a "new country," whereas she herself is the "settler" or "trader" revolving about the strange land (548-49). Maggie's despairing torment thus leads her to feel "... as if she were waiting with [the Prince] in his prison" - as if they were captives in the French Revolution, in chains, and "in the darkness of the Terror" (561). Though the Princess is really terrified by all the uncertainty of her relation to Amerigo, she experiences a great relief when she has a pretext to approach him and announce that Charlotte and Adam are coming for tea to say their last goodbye. It is still in that condition of total silence about what concerns them all, and Maggie's total abstention from pressure that she gains the Prince's respect, and what will bring her plan to a decisive victory. For sure, Charlotte is never told anything about Maggie's suspicion of her adulterous relation with the Prince, nor does Charlotte know anything about Maggie's purchase of the flawed bowl. Adam Verver in turn, like Charlotte herself, is never told anything about the matter. For Dorothea Krook, Maggie discerns that "her intelligence must be ... as accute, as shrued, as calculating, as cool and self-possessed, and as perfectly disciplined as the intelligence that the world honours and understands ..."[4] The Prince indeed has made his Princess a proposal. He has asked Maggie to "wait" till Charlotte and Adam leave the country - till they have "ceased to see them - for as long as God may grant! Till [they're] really alone" (567).

In spite of the Prince's implied promise of eternal devotion to Maggie's love, the Princess still feels restless about their final encounter with the other couple. At all events, everything turns out all right for both couples, or at least Maggie and Adam experience

the taste of success. As Maggie goes out to the balcony with her father, Adam simply declares to her: "You see ... how right I was. Right, I mean, to do it for you" (577). Since nobody knows how much Adam Verver knows about the whole affair, one may guess he may be alluding either to his marriage or to his going back to America with Charlotte, or both. On the other hand, both the Prince, whom Adam Verver considers "a pure and perfect crystal," and Charlotte, the sophisticated young "social success," are safely kept in the Ververs's art collection. Verily, Maggie recognizes their victory over the two lovers as she says to Adam: "it's success, father" (578). Dorothea Krook also agrees that they experience real success mainly "because the triumph of good over evil, especially when achieved at the cost of much suffering, is the ultimate form of success."[5] Later on, at Adam and Charlotte's departure, Maggie goes back to the balcony as if she were just waiting for the Prince to celebrate their own newly achieved freedom. Though the Prince's delay in coming to her made "her heart beat too fast to go on ... she had thrown the dice" (579), and she had also played her only card. The game is over, and the Prince does come to her. For Philip M. Weinstein, as the Prince reaches the balcony beside Maggie, the Princess "has a fully commanding view; from her eminence she now can see everything." Besides, Mr. Weinstein, among other critics, suggests that Maggie achieves "a consistent growth into mature self-awareness" as she accepts her separation from her father.[6]

Finally Maggie has undergone her process into knowledge. Her confrontation with European society is conveyed by her own performance on the European stage. It is revealed in her struggle to

conquer her husband through a permanent state of meditative vigil, and the way she preserves appearances through an unbroken silence - the omission of the truth, or her own lies. Her awakening journey towards maturity thus is developed in so far as she puts her plan or her make-believe game into action, after her crucial encounter with evil: the discovery that she has been deceived and betrayed by a false impression of nobleness, cleverness and tenderness she receives from everyone who surrounds her. Maggie's fall from innocence to consciousness then does not lead her to a pitiful or deplorable decision - the renunciation of life, but rather, a very successful one, for the impact of the European culture she suffers does not frustrate her. Instead, it works upon her and makes of her the successful American in Europe since she learns how to play the Eurpean game. Maggie, in fact, brings the two civilizations together through a really happy marriage bond; and her victory, based on omissions and lies, reflects again James's own ambiguity, this time concerning morality.

Notes

[1]Joseph A. Ward, **The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James.** (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1961) 153.

[2]Frederick C. Crews, **The Tragedy of Manners: Moral Drama in the later Novels of Henry James.** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) 104.

[3]Lyall H. Powers, **Henry James: An Introduction and Interpretation** (Michigan: Holt, Rinehart And Winston, 1970) 97.

[4]Dorothea Krook, **The Ordeal Of Consciousness In Henry James** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 268.

[5]Krook 310.

[6]Philip M. Weinstein, **Henry James and the Requirements of the Imagination** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) 183, 191.

CONCLUSION

Throughout these four psychological novels Henry James dramatizes the American artist Roderick Hudson abroad in **Roderick Hudson** (1875), the ambitious girl Isabel Archer in **The Portrait of a Lady** (1881), the businessman Lambert Strether in **The Ambassadors** (1903), and the millionaire young woman Maggie Verver in **The Golden Bowl** (1904). Through this gallery of naïve innocents James deals with the confrontation of the American of either sex, and of almost any age, with the unknown world or, at least, with the evil side of high society in the Old World. Some of them are extremely passionate and vulnerable to what surrounds them, as in the case of Roderick Hudson and Isabel Archer. Others are less passionate, and not very much affected by what they see abroad as in the case of the middle-aged Strether and the young Maggie Verver. Roderick's and Isabel's cultural and social thirst turn them into immense provincial idealists. As earlier protagonists, their instinctive hunger for the development of their mind and character leads them to

a frenzied search for culture and refinement in the old civilization. On the other hand Strether has little idealism, but a capacity to accept the unknown and adapt himself to new patterns of attitude and behavior. Maggie goes a step further than Strether, she is not only capable of accepting the unknown but of reconciling both worlds - Europe and America. In this way, in James's later period the discussion of manners and behavior of Americans in Europe gradually disappears.

James's protagonists thus seem to mature in the same proportion as James ages. That which in Roderick Hudson and Isabel Archer, seems to be a tragic flaw, their idealism, resulting in their failure to achieve a real harmony with the Old World, in Strether leads to freedom of choice and, therefore, freedom from convenient commitments. In Maggie Verver it is a complete success, for her idealism is purged by her own apprenticeship in the old world: she does not fail to master the problem of social deception, and she does succeed in her union with the European Prince Amerigo. The acquisition of full maturity then, or full knowledge, or even full openness of mind, is suggested only by Maggie Verver of **The Golden Bowl**, James's last completed novel, as she succeeds in reconciling both America and Europe; the New World and the Old; the new power represented by the vulgar materialist and commercial class, and the old power represented by the highly civilized and traditional class; the idealism of American moral imagination and the knowledge and experience of the European aesthetic social values. In this final fusion Maggie Verver achieves completely what Leon Edel calls, in his article "Henry James: The Americano-European Legend," "an ideal of tolerance, an acceptance of differences, a recognition of

similarities, a code of non-violence, a feeling for a world made rich and disprovincialized by the knowledge of the multitude of peoples and types and customs."[1] Maggie's conduct and final victory indeed lead her to reach what James calls an ideally civilized society since, in **The Golden Bowl**, the confronting interests are fused, worldly prejudices have been removed, the tragedy of manners is dissolved, and the fusion of both civilizations is fully achieved by Maggie's newly acquired experience and maturity.

In accordance with the concept of American innocence and the myth of the American Adam expressed by critics in the introduction of this research, Henry James's innocent "new worlders" are those very Adamic figures who come to the unknown world of Europe and, through the clash of cultures, undergo the tragedy of innocence as discussed by R.W.B. Lewis. Even though the considering tragedy may not appear a "Fortunate Fall" to some of the Jamesian protagonists, as in the case of Roderick Hudson and, perhaps, Isabel Archer, all James's characters who undergo the international experience cease to be the man or woman of "blank mind" and acquire the conscious conscience. While the new Americans are too immature on account of the very newness of their home country, Europe is ancient and ripe with tradition and experience. The impact thus of Europe on Americans, the old on the new, of experience on innocence, makes the pure innocents experience the social evil in the hands of Europeans or Europeanized people. The experience of evil they undergo resides in the deceit and betrayal they suffer in the supposed paradise Europe first represents for them. And the nature of the betrayal they suffer always favours a convenience whose main interest is the preservation of appearances on the part of the Europeans. As in the

case of **The Golden Bowl**, Amerigo is conveniently married to Maggie Verver and, his adulterous relation to Charlotte Stant triggers Maggie's awakening process. Likewise, in **The Portrait**, Osmond is also conveniently married to Isabel Archer and, his adulterous relation to Madame Merle triggers Isabel's awakening process. As for **Roderick Hudson**, the young sculptor's learning that his beloved Christina Light has been conveniently married to Prince Casamassima completes his awakening process, and leads him to his fatal fall from the Swiss cliff. Similar to Roderick Hudson, in **The Ambassadors**, Strether's learning of Chad's convenient, yet hidden, attachment to the adulterous Madame de Vionnet also completes his process into awareness in the old world. As regards all these conveniences, it seems Henry James's own convenience or ideal to unite or try to unite Americans and Europeans (or Europeanized), and America itself and Europe - so that the ideal society may be formed. In fact, for James, says Tony Tanner in his article "Henry James II: 1882-1898," "... an American ... must deal, more or less, even if only by implication, with Europe; whereas no European is obliged to deal in the least with America,"[2] for the Americans themselves are the ones who lack the knowledge and experience of the old world.

Verily, Frederick J. Hoffman's previous idea that 'life needs forms" in order to achieve consciousness is also confirmed throughout James's protagonists' awakening process. Besides, the Americans' submission to the "forms" or conveniences of the European society, or their own trial in Europe, may in fact assume the forms of initiation or victimization as stated by Ihab Hassan. Considering thus that the end of initiation in James's works is the confirmation and acceptance of the world through a fully achieved reconciliation

between Americans and the old world, Maggie Verver may be regarded as the fully initiated Jamesian character. And, if victimization implies the Americans' failure to achieve real harmony with the old world on account of the American insufficiency or incompleteness towards European life, then Roderick Hudson and Isabel Archer, are really victimized by the European conventionalities. Nonetheless, James's protagonists' achieved knowledge and experience of the world, their initiation, are obtained with sacrifice and renunciation. Thus, Maggie must sacrifice her father, give him up, in order to conquer the Prince; Strether seems to renounce a promising life as he returns to America. At any rate, the sort of ordeal James's characters undergo fits into Hassan's idea that the end of this process seems to assume the form of victimization, as in the case of Roderick and Isabel, rather than initiation. And whatever name this process receives, it also corresponds to Maxwell Geismar's idea that James's fiction broaches essentially the "tragedy of innocence" on account of the intense suffering that process involves. But since the Jamesian characters are Adamic figures doomed to fall as it has been confirmed throughout the analysis of those four novels, they do undergo the experience of evil. Even Maggie owes her success to a hypocritical, Europeanized behavior; but, at all events, they taste the fruit of knowledge produced by the suffering they experience during their fall into consciousness in Europe.

The way Henry James manages to develop his male and female innocents into the awakening process then has nothing to do with their sex or age. In fact, there is no pattern for males as opposed to females. The only required elements that provide them all with

experience are the opportunity and freedom they are offered. Though Isabel Archer's and Maggie Verver's fall from innocence occurs only after their marriage, some other Jamesian heroines such as Milly Theale of **The Wings Of The Dove**, and Daisy Miller of **Daisy Miller** do not need to marry in order to achieve awareness just like Roderick Hudson and Lambert Strether. On the other hand, considering James's works in general, full maturity is only completely achieved through the successful marriage between the New World and the Old. This marriage indeed is accomplished in **The Golden Bowl**, James's last complete novel, as Lyall H. Powers points out: "**The Golden Bowl** insists, like other of James's stories before it, on the importance of full consciousness, clear vision, to successful life - life in which the saving benefice of love can be enjoyed. To put it simply, **The Golden Bowl** achieves that compromise toward which all of James's stories on the international theme seem to have been striving - here the American is successfully wedded to the European, and the Principino is the pledge of the success of that union."[3] It is also worth noting that while the Prince and Maggie's child is "the pledge of the success" of their union, in **The Portrait of a Lady**, Isabel's boy dies six months after his birth, as a suggestion that her union to Osmond has been a failure. The construction process towards full maturity in Henry James's works consists, thus, in the complete reconciliation and acceptance of both American and European values - the fusion between the idealism, moralism, naturalness, and freedom of the New World, and the knowledge, experience, civilization, tradition, and discipline of the Old World.

In order to arrive conclusively at the essence of the awakening process which James's American protagonists undergo in **Roderick**

Hudson, The Portrait of a Lady, The Ambassadors and The Golden Bowl, some clarifications are needed. As regards the nature of the innocence of those characters, they are innocents in so far as their fine intelligence leads them to an intense imaginative moral life grounded in their idealism. What causes their fall from innocence is their exposure to social relations as they confront the European culture, or rather, as they confront the European aesthetic values grounded in knowledge, experience, and discipline. And what constitutes the evil they meet then, as defined so clearly by Lotus Snow in "The Pattern Of Innocence Through Experience In The Characters Of Henry James," is "ruthless egoism," and, therefore, the nature of the experience they undergo is "betrayal." As for what they make of the experience they gain, Lotus Snow also judges it quite properly: "they do not simply abstain from revenge: they do not simply let the evil-doers off easly. They take of the evil-doers exquisite care due themselves; they let them off without impairment to their self-respect. They cushion the way of the transgressors. They are in short, 'of a magnificence.' Likewise, as Lotus Snow expands on those innocents' re-education after their fall, "the innocence which is the finely moral imagination of self does not change. What James's characters are inherently at the beginning of a novel, they are at the end ... The journey they take is not from innocence to experience but of innocence through experience."[4] Furthermore, although all of the Jamesian protagonists who experience the international situation gain experience, it is not all of them who achieve full maturity or a complete reconciliation with Europe. Roderick Hudson, Isabel Archer and Lambert Strether fail because they do not achieve real harmony with the old world -

though their failure occurs in different proportions: Roderick prefers death rather than coping with his acquired knowledge as he feels unable to profit by the experience he gains; though Isabel remains attached to a Europeanized husband, she does not love him; and as for Strether, he returns to America. Thus, only Maggie Verver achieves full maturity as she reconciles both America and Europe - even though this reconciliation may appear a fatality as the Italian Prince depends on the Ververs' money and his old mistress possesses none. Considering therefore that for James living consists in moving from unawareness to awareness as previously stated by critics, his protagonists have had their life - they have had their experience made into knowledge.

Notes

[1]Leon Edel, "Henry James: The Americano-European Legend," University of Toronto Quaterly XXXVI (July, 1967) 328.

[2]Tony Tanner, "Henry James II: 1882-1898," **Writers & their Work** (England: Longman Group LTO, 1979) 5.

[3]Lyall H. Powers, **Henry James: An Introduction and Interpretation** (Michigan: Holt, Rinehart And Winston, 1970) 98.

[4]Lotus Snow, "The Pattern of Innocence Through Experience in The Characters of Henry James," University of Toronto Quaterly XXII (April, 1953) 235-36.

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