

Revisionism for Modernizing Experience in *The Golden Bowl*: A New-historical Perspective

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Abstract—The present article intends to show how the bi-partite structure of Henry James's *The Golden Bowl* makes it possible for the author to recycle its discourse through a strategy of revisionism. With the emergence of new theories and critical perspectives in the humanities of the 1970s and after, it seems that this strategy of creative writing has been considerably theorized also. A hypothesis behind the insertion of theory and practice here is that revising the previous literatures has come to be strategic for modernizing experience and creating new knowledge. For example, mainly based on Foucault's contributions to literature, new historicism takes history and literature as interconnected, while it takes their interconnection as implying that the revisionism of the bygone periods' literatures is a way for revivifying the historical situations of their production. In a literary work, the author-text-reader connections on one side, and the relation between power and literature on other side are features on which a new historicist focuses for historicizing the work. The present study also attempts to provide James's reader with some theories and examples of revisionism in his novel for restructuring its discourse and making it applicable to the present time conditions.

Index Terms—revisionism, new-historicism, *The Golden Bowl*, literature, history, modernizing experience

I. INTRODUCTION

New Historicism is rooted in old historicism in which, as Charles E. Bressler (1994) says, "history serves as a background to literature" (p. 128). In an old-historical approach to literature, it was the literary object as an aesthetic product which was primarily important, and the historical background of the text's production had only a secondary position. Old historicists also believed in the objectivity of the historian in his scholarships as well as in the accuracy of his data. Therefore, in old historicism the literary text was regarded to reflect the historical background of its production.

However, although new historicism has many things in common with old historicism, from many perspectives it is different from the latter. If old historicism regarded history as linear, new historicism takes it opposite to linear, and finds it often broken, disrupted, and even contradictory. And if the former used to take history as objectively narrated and therefore as trustworthy, the latter sees it as a discourse which is, like other discourses, influenced by power, subjective, and in risk of the historian's prejudice.

In new-historical studies history has a double meaning. It signifies what has happened in the past as well as our knowledge of what has happened in the past. In addition to the past happenings, history signifies our retelling or representing of such happenings in language also. Along with this double meaning of history in new historicism, a research method in it is the analysis of certain literary texts, Edmund Spenser's "The Faerie Queen" or Jonathan Swift's satires for example, to find about a past worldview, a bygone discourse, or the ways of perception of a certain historical nation like the English people in the Renaissance times or the Neo-classical Period.

It should be noted that all such forms of being are manifested in language. So, a discourse in this sense is primarily a language 'event' that is linked not only to the gesture of writing or to the articulation of speech, but also to the situation that has provoked it, to its consequences, and to the statements before and after it. And, on the contrary to old historicism, new historicism does not study literature as detached from other discourses, but studies it, Raman Selden (1989) says, "in the context of social, political and cultural history" (p. 94). In new historicism, literature as a discourse is not superior to other discourses, but is, like them, influenced by power.

Other concerns of new historicists, which the present research takes to critically analyze, are the nature and function of discourse for Michel Foucault, its historical disruptions, the formation of what Foucault calls "episteme", as well as the method he proposes for the study of discourse. After that, the paper will examine the application of power in *The Golden Bowl* for both repression and creation. It takes to analyze literature as a discourse which is not for liberation but for controlling through the creation of certain kinds of subjects which are desired by the power system. The creation of characters in literature with pre-determined mentalities is perhaps mainly for the institutionalization of power, which means for the reader to socialize himself through self-disciplining.

Additionally, new historicism regards a literary text as a triadic space for the contribution of the author, the text, and the reader. This renders literature a discourse for examining problems like: the concerns of the reader and his society, the production of power through interpretation, and the formation of the text in the reader's consciousness. The relation of power and subject, subject-making in literature via a search for 'truth', the modes and functions of surveillance, and

the text as culture in history are among other concerns of a new-historical approach to literature which the present article will attempt to discuss.

The present article will also deal with the bi-partite structure of *The Golden Bowl* to discuss its revisionism as a writing strategy called new-historical. The focus of my argument here is the productive power of the book's revision. In the first part of James's book, Maggie Verver's discourse is too inadequate for the people around her to accept and believe in. However, in its second part, which is a revision or a re-telling of the first, James repeats Maggie's discourse to update it via a negotiation between Maggie and her friends and the use of her strategic silence, and by so doing to make it acceptable for the people around her.

In addition, what James the revisionist calls the "Absolute" is discussed as a possibility for modernizing the novel's experience. It is also a space for James's reader to find "a way out" of whatever hinders renovating the novel's discourse. Moreover, in a series of metaphors the reviser illustrates how the discourse of the first part of his book was cancelled for the emergence of that of its second part.

II. DISCUSSION

A. *A Theory of New Historicism*

New historicism takes its roots perhaps from the old historicism of Johann Gottfried von Herder. Nevertheless, the base of the arguments of the present paper is Michel Foucault's literary contributions.

In *Critical Theory since Plato* we read "Foucault's interests had always been nothing if not historical and concerned with events" (Adams and Searle, 2004, p. 1259). When Foucault turned from his archeological studies to focus on (Nietzsche's) 'genealogy', it seems that he took the term to mean the historical development of 'power relations'. In this way, in a new-historical analysis of literature, history, which means the change or development of events in time, often stands in the center, because a bi-lateral connection is there regarded between history and literature. On one hand, a literary text reflects the determining forces of the historical situation of its production while on other hand the text is shaped by a totality of forces including the historical ones. And Foucault's researches in the 1970s and 1980s excited the English and American Renaissance scholars to regard history as subjective, non-linear, and as having no definite goal in its movement.

Another tenet of new historicism is that it takes history as subjective. Due to history's subjectivity, this critical approach formulates no single universal set of principles, and proposes no unitary theoretical model of research. Instead, it suggests particular models of investigation that are appropriate to certain times and places. It also regards literature not superior to other human discourses like philosophy, religion, politics, and sociology, but as a discourse that is, like them, the product of human imagination, subject to the dominating ideology, and a means of control by the power-structure in the time of its production.

However, history's subjectivity and the fact it is controlled by power render it into disrupted (disconnected) 'epistemes' of which the logic and purpose of a higher layer can go even counter to the logic and purpose of a lower one. Foucault says an episteme is a "totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities" (2004, p. 148). A sense of his definition is that discourses change historically; that is, in different historical eras different relations are at work among the sciences. For example, the discourse of the 16th-century Shakespearean poetry is different, both in form and content, from the discourse of the 17th-century metaphysical poetry, the 19th-century romanticism is different from the Victorian realism, and the modern aesthetic consciousness in the fiction of the first half of the 20th century is different from the postmodern discourse in contemporary fiction.

Notwithstanding, not all scholars have a clear idea about the meaning of 'discourse' for Foucault. "Lynda Nead, ... , argues that Foucault is not consistent in his use of the term, and that consequently there is some uncertainty about the precise meaning of it as it is used even in a single work of Foucault" (Hawthorn, 1992, p. 66). But Hawthorn himself claims that "for Foucault discourses are 'large groups of statements' – rule-governed language terrains defined by what Foucault refers to as 'strategic possibilities'" (p. 65).

Therefore, it can be suggested that discourse is, in a Foucauldian sense, a cluster of statements in a certain historical period which ground the production of thought, reasoning, and intellectual communication as well as the inauguration of the logic of truth(-making). Such statements can be produced in theology, literature, philosophy, sociology, political science, etc. It goes without saying that defined as a cluster of statements, discourse is a dimension of language. However, it is not a linguistic dimension of language but a semantic one; that is, a dimension of whatever is concerned with the meaning, with the semantics, of language. In addition, it is concerned with laying the foundations of thought and reasoning, or with what Mas'Ud Zavarzadeh (1985) calls the "frames of intelligibility" (p. 607) in succeeding historical eras.

Discourse as a tradition for the production of truthful reasoning is also far from a continuously legitimate tradition, for in the history of its evolution it often goes through disruptions, discontinuities. A reason for such disruptions is the influence of the power structure on history and on the process of historicizing discourses. These subtle effects make the literary scholar doubt about the authenticity of such historically-made "discursive formations". In addition, the blind and non-linear movement of history should make the critic analyze the art object only in the context of the certain historical period in which it was produced.

But the idea is a bit more complicated than it seems, for if discourses are, on one hand, historically disrupted, on other hand all discourses of a same period are interconnected also. The disrupted and discontinuous nature of a discourse makes it essential that it is analyzed in the historical context of its production. Foucault's proposition for the study of discourse is strategic. The method he proposes for it is analyzing the episteme. He claims that

This episteme may be suspected of being something like a world-view, a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge, which imposes on each one the same norms and postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape — a great body of legislation written once and for all by some anonymous hand (2004, p. 148).

New historicism regards the discourse of a certain era interconnected to all other kinds of discourse in the same era in the making of which the social and historical strata of the time and place have important roles. It finds the literary text perhaps as the best space for the simulation of the interconnection of all these diversified discourses.

B. New Historicism in Fiction

Thus, in new historicism a piece of fiction is no longer an autonomous object. It is a cultural production which is itself a totality of forms, tools, mechanisms, etc. that are devised mainly by the power system for controlling the subjects. This leads to Foucault's refusal to accept that knowledge is simply there for liberation. He says "knowledge is not made of understanding; it is made for cutting" (qtd. in Nealon, 1992, p. 111).

New historicism sees (literary) knowledge not necessarily for producing citizens or making nations but as in the business of surveillance also, as in the service of the authority for easing the exercise of power for the subjugation of citizens. In such a context of double application of literature, criticism takes mission to direct knowledge and to formulate the individual and collective consciousness.

Thus, new historicists note that we cannot expect literature to open a way to our freedom, because its purpose is, among other things, the legitimization (naturalization) of the production of certain kinds of subjects with previously designed mentalities as the power needs. Freundlieb (1995) argues that for new historicists "the will to truth is simultaneously a will to power because the 'truth' that is 'discovered' is precisely what shapes or even constitutes the subject" (p. 332).

This subject-constituting power is a mechanism which grounds the production of a certain kind of people with neutralized or disempowered subjectivities who therefore only ease the legitimization of power. A new-historical scholar of literature wants to see how, under the guise of a search for 'truth', a literary work represents the creation of men and women in society who readily accept the necessities of the power structure. Instead of resisting the hegemony of power, these people easily come to terms with it and support its institutionalization. Therefore, for changing themselves into good citizens through moral conducts and acts of socialization, these citizens search for "self-disciplining" programs in which they attempt to make connections with themselves and bestow an aesthetic dimension on their own lives. This is why Freundlieb calls literature an "apparatus of ethical surveillance and normalization" (p. 330).

An aesthetic object, a story by Henry James for example or by Thomas Pynchon, is the product of a cultural system of which the author, the text, and the reader are major components. The importance which new historicism attaches to the author's life is that the aesthetic object reflects not only the concerns of the author but also those of the society in which the object has been produced. In line with this argument, what makes a James or a Pynchon is itself part and parcel of the culture in which they have lived and produced their oeuvres. The fact that the young James has often traveled between Europe and America, the various teachings that he has received from his tutors in great European cities like London, Paris, and Bonn, as well as what he has picked up from the European social and artistic opportunities like museums and libraries, have grounded the expansion of his imaginative outlooks and helped him to produce, later on in his life, a prose fiction a central theme of which is the interconnection of the past and the present of certain nations in the making of their cultures and civilizations.

Another issue of a new-historical analysis of James's fiction is the change in his studies when he was an undergraduate student. He firstly attended the Harvard Law School, but shortly after that he started to prefer literature to which he devoted his life. The reason of this radical adjustment can be found both in his personal interests and in the social backgrounds of his life. Personally, after reading law for some times, he made up his mind that he was more talented and more interested in literature than in the former discipline. Socially, he realized that American fiction and criticism were in a chronic state of extreme shallowness which he imagined could help to put right if he read literature.

This signifies that a new-historical study of fiction pays close attention to the text for showing the influence on it of the social and cultural situation of its production. However, in addition to representing how an author's mentality expands and tracing the fulfilment of his inclinations and responsibilities, such a care which new historicism pays to the social conditions of the text's production is often for representing subject-making power relations and modes of surveillance in such texts.

The representation of power relations in a work of fiction renders reading into a political gesture of truth-making. If a relation is naturally a two-dimensional entity, it guarantees the production of an in-between space where power is rooted not in the presence of a single side but in the participation of both sides of the relation. The source of such a relational power is neither something pre-given nor something out of the power structure, but is an integral part of it from which it therefore cannot be divided. This is to mean that what brings this kind of power into being is the dynamic

interaction of the two parties of the relation. This kind of power is therefore no longer given by a sacred agency from the heavens, and it is no longer central, transcendental. It is nodal, relational.

This means that a new-historical analysis of a literary text searches for the centers of power not out of the structure but within it, like something which is bound to the rules and regulations of the structure. The integration of power and structure, an exciting representation of which is *The Golden Bowl*, is a functioning guarantee of the modern liberal democracies.

In addition to power as relational, power is, from the eye of Foucault, both repressive and constitutive, productive and destructive. However, Foucault seemingly suggests that we should close our eyes on its repressive dimensions, and should focus on it only as productive. He says

The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an "ideological" representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called "discipline." We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," it "masks," it "conceals." In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (ptd. in Freundlieb, 1995, p. 332).

An aftermath of power as productive is that there is not any universal culture or aesthetic norm, but there is a wide spectrum of cultures and norms that are much different from each other. As cultural products, literary texts are also culturally bound. Like other kinds of aesthetic objects, they take root from the innermost resources of peoples in different times and places. And the historical diversity of discourses is the guarantee of the emergence of diversified literary norms and aesthetic conventions. Such norms and conventions reflect both the cultural influences upon the authors and the feeling and behavioral standards of the author who produces the text.

Therefore, the next new-historical principle of literary analysis is the fictional text as a piece of culture in history. A new-historical reading of literature is a search for how it reflects a certain historical situation; that is, how a series of past happenings is narrated in language situations and how the reader reconstructs (historicizes) them in the act of reading. If both fiction and history are narrative discourses, fiction interacts with the historical conditions of its production to create reality and engineer people's subjectivities.

This in turn indicates that history is subjective, because it is narrated by the people whose consciousness is controlled by the power system. The school, the media, the pulpit, and the hospital are among the controlling apparatuses in the hand of power. It also indicates that such discourses are nodal rather than hierarchical.

Literature, history, and criticism are discourses between which no dividing line can be drawn, because to produce meaning a great text of fiction interweaves them so artistically that they cannot be un-woven again. The "periodicity" of history and discourse has excited new historicists to propose that they should undertake their job like an archeologist. To provide data as to a bygone people, the archeologist digs in deep layers of the earth and uncovers the (symbolic) leftovers of their lost civilization. Then, he discovers the interconnection of those leftovers to provide a formula about the bygone people. Likewise, in order to develop a formula for the formation and functioning of an 'episteme', a new-historical researcher digs in different discourses, regimes of thought or knowledge, of a given past era, uncovers the connections of these discourses, and provides the rules of the functioning of the episteme. In this sense, an episteme is the coming together of different discourses and the unifying principles or patterns of their interaction in a given historical era. Foucault asserts that these "epistemes exist in their own right; they are neither moral nor immoral, but amoral" (qtd. in Bressler, 1994, p. 132). The amorality of the episteme excites the 'archeologist of knowledge' to focus on how different layers of a bygone people's culture have interacted to render its members into a unified nation. As well, he is excited to zoom on the structure of power in the nation, the circulation of power in it, and how it has renewed itself in the passage of time.

Like what Stephen Greenblatt has done in his Shakespeare and Renaissance studies, a new-historicist investigator searches for meaning in the substrata of history and national cultures. However, new-historicists argue that there is not any general or universal episteme, for epistemes are to a large extent under the influence of power, and are therefore fully disrupted, and quite disconnected in logic and content. The non-linearity and disruption of history and its being influenced by power imply that our subjectivities are also not independent from culture and power, and that experience is the outcome of our interaction with cultural structures in history. And experience is earned in the act of reading when we find occasion to historicize the characters' feelings and thoughts in what Foucault calls "the being of language," and to simulate the spaces where such characters experience the world around them.

C. *New Historicism in The Golden Bowl*

1. *Allegory of the Revision*

Henry James's prefaces often want to teach us how to read his stories, and from the preface to *The Golden Bowl* the present reader takes to unravel a theory of new-historical reading of the novel. The novel spaces two texts or discourses one of which goes counter the other one, so that the superior text finally demolishes all the traces of the inferior one and erects its own logic and structure. From a naïve girl in the first text, who understands neither her husband (Prince Amerigo) nor her friend (Charlotte Stant), Maggie Verver develops in the second text to a girl with discriminating powers of mind who unweaves the thought patterns of her opponents, regains her husband's love, and helps them appreciate her subtle techniques of silence in a way that they can no longer reject her discourse. Her techniques of silence, as well as her dialogic power, which is a structure-making power also, invite James's characters and reader to

complement his text, so that at the end of it, although in our hand we have his book, in our mind we have a story that is re-told, historicized, by his reader and character which guarantees not only the renovation of the former's consciousness but that of the latter's also.

James's preface also reports his experiences about when he was revising the novel. In the original text (story), there was a 'case' which was to be represented as well as an individual 'view' of the case which was to be accounted for. If it is right to suggest that in the composition of the original text the writer was 'irresponsible' to his 'ideal', in its revision he says "I track my uncontrollable footsteps, right and left, while they take their quick turn" (James, 1995, p. xviii). But his revised text is bound in movement to the original. In this way, the author of *The Golden Bowl* pictorially and poetically exposes us to the deepest truths. There is an "embarrassed truth" through which this painter-poet-author remembers he has already glanced. But the revised story takes its main 'amusement' from how the teller recognizes the original truth "betrays itself," how it excites the reporter to filtrate a new outlook into his consciousness. A part of the pleasure of this language game of revision comes from an indirect report as to how the imagined agents succeed in "disavowing the presence of" a previous outlook and replacing it with a new one.

As a previous discourse is cancelled and a new one is inaugurated, it involves the society in the process of an embarrassing understanding, because it has to disregard the semantics of the previous discourse and justify its subjectivity with the new one. The literary representation of such a restoring game, *The Golden Bowl* for example, is a struggle for recognition through historicizing the experience of characters who have partaken in the making of the original story. The people of the story take their existence from participation in the act of recognition. These acts are to be represented mainly in "the consciousness of but two of the characters" (James, 1995, p. xviii): that of Prince Amerigo in the first part of the book, and that of Princess Maggie in the second.

A set of relations is represented in the name of Amerigo, while another set is shown in the name of Maggie. Although the Prince is entangled in a deep embarrassment, his concerns and interests are not much different from our own ones. However, the Princess is the representation of a "highly individualized *though* highly intelligent" (James, 1995, p. xviii) consciousness. The fact that she is "a compositional resource, and of the finest order" (James, 1995, p. xviii), signifies that James renders her into an occasion, into an apparatus, for repealing a previous episteme for the initiation of a new one.

However, in the presentation of the Princess almost nothing is calculable, because having a great variety of narrative materials at his disposal, in their selection the author feels quite free. The Jamesian compositional strategy here is that the Prince and Princess should be each a 'center of recognition'. We, as readers, enter these centers mainly in two ways. One is the door the Prince opens to the Princess while another one is the door the latter opens to the former. In the first part of the story the things are to help the Prince to hand himself over to the reader. This formula repeats itself in the second half of the story also where we read mainly to know the Princess.

However, this is not to mean that the Jamesian game in this novel is already complete, for a "consummate application" of these structural techniques is needed by the reader. The texts of Prince and Princess will unravel their mysteries only in a process of analytical negotiation in reading, for it is in reading that their images and pictures add to the hallucination of our being in literature, and make it into a vivid experience of understanding. In the act of reading, these images are invoked into figures and scenes for adding to our curiosity about the nature and development of the historical experience, so that in this historicizing process the interior of the past lives reveals itself to us in the form of renewed visible appearances. In this way, it can be suggested that a new-historical approach to fiction is for re-invoking such hallucinated past lives to flow into our consciousness and make our souls 'artistically' competent to absorb the truth of those lives and render them as understandable methods and formulas. *The Golden Bowl* illustrates how image and picture can develop, in the imagination of the author and reader, into visible appearances that work for sending the things of a previous era into disappearance and certifying the emergence of a new period with different laws of knowledge and principles of cognition.

James argues that the 'garden' of story-writer differs from that of the painter: story is a more dramatic illustration of the imaginary than painting, a more deeply enacted representation of life, and more suggestive. Picture cannot be modified to different situations and applications, since it is more stable in value than story, and it sooner becomes stale and rigid. But the vivid imagination of the author allows him to use the "plastic possibility" of the story perhaps in unlimited ways for the formation of a newly imagined world. And story is a freer simulation, and more productive, of (the truth of) life than painting, and it is more critical. The increasing unfaithfulness of the signifier to the signified in the modern and postmodern fiction opens up a possibility for it to create numberless imaginative environments where invented people pass virtual lives and institute successive discourses.

In the preface to James's book, we also read that for the composition of his story he has used "the street-scenery of London" (1995, p. xxi). This scenery is

a field yielding a ripe harvest of treasure from the moment I held up to it, in my fellow artist's company, the light of our fond idea--the idea, that is, of the aspect of things or the combination of objects that might, by a latent virtue in it, speak for its connexion with something in the book, and yet at the same time speak enough for its odd or interesting self" (1995, p. xxi-xxii).

The author confesses that although the implements of this scenery were at the risk of inconsistency, but they generated in him and his "fellow searcher" a "mere pleasure of exploration," a deep sense of curiosity which would

excite them “to ‘back’ the prodigious city” (1995, p. xxii) of London. However, in their backward exploring quest in the history of the city, it seems that what is more important for James is not the scenery implements but “the looking itself” which is “so often flooded with light the question of what a ‘subject’, what ‘character’, what a saving sense in things, is and isn’t” (1995, p. xxii). He is touring the scenery not for the things exhibited in the shop windows or if and how much they are or are not artistic, but more likely for enlightenment about the formulas of tastes, subjectivities, sensibilities, etc. of the typical English or even European man in the Renaissance times, for example.

Approaching James’s text in this way, one can claim that it is the ‘history’ (of Renaissance) which is at the center of it and to which it is a ‘response’. So, the idea of literature in it emerges from the idea of the past lives and appearances, that is, from the idea of things as they really were in history, but as the author has translated the formulas of their existence into appropriate content of his story. Thus, (understanding) the London life as a bridge or canal for leading James to the historical being of the European consciousness in a major subject of the novel.

This novel is, among other things, the story of how (London) life can be studied as a manifestation of the English prototypical discourse in history. James acknowledges that “the small shop” in the London scenery at the outset of the novel is “but a shop of the mind, of the author’s projected world, in which objects are primarily related to each other” (1995, p. xxii). Therefore, it is perhaps right to suggest that this Jamesian shop is not a real and concrete shop but is a phenomenon which has only been projected onto the mind of the author and the building blocks of which are relations. In addition, we should and can read “the Prince’s and Charlotte’s and the Princess’s visits” (1995, p. xxii) only in the space of this phenomenological being. Also, the author notifies the reader that this projected structure will remain incomplete unless the reader participates in its fabrication. The present reader is not sure if such a close and productive contribution between literature and reader for restructuring the geometry of the presence in history of the English people is not particular to the fiction of James.

If “shop” for mind in James’s preface signifies also his characters’ participation in the exchange of ideas for recycling the golden bowl of the English Renaissance consciousness, a feature of this projected construction is that no part of it stands divided from its other parts. However, another feature of it is that it lacks any center, while it will not cease its continuous becoming. The unceasing permutation in the subjectivity of men and women testifies discursive disruptions in the course of history.

When James was revising the text of *The Golden Bowl* for the New York Edition of his works, he said in the preface that the pursuit of the plot was secondary to the idea of rereading the tale. He realized that re-reading the tale, he could be faithful to the performing movement in its original form: “the march of my present attention coincides sufficiently with the march of my original expression” (1995, p. xxiii). Revising the text of this novel does not mean that James has re-written the whole of it, but only that he has read it again to recycle its discourse, to make it digestible for the modern reader.

Therefore, the author as reader is paradigmatic for the reader as author. The former does the revision perhaps without any “bewilderment or anguish”. Retelling story, James says he is “passive, receptive, appreciative, often even grateful” (1995, p. xxiii) to his previous footprints when he was telling the original one. In opposition to when he was revising his earlier texts, now he needs to make few amendments, because he does not see any “disparity of sense” between the original composer and the reviser of the text. His present act of revision is as similar to that of the original story-teller as the paper puppets are applicable to the shadows on the wall (in a puppet show).

Accordingly, the consciousness represented in the revised story is similar to that in the original version: in the rhythm of the motion as well as in the system of representation. The metaphor that James creates here is extraordinary: the previous virtual environment is like “a shining expanse of snow spread over a plain” (1995, p. xxiii) on which the reviser is treading. On the substructure, there are the footprints of the original intruder, but these footprints are just hidden under a solid layer of fresh snow that is perhaps the allegory of the new (social) changes, the problems of modernizing the text and adapting it to the needs of the modern reader. James says he could occasionally have deviated from the original track, but suggests that in the justification of his new steps to the previous footprints he had, on the whole, little problems. However, some amendments are appropriate to the dramatic ‘necessity’ of the new times.

Revising his text, and under the impact of a “sudden large apprehension of the Absolute” (James, 1995, p. xxiv), James seems to have acted quite intuitively. He frees himself from the influence of all theories of writing or philosophies of mind to find a short cut to the innermost regions of human consciousness. For James the reviser of his text, as well as for his reader, a source of inspiration is “deviations and differences” between the original text and its revision which appear in the act of reading.

In a new-historical analysis of literature superimposition is strategic also. In superimposition there is often a negotiation between old and new discourses of a people while the analyst focuses on their deviations as a field of research. As he works on such discursive deviations in the history of that people, he discovers the source, logic, and direction of knowledge in their historical evolution. In this sense, writing fiction and reading it are equal, for in reading fiction we also wrestle with the problems of composition, and renovate ourselves through the infusion of our perspectives and those of the text. It is in such horizon infusions, when a previous logic of experience is modified, that the conditions of our previous being are demolished, and our history regenerates itself through deviation from its previous course.

2. The “Absolute”

The "Absolute" is, as Stephen Donadio (1978) puts it with reference to the philosophy of Friedrich Hegel, the activity of the artist who "corresponds in essence to the striving of the spirit to realize itself completely in the world" (p. 60). In such a self-realizing attempt, the artist becomes inclined to tread on new ways for discovering himself. The science, art, knowledge, etc. of the new era welcome him to unrecognized horizons. In this "flat interregnum," he consciously waits to partake in setting up new systems of thought. Therefore, he observes a process of transformation in which the previous statements are cancelled and new norms, institutions, and systems of value impose themselves upon the subjects. With the gradual cancellation of trite discourses and the installation of new ones, the imagination of the typical artist flies over the altitudes that are necessarily other than the previous ones.

In this sense, it is through the art of revisionism that man historicizes literature and recreates himself. Art makes man, and man (re-)makes history. And the Jamesian "Absolute" is the space for the redemption of the artist in the temple of his consciousness through revisionism, the application of the new textual potentialities to free himself from compulsion and attain freedom of choice through introducing new epistemes. In the domain of the absolute, the revisionist writer, like his characters and readers, consciously endeavors to update himself through updating his art.

James implies that in a Kantian sense also revising a text is an act of enlightenment. As an "ausgang" (or a "way out"), it is a quest for new knowledge, because it gives a chance to the author to leave the previous norms of composition behind and introduce new logics of meaning. Thus, could it be argued that "the sense of the absolute" implies the application of the power of language, or of discourse, in re-reading a text for renewing the grammar of a previous epistemology? The "absolute" is the ground for "deviations and differences" to increase in the text, the possibility to go into the exterior of the text to see what the text originally wanted to say but has failed to say. It is therefore the logic of hatching the eggs of a new text in the shell of the previous one(s). Revising a text is to renew its narrative by removing the dust of oldness on the face of it, to turn its characters into new persons whom the reader can know and with whom he can sympathize.

If, as Mary Cross (1993) says, "There is an increasing disproportion between what she [Maggie] says and the accumulating surplus of what she means" (p. 185), re-reading or revising *The Golden Bowl* is to load its discourse up with new implications so as to enable her to interfere between the word and its referent. James and Maggie use this strategy for looking over the text to see how it can be impregnated with new meanings.

Here James and Maggie intend artistically to control the meaning, and their solution is "to preserve the word, the appearance, even as she makes off with or replaces its reference" (Cross, 1993, p. 185). They try to understand the language, not as an absolute essence, but as a virtual apparatus, as a collection of signs with relations and differences; and they want to re-fill in the gaps between the word and its referent. Maggie attempts to exercise her power over the text by interfering with the meanings that the words produce. She will create her text within the one that Charlotte has already written for her, and she will try to possess it in a way that it affirms her recently renovated self.

In the preface to his novel, James uses two additional figures which support the sense of the metaphor glanced at above and which I therefore would like to discuss in a few sentences. In the first one, the agents of revisionism are the "alert winged creatures, perched on those diminished summits and aspired to a clearer air" (1995, p. xxvi) in the environment. For the present reader, this is the metaphor of the reader's imagination which suddenly comes to sit on the deserted strongholds of the text for the importation of new codes and the circulation of new meanings. In this sense, rereading a literary text is an intellectual challenge for transcending experience as well as showing how power is enacted in society.

The second image, which is rather sensual, is even more exciting. Primarily, "The 'old' matter is there, reaccepted, restated, exquisitely re-assimilated and reenjoyed – believed in, to be brief, with the same 'old' grateful faith" (1995, p. xxvi). But when a sense of 'doubt' juxtaposes itself with the sense of faith in the imagination of the artist, we see him "perforating as by some strange and fine, some latent and gathered force, a myriad more adequate channels" (James, 1995, p. xxvi) to dramatize how his faith to the old is dethroned to give way to his doubt for the possibility of inputting new ideas and asserting new values. The perforated channel in the arena of the text seems to be for rendering it a field of conflict between the old and the new. And the artist's lingering between the two is the economy of a purposeful negotiation between faith and doubt for the emergence of new epistemes.

Thus, revising a story is not necessarily rendering its previous meanings futile, but to manage the emergence of a mixture of a present and a previous discourse, the possibility of a mutation of the 'archeology of knowledge' to apply it to new conditions. In this sense, re-reading or revising a text is a possibility for historicizing literature by injecting new life into it.

3. Maggie Verver's "Performative Self-Contradiction"

In the first part of James's novel, Maggie Verver is extremely naïve, and so her discourse is unable to compete with those of her rivals. Her problem is that she is inadequate to establish useful connections between herself and the people around her. However, in the second part of the novel she historicizes her discourse of the first part; that is, she renews her discourse to produce meaningful connections between her moral outlook and the outlook of the folks around her about marriage and the Lancaster Gate celebrations. In her magnificent language performances, she creates a dynamic space for canceling the plots of her husband and mother-in-law and compelling them to admit the development of her newly established discourse.

At the end of the novel, Maggie is aware about the affair of her husband and her mother-in-law. But when the latter and her father are on the way back to America, she meets her, not to take revenge of her by informing her that she knows everything about her misdeeds, but to pretend that she thinks she is a good and moral woman and that she does not think anything wrong about her (or if she meets her to take revenge, she does so in her own way which is Jamesian). Maggie's self-contradiction here is a method of remaking her identity through the promotion of her perspective, for what would the outcome have been if Maggie had done otherwise?!

Her self-contradicting renunciation guarantees epistemological initiations which provide James's character and reader with good occasions to think about how they can change their being, how they can insert themselves in the social context through their critical thinking; for their minds could otherwise be misguided and their energy misused. To put it another way, if Maggie had not pretended negligence about the affair of Charlotte and her own husband, we would have lost the chance to think critically about their and our better choices. And it would mean the deterioration of our social beings and the cancellation of our histories. Maggie's self-contradiction guarantees the remaking of her critical self, for hereby she finds the space to care for herself and to conceptualize herself.

III. CONCLUSION

New historicism is rooted in old historicism. But the former is much different from the latter; and it seems to be a more developed stage of old historicism. But new-historicism is mainly based on the ideas of Michel Foucault the well-known French archeologist, historian, and philosopher. In Foucauldian new historicism, standing at the center of attention is history with two meanings (a) the events which have happened in the past, and (b) our perception of those events. History as perception means that it is neither quite trustable nor wholly uncoverable. However, it also means that it is both subjective and at the risk of prejudice.

Also, in new historicism literature is interconnected with history while their connection is a double one. On one hand, a literary text mirrors the social, political, etc. situation of the era of its production, while on other hand the text is the product of that certain situation.

And a literary text is a triangular field where the author, the text, and the reader stand interconnected. Regarding the first angle, new historicists pay close attention to how the realities of the author's private and social life affect the production of a literary text. As to the text, text as culture in history and text as a field of negotiation (interpretation) are among the more important issues of new historicism. And regarding the reader, they focus on even more important problems: the formation of the text's discourse in the reader's consciousness, reading as writing, the development of readership, and by so doing, the application of surveillance, and the issues of repression and creation. These debates put new historicism among the social and political approaches to literature.

As well, the present reader believes that *The Golden Bowl* can interestingly be approached new historically. James has written it in two texts (parts) in a way that the second text is a revision of the first. Thus, it is mainly revisionism which renders it applicable to this mode of analysis. In "Book First" of the novel, Maggie Verver's discourse is too inadequate to be accepted by the people around her, because although she is a sincere friend, a morally good wife, and a loving daughter-in-law with a humanistic outlook, she cannot excite them to accept it.

However, in its "Book Second" James re-writes her story in a way that the forces of revisionism make it into an acceptable discourse for Maggie's opponents. Interpretive negotiation and a telling gesture of silence are two historicizing strategies in the hands of James the reviser which enable Maggie's second text to include whatever her first text had futilely attempted to include. Here James uses literary language both as a means of creation and as a means of control. On the one hand, he uses language for creating new experiences, because each time it enables his character to develop new relations with herself and change her outlook to a better one in a self-disciplining procedure. On the other hand, he uses language as a controlling mechanism, as a means of surveillance.

Therefore, literature for creation and literature for control are two further features of language that render James's novel applicable to a new-historical analysis. Both of these language features are the forms of what Stephen Greenblatt (1980) calls the "self-fashioning," of literature, which he claims "is always, though not exclusively, in language" (p. 9). However, if for Greenblatt the fashioning power of literature lies in representation which signifies the lack of a sharp contrast between life and literature, for Foucault it lies in the other dimensions of language: in whatever renders the literary text a fertile ground for recycling or historicizing experience through revisionism, and through reading and critical interpretation.

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