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HENRY JAMES'S INDEPENDENT WOMEN

by

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B.A. University of California, 1942

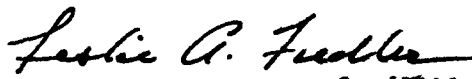
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

WHY "INDEPENDENT"?

Millions of presumptuous girls, intelligent or not, daily affront their destiny, and what is it open to their destiny to be, at the most, that we should make an ado about it?¹

Thus Henry James, in the Preface to The Portrait of a Lady, puts a question that may have occurred to many of the readers of his fiction, in which women play a prominent, frequently a central, position.

His defense of his "ado" takes in a good part of the core of his thinking about writing in general: that worthwhileness, even "morality," is not inherent in any subject as such but depends rather on its treatment, on the calibre of the artist and the authenticity of his experience. Given an artist whose prime sensibility has the ability to "'grow' with due freshness and straightness any vision of life," (p. x) any material that has made sufficient impression on him is suitable for him to use:

. . . the one measure of the worth of a given subject, the question about it that, rightly answered, disposes of all others--is it valid, in a word, is it genuine, is it sincere, the result of some direct impression or perception of life? (p.ix)

In other words, in the hands of a master even women

can be given importance and general interest. He mentions two who did, Shakespeare and George Eliot, and could have mentioned others, among them certainly Richardson, Jane Austen and Flaubert. Scott, Dickens and Stevenson he considers not to have bothered enough to take women seriously.

Since James's work is fairly voluminous, it was decided arbitrarily for the purpose of this study to restrict consideration to the completed full-length novels given the dignity of separate covers in the New York Edition of his writings. These are: Roderick Hudson, The American, The Portrait of a Lady, The Tragic Muse, The Awkward Age, The Princess Casamassima, The Ambassadors, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl.

Both his attitude towards the writing craft and his approach to life would guarantee that James could only be interested in studying in depth women of intelligence, with some independence of spirit and freedom of action, inevitably women with social advantages. Aside from the fact that most of his own social contacts would be with such women, he simply would not be able to find enough material for the practice of his art in Maggie the Cook.

James disdained those readers of the English novel who were uninterested in the "why" behind the action. In the Preface to The Princess Casamassima he says they have "the wondrous property of caring for the displayed tangle of human relations without caring for its intelligibility."²

Since he wanted to convey the "why," and since he felt it was irresponsible of an author to speak directly to the reader in his work, to dissociate himself from the characters he creates, he was under the necessity of choosing for his principal protagonists or for recording observers those who are "finely aware and richly responsible." "Their being finely aware--as Hamlet and Lear, say, are finely aware--makes absolutely the intensity of their adventure, gives the maximum of sense to what befalls them." (p. viii)

By this standard, the respectable but unimaginative and undemanding women of the upper classes do not hold his interest as a writer long either. These are women such as Nick's guardian's sister in The Tragic Muse: a "large, mild, healthy woman with a heavy tread, a person who preferred early breakfasts, uncomfortable chairs and the advertisement sheet of the Times,"³ and whose main concern is her herbageous garden. She has no irony or play of mind, nothing but a simple discretion; hers is a nature "trained to a hundred decent submissions."

Nick looked a little into her mild, uninvestigating eyes, and it came over him supremely that the goodness of these people was singularly pure; they were a part of what was cleanest and sanest and dullest in humanity. (p. 160)

"Finely aware" his proper heroines must be but also "richly responsible," since James not only wanted to know the "why" behind action but he also wanted to establish

moral accountability. Children and women with what Simone de Beauvoir calls a "servant mentality" have only limited areas of moral responsibility. Some degree of freedom of action is necessary, therefore, if any judgment is to be made, for, as Bernard Berenson has said, in Rumours and Reflections, "indignation is based on the idea that its subject could have acted otherwise."⁴

In these novels, the women who have enough strength of character and opportunity for exercise of choice to qualify for accountability for their fates are Isabel Archer, Christina Light, Kate Croy, Charlotte Stant, Nanda and Mrs. Brookenham, Miriam Rooth, Julia Dallow, Marie de Vionnet, and Mary Garland. Sarah and Mamie Pocock will also be included in their number although they are considered less centrally.

If, for these women, in most cases, the choice of fate seems to hinge mainly on the choice of mate, that at least is an improvement over earlier times. In Chaucer's time, according to Treveleyan's Illustrated English Social History, women of the upper classes usually were disposed of arbitrarily by parents to the highest bidder, with the unmarried ones deposited in a nunnery. Only in the lower classes was a love match at all frequent. Although by the eighteenth century parental control had weakened considerably, and the right of a daughter to have some say in the choice of her husband was quite usual, a Clarissa Harlowe

had to put up a fearful struggle to keep herself from becoming merely an item in a real estate transaction. By the Victorian age, the right to dispose of themselves in marriage, possessed fairly generally by their lower class sisters in medieval times, commonly belonged to upper class women in England and America.

This is the reason the few jeunes filles who appear in these books cannot be given serious consideration as human beings by James. They are being raised in a medieval manner in modern times. They are kept like little dependent children through adolescence and until marriage, sometimes even beyond. He cannot censure them really since they are not accountable, they are not masters of themselves. He can only feel a certain pity for their helplessness and inadequacy.

Pansy Osmond of The Portrait of a Lady and Aggie of The Awkward Age, are the two genuine examples of the jeune fille, European style, in these novels. Marie de Vionnet's daughter in The Ambassadors also belongs in this category but she makes such a fleeting appearance in the novel that there is too little material on her for discussion. Mme. de Centr e of The American will be mentioned, however, since she is essentially the jeune fille grown up, widowed, and still under the absolute control of her family.

At her most typical, the jeune fille is carefully protected from the sophistication of the adult world. Her

life centers in home, school and church (the latter two usually combined in the convent). She visits other approved places only occasionally with proper chaperonage. Her mind is kept immature by screening out contacts with books or companions that might stimulate "improper" notions. Above all, she is taught to be docile and sweet, submissive to the authority of her parents until they can hand her over to the authority of a suitable spouse of their choice.

The young Aggie impresses those who see her as something "deliberately prepared for consumption," like a peach. Even English history is suspect as reading matter for so innocent a nature. She is dependent and vulnerable.

Little Aggie looked about with an impartial politeness, that, as an expression of the general blind sense of her being as to every particular in hands at full liberty either to spot or spare her, was touching enough to bring tears to all eyes.⁵

Pansy Osmond is very similar to Aggie. At any age in her growing up period she seems several years younger. She has the same submissiveness to authority, the same child-like, undeveloped mind and personality.

Pansy was really a blank page, a pure white surface, successfully kept so; she had neither art, nor guile, nor temper, nor talent--only two or three small exquisite instincts: for knowing a friend, for avoiding a mistake, for taking care of an old toy or a new frock. Yet to be so tender was to be touching withal and she could be felt as an easy victim of fate. She would have no will, no power to resist, no sense of her own importance; she

would easily be mystified, easily crushed; her force would be all in knowing when and where to cling.⁶

Carefully acquired social graces cover Mme. de Centr e's basic diffidence and shyness. She gives Newman the sense of "having passed through mysterious ceremonies and processes of culture in her youth, of her having been fashioned and made flexible to certain deep social ends."⁷ He is never sure of the extent to which her graciousness to him stems from personal feeling or simply good manners.

When Mme. de Centr e finally refuses Newman's suit rather than go contrary to the orders of her family, she confesses that she is weak, that she has been raised to capitulate to family authority, that she is not made for hard decisions, for changes: "I'm not meant for that--I'm not made for boldness and defiance, I was made to be happy in a quiet, natural way I was made to do gladly and gratefully what's expected of me--I cant change!" (pp. 416-417)

If such enforced defencelessness and deprivation of resources, which is equivalent to a kind of stupidity, has no appeal to James, he does recognize it has an attraction for some men, men as diverse as the personable Vanderbank of The Awkward Age and the precious Ned Rosier of The Portrait of a Lady. For Ned, Pansy's doll-like quality, her helplessness and innocence, have great charm:

He was sure that Pansy had never looked at a newspaper and that, in the way of novels, if she had read Sir Walter Scott

it was the very most. An American jeune fille--what could be better than that? She would be fresh and gay, and yet would not have walked alone, nor have received letters from men, nor have been taken to the theatre to see the comedy of manners. (II, p. 108)

James also admits that what he calls the "English Compromise," where young unmarried girls after a certain age are half in and half out of adult society, presents problems that would never occur on the Continent, where the inexperienced are excluded from the sophisticated until marriage "corrects" their youth. Among the French, he says:

Talk--giving the term a wide application--is one thing and a proper inexperience another; and it has never occurred to a logical people that the interest of the greater, the general, need be sacrificed to that of the less, the particular.⁸

Conflict between opposing theories of rearing young girls furnishes the main theme of The Awkward Age. The Duchess defends her method of raising Aggie on the grounds simply that the "right sort" of man wants a girl like this for a wife. As the all-knowing young Nanda Brookenham comes to realize that Vanderbank is alienated by her very awareness of the world, she muses wistfully that it might have been nice to be like Aggie. Mitchy, an admirer of Nanda's, a man with money but without Vanderbank's "U" family and school background, insists that he prefers the modern girl, "the product of our hard London facts and of her inevitable consciousness of them just as they are." (p. 312) Later,

when Nanda ruefully says, "doesn't one become a sort of little drain-pipe with everything flowing through," Mitchy replies, more flatteringly, that she is "a little Aeolian harp set in the drawing-room window and vibrating in the breeze of conversation." (p. 358)

Nanda eventually accepts herself honestly for what she is, the modern girl, Victorian version. She tells her elderly protector, Mr. Longdon, who has finally stopped trying to adapt her to the image of a love of his youth:

We're many of us, we're most of us--as you long ago saw and showed you felt--extraordinary now. We cant help it. It isnt really our fault. There's so much else that's extraordinary that if we're in it all so much we must naturally be Everything's different from what it used to be. (p. 544)

For most of these "modern" young women there is no conflict. They accept their increased independence, increased social and physical mobility and wider scope of activity matter-of-factly, occasionally exultantly. Indeed, most of the men in these novels prefer women with fully developed minds and personalities, no doubt loyally reflecting James's own tastes. Those who do not, like Vanderbank and Gilbert Osmond and Ned Rosier, are the products of a narrow, conservative code.

Kate Croy, in The Wings of the Dove, describes to herself her relationship to Densher, after their chance second meeting on the underground, in philosophically down-

to-earth terms, as similar to that between a housemaid and the baker. They "kept company." He asked leave to call, and, without formality or intermediaries,

. . . as a young person who wasn't really young, who didn't pretend to be a sheltered flower, [consent] she as rationally gave. That--she was promptly clear about it--was now her only possible basis; she was just the contemporary London female, highly modern, inevitably battered, honourably free.⁹

Isabel Archer, in The Portrait of a Lady, puts her declaration of independence in a more declamatory style. As she once more removes the ubiquitous Casper Goodwood from her path before taking off for the Continent, she orates passionately: "I don't want 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 it compatible with propriety to tell me." (I, p. 229)

There are two young women who do not really fit properly into the category either of Jeune Fille or Independent Woman: Milly Theale, of The Wings of the Dove, and Maggie Tulliver, of The Golden Bowl. Both are from very wealthy American families and though they have not been artificially cut off from society as are the jeunes filles, they appear to have led protected lives. They should have suffered from no lack of opportunity for education and social experience and yet in both young women these seem to be deficient and their range of information and interests circumscribed.

Unlike the jeunes filles, they are their own masters and they are accustomed to the automatic deference given to the wealthy, but even so they are lacking in self-assurance and in personal force, and generally assume a passive role in their relations with other people.

Milly and Maggie each admire and feel inferior to a stronger woman with whom she associates and for whom she serves as a foil. Milly is even forced to admire a certain brutality about Kate Croy in the way she dismisses from her consideration anything or anyone that does not interest her. As she listens to Kate's competent explanation of the complications of London society, Milly feels that she herself is never really at her best, "unless indeed it were exactly as now, in listening, watching, admiring, collapsing." (I, p. 276) Maggie continually runs herself down in comparison with the "greatness" of Charlotte Stant. She tells her father that she (Maggie) is "good" but also cowardly, "a small creeping thing;" she does not take liberties with other people, she says, "but then I do always of nature tremble for my life. That's the way I live."¹⁰

Eventually in these novels, these two young women, put to the test, reveal an inner strength, a generosity of spirit and an awareness of human values that no proper jeune fille could command.

These women, independent or semi-independent, will be the concern of this paper. From what standpoint, what

private world of his own, does James view them? What kind of environment do they operate in and what are some of their values, their aims and achievements? What, if any, is James's final judgment on them?

CHAPTER II

JAMES'S MORAL VIEW

Granted then that a degree of independence is necessary for a person to be considered as a potentially responsible moral agent, on what basis does James establish moral accountability?

The Jamesian world is quite different from that of some of recent fiction. There is no murder or rape, sodomy or incest. It is a world of delicately balanced relationships between highly civilized people, where the crime committed is lack or loss of integrity in these personal relations. Adultery and covetousness occur but do not in themselves constitute the moral issue at stake.

James's moral universe is very much this-world centered, even here-and-now centered, and in this sense he is a modern, in the line of thinking of a Pasternak or a Camus. Thoughts of another world, of ultimate damnation or salvation, never trouble the thoughts of his people nor operate in James's moral calculations. No heroine in these novels, no matter how much she venerates a man and makes him her reason for living and hope for the future, is subject to the kind of self-recrimination attributed to Jane Eyre, who fears that to place too much importance on an earthly tie is sacriligious:

My future husband was becoming to me my whole world; and more than the world: almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for his creatures, of whom I had made an idol.¹¹

Yet James's moral view is Christian in the general sense that it encompasses certain ethical principles such as compassion, forgiveness, charity, consideration, that have come to be associated with Christ by people of European origin whether or not they actually stem specifically from his teaching and that have validity for those who have no belief in divinity.

James, of course, in accordance with his own artistic principles, seldom separates himself from his characters to preach or uses them as mouthpieces for that purpose. A sense of his moral view simply develops out of the action of the novels. For James, as for Proust, principles or virtues are inseparable from conduct:

. . . nos vertus elles-mêmes ne sont pas quelque chose de libre, de flottant, de quoi nous gardions la disponibilité permanente; elles finissent par s'associer si étroitement dans notre esprit avec les actions à l'occasion desquelles nous nous sommes faits un devoir de les exercer, que si surgit pour nous une activité d'un autre ordre, elle nous prend au depourvu et sans que nous ayons seulement l'idée qu'elle pourrait comporter la mise en oeuvre de ces mêmes vertus.¹²

Principles are a guide but in any given situation judgment must be exercised, with the ultimate test of the

rightness of an action: what will serve the maximum human value? Misrepresentation is certainly an evil since it obscures the basis for judgment. Yet even here there can be no absolute certainty: Maggie has to lie to Charlotte in order to preserve Charlotte's dignity and pride and Milly lies to do the same for Densher. Consideration for the rights and needs of others, an established Christian virtue, involves the Ververs in a complex and difficult situation and they begin to question if it can form the whole of a philosophy of personal relations:

They each knew that both were full of the superstition of not 'hurting' but might precisely have been asking themselves, asking in fact each other, at this moment, whether that was to be after all the last word of their conscientious development. (I, p. 167)

James is strongly influenced by a sense of the "New England Spirit," a spirit not peculiar to New Englanders or Americans, even though James himself was not brought up in that region. The idea of the New England Spirit can encompass many things: self-restraint in sensual pleasure, the priority of spiritual or intellectual acquirement over material possession, dedication to the service of mankind. In its narrowest, most specific, sense it has come to mean a conviction that one must always do the "good" or "right" action in any situation, regardless of the claims of expediency or self-interest.

A story, "The Stern and Rock-Bound Coast of Chicago,"

by Esther R.B. Wagner, may help clarify this concept in its last-named sense and establish that it has meaning in European circles. A young American girl is a member of a group of her compatriots taking courses at the Sorbonne, with the financial backing to provide coaching in practice themes and in locating references, while the other students have to dig out material on their own. Taking an examination, she finds that one of the themes assigned is identical one she has already written for her coach. She writes almost entirely from memory for most of the period on this topic and then is overcome with the injustice to her fellow students. She destroys what she has written and starts over on another question but naturally cannot finish. When the reason for her failure is explained to the professor of the course by a mutual friend he is thrilled: this is a genuine example of the workings of the New England Spirit.^{13*}

This sort of altruism mystifies Maggie's Prince in The Golden Bowl. He cannot understand why Mrs. Assingham should promote his marriage or Maggie save Charlotte when they will "get" nothing out of it. He tells Mrs. Assingham once that the Italian moral sense is different from that of

*The explanation of the title of this story is that when the friend transmits the professor's reaction to the girl she protests: she is not from New England but from Chicago. The friend suggests that she not disillusion the French professor. After all, he has personified to the American girl the spirit of Paris and he comes from a small town in the south of France.

the English and Americans and compares his to a torturous, winding old staircase and theirs to an elevator. The comparison has some accuracy if his is considered largely based on expediency and theirs on principle. Actually, the torturous mental processes gone through by the Ververs in trying to solve their difficulties with the maximum amount of "rightness" is something the Prince would never have bothered with. "He liked all signs that things were well, but he cared rather less why they were." (I, p. 139)

The impression of moral stamina given by some Americans has a palpable effect on certain Europeans. After meeting her once briefly, Christina Light assures Rowland that Mary Garland must have "every virtue under heaven"--save imagination. She tells him how inferior she had felt in comparison:

I frankly confess that I was tormented, that I was moved to envy, call it, if you like, to jealousy, by something I found in her. There came to me there in five minutes the sense of her character. C'est bien beau, you know, a character like that, and I got it full in the face I hated the idea of being worse than she--of doing something that she wouldnt do.¹⁴

James is aware of the pitfalls and perversities to which the New England Spirit is subject. It can go too hard and produce the narrow bigotry of a Sarah Pocock. It can go too soft and make for the vulnerability of the Ververs, a lacking in necessary defenses for self-preservation. Mrs.

Assingham and Charlotte speak of the extreme "goodness" of the Ververs, their simplicity and unselfishness, as if it were a quality peculiarly American, a quality they themselves have left behind in the process of becoming Europeanized. Mrs. Assingham says of Maggie, "She wasn't born to know evil. She must never know it." (I, p. 78) Yet Mrs. Assingham knows that Maggie must at least recognize the existence of evil if she is to operate effectively as an adult in an adult's world.

The New England Spirit can even go astray in its most idealistic aspect, the expansion of personal altruism into social altruism, into humanitarianism. An Isabel Archer, a Mary Garland, her need for social service so imperative, can find a Mission in unlikely material.

Admire the positive aspects of the New England Spirit as he does, James is no Puritan. He cannot sympathize with those who find the repression of the sensual in man's nature a virtue that needs no defence. This is one reason James finds Isabel Archer a more attractive person than Mary Garland, though Rowland believes that given enough experience Mary will broaden her values. Isabel has Mary's strength of character but in addition, before her marriage, has a tremendous capacity for finding fun in living.

At the same time, James is aware that the irrational in man's nature has such force that it can override ethical considerations in the most civilized.

In The Wings of the Dove, passion for Kate blinds Densher to the consequences of his actions until he has reached such a morally equivocal position in his relation to Milly, even though he has not "lied with his lips," that for the first time in his life he loses his spontaneity and is afraid of himself, afraid of acting poor or small; "anything like his actual state he had not, as to the prohibition of impulse, accident, range--the prohibition in other words of freedom--hitherto known." (II, p. 296) He feels cheap, a feeling that lack of money had never been able to induce in him.

As she watches her father and his wife and her husband playing bridge, Maggie Verver, in The Golden Bowl, toys with the attractiveness of violence, of smashing things, and she is tempted to shout out all she knows about the affair between the Prince and Charlotte.

There reigned for her absolutely during those vertiginous moments that fascination of the monstrous, that temptation of the horribly possible, which we so often trace by its breaking out suddenly lest it should go further, in unexplained retreats and reactions. (II, p. 233)

She does not do so. It took her one second to smash the Golden Bowl. It takes time, patience and all her own and her father's resources to put it together again.

James does not ignore the influence of the environment in the formation of an individual. A great deal in the shaping of a personality takes place long before the stage

of real moral accountability. The aging Strether, speaking to a young American friend in a moment of discouragement at the amount he has missed in life, says:

The affair--I mean the affair of life--couldnt, no doubt, have been different for me, for it's at the best a tin mold, either fluted and embossed, with ornamental excrescences or else smooth and dreadfully plain, into which, a helpless jelly, one's consciousness is poured--so that one 'takes' the form, as the great cook says, and is more or less compactly held by it; one lives in fine as one can. Still one has the illusion of freedom; therefore, dont be like me, without the memory of that illusion.¹⁵

This statement of Strether's involves a contradiction, however. He says both that life could and could not have been different for him. Freedom is certainly more than an illusion to James. No one has unlimited choice of the niche he will occupy in society but he does have some choice among various standards of social value offered by that society. Although the moral issues in these novels revolve around the integrity with which one conducts one's relations with other people, there is almost the feeling that those who knowingly choose a lower social value for themselves than what is open to them, and there are a number of examples, have a different kind of immorality. They destroy not another but the best in themselves.

In the moral sphere proper, social background is never offered by James as an excuse for irresponsible or inhumane behavior. In fact, James does only the most minimal doc-

umentation of the early life of his people; of many almost nothing is known of their previous background. He assumes that as adults in a civilized society, while not gifted with god-like infallibility, they are capable of ethical conduct. A modern tendency to equate cause with justification of unethical or antisocial behavior has been argued against by Lionel Trilling, in his story, "The Other Margaret" and his novel The Middle of the Journey, and also in some of his essays. In these fictional works Trilling is dealing with the guilt felt by people with social advantages which leads them to excuse those with fewer opportunities from coming up to their own standards of behavior, thus reducing those less fortunate to an inferior, sub-adult status. James, of course, has an advantage in passing moral judgment since none of his people can be counted really among the "less fortunate."

In summary, one can say that James's moral philosophy is strongly influenced by a liberal "New England" version of Christian ethics, purged, however, of any belief in the supernatural. Some of its tenets would be: to take the "just" rather than the expedient course of action, to make the best possible use of one's resources and at the same time to respect the integrity and needs of others, and to curb the irrational in man's nature when its expression conflicts with acquired principles of ethical conduct.

CHAPTER III

JAMES'S DOUBLE VISION:

HIS AESTHETIC VIEW

Concerned as he is with describing the moral conscience in action, James is not by any means wholly preoccupied with the moral natures of these women. He also considers them from his own aesthetic standpoint: how do they please the heart and mind, at least his heart and mind, as interesting and satisfying human beings, as women of charm? He is perfectly capable of admiring a woman whole-heartedly from the latter standpoint while holding mental reservations about the moral implications of some of her conduct.

Of the women under consideration here, James gives his unqualified endorsement as Women of Charm to Isabel Archer, Christina Light, Miriam Rooth, Marie de Vionnet, Charlotte Stant, and Kate Croy. They vary in many factors: social background, education, aspirations, personal force, and nationality, among others, but they have some qualities in common that invest them with a special sort of appeal in James's eyes.

High-spirited. They all are that. They have self-assurance and an awareness of their own worth as individuals, even if they are sometimes subject to bouts of discouragement or humility.

The young Isabel Archer impresses those she meets with

her purposefulness. With her high self-esteem, she feels that acknowledgment of her superiority is only right:

She has a theory that it was only under this provision that 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. (I, p. 68)

James would be glad to give his heroines full rein. He does not desire them to be merely decorative and amenable. Feminine charm to him is not synonymous with deference to the male ego or with the use and misuse of physical attractions to have one's way, the sort of thing Virginia Woolf railed against on occasion. Poor Orlando, at one stage of her reincarnations, finds that no matter what her talents her only socially acceptable function is to pour tea.

Even if at times these women are too much for their men--Christina too imperious, Kate too high-handed--most of the men would prefer them strong-natured to the opposite extreme, shrinking violets, like Amelia of Vanity Fair. As Nick Dormer in The Tragic Muse says of Julia Dallow (not one of James's established charmers): "a high spirit was of course better than a mawkish to be mismated with, any day in the year." (I, p. 92)

Not that James has any fondness for the Feminist, in the cartoon sense of the term. He has little tolerance for women who have lost, or never had, the capacity to be women,

no matter what their independence. The narrow, repressed woman, who takes her fear of sexual intimacy out in hatred and defiance of the male sex in general, is drawn in detail in The Bostonians. The half-masculinized, downright, grown-up-captain-of-the-girls'-basketball-team type appears briefly in a minor comic relief role as Henrietta Stackpole of The Portrait of a Lady. Henrietta is noted for lack of tact and for blunt remarks of the sort she addresses to Lord Warburton's sisters: "I suppose in your position it's sufficient for you to exist!" (I, p. 189) Later Isabel is disappointed to hear of Henrietta's marriage; she had preferred her as a symbol of female accomplishment, above the frailty of personal involvements.

Introducing Charlotte Stant, in The Golden Bowl, James sketches her as a young woman with the air of being adventurous, competent, well-traveled, with "the knowledge of how and where and the habit, founded on experience, of not being afraid." (I, p. 45) He hastens to add that she is not the "strong-minded English-speaking type."

Joie de vivre. They all have vitality, a liveness of mind and an eagerness for experience.

Charlotte Stant can find interest and amusement at a ball or in people passing in the street, in the conversation of guests at a country house weekend or in that of a shopman. Maggie Verver, who finds Charlotte more courageous, cleverer and more interesting than any other woman of her

acquaintance, calls her: "Great in nature, in character, in spirit. Great in life." (I, p.180) When Charlotte comes back one rainy day from a spontaneous excursion to the museum, the National Gallery, various booksellers, with lunch at some strange place, to find the Prince sitting gloomily alone at his home, she tells him, "if I've had a better day than you it's perhaps, when I come to think of it, that I am braver. You bore yourself, you see. But I dont, I dont, I dont." (II, p. 30)

It is her aptitude for living that forms a large part of the attraction Kate Croy holds for Densher, the intellectual. Miriam Rooth is grateful for having had a variety of experiences, pleasant and unpleasant; naturally, in her case, she thinks of experience as furnishing material for her development as an artist. Marie de Vionnet leads an unnaturally restricted life because of her relationship to Chad but it can be assumed from the affect she has had on his development and from the circle of intellectuals and artists as well as aristocrats to which she has introduced him that her interests are wide. The search for new sensation and the escape from the banal is almost compulsive with Christina all her life.

The young Isabel Archer is always thrilled at the mere idea of change; she constantly has the desire to walk down both sides of the street at once in order not to miss anything. "This desire indeed was not a birth of the present

occasion; it was as familiar as the sound of rain upon the window and it had led her to beginning afresh a great many times." (I, p. 54) She expresses this desire to explore the unknown more violently later to her friend Henrietta: "A swift carriage, of a dark night, rattling with four horses over roads that one cant see--that's my idea of happiness." (I, p. 235) This is a romantically adventurous notion for a proper young Victorian lady. Much later a sadder and less ebullient Isabel looks back on her younger self and muses that in those days she had passed from enthusiasm to enthusiasm.

Versatility. James has a great admiration for women capable of playing a variety of roles, of commanding a range of mood and manner.

Densher gives the following tribute to Kate Croy in The Wings of the Dove:

All women but you are stupid. How can I look at another? You're different and different--and then you're different again. No marvel Aunt Maud builds on you--except that you're so much too good for what she builds for. Even society wont know how good for it you are; it's too stupid and you're beyond it. You'd have to pull it uphill--it's you yourself who are at the top. The women one meets--what are they but books one has already read? You're a whole library of the unknown, the uncut.
(I, pp. 61-62)

Roderick Hudson tries to explain to his friend Rowland the fascination the young Christina Light, a perpetual role-

player, exercises for him. In addition to her great beauty, she has done and seen so much and says such shocking and amusing things and has so many moods and facets. "She has an atmosphere," he finally sums up. "It may be charm," Rowland answers, "but it's certainly not the orthodox charm of marriageable maidenhood, the charm of the 'nice girl' or 'dear girl' as we have been accustomed to know these blest creatures." (p. 187)

Marie de Vionnet of The Ambassadors is described as brilliant and charming, an actress who can be fifty women, one at a time: "What was truly wonderful was her way of differing so from time to time without detriment to her simplicity." (II, p. 276) Mme. de Vionnet,

. . . the femme du monde--in the finest development of the type--was, like Cleopatra in the play, indeed various and multifold. She had aspects, characters, days, nights--or had them at least, showed them by a mysterious law of her own, when in addition to everything she happened also to be a woman of genius. (II, p. 265)

There is no implication that because the term "actress" is applied to these women at times they are necessarily lacking in sincerity. Everyone changes somewhat in adjustment to varying circumstances. These women simply have an above average amount of imagination that allows them to project themselves into different "identities."

With Miriam in The Tragic Muse this role-playing becomes a professional objective, to be cultivated and per-

fect. In her early days in Paris, Peter Sherringham accuses her of acting all the time, onstage and off; he says there is no "her" behind any particular pose she assumes, that she is an "embroidery without canvas." Miriam insists that she can be all artist and by the time she has achieved artistic stature and acclaim in London Peter is willing to admit that her character is her acting ability:

Her character was simply to hold you by the particular spell; any other--the good nature of home, the relation to her mother, her friends, her lovers, her debts, the practice of virtues or vices--was not worth speaking of. These things were the fictions and shadows; the representation was the deep substance. (II, p. 118)

Although these women are all obviously highly intelligent, little mention is made of their formal intellectual training. Certainly none of these women is equal in learning or self-discipline to Richardson's Clarissa. This eighteenth century prodigy not only carefully organized the hours of the day in order to take care of multiple responsibilities for household management, charitable works, social relations and entertainment, and was proficient in art, needlework, music and recitation, but was also reputed to be well read in the Latin classics and the English, French and Italian poets. But then, her friend Anna Howe acknowledges, Clarissa was a shining light of her sex and most of the "modern" young ladies of her age and circumstance, "whose whole time, in the short days they generally make, and in the inverted

night and day, where they make them longer, is wholly spent in dress, visits, cards, plays, operas and musical entertainments,"¹⁶ were far her inferiors.

As far as that goes, there is very little of direct or indirect reference to indicate a high degree of intellectual training in the men in these novels. Partly this is due, no doubt, to the Bad Form of introducing learned references in polite society--such things belong to school days--but mainly it is because James's people are almost wholly preoccupied with their social and personal relationships.

When mention is made with respect to the women the tone is usually mildly disparaging or self-belittling. Miriam and Christina have had a rather peripatetic growing-up period and their education has probably been spotty. Mrs. Rooth insists her daughter speaks several languages but it comes down to two, English and French. Christina's mother, in Roderick Hudson, says her daughter has had the "education of a princess," which to Mme. Grandoni means, "In other words I suppose she speaks three or four languages and has read several hundred French novels." (p. 164) Christina appeals to Rowland Mallet to bring her poetry, memoirs, histories, good improving books--the kind she never sees.

In The Wings of the Dove, it is Densher's very unlikeness to herself, the high order of his intellectual development, that makes him so attractive to Kate Croy:

He represented what her life had never given her and certainly, without some such aid as his, never would give her; all the high dim things she lumped together as of the mind. It was on the side of the mind that Densher was rich for her and imperious and strong; and he had rendered her in especial the sovereign service of making that element real. She had had all her days to take it terribly on trust; no creature she had ever encountered having been able to testify for it directly. Vague rumours of its existence had made their precarious way to her; but nothing, on the whole, struck her as more likely than that she should live and die without the chance to verify them. (I, p. 51)

And she has been moving in the upper levels of English society.

Not that intellectual attainment as such is any bar to feminine charm for James, the qualities mentioned earlier being present. His most intellectual heroine, at least the one of whom the most is written of her interest in "ideas," Isabel Archer, is probably his favorite. He is making fun more of provincial young American men than of Isabel when he says that her awesome reputation for intellectuality (it is rumoured that she has even read Latin and Greek classics in translation) intimidates all but the most self-confident of her male acquaintances:

. . . as a general thing they were afraid of her; they had a belief that some special preparation was required for talking with her. Her reputation of reading a great deal hung about her like the cloudy envelope of a goddess in an epic; it was supposed to engender difficult questions and to keep the conversation at a low

temperature. (I, p. 45)

Although Isabel hates a reputation for bookishness (in the musty, cut-off-from-life sense), and avoids ostentatious display of learning in public, she has a genuine love of knowledge, gained either from books or experience, and goes on periodic campaigns of self-discipline and self-improvement. She is on one when first introduced in The Portrait of a Lady:

It had lately occurred to her that her mind was a good deal of a vagabond, and she had spent much ingenuity in training it to a military step and teaching it to advance, to halt, to retreat, to perform even more complicated manoeuvres, at the word of command. Just now she had given it marching orders and it had been trudging over the sandy plains of a history of German Thought. (I, p. 31)

Despite such firm resolutions, whenever she is found later in the two volumes with a book in her hand her mind is wandering on personal problems. Admire her as he does, James good-humoredly finds her self-education has been sketchy and uneven:

Meanwhile her errors and delusions were frequently such as a biographer interested in preserving the dignity of his subject might shrink from specifying. Her thoughts were a tangle of vague outlines which had never been corrected by the judgment of people speaking with authority. (I, p. 67)

James spends little time specifying the sexual attractions of these women. There are no descriptions of sultry eyes, rounded bosoms or velvety skin. They are simply as-

sumed to be physically attractive women, as well as charming and personable human beings, from the devotion of the men attracted to them. (Christina Light is an exception because her overpowering beauty is integral to her fate.) In fact, there is little physical description of any of the people, male or female, in these novels. The sense of the person is conveyed and it is principally left to the reader to imagine the physical embodiment if he desires. If James was in general averse to painting detailed portraits of his characters it is no wonder that he was opposed to the idea of illustrations for his work:

The essence of any representational work is, of course, to bristle with immediate images; and I, for one, should have looked much askance at the proposal, on the part of my associates in the whole business, to graft or 'grow,' at whatever point, a picture by another hand on my own picture--this being always, to my sense, a lawless incident.¹⁷

The other women being considered in these novels, while not without appeal, are missing one or another of the qualities mentioned that James particularly admires in women. None of them has a dramatic personality, some lack a certain liveliness and flexibility of mind and range of interest. Only the two semi-independent young women, Milly and Maggie, could be said to be deficient in spirit.

Mrs. Brookenham of The Awkward Age is vivacious and has at least a superficially clever line of patter. She has

created an atmosphere of amusing worldliness around herself and her little group, as her "friend," the Duchess, has to admit:

She has invented a nuance of her own and she has done it all by herself for Edward figures in her drawing room only as one of those green extinguishers of fire in the corridors of hotels. He's just a bucket on a peg. The men, the young and clever ones, find it a house-- and heavens knows they're right--with intellectual elbow room, with freedom of talk. Most English talk is a quadrille in a sentry-box. (p. 255)

What keeps her from being a full-fledged femme du monde is that she is, as the Duchess says, a "baby." Not only is she capable of being naively shocked at her own naughtiness but she is terribly dependent for her charm to function on being surrounded by just the proper intimate admirers.

Nanda Brookenham bids fair to becoming a more accomplished woman of the world than her mother ever will be, even if she never reaches the versatility of a Mme. de Vionnet. Young as she is, and still just emerging from the social domination of her mother, she is paid the compliment of being called by her friend Mitchy (and others are already sharing his view) a woman with whom he can talk of "everything:"

What does stretch before me is the happy prospect of my feeling that I've found in you a friend with whom, so utterly and unreservedly, I can always go to the bottom of things It's so awfully

jolly, isn't it? that there's not at last a single thing that we can't take our ease about. I mean that we can't intelligently name and comfortably tackle. We've worked through the long turmoil of artificial reserves and superstitious mysteries and I at least shall have only to feel that in showing every confidence and dotting every 'i' I follow the example you so admirably set. You go down to the roots? Good. It's all I ask. (p. 544)

Julia Dallow and Mary Gardner are two who share a too earnest seriousness to be amusing companions. They have too little play of mind and too little of an easy capacity for sensual enjoyment. Julia has a prickly brusqueness and angularity that could stem from shyness. In Roderick Hudson, Rowland admires Mary's receptiveness and purposefulness but he gets irritated at times at the dogged, methodical, "intellectual" way she attacks learning about art in Rome--asking sensible questions, taking notes--"snatching at useful instruction," as he puts it.

It was not amusement and sensation she coveted but knowledge--facts that she might noiselessly lay away, piece by piece, in the fragrant darkness of her serious mind, so that under this head at least she should not be a perfectly portionless bride. (p. 342)

Mary's submission to Roderick's callous behavior disappoints Rowland. He had thought she would show more pride. He is so puzzled that he tries unsuccessfully to fit her into types at opposite ends of the scale: the Patient Griselda, and, say, the Wife of Bath, types not admired by

James. Rowland muses, "There were girls indeed the beauty of whose nature, like that of Burd Helen in the ballad, lay in clinging to the man of their love through bush and briar and in bowing their head to all hard usage." (p. 474) He does not believe Mary is like that. On the other hand, he does not like to think that Mary is one of the women who seeks a weak, easily-dominated man:

There are women whose love is care-taking and patronizing and who attach themselves to those persons of the other sex in whom the manly grain is soft and submissive. It did not in the least please him to hold her one of these, for he regarded such women as mere males in petticoats, and he was convinced that his young lady was intensely of her sex. (p. 449)

If Julia and Mary have too few of the social graces, Mamie Pocock of The Ambassadors has the wrong kind--for James. Her effervescent public manner stems not from liveliness of mind but from the social training of a small American town: popularity and ease in society are indicated by the frequency of the smile and the pitch of the voice. To Strether, Mamie's "pleasant public familiar radiance that affirmed her vitality," her "bridling brightness,"

. . . her bland, chatty, matron-like reassuring air, always seems to him to give her the glamour of the 'receiving,' placed her again perpetually between the windows and within sound of the ice cream plates, suggested the enumeration of all the names, all the Brookeses and Mr. Snookeses, gregarious specimens of a single type, she was happy to 'meet.' (I, p. 71)

On closer acquaintance with Mamie, Strether later grants her greater respect. Beneath her artificially bubbling social manner there is a perceptiveness not apparent at first.

But if all this [her manner] was where she was funny, and if what was funnier than the rest was the contrast between her beautiful benevolent patronage--such a hint of the polysyllabic as might make her something of a bore toward middle age--and her rather flat little voice, the voice, naturally, unaffectedly yet, of a girl of fifteen or so, Strether none the less, at the end of ten minutes felt in her a quiet dignity that pulled things bravely together. (II, p. 76)

The two inevitably-coupled young Americans, Milly and Maggie, sweet and good-natured as they are, are disqualified as enchantresses for the same reason they do not quite make the grade as Independent Women: they are lacking in social initiative.

Milly plays the roles assigned her by others. She can be the Vivacious American Girl, on occasion, for Densher because that is the way he pictures her, in an unromantic, cousinly way. Mostly, though, as she realizes, she is the "dove," as so designated by Kate, and her role is to let others be kind to her without openly showing pity.

Maggie clings to the narrow domestic activities and filial relationship of her adolescence. The demands of a more varied and adventurous life fill her with inadequacy and terror. Until her marriage is threatened, she seems

quite contented with placidity. The Prince comes to look on her as one of the good but dull, the upholders of the conventions, approximating, in his mind, "the transmitted images of rather neutral and negative propriety that made up, in his long line, the average of wifhood and motherhood." (I, p. 322)

These women discussed so far please James more or less (Mrs. Brookenham certainly decidedly less). Sarah Pocock of The Ambassadors he quite plainly and unqualifiedly dislikes. In another way Sarah is exceptional. The personalities of the other women can be defined in a general way in their own frame of reference. With Sarah her qualities are considered primarily in relation to the effect she has on her husband, though of course James is offended as well by her narrow, Puritanical moral code. It is not so much that Sarah is a "male in petticoats," that she dominates Jim Pocock, though undoubtedly she does that too, as that she ignores him. "He was nothing compared to Sally [Sarah], and not so much by reason of Sally's temper and will as that of her more developed type and greater acquaintance with the world." (II, p. 81) Jim is a nonentity.

There were signs in him, though none of them plaintive, of always paying for others and the principal one perhaps was just this failure of type. It was with this that he paid, rather than with fatigue or waste and also doubtless a little with the effort of humour-- never irrelevant to the conditions, to the relations, with which he was acquainted. (II, p. 83)

His being a nonentity--indistinguishable from other American businessmen, with no occupation save business and little recreation except an occasional American Legion type spree--James implies, is Sarah's fault. Jim comes from a society where men are looked on as useful breadwinners and women monopolize all other facets of the culture. Strether muses that the moral-cultural side of community life in the small town from which he has come is almost exclusively composed of, and controlled by, women and that while he (Strether) had been included in it, as editor of a magazine in which Sarah's mother is interested, he would have been excluded if he had married. Strether, registering Sarah's to him complete lack of feminine charm--the contrast with Marie de Vionnet is painful--comments to himself that perhaps she has no need of any in that sort of society.

Since, along with others of her sort, Sarah is held responsible and criticized for Jim's inadequacy as a human being the assumption is that she prefers him that way, or at least recognizes nothing abnormal in their situation. This raises a number of questions, still valid today in segments of American society but beyond the province of this study to attempt to answer. How did this division of work for the men, cultural or civic pursuits for the women, come about in America? Is it typical in other cultures, at a comparable social-economic level, where the men work full time? Do the women monopolize such activities simply because they

have more free time or do they prefer to keep men excluded so that they can feel superior? Do the men take more interest in cultural pursuits as their working hours decrease? Would they be more or less involved if women were not?

At any rate, Jim Pocock for one is obviously in awe of the species--James credits him with profundity only in relation to his experience as a husband--and he speaks of his wife and mother-in-law as large cats:

They aint fierce, either of 'em; they let you come quite close. They wear their fur the smooth side out--the warm side in. So you know what they are? They're about as intense as they can live! . . . They dont lash about and shake the cage and it's at feeding time that they're quietest. But they always get there. (II, pp. 86-87)

CHAPTER IV

FOCUSSING THE VIEWS:

THE WOMEN IN RELATION TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Since, as has been pointed out, James is interested in the whole woman, not simply a disembodied moral agent, and since both moral and social-value judgments (as differentiated in an earlier section) cannot be separated from day-to-day actions, it is necessary to see these women, and view their objectives, in the social context in which they act.

The Setting. The milieu in these novels is the upper levels of European society. It is true that in The Princess Casamassima, James ventures gingerly down into the lower regions of London but his hero Hyacinth does not identify with this environment, the revolutionary group is not typical of its denizens, and Christina and Lady Aurora are gracious visitors from above.

This society is centered mainly in the great capitals-- London, Paris, Rome--and is a great deal more complex than even big-city American society of that day, having had a longer cultural history to build up protocol. Family background and connections are of prime importance in establishing whether anyone is to be "in" any particular circle, though money is no handicap. The way the money was acquired,

and particularly when, is taken into consideration.

The very complexity of European society arouses the antipathy of some Americans. To Waymarsh, of The Ambassadors, it represents the decadence of the Old World, from which the Puritans escaped to found a newer and simpler society with a purer morality.

The Catholic Church for Waymarsh--that was to say the enemy--the monster of bulging eyes and far-reaching quivering groping tentacles--was exactly society, exactly the multiplication of shibboleths, exactly the discrimination of types and tones, exactly the wicked old Rows of Chester, rank with feudalism; exactly, in short, Europe. (I, p.41)

To others, like the Ververs, coming from a relatively raw and unstoried land, Europe has the romantic appeal of living evidence of the past, of the setting for History.

To an aging Strether, in The Ambassadors, Europe means the richer, fuller cultural life he has missed in the provincial American town where he has been. It represents to him all the books he meant to read but never did, the pictures he never saw, the travel he never managed, and, perhaps most of all, the conversations he never took part in. He is amazed at the variety of opinions expressed without diffidence in the gatherings at Chad's apartment; differences even seem to be invented "to avert those agreements that destroy the taste of talk." (I, p. 174) He recognizes that he had been tempted to do the same on occasion back home in Woollett simply to promote intercourse.

There were opinions at Woollett but only three or four. The differences were there to match; if they were doubtless deep, though few, they were quiet--they were, as might be said, almost as shy as if people had been ashamed of them. (II, p. 13)

James does not, by any means, give a carte blanche endorsement of European upper society. Talk is good in Chad's Parisian circle mainly because it includes artists and intellectuals of various sorts. Most English talk is compared to a "quadrille in a sentry box." The conversation of Mrs. Brookenham's little Circle is considered an improvement on the usual fare yet it revolves primarily around the marital difficulties of the members and their acquaintances. A London big party, or "squash," is described as follows:

. . . a thing of vague slow senseless eddies, revolving as in fear of some menace of conversation suspended over it, the drop of which, with a consequent refreshing splash or splatter, yet never took place.¹⁸

There is a reminder here of Virginia Woolf's speculations in Orlando on the nature of "Society," the persistent compulsive need to mingle in a group with a large number of others of one's kind:

The truth would seem to be--if we dare use such a word in such a connection--that all these groups of people lie under an enchantment. The hostess is our modern Sibyl. She is a witch who lays her guests under a spell. In this house they think themselves happy; in that witty; in a third profound. It is all an illusion (which is nothing against it, for illusions are the most

valuable and necessary of all things and she who can create one is among the world's greatest benefactors), but as it is notorious that illusions are shattered by conflict with reality, so no real happiness, no real wit, no real profundity are tolerated where the illusion prevails.¹⁹

If artists mingle freely as accepted members in Chad's group, they do not do so generally in the best circles. They may be tolerated there as unpaid entertainers or as freaks exhibited by lion-hunters. Miriam Rooth is warned that as an actress she will be excluded from good society in France; she may be socially acceptable in England--if she becomes famous enough. In The Tragic Muse, Julia Dallow thinks of Nash simply as "that impossible person," and Nick Dormer realizes that if he gives up his political career to become an artist he has to be willing "to pass mainly for an ass."

It was disagreeable to have to remember that his task would not be sweetened by a sense of heroism, for if it might be heroic to give up the muses for the strife of great affairs, no romantic glamour worth speaking of would ever gather around an Englishman who in the prime of his strength had given up great or even small affairs for the muses.
(II, pp. 187-188)

In The Wings of the Dove, Densher is intimidated by the physical embodiments of the power of wealth in Kate's Aunt Maud's upper middle class London house. The furnishings may be in bad taste but they represent a world of monied respectability that regards people of his sort, and

the creative processes as such, with supreme indifference.

But it was above all the solid forms, the wasted finish, the misguided cost, the general attestation of morality and money, a good conscience and a big balance. These things finally represented for him a portentous negation of his own world of thought--of which, for that matter, in presence of them, he became as for the first time hopelessly aware. (I, p. 79)

It was mentioned earlier that Densher's fiancée, Kate Croy, who has been moving in her aunt's circle, had never had contact with anyone directly concerned in "the things of the mind," and never expected to unless Densher would show her the way.

Mrs. Lowden, Kate's aunt, is not of the very upper reaches of English society--the mercantile taint on the sources of her money is still too fresh--she only has aspirations towards them, and money, properly used--in buying the influence of those with connections such as Lord Mark, for instance--can worm its way in.

Even on the highest level, the society that centers in the great town and country houses, however, no profound cultural background is necessary to get along once included. According to James, all that is needed is a certain amount of courage and good humor to manage adequately the principal amusements of indoor and outdoor sports, dancing and light conversation. Once within the charmed circle, as Charlotte and the Prince discover to their convenience, in The Golden

Bowl, a great deal of personal freedom is allowed to the members; it is the freedom of the elite that does not have to consider the opinions of anyone else.

What any one 'thought' of any one else-- above all of any one else with any one else--was a matter incurring in these halls so little awkward formulation that hovering Judgment, the spirit with the scales, might perfectly have been imagined there as some rather snubbed and subdued but quite trained and tactful poor relation, of equal, of the properest lineage, only of aspect a little dingy, doubtless from too limited a change of dress, for whose tacid and abstemious presence, never betrayed by a rattle of her rusty machine, a room in the attic and a plate at the side table were decently usual. (I, p. 331)

Newman, in The American, learns clearly what it means to be an outsider in such a closed social circle at the party reluctantly given for him by Mme. de Bellegarde:

Everyone gave Newman extreme attention, everyone lighted up for him regardless, as he would have said, of expense, every one was enchanted to make his acquaintance, every one looked at him with that fraudulent intensity of good society which puts out its bountiful hand but keeps the fingers closed over the coin. (p. 322)

If Newman suffers some discomfort from the awareness that his fiancée's relatives and friends consider him outside the pale--as an American of no recognized lineage, gauche and tainted with sordid commercialism--he at least has a laugh at their expense when the young Marquise de Bellegarde pleads with him to take her to the student's ball in the

Latin Quarter. "It's my dream!" she insists.

It seemed to him hardly worthwhile to be the wife of the Marquis de Bellegarde, a daughter of the crusaders, heiress of six centuries of glories and traditions, only to have centered one's aspirations upon the sight of fifty young ladies kicking off the hats of one hundred young men. (p. 344)

Not all Americans are rejected as Newman is. Sometimes being an American makes acceptance, at least provisional acceptance, easier. Milly Theale catches on as the new "find" of the current London season and is given a social whirl. Kate tells her that as an outsider Milly can go anywhere in London society simply because she is not "hideously relative to tiers and tiers of others." The Ververs could mingle in high society (and their spouses do); possibly owning a Prince is a help. These are very wealthy Americans, of course, the English being more willing to forgive the mercantile basis for a fortune in a stranger whose factories are thousands of miles away. Isabel Archer meets a lord as a social equal, something few penniless English middle-class girls would have the opportunity to do, but then she is visiting a relative whose money makes possible proximity to aristocracy. When Isabel is on her own she has money. Considering her financial handicap, Charlotte Stant does very well but she is still more or less on the fringes.

Money is not always necessary for acceptance. In more tolerant circles, such as Chad's, in The Ambassadors,

Americans may be welcomed for some unique national trait that is found intriguing. Miss Grostrey says that Bilham has what is typical of the best young Americans, "the happy attitude itself, the state of faith and--what shall I call it?--the sense of beauty." (I, 131) She hopes he will not want to "do" something and spoil it. Even gruff, unbending Waymarsh, "the Hebrew Prophet," has admirers for the blunt forthrightness with which he expresses his strong convictions and prejudices.

Yet the Americans in these novels, as foreigners anywhere, are still outsiders, are socially dislocated. Madame Merle in The Portrait of a Lady, advises all Americans to go home, they have no place in Europe, they can only "crawl on the surface."

In fact, all of the women under consideration are socially dislocated in some way, to a greater or less extent, and some on more than one count. They may be Americans and have the further social disadvantage of having neither money nor family connections in Europe, no recognized handicap to a Mary Garland, who does not wish to establish herself there, and a real one to a Charlotte Stant who does. Christina and Miriam have obscure social origins and have led unanchored existences since early childhood. Kate has the social disgrace of her father added to penury. Julia Dallow is widowed and Marie de Vionnet separated from her husband. The Brookenhams seem on the surface less dislocated than most of the

women and yet the problem which is at the center of The Awkward Age reflects a social as well as a personal maladjustment. In addition, while not poverty-stricken, their lack of financial resources limits their social prospects.

Whether directly or indirectly resulting from the social dislocation or not, they all have some degree of personal maladjustment, if only in the sense that anyone who has unsatisfied demands is to that extent maladjusted, is fluid rather than static. Some amount of personal dislocation would seem a necessity in his protagonists for a novelist to develop plot complications. Only an Austen can take as a heroine an Emma, a girl completely satisfied with her place in the scheme of things, with her teas and evening parties, and obviously predestined to marry her next-door neighbor and continue with little change the same rounds with the same people. Even Miss Austen had to endow her heroine with enough imagination to fabricate complexities.

Their Aims and Achievements. How then, in general, do the women in these novels look on themselves and what are their aspirations? (It should be noted that few of these generalizations fit Miriam Rooth. She will be taken up as an exceptional case at the end of the chapter.)

They are certainly not Feminists, in the ordinary popular sense of the term. They seem remote from the belligerent battles for women's rights going on in England and America

during the period and noted in detail by James in The Bostonians. They are not aggrieved about their status as women. Madame Merle, in The Portrait of a Lady, sounds a bitter note that is extremely rare in these novels when she tells Isabel that although Americans in general should stay at home, there is no natural place for them in Europe, an exception could be made for women:

A woman can perhaps get on; a woman, it seems to me, has no natural place anywhere; wherever she finds herself she has to remain on the surface, and, more or less, to crawl. (I, p. 280)

On occasion, of course, they sometimes make half-defiant statements about woman's increasing independence, as Charlotte does in The Golden Bowl. When the Prince insists she should marry, Charlotte answers, "Existence, you know, all the same, doesn't depend on that. I mean," she smiled, "on having caught a husband." She adds a moment later, "There are things of sorts I should be able to have-- things I should be able to be. The position of a single woman today is very favorable you know." (I, p. 57) Yet later when Verver asks her to marry him Charlotte admits she likes the settled, anchored existence and a motive outside herself that marriage would give and hates the idea of spinsterhood. "'Miss' among us all, is too dreadful--except for a shopgirl. I don't want to be a horrible English old maid." (I, p. 219)

Sometimes the defiance takes on a note of teasing

coquetry, as in a conversation between Biddy, Nick's younger sister in The Tragic Muse, and Peter Sherringham. Peter insists that an artist's life is a terrible one for a woman but that there is one art they can perform superlatively well, "that of being charming and good, that of being indispensable to man." "Oh, that isnt an art," Biddy answers him, and adds, "Oh, I know, men want women not to be anything." Peter gallantly responds, "It's a poor little refuge they try to take from the overwhelming consciousness that you're in fact everything." (II, p. 294)

They may talk in general terms about what can be done by women "these days" but they do not think of themselves in terms of concrete careers, of training themselves for specific work.

The young Isabel Archer, in The Portrait of a Lady, uncircumscribed as she is by family pressures or social ambitions, and determined on finding a Mission in Life to perform, seems in the beginning the only one of these women likely to break new trails. She so impresses her cousin Ralph Touchett who is surprised that with a woman he is even questioning what her future intentions, her plans, will be. "Most women did with themselves nothing at all; they waited in attitudes more or less gracefully passive, for a man to come that way and furnish them with a destiny." (I, p. 87)

Isabel turns down Lord Warburton's proposal partly

because, as she tells her cousin, she does not wish to begin life by marrying, she wants to find out about it herself, and partly because Warburton represents a manner of existence already thoroughly organized and established into which she will have to fit and over which she will have little control. Later she is even able to reconcile the inheritance of a fortune with her Pursuit of a Mission--after a struggle with her conscience. She comes to think of her wealth as an addition to her superior resources. The amount of that undiscovered-as-yet Good that she will be able to do will simply be increased.

Isabel disappoints those who had high hopes for her future. After a year of restless, impetuous travel she returns to marry Osmond, the only Mission she has discovered. Her cousin Ralph expresses the disappointment:

You seemed to be soaring far up in the blue--to be sailing in the bright light, over the heads of men. Suddenly someone tosses up a faded rosebud--a missile that should never have reached you--and straight you drop to the ground. (II, pp. 69-70)

Isabel makes the lame reply: "There's nothing higher for a girl than to marry a - a person she likes!" (II, p. 70)

All of these women think of their futures in terms of a marriage rather than a job, although they are insulated by money, if not theirs someone else's, from being "kitchen-minded."

This is not surprising since the women under consid-

eration are by birth, money or contrivance, members of the leisure class. As De Toqueville has pointed out, by the nineteenth century the gentleman of leisure was a passing phenomenon in England, even the younger sons of the aristocracy being generally expected to take up careers of public service. Not so the women. A gentlewoman became declassée if she had to, or wanted to, earn her living or took up "unladylike" pursuits. Vestiges of the attitude are still around. Lady Aurora, in The Princess Casamassima, is thought by her family a monster of eccentricity, even mad, for shifting her charitable activities from the parish poor of their country estate to the poor of the London slums. Jane Eyre and the Jane in Emma take the shortest step down from the class of "lady" in becoming, or planning to become, governesses but they are made conscious of how long that step is. Hepsibah in The House of Seven Gables goes through agonies of mortification at the thought that a lady of her ancient pedigree should be forced to engage in commercial transactions but finds comfort in the knowledge that as she is incapacitated by birth for such sordid practical activities she will not be very good at them.

There are no fallen gentlewomen in these novels. A Kate Croy, a Charlotte Stant, a Madame Merle, almost penniless, will lead a half-parasitical existence with rich relatives and friends but never think of earning her living. A Milly Theale, for whom not money but time is in short

supply, will cast a glance of wistful envy at the young female copyists at an art gallery and muse that perhaps an occupation might be a way to enrich her dwindling months or years but that will be as far as the thought will go.

There were women in the nineteenth century who simply jumped the tracks establishing propriety and suitability of activities for women but they were few in number and the heroines of these novels are not of their persuasion. Writing of Gertrude Stein, Katherine Anne Porter calls such women "Amazons:"

. . . not-men, not-women, answerable to no function in either sex, whose careers were carried on, and how successfully in whatever field they chose: they were educators, writers, editors, politicians, artists, world travelers, and international hostesses, who lived in public and by the public and played out their self-assumed, self-created roles in such masterly freedom as only a few early medieval queens had equaled. Freedom to them meant precisely freedom from men and their stuffy rules for women. They usurped with a high hand the traditional masculine privileges of movement, choice, and the use of direct, personal power.¹⁸

The lack of bitterness in James's women that has been mentioned can be partly accounted for by just this absence of a need for self-justification in a career of their own. They look on themselves as playing an auxiliary, not necessarily inferior but certainly different, role in society to men. They do not have the ambivalence of attitude of educated contemporary American women, unsure whether their

prime responsibility should be self-development or assisting the development of others through the family.

If these women, as Ralph Touchett says of most women, wait for a man to furnish them with a destiny, they do not wait, as he says, in a manner "gracefully passive." They have an active rather than passive attitude toward life; they have some idea of the pattern they want it to assume and make some effort to direct the course of their destiny. Within the compass of the novel, they all suffer total or partial defeat in terms of their objectives but they all have the capacity to go on. An exception is Milly Theale but in her case disease is a special factor.

They all share one common objective: to attract or hold the love of a particular man. James never goes into the physical details of passion in these novels. This is a reflection not only of his period and place but also of his own perhaps overly fastidious nature. On occasion there is specific mention or the implication that sexual relations have taken place. In general, though, the feeling is conveyed by indirection that while passion is present it is only a part of a complex relationship between highly civilized and complex people and cannot be isolated as a separate factor satisfactorily. Maggie's Prince shows his obtuseness in trying to do just that.

For a few this desire for a specific man is really their only principal objective for the period they are under

observation. This is not to say that they have no other needs; either those other needs are already satisfied or they are in abeyance before the force of the primary one.

The rest of the women could be divided up either on the basis of the way they envision their relationship to the man or on the basis of their other ruling motive or drive but since the two factors are so closely interrelated it seems clearer to classify them according to their ambitions. Thus they can be separated into two groups: those who have purely social ambitions and those who, while a desire for social prestige may or may not be present, have a need for making some form of social contribution.

Women for whom the man is the only object of attainment: Marie de Vionnet, Milly Theale and Nanda Brookenham.

Marie de Vionnet, in The Ambassadors, is the woman who could most justly claim to have "created" a man, yet public acknowledgment, or private satisfaction, for the transformation of Chad forms no part of necessary ego-boosting for her as it does with some of the women to be mentioned later.

She already has everything necessary for self-assurance and social prestige: money, an illustrious family, and the beauty and charm that bring her admiration among a wide variety of friends. These assets are insignificant in her eyes compared to the companionship and emotional fulfillment

that Chad brings her.

Chad complacently acknowledges his satisfaction with her services to Strether: "She's never been anything I would call a burden." Dutifully he insists that he is not tired of her, "almost as he might have spoken of being tired of roast mutton for dinner." Chad continues this rundown of Marie's virtues:

She has never for a moment yet bored me --never been wanting, as the cleverest women sometimes are, in tact. She has never talked about her tact--as even they too sometimes talk; but she has always had it. She never had it more . . . than just lately. (II, p. 313)

By the time Strether meets her in Paris, Marie knows that she is doomed to ultimate defeat. Not pressure from home, not even the fading of the charms of a mistress ten years his senior will finally pull Chad away so much as his need for a conventional married life and an outlet for his energies in work. When Marie breaks down before Strether, she admits she is afraid for her life: "There's not a grain of certainty in my future--for the only certainty is that I shall be the loser in the end." (II, p. 288)

Strether is somewhat appalled that for this woman of great resources one man should outweigh all the rest that life has to offer.

The work, however admirable, was nevertheless of the strictly human order, and in short it was marvelous that the companion of mere earthly joys, of comforts, aberrations (however one classed them)

within the common experience, should be so transcendentally prized. (II, pp. 284-285)

During her breakdown, at another point, Marie cries to Strether: "What it comes to, is that it's not, that it's never happiness, any happiness at all to take. The only safe thing is to give. It's what plays you least false." (II, p. 282) Safe in the sense that one is not dependent on the feelings of another. Yet only rarely, possibly in a child-parent or disciple-master situation, is a one-way relationship successful long. Marie has not wanted to be safe; she has been willing to risk permanent damage to her reputation and her feelings by involving herself with Chad and she does not really regret what she has had but only what she knows she will be deprived of in the future. It is an indication of the trust the beneficent Strether inspires that she does expose her desperation to him. She will always keep up a front before Chad until the end, never charge him with ingratitude or inconstancy. She will have the courage and dignity and self-respect to let him go gracefully when the time comes.

Milly Theale, with a probably fatal disease, has enough money to have "everything," except time. Despite a self-acknowledge passivity in her nature, she does not wait passively for death. She sets out for Europe with her companion to live as fully as possible in the time remain-

ing. Wandering the Swiss countryside, she realizes that more than anything else, more than scenery, or books, or the monuments of the cultural past, she wants relationships with other human beings in the limited time available to her. She experiences some exhilaration briefly as the "find" of the London season but realizes that this generalized social acclaim is not what she is really seeking. She wants the most concentrated and intimate of human relationships: the experience of passionate love between a man and woman. Consciously or not, she has headed for London in the first place because of the impression the young Englishman Densher made on her in New York. She can sense the largeness of his nature, his ability to give of himself without reservation, in addition to his other attractions.

For that reason Lord Mark, with his business-like proposal, can have no attraction for her whatsoever, even if she had not realized eventually his cold-blooded calculation of the profitableness to him of her early death. Lord Mark is a man of careful compromises, adjustments, expediencies, a man whose "nature and his acquired notion of behavior rested on the general assumption that nothing--nothing to make a deadly difference for him--ever could happen. (II, p. 159) Faced with a tragic early finish to her life, Milly wants what happens to her to matter very much. Lord Mark's reasonable offer that they make an alliance and "try" to love one another is obtusely inadequate: "As a suggestion to her of

a healing and uplifting passion it was in truth deficient; it wouldn't do as the communication of a force that should sweep them both away." (II, p. 157)

At least Milly achieves something of what she has wanted before she dies. Her last days are enriched by her feelings for Densher and her hope, before she learns of the deception, that he might come to love her. Like Clarissa Harlowe, Milly's giving up the will to live somehow seems an act of strength rather than weakness. It is not simply that she bestows an inheritance on Kate and Densher, gives them her generous forgiveness and protects their betrayal from public knowledge. It is more than that. It is as if she throws her blessing over them to live the experiences she can never have--the same feeling Strether had towards Chad and Marie. Even Kate, despite her jealousy, acknowledges her error about Milly to Densher: "I used to call her, in my stupidity, for want of anything better, a dove. Well she stretched out her wings and it was to that they reached. They cover us." (II, p. 404)

In The Awkward Age, it is her mother, and not Nanda, who is interested in Mr. Longdon for his money. Nanda seeks with him a parent-child relationship of mutual love and respect that is missing in her own family. She would not have him attempt to buy Vanderbank for her, and in his own way Vanderbank cannot be bought. He must marry a woman with

money if he is to satisfy his social ambitions but he will only marry one who meets the standards of his narrow "gentleman's code," with its elements of pompousness and prudery. Nanda's physical withdrawal "upstairs" again, out of her mother's gossip-laden parlor, is her direct action to counter the besmirchment of her character in Vanderbank's eyes. When the move fails, she salvages what she can from the situation: pleads for his attentions to her mother, agrees to square his actions with Mr. Longdon, and, above all, generously allows him to leave gracefully, with the feeling that he has acted with the honor of a gentleman towards her.

. . . what that she could ever do for him would really be so beautiful as this present chance to smooth his confusion and add as much as possible to that refined satisfaction with himself which would proceed from his having dealt with a difficult hour in a gallant and delicate way? To force upon him an awkwardness was like forcing a disfigurement or a hurt. (p. 501)

These women are passive in relationship to the men they want for a destiny only in the sense that the initiative for acceptance or rejection is with the men. They have their times of hopelessness or anger--Marie breaks down, Milly shuts Densher out, Nanda shuns her mother--but eventually they can, or in Marie's case will, accept the unalterable with philosophy. They can give the man the one gift always acceptable: a boost to his self-esteem.

Women who have social ambitions: Kate Croy, Charlotte Stant and Mrs. Brookenham.

In The Wings of the Dove, Kate Croy's social ambitions antedate, and are not cancelled out by, her love and admiration for Densher. All of her maneuvers to obtain a fortune come from her need to reconcile two conflicting desires: to marry this impecunious writer and yet to enjoy the social prestige that would have come if she had married "well."

An earlier, undisclosed, family disgrace and current family pressure from a n'er-do-well father and a struggling married sister contribute to Kate's urgency to make her mark in society. She tells Densher: "It makes me ask myself if I've any right to personal happiness, any right to anything but to be as rich and overflowing, as smart and shining, as I can be made." (I, p. 71)

She is not really so self-sacrificing. She has a physical revulsion for the mean or tasteless in clothes or furnishings and her proud and competitive spirit demands inclusion in the "best" circles where her ability to shine has already been proven. It never occurs to her that Densher, with his preoccupation with matters intellectual and his indifference to material advantages, might be out of place in high society. She even convinces herself at one point that she is doing all the scheming for money just for him. "I'm taking a trouble for you I never dreamed I should take

for any human creature," she tells him. (II, p. 233)

The very "precious unlikeness" in the other--her capacity for living, his for the things of the mind--that draws them together in the first place, each seeking what is lacking in himself, is what eventually sunders the relationship. Her ability at managing people leads her step-by-step from a calculated deception of her aunt and Milly, rationalized on the grounds that the dying girl is receiving pleasure from thinking herself loved by Densher, to, eventually, a callous contempt for the duped girl, which climaxes in Kate's jealous destruction of Milly's posthumous letter. Densher's greater intellectuality inclines him to follow her lead up to the point when his ethical principles are so outraged that he begins by loathing himself and ends up almost hating Kate.

She dominates him and yet he is not weak. He gives in to her out of love. When he assures Kate that he can do anything for her if he is certain of the sincerity of her passion, she answers, sure of her power, "Good, good That's how I like you." (II, p. 93) Above all, he wants to be generous and loyal in his relations to her; he has the imagination to want to live handsomely, in a spiritual not material sense, free of ordinary pettiness, to escape "reading the romance of his existence in a cheap edition."

His idea from the first, from the very first of his knowing her, had been to be, as the French call it, bon prince with

her, mindful of the good humour and generosity, the contempt in the manner of confidence, for the small outlays and small savings, that belonged to the man who wasnt generally afraid. (II, p. 176)

Densher's resentment of Kate's domination begins in Venice and the contest of their wills continues until the end. His insistence that she come to his room first if he is to continue relations with Milly is not so much a demand for a pledge of love as a test of his power;

. . . he was fairly playing with her pride. He had never, he then knew, tasted in all his relation with her, of anything so sharp--too sharp for mere sweetness--as the vividness with which he saw himself master in the conflict. (II, p. 331)

With Kate's destruction of Milly's letter, their spiritual estrangement is complete, although they continue their affair for a time, trying with passion "to buy in the dark blindness of each other's arms the knowledge of each other that they cannot undo." (II, p. 392) They have become mere acquaintances, with "charm of manner" and formalized civility regulating their relationship; "they took precautions for the courtesy they had formerly left to come of itself." (II, p. 393) In their last words together Densher acknowledges bitterly that Kate still has power over him and offers to marry her, refusal of Milly's bequest being understood as a condition. "As we were?" asks Kate and Densher answers, "As we were." "We shall never be again as we were!" she says. (II, p. 405)

Kate loses more than Densher, the one person with whom she has been able to be completely honest. She also loses the part of her capable of admiring his character and intellect. If Densher has once said that she was "too good for society," she will become less so. She has already adopted the misuse of personal relations for private ends, a practice she had once found reprehensible in her aunt and Lord Mark and customary in the society toward which she aspires. With her aunt's or Milly's money she will move into that society and her public manner will become her only manner, the public manner that Densher noted, in their final period together, as being entertaining but at the same time giving the impression "of a contact multitudinous as only the superficial can be." (II, p. 401)

Even more than Kate, because she has no conveniently rich aunt, Charlotte Stant in The Golden Bowl is a young woman who has only her own resources as capital in making her way in society. When marriage to Verver lifts her to the top rung, she is vindicated in "the proved private theory that materials to work with had been all she required and that there were none too precious for her to understand and use." (I, p. 246) One of those precious materials is her ex-lover and present step son-in-law, the Prince. For a period she has everything she could want, short of marrying the Prince: an established position as the wife

of an American millionaire and entrée into a high social life with the Prince sanctioned as her escort by the retiring Ververs.

Charlotte leads the way into the private affair with the Prince but, unlike Kate, she neither dominates him nor corrupts his morals. He is accustomed to accepting whatever pleasurable is offered him without troubling over justifications. Actually, Charlotte's rationalizations of their affair are offered to soothe her own developed moral conscience. She had, as Mrs. Assingham says, started out as an idealist. She tells herself that she and the Prince are justified in finding their own pleasure since the Ververs obviously prefer each other's company and anyway will never find out and be hurt. She had really already stepped over the line into unethical conduct when she sidestepped telling Verver of her previous relationship to the Prince before her marriage.

When the crisis comes, Charlotte has no choice but to go along with the generous maneuverings of the Ververs and leave for America with head high, as if voluntarily. The Prince would never give up his profitable marriage for her. She fails, as Kate does, to manage a complicated double play for both love and high social consideration and is left, as Kate is, with just the latter.

Mrs. Brookenham's social ambitions are of a nature

different from Kate's and Charlotte's. Undoubtedly she has wider social contacts, but the core of her intellectual and emotional life is centered in the small group of intimate friends that makes up her salon. The interrelations of the members of the Circle give her the mental stimulation, vicarious excitement, admiration from men and the chance to exercise power over other peoples' lives that she needs to thrive. In addition to its other assets, the Circle provides her with a wonderful feeling of exclusiveness, a quality basic to the survival of country clubs and coteries. Not just Anyone can enter Their Inner Sanctum, as Mrs. Brookenham makes clear to Mr. Cashmore in The Awkward Age when he presumes to the extent of assuming himself an equal participant in the "we" who discuss his marital difficulties:

'I mean we,' and it was wonderful how her accent discriminated. 'We've talked you too but of course we talk everyone.'
She had a pause through which there glimmered a ray from luminous hours the inner intimacy which, privileged as he was, he couldn't pretend to share. (p. 169)

Her relations to the men closest to her parallel Charlotte's more than Kate's. She has a husband to whom she is generally indifferent and another man is the focus of her emotional attachment. Edward Brookenham is the figurehead of the family, the breadwinner, little involved in his wife's or children's affairs, for whom Mrs. Brookenham sees that the servants take care of the necessary de-

tails of his existence--his clothes, his meals, his social appointments.

So dry and decent and even distinguished did he look as if he had positively been created to meet a propriety, and match some other piece, that lady, with her famous perceptions, would no more have applied to him seriously on a general proposition than she would, for such a response, have rung the drawing room bell. (p. 67)

Mrs. Brookenham considers him a bore and even publicly patronizes him. "Fancy people wanting Edward!" she exclaims to a friend on hearing someone has extended him an invitation for a visit. Yet there is no implied criticism of Mrs. Brookenham for her husband's social inadequacies as there is of Sarah Pocock for Jim's. The assumption seems to be that Edward could be a more developed human being (Vanderbank is employed also) whereas the cultural set-up in America does not encourage Jim to be.

The "affair" between Mrs. Brookenham and Vanderbank is one-sided, the passion being all on her side. In an odd reversal of the Chad Newsome-Marie de Vionnet situation, Mrs. Brookenham acknowledges that Vanderbank, although he is ten years her junior, "brought her out" from her state of narrow, girlish innocence sometime in her early thirties. This late flowering accounts for her excitement over all the "naughtiness" in the world as compared to Nanda's matter-of-fact attitude. It may also partly account for, but does not excuse, her childish irresponsibility in pursuing her ends. In the

interests of keeping the Circle functioning, her adolescent son is shunted off on visits uninvited and even encouraged to have an affair with Mrs. Cashmore to keep this subject of lively gossip within range. Having failed to foist Nanda off on Mitchy, Mrs. Brookenham conducts a smear campaign against her daughter's character intended both to eliminate a sexual rival and to keep the Circle intact. If, as she later insists to Mitchy, her public exposure of Nanda's reading of an off-color book at Tishy's party resulted from impulse, not plan--Mitchy calls it "blind instinct"--her prevention of Vanderbank's seeing her daughter in her new arrangement upstairs by the imputation that Nanda is involved with Cashmore is calculated malice.

The campaign is successful with Vanderbank but in the process she alienates both him and Mitchy and almost destroys the Circle. On one occasion Mitchy insists that he cannot have Nanda whether or not Vanderbank takes her and Mrs. Brookenham exclaims, "Oh then shall I just go on with you both? That will be joy!" (p. 307) At the same time there comes to her "the flicker of a sense that in spite of all intimacy and amiability they could, at bottom, and as things commonly turned out, only be united against her." (p.311) Vanderbank comments later that the members of the Circle are falling apart since Mitchy's marriage and she agrees: "The spell's broken; the harp has lost its string. We're not the same thing." (p.416) Her attempts to revive the old relation-

ship, to discuss Mitchy's marriage with him, meet with no response. "It will be like old times," she pleads. "For you perhaps," he answers, "but not for me." (p.469)

Mrs. Brookenham loses Vanderbank as an intimate and only Nanda's exercise of "maternal" solicitude saves the pieces of her mother's social life. Nanda pleads with Vanderbank not utterly to abandon her mother: "When I think of her downstairs there so often nowadays practically alone I feel as if I could scarcely bear it. She's so fearfully young." (p. 506)

These three women who try and fail to successfully combine social and amatory ambitions are the only ones in these novels who are under moral censure for deliberate unethical actions.

Women who wish to make a social contribution: Christina Light, Mary Garland, Julia Dallow and Isabel Archer are the major ones but Maggie Verver and Mamie Pocock should be considered in this category too. This represents half the number of women being considered here.

They all aim, in varying ways, at vicarious accomplishment through uniting forces with an exceptional man. This is their substitute for a career of their own. It often seems the substitute for an active religious faith.

Desire for social prestige, or even personal glory, is

sometimes part of their motivation--it certainly is with Christina and Julia--but there is always present some form of the need to make a social contribution. The degree of participation in their candidate's life they would want varies from simply being there or acting as the loyal helpmeet to actively promoting his career, even to molding the man himself.

The desire for personal glory is expressed the most frankly by the young Christina Light in Roderick Hudson as she assesses the sculptor as a potential genius. She seeks objective knowledge of him from his friend Rowland Mallet: "Tell me this: do you think he's going to be a real swell, a big celebrity, have his life written, make his fortune, and immortalize--as the real ones do you know--the people he has done busts of and the women he has loved?" (p. 212)

Christina does not care to gamble her life on someone who will not make the grade. What she seeks is a man capable of "splendid achievement," with the sacred fire, "large in character, great in talent, strong in will," a man she can have the "luxury of respecting." (pp. 259-260) She finds Roderick sadly lacking by this standard and quite brutally tells him so: he is weak, indecisive and egocentric and his sacred fire burns only intermittently (the last a characteristic even of true genius if she but knew it.) As she tells Rowland, Roderick is a romantic figure, not banal

or stupid, but then, "One doesn't want a lover one pities, and one doesn't want--of all things in the world--a husband who's a picturesque curiosity." (p. 408) She informs Roderick that he thinks only of himself, which might be all right in a man of extraordinary power. "But if the power should turn out to be, after all, rather ordinary? Fancy feeling one's self ground in the mill of a third-rate talent!" (p. 262)

She does not look for ego-satisfaction in taking credit for the rise of a Great Man. She would be satisfied to worship, not create, this demi-god; nothing she could do would add or take away from his stature. When Roderick tells her that she makes him feel as if he could scale the skies, she answers, "Ah, the man who's strong with what I call strength . . . would neither rise nor fall by anything I could say! I'm a poor weak woman. I've no strength in myself, and I can give no strength." (p.260) She adds:

No, No, I cant reassure you and when you tell me--with a confidence in my discretion of which certainly I'm duly sensible--that at times you feel terribly scant, why, I can only answer, 'Ah, then, my poor friend, I'm afraid you are scant!' The language I should like to hear from a person offering me his career is that of a confidence that would knock me down. (p.263)

Yielding to family pressure, Christina marries a far from great man, the Prince Casamassima, and appears only briefly once more in Roderick Hudson beckoning back the enslaved young

artist for a diversion. When she reappears in The Princess Casamassima it is several years later and she is separated from her husband whom she has treated abominably for being what she knew he was before she married him. "My husband traces his descent from the fifth century, and he's the greatest bore in Europe," she says once. (I, p. 291)

Her friend, Mme. Grandoni, explaining later to the Prince Christina's involvement in the revolutionary movement, tells him that his wife regards marrying him "as such a horrible piece of frivolity that she can't for the rest of her days be serious enough to make up for it." (I, p. 307) This is hardly a completely accurate picture of Christina considering the number of whims she has pursued since her marriage according to her friend Captain Sholta.

Spiting the Prince and his reactionary, self-important family undoubtedly plays a large part in pushing Christina into association with radicals, of course. She can have it both ways, always a great satisfaction: enjoy the prestige and luxury that go with marriage to a title and money and at the same time work virtuously to destroy the privileged classes.

. . . the force of reaction and revenge might carry her far, make her modern and democratic and heretical à outrance-- lead her to swear by Darwin and Spencer and all the scientific iconoclasts as well as by the revolutionary spirit. (I, p. 295)

Nevertheless, the same drives that operated in

Christina before her marriage are still in full force: to banish the banal and to bolster her self esteem by "doing" something or by association with a man of accomplishment, the latter two being closely connected in her mind. The first drive usually counteracts the effectiveness of the second.

In spite of what Mme. Grandoni told the Prince, Christina's old friends do not take her new allegiance with much seriousness. When Christina, arguing the gravity of the social situation, insists that "the ground's heaving under our feet," Mme. Grandoni replies, "It's not the ground, my dear, it's you who are turning somersaults!" (I, p. 219) Captain Sholta, who makes the initial contacts for Christina with the revolutionaries, classifies his activity of collecting "little democrats" for her with past "propitiary offerings" of ghost stories or illuminated missals.

Christina does seriously want recognition for her own abilities and efforts. She continually presents proofs or asks for tests of her sincerity and insists she is not trifling. When Paul Muniment asks if she talks about her contacts with European revolutionaries as proof of her soundness, she answers, "My soundness must be in myself--a matter for you to appreciate as you know me better, not in my references and vouchers." (II, pp. 227-228)

At the same time she is still in quest of the Great Man, this time one who can rise on sheer merit from the bottom to the top, one as unlike her husband as possible. Part

of her motivation is to show herself worthy of Him. She quickly realizes that Hyacinth has no potential for greatness, comes to treat him with a fond and protective pity bordering on contempt, and moves on to Paul, who does have the qualities for political success. Paul himself might have been merely a stepping-stone to Hoffendahl, the master mind behind the movement and a man whose rejection of her assistance has rankled with Christina. "He'll write to me but wont trust me. However, he shall some day!" she declares to Hyacinth. (II, p. 53) Even the achievement of friendship can become just a sop to her competitive spirit. She likes best those who accept her least readily; securing them represents more of a challenge, their conquest more of a triumph.

Christina never convinces the revolutionary leaders, any more than her old friends, of her seriousness and steadfastness of purpose. They are sure that once the novelty of her new adventure wears off she will seek another and more amusing game to play. When the Prince cuts off the supply of money coming to them and they reject Christina, she exclaims furiously, "You dont count then any devotion, any intelligence that I may have placed at your service--even rating my faculties modestly?" and Paul answers, "I count your intelligence, but I dont count your devotion, and one's nothing without the other. You're not trusted--well, where it makes the difference." (II, p. 413) Her sexual attraction

for him, and she has used it in an auxiliary way to advance her candidacy, does not outweigh his political ambition.

What keeps Christina from winning their respect is the side of her nature that contributes to her fascination as a woman--the part of her that craves change, excitement, adventure in her life and a chance to play a variety of roles. Whatever her other motives, Christina is in the revolutionary movement to a great extent simply for "kicks."

In his anxiety to show, somewhat pretentiously, that he is not just an ordinary member of the working classes, the little book binder Hyacinth almost alienates the Princess. She wants him to be a "type," the Working Man, with an orthodox background of poverty and inadequate education. It is "awfully chic," in other words daring and novel, to have a Worker in attendance, to show him the wonders of a country estate and to introduce him to society as an equal, without revealing his background.

To give away money (the Prince's) to the poor, deserving and undeserving alike, can also be great fun: "To do something for others was not only so much more human--it was so much more amusing!" (II, p. 261) It is such a lark for Christina, always the extremist, piqued at a complaint of extravagance from the Prince, to spite him by selling and storing her possessions and taking a small house, a house that to her is the epitome of lower middle class vulgarity and to Paul a dream cottage to be achieved after

years of hard work. Only lacking in Madeira Crescent, and Christina regrets the lack, is an audience of her society acquaintances who can best appreciate the extent of her sacrifice. She only keeps one maid.

Not only amusement but thrills are what she seeks. She urges Paul to take her on more and more dangerous missions and is annoyed at his matter-of-factness and derision of her romantic sensation-seeking. "Of course one doesn't want any vague rodamontage, one wants to do something. But it would be hard if one couldn't have a little pleasure by the way," she insists. (II, p. 291) To feel that she is risking All for a Great Cause, feeds both her self-importance and her sense of the dramatic. She is living more than ever "on high hopes and bold plans and far-reaching combinations," (II, p. 400) and when Hyacinth demurs at the possible sacrifice of one so beautiful, "she turned from him as with a beat of great white wings that raised her straight out of the bad air of the personal." (II, p. 406)

Christina's future is as problematical as the woman herself. The novel breaks off abruptly at her discovery of Hyacinth's suicide. She could rush out and get killed, in a blind impulse and a desperate attempt to prove herself, taking his place as assassin. She could just as well continue her quest for a Mission and a Great Man and/or the banishment of the banal in another field. The comparison is unjust to the lovely Christina but the case of the Mrs.

Marmaduke Moore of Ogden Nash's poem comes to mind. She who took up Episcopalianism at twenty, the Bahai at thirty, Freud at forty, and at:

Fifty! she haunted museums and galleries,
And pleased young men by augmenting their
salaries.

Oh, it shouldnt occur, but it does occur,
That poets are made by fools like her.
Her salon was full of frangipani,
Roumanian, Russian and Hindustani,
And she conquered par as well as bogey,
By reading a book and going Yogi.

.
That is the story of Mrs. Moore,
As far as it goes. But of this I'm sure--
When seventy stares her in the face
She'll have found some other state of
grace.

Mohammed may be her Lord and master,
Or Zeus, or Mithros, or Zoroaster.
For when a lady is badly sexed
God knows what God is coming next.²¹

It is not her quixotism that lays Christina open to moral censure, it is her misuse of personal relationships. She does not, as do Kate and Charlotte and Mrs. Brookenham, deliberately practice deception and knowingly pursue a course of action that could be terribly damaging to another individual, though she is completely callous toward the Prince. Out of sheer heedlessness, she treats people as objects, as toys to be picked up or put away depending on her need for diversion. She is at least partially responsible for the deaths of two men whom she has treated in this way, Roderick and Hyacinth. Christina meets her match when she comes up against the revolutionary organization which regards friend and foe alike as objects to be manipulated in

the light of ultimate objectives.

Mary Garland never sees her fiancé, Roderick Hudson, in the cruelly unflattering light cast by Christina's analysis of his character and talent. To the end she keeps her belief in his genius and high destiny. She is a one-track person--neither social prominence nor personal glory have much attraction for her--and she believes strongly in the use of one's resources for worthwhile goals. Supporting and helping a man of accomplishment is her means of being a socially useful human being, her mission in life and her cause to defend, and her New England spirit does not give up readily.

Others see Mary, in her future role as an artist's wife, as the little brown bird, making the nest and warming the eggs, while her brighter plumaged mate flits as he pleases, a role Christina would never have accepted. Rowland's cousin Cecilia writes patronizingly of Mary:

She will be a very good wife for a man of genius, and such a one as they are often shrewd enough to take. She will darn his stockings and keep his accounts, she will sit at home and trim the lamp and keep up the fire, while he studies the Beautiful in pretty neighbors at dinner parties. (p. 132)

This echoes Hawthorne's explanation of the attraction the good-natured country girl Phoebe has for the variously experienced and gifted young daguerrotypist, Holgrave, in The

House of Seven Gables. To someone outside conventional human relationships as Holgrave is, Phoebe's very ordinariness, her uncomplicated mental processes, her warmth and home-making qualities, provide a welcome link with the world of everyday reality.

Why are poets so apt to choose their mates, not for any similarity of poetic endowment, but for qualities which might make the happiness of the rudest handicraftsman as well as that of the ideal craftsman of the spirit? Because, probably, at his highest elevation, the poet needs no human intercourse; but he finds it dreary to descend, and be a stranger.²²

In some cases, however, Hawthorne intimates, the valuable conservatism of the female, rather than providing a necessary stable base for the creative radicalism of the male, reduces, even obliterates it. When Phoebe fears that she will be lost trying to climb to his heights, Holgrave makes the for him prophetic statement:

It will be far otherwise than as you forbode. The world owes all its onward impulses to men ill at ease. The happy man inevitably confines himself within ancient limits. I have a presentiment that, hereafter, it will be my lot to set out trees, to make fences,--perhaps, even, in due time, to build a house for another generation--in a word, to conform myself to laws, and the peaceful practice of society. Your poise will be more powerful than any oscillating tendency of mine.²³

Mary never gets the chance to prove whether her stability would have a positive or negative effect on Rod-

erick's creative output.

Roderick does not look on Mary merely as a provider of domestic comforts, though as the spoiled son of a doting mother he is accustomed to and would expect service from women. He also wants Mary's unquestioning belief in him to bolster his ego and her Puritan faith in the value of hard work to strengthen his sometimes flabby spine. He calls her a "stern moralist" and insists, "It was for that I fell in love with her and with security and sanity, all the 'saving clauses' in her sweet fresh person." (p. 87)

When he is on the upgrade Roderick may find Mary's ideals bolstering but on the downgrade he finds them trying. He asks Rowland to get rid of Mary and his mother for him in Rome after he has tired of their solicitude, using the excuse that he no longer has a romantic interest in his fiancée, she bores him. It is more than that. She is a reproach to his conscience. One must justify being idolized and he is idling away his time. He complains, "She thinks all the world of me. She likes me as if I were good to eat. She's saving me up, cannibal-fashion, as if I were a big feast." (p. 356)

Roderick's premature death saves Mary from the sort of disillusionment that Isabel Archer goes through after marriage. She never knows the extent of his egocentricity. If Mary would have been willing to take a great deal from an egocentric genius, she would not have been willing, in

Christina's words, "to be ground in the mill of a third-rate talent."

She believed in the conquests of ambition and would surely never long persuade herself that it was as interesting to see them missed--even helplessly and pathetically--as to see them strenuously reached. (p. 474)

Roderick has not so much a third-rate talent--his talent has been acknowledged to be of a high order--as a third-rate character. In his decline, his egocentricity is directed less and less towards his identity and needs as an artist and more and more towards his wants as a very self-indulgent man. For the same reason that Dylan Thomas took to the bottle in his last years, Roderick takes to dissipation and the pursuit of Christina: to escape the self-discipline necessary to achievement as an artist.

In spite of all the callous treatment Mary takes uncomplainingly from Roderick, there are indications towards the end of some disagreement between her and his mother, disagreement based on Mary's beginning to question Roderick's godlike invulnerability to criticism. Mary is valued by Mrs. Hudson solely as "assistant priestess at Roderick's shrine"; she has been honored to be asked to be his wife and should never protest any of his behavior towards her.

Mrs. Hudson kept clear of the reflection that a mother may forgive where a mistress may not, and she seemed to feel it a further drain on her own depletion that Mary shouldn't be glad to act as a handmaid without wages.

She was ready to hold her breath so that Roderick might howl, if need be, at his ease, and she was capable of seeing any one else gasp for air without a tremor of compassion. The girl had now perhaps given some intimation of her belief that if constancy is the flower of devotion, reciprocity is the guarantee of constancy, and Mrs. Hudson had denounced this as arrogant doctrine. (p. 454)

Isabel Archer, of The Portrait of a Lady, would go farther in active partnership with a man of genius than either of the two women already discussed. If Christina would be satisfied merely to benefit from his success and Mary would find her role mainly as loyal helpmeet, Isabel would work to further his career. Her missionary zeal is more like Mary's than Christina's, concerned with public benefit more than personal glory.

To Isabel, before her marriage, Gilbert Osmond is the greatest man she has ever met, the most intelligent and cultured, with the finest sensibility and the most exquisite taste. To the objections of her friends and relatives that Osmond has neither family, reputation nor money, that he is a dabbler and a dilettante and has never done anything, Isabel remains deaf or else, as her cousin Ralph says, turns Osmond's vices into virtues. It is what he is rather than what he has done that matters. If, out of pride, he has kept to a lonely and studious life and has gained neither fame nor fortune, it is because he is indifferent to tangible rewards:

"Mr. Osmond has never scrambled nor struggled--he has cared for no worldly prize." (II, p. 73)

His very lacks are her gains, provide her with an opportunity to use her fortune to good social purpose. She will provide care for his motherless daughter and give Osmond wider scope, enable him to have the things he has had to do without: travel, the beautiful objects and surroundings his taste can appreciate so well, acquaintanceship with and recognition from the kind of people understanding his gifts.

Not only will the world be thus greatly enriched but Isabel herself will personally benefit. Osmond will complete her education, take her by the hand and lead her up to his heights. Together they will share the finest kind of life, the richest personal relationship, possible to cultivated men and women, "at a high level of consciousness of the beautiful." (II, p. 82)

The closest literary parallel to Isabel's feeling for Osmond is that of Dorothea Brooke for the middle-aged Casaubon in George Eliot's Middlemarch. Another high-minded girl, though of a more religious bent than Isabel, Dorothea worships knowledge as the key to a happily useful life; "since the time was gone for guiding visions and spiritual directors, since prayer heightened yearning but not instruction, what lamp was there but knowledge?"²⁴ She idealizes the dull, pedantic Casaubon, who is engaged in the most

futile kind of research, as the Great Scholar:

Here was a man who could understand the higher inward life, and with whom there could be some spiritual communion; nay, who could illuminate principle with the widest knowledge: a man whose learning almost amounted to a proof of whatever he believed!²⁵

Dorothea thinks of her "higher duties" in marriage largely in terms of studying, learning the classical languages and other fields in order to help her husband with his Great Work. Casaubon will assist her out of the pit of ignorance in which she has been left by her inadequate feminine education and together they will live on the highest spiritual plane:

There would be nothing trivial about our lives. Everyday things with us would mean the greatest things. It would be like marrying Pascal. I should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by.²⁶

Just as Dorothea later finds that Casaubon, far from being able to lead her to the illuminating heights of broad knowledge, is himself "lost among small closets and winding stairs," his chief preoccupation a petty irritation at lack of recognition by colleagues, so Isabel, after marriage, must completely revise her opinion of Osmond. Not until almost the end of the novel does she learn that there has been collusion between Osmond and her friend Madame Merle to make the match.

Far from being nobly indifferent to the world's

opinion, as Isabel had supposed, Osmond is obsessed with the need for public acknowledgement of his superiority. He had simply found trying to achieve prominence through his own efforts too demeaning, "like the swallowing of mugs of beer to advertise what one could 'stand'!" (II, p. 12) Rather than run the risk of a possible humiliating failure he had preferred to keep the self-assurance of the man who has never competed. Isabel, with all her lovely money, is the answer to a prayer. Without effort or risk on his own part she will establish his superior place in the world;

If an anonymous drawing on a museum wall had been conscious and watchful it might have known this peculiar pleasure of being at last and all of a sudden identified--as from the hand of a great master--by the so high so unnoticed fact of style. His 'style' was what the girl had discovered with a little help; and now, besides herself enjoying it, she should publish it to the world without his having any of the trouble. She should do the thing for him, and he would not have waited in vain. (II, p. 12)

Up to this point, at any rate, Osmond's ideas coincide quite closely with Isabel's.

His simply wanting the good opinion of the world would not be enough for Isabel eventually to come to despise Osmond. But Osmond on the one hand finds the world base and despicable--except for a few high-born personages, envy of whom he cannot admit without admitting inferiority in himself--and has no desire to "enlighten or convert or redeem it," and on the other hand has no standard for doing anything except

the effect it will have on the world's opinion. Nothing he has or does has significance for him except as a means to excite admiration or envy. His whole approach to living is false:

. . . 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. (II, p. 144)

Osmond conceived of Isabel not only as his financial backer but also as one more lovely ornament to his existence to be admired in public and in private to be his pliant and docile adorer. A tendency to precipitateness and a concern with "ideas" could be corrected with firmness.

What could be a finer thing than to live with a high spirit attuned to softness? For would not the softness be all for one's self, and the strenuousness for society, which admired the air of superiority? What could be a happier gift in a companion than a quick, fanciful mind which saved one repetitions, and reflected one's thoughts on a polished, elegant surface . . . this lady's intelligence was a plate that he might heap up with ripe fruits, to which it would give a decorative value, that talk might become for him a sort of served dessert. (II, p. 79)

Much later, Isabel admits to herself that unintentionally she had deceived Osmond somewhat about her nature

before their marriage; intimidated and entranced by his charm and wider cultural background, she had effaced herself, "had made herself small, pretending there was less of her than there really was." (II, p. 91) When Osmond finds that he cannot make of Isabel a dim reflection of himself, a mere sounding board, but that indeed she has the temerity to judge and find wanting his own values, he develops an antipathy for her equal to hers for him. Their relations become formalized and they have little private time together. They live in a permanent state of mutual mistrust:

This mistrust was now the clearest result of their short married life; a gulf had opened between them over which they looked at each other with eyes that were on either side a declaration of the deception suffered. It was a strange opposition in which the vital principle of the one was a thing of contempt for the other. (II, p. 189)

Osmond does not succeed in changing Isabel's moral and social values to his but she is drastically changed by her marriage. With no encouragement from her environment, she loses what had made for the charm of the young Isabel: her spontaneity, intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for new experiences. Although she fights against unhappiness, feeling it both a disease and a weakness, and makes efforts to ameliorate the situation between herself and Osmond, in private she is subject to frequent black moods. She feels she has thrown her life away; "she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow

alley with a dead wall at the end." (II, p. 189) How close this is to Dorothea Brooke's feelings about her marriage to Casaubon.

In public, of necessity, Isabel conforms to the role Osmond demands of her: elegant society hostess to the select group of admirers and enviers he condescends to entertain. Her cousin Ralph is horrified at the change in her after the lapse of a few years:

Poor human-hearted Isabel, what perversity had bitten her? Her light step drew a mass of drapery behind it; her intelligent head sustained a majesty of ornament. The free, keen girl had become quite another person; what he saw was the fine lady who was supposed to represent something. What did Isabel represent? Ralph asked himself, and he could only answer by saying she represented Gilbert Osmond. "Good heavens, what a function!" he then woefully exclaimed. (II, pp. 143-144)

Pride, a sense of responsibility, respect for the sanctity of marriage and solicitude for Osmond's daughter all play parts in keeping Isabel from breaking up her marriage.

It would be difficult for her to admit publicly that she was totally wrong in her judgment and her marriage is a complete failure. Pride can involve her in contradictions. Despise Osmond as she does, she yet hopes he will appear to advantage in meeting Lord Warburton. Like any other wife her prestige is bound up with her husband's.

Aside from any consideration of public opinion, her

own strong moral training dictates that one must abide by and deal with the consequences of any freely-taken decision. "When a woman had made such a mistake, there was only one way to repair it--just immensely (oh, with the highest grandeur!) to accept it." (II, p. 161)

Finally, in spite of her pre-marriage talk about her emancipation, Isabel has traditional ideas about the sanctity of the marriage vows and a woman's position in relation to her husband, more usual in women fifty years or so ago. She acknowledges to herself, though at times incredulously, that Osmond is her appointed master. She tells a friend, "If I were afraid of my husband that would be simply my duty. That's what women are expected to be." (II, p. 306) It is not specified whether or not her belief in such a Pauline doctrine is connected with attachment to any particular religious sect.

When she disobeys Osmond's orders and goes to see her dying cousin in England, Isabel knows that she will return even though it will be to a tremendous scene with Osmond. She tells her friend Henrietta, "It won't be the scene of a moment; it will be the scene of the rest of my life." (II, p. 398)

Julia Dallow, of The Tragic Muse, would go even farther than Isabel in promoting her candidate for fame. She is actively involved not only in assisting Nick Dormer's pol-

itical career but in shaping the development of the man himself. Only his fiancée, she nevertheless urges him toward a political career, puts the weight of her money and local influence behind his candidacy, entertains political personages it would be advantageous for him to meet and even suggests suitable reading material to him. She tells him that she would not even consider him for a husband if she did not think he could be a great man and insists, on one occasion, that if he fails to win the election she will never speak to him again. Her first husband, after making a fortune, spent the rest of his life in what she had considered pure diletantism, collecting and admiring small objets d'art. She has no intention of linking herself again with an unambitious man.

Her activities are a substitute for a career of her own in politics, the only field she thinks worthwhile and one at that time barred to women. She has enough ordinary social prominence but she wants to wield power and influence on a large scale, at least vicariously. At the same time, she does not want to be a "male in petticoats," a woman who dominates and manages a weak-willed man. She wants to operate in a marital and political partnership with a man of strength. When Nick acknowledges with some humility, after their victory in the election, that his career will be hers, she demurs:

Ah, dont say that--dont make me out that

sort of woman. If they should say
it's me I'd drown myself.
If they should say what's you?
Why your getting on. If they should say
I push you and do things for you.
Things I mean that you can do your-
self.
Well, wont you do them? It's just what
I count on.
Dont be dreadful It would be
loathesome if I were thought the
cleverest. That's not the sort of
man I want to marry. (I, p. 278)

Julia loses on both counts eventually: she marries Nick but he is not to have a political career and he is not the strong man, with a potential for greatness, who could hold his own weight with her.

Julia at first is uncompromising on the plan she has mapped out for her future. She breaks with Nick when she decides he prefers a life of arty bohemianism and pursues a political career only to please her. The decision is all out of proportion to the incident triggering it: finding Nick painting Miriam in his studio, and one's credulity is strained. Lady Agnes, Nick's mother, comments: "Julia would have got over the other woman, but she would never get over his becoming a nobody." (II, p. 183)

When the need for the man becomes stronger than the need for the political career, Julia takes Nick on as an artist anyway. The clairvoyant Nash has predicted correctly earlier that just this will happen, that Nick will lose his battle for slow maturing as an artist and that Julia, with the typical feminine genius for compromise, will promote his

career among her friends, manage premature showings and make him the pet of the country houses. Nash's attitude, however, involves several injustices to Julia. She did have high goals of attainment for Nick of a different order, she did not want a man she could dominate, and, of most importance, she did not lure him away from solitary pursuit of perfection as an artist. He had lost that battle on his own already.

Although a stronger, less self-indulgent, person than Roderick Hudson, Nick Dormer ultimately also lacks the inner fortitude to become a serious artist. Initially he has a more difficult time than Roderick, having to fight the outside pressures that would keep him in politics that are provided by Julia, his mother and sisters and his guardian and would-be benefactor. He also has to ignore the general public opinion that a mere dabbler in colors is far inferior to a successful statesman.

He wins this initial battle and does remain a painter but he loses a second one against what he thinks of as his Lower Self, the self that is highly competitive, has loved football and mountain climbing and the amusing and slightly dangerous and flattering aspects of political life. Nick finds that the serious pursuit of Art is a lonely road:

. . . as a preference attended with the honours of publicity it is indeed nowhere; that in fact, under the rule of its sincerity, its only honours are those of contraction, concentration and

seemingly deplorable indifference to everything but itself. (I, p. viii)

His Lower Self demands quick proofs of success to show those who opposed his decision how right he was, in spite of Nash's admonitions about "how inferior as a productive force the desire to win over the ill-disposed might be to the principle of full growth." (II, p. 369) Julia, to whom Art is no god, merely gives him what this side of him wants.

Mamie Pocock, briefly sketched in The Ambassadors, has no high ambitions of the nature of Julia's but she belongs with her as one of those women who would seek to find her chief raison d'etre in helping to create, as well as furthering the career of, a man of achievement.

Bilham tells Strether that Mamie came to Europe with the preconceived idea that she could "save" Chad and was disappointed to find him saved already by Marie de Vionnet. Bilham goes on that Mamie would have liked Chad better as she originally believed him to be; she does not want to profit by another woman's work, "she wants the miracle to have been her own miracle." Strether comments that such an attitude makes her fastidious, difficile, and Bilham answers: "Of course she's difficile--on any lines! What else in the world are our Mamies--the real, the right ones?" (II, p. 172) When Strether concludes that "poor awful" Chad is too good for her, Bilham corrects him, "Ah, too good was what he

was after all to be; but it was she herself, and she herself only, who was to have made him so." (II, p. 172)

Maggie Verver also would maintain and preserve an exceptional man in The Golden Bowl but her attitude towards the Prince is entirely different from any of the women so far discussed. Sweet and self-effacing, she is as far from the legendary American title-hunter as possible. She has no social ambitions and no thoughts of personal glory. She is not interested in what she can make of the Prince. Indeed, it is not his personal qualities and accomplishments that make him exceptional in her eyes--she scarcely knows him--but what he represents: history personified. He is living evidence of a continuity with the romantic past.

Maggie would rescue this scion of an old family from poverty and obscurity just as her father finds and buys precious old art objects and displays them for the gratification and enlightenment of the world. The Prince is somewhat mystified by, though willing to benefit from, the attitude of the Ververs towards him: "It was as if he had been some old embossed coin, of a purity of gold no longer used, stamped with glorious arms, medieval, wonderful." (I, p. 23)

Regarding her husband as a handsome and exotic object, Maggie, kindly and considerate as she is, gives little thought to what marriage to the man behind the title will be like. If she has ever had the sort of romantic daydreams of

an Emma Bovary or a Euphemia Cleve, later Madame de Mauves, an earlier story of James, they are not recorded. When the Prince reminds her, before their marriage, that she scarcely knows him as a person, she answers, "Luckily, my dear . . . for what then would become, please, the promised occupation of my future?" (I, p. 9)

It does not become her occupation after marriage. He remains the treasured object and she stays within the comfortably known world of her father's affection while the Prince seeks his social and love life elsewhere. When she begins to have doubts about the Prince, Maggie hurries off to the museum to read more of his family's history in the archives to renew her faith in the authenticity of the object. Afterwards she tells a friend, "I believed in him again as much as ever, and I felt how I believed in him." (II, p. 155) Like Euphemia Cleve, Maggie believes that an aristocratic pedigree is a guarantee of perfection--Americans would naturally be more gullible in this respect--and perfection in a man, to the unworldly Maggie, could only imply a moral code in line with her own strict Puritan standards.

From the smashing of the Golden Bowl on, the disposition of the two marriages rests with the consciences of the father and daughter. Without verbal communication or acknowledgement that a situation even exists, they reach a mutual agreement that these two beautiful possessions they have purchased (the Prince and Charlotte) must be kept as

intact as possible and their own intimacy must end so that each can begin living with his spouse as a person.

Mrs. Assingham has said that Maggie's imagination was completely sealed against any knowledge of the existence of wrong in the world. She gains stature by having to take the initiative in righting a wrong situation and in the process extending her protection over those who are stronger than she is. For the first time in her marriage the Prince has need of her and for the first time she herself identifies with her husband's needs; by helping him she will be helping herself. Like Nanda, like Milly, Maggie gives her husband the greatest gift she has: she preserves his dignity and pride of presence.

And how does the Prince feel? Certainly he has a greater respect for a more forceful, less gullible Maggie, and the unfathomableness of her thought processes for him even creates a little awe of her. He is grateful his marriage is not to be destroyed and that someone else is taking Charlotte off his hands now that their relationship is untenable but mystified as to why the Ververs should exercise such delicacy about preserving her pride. Making love is the only sure way he knows of ingratiating himself with a woman, the act being in his view always preferable to any words, "always better in fact at any time than anything." Since Maggie cannot resume physical intimacy until other aspects of their relationship are cleared up, this alternative

that redresses all wrongs is not open to him and his contribution is at best a "negative diplomacy." He treats Maggie in public with great politeness and then judiciously retreats to London, leaving the Ververs to handle the situation.

The ultimate test of the worth of all Maggie's efforts--the loss of her father and Charlotte, her self-abasement so Charlotte could leave with her head high--is the Prince himself. Was he, not the Prince but the man with whom she is to live the rest of her life, worth it? When she turns to him after the departure of the Ververs' carriage, she wants no self-recriminations from him. She simply wants to know if he has enough sensibility, enough moral refinement, to understand what she and her father have been trying to do: does he see, she asks. She has her answer in his answer.

He tried, too clearly, to please her--to meet her in her own way with the result that, close to her, her face kept before him, his hands holding her shoulders, his whole act enclosing her, he presently echoed: 'See? I see nothing but you.' And the truth of it had with this force after a moment so strongly lighted in his eyes that as for pity and dread of them she buried her own in his breast.
(II, p. 369)

None of these men has the quality of "greatness" looked for by the women. It is not too surprising, since a combination of a high ideal of conduct and achievement,

superlative ability and a monumental strength of purpose is extremely rare.

None of these women works out a solution of permanence that satisfies her highest goals, either in terms of her need to be socially useful or in the kind of personal relationship with a chosen man. Christina and Mamie have not yet found a man to manage. Julia works out her compromises before marriage and Isabel and Maggie afterwards. Mary is saved from having to do so by Roderick's premature death.

Of course, there is one very good reason why these women seem more idealistic than the men. They are adults, responsible for their own conduct, but at the same time they are like adolescents in that they are not actively engaged in proving their abilities in the market place. It is easier to demand high standards of the world and its inhabitants than it is to meet them oneself. It is easier to promote and prod another than to accomplish on one's own.

The only one of them guilty of lack of ethics in personal relations is Christina, in her impulsive, egocentric way. Maggie, of course, in an almost superhuman spirit of Christian forgiveness, returns good for bad.

Miriam Rooth: the Artist. Miriam has to be considered by herself because she is an exception to almost every generalization that has been made about the women in all three sections of this chapter. Love is not a primary goal with

her. She has no social ambitions. If she wants personal glory she wants it on her own merits, not reflected off another. She will make a social contribution, in the sense that anyone does who works to perfect himself, but she does not think in such terms. She is an exception in another way: she is the only woman under consideration here who is on the crest of the wave at the end of the novel.

Miriam's single-minded devotion to her career would make her an exception among women a half century later than her own times. By-passing Virginia Woolf's witty fulminations on the subject, Phyllis McGinley recently gives this advice to women: "Let us teach our daughters not self-realization at any cost but the true glory of being a woman-- sacrifice, containment, pride and pleasure in our natural accomplishments."27

"Self-realization at any cost" is just what Miriam aims at. This is one of the very few fictional portraits of a woman intent on work of her own not in default of marriage or out of a warped psychology or through a need to spite or compete with men but for the same reason that motivates the best of men: the desire to make the most of one's resources. Miriam is neither masculinized in the process nor does she give up her career in end for a higher claim of love and family duty as does even so dedicated a spirit as Dinah Morris of Adam Bede.

Miriam has no affinity with the dreamy, restless wife

of Virginia Woolf's Between the Acts who hides her secretly written poetic flights even from her husband. Miriam thinks of herself solely as a talent to be refined, relates any applicable experience to her own artistic development and firmly rejects outsiders' attempts to make her into their conception of what she should be. She is willing to work hard toward self-perfection and has the toughness and perseverance to take criticism without losing faith in herself, qualities lacking in Nick Dormer and Roderick Hudson.

Her artistic conscience is absolute: nothing is of more importance than the integrity of her work. When Miriam's socially ambitious mother demurs at her daughter's association with "low" artists or her playing "low" parts--her reputation as a "lady" and her chances for a good marriage might be affected--the old actress Madame Carré defines for Mrs. Rooth the difference between "artistic" morality and "public" morality:

To be too respectable to go where things are done best is in my opinion to be very vicious indeed; and to do them badly in order to preserve your virtue is to fall into a grossness more shocking than any other. To do them well is virtue enough, and not to make a mess of it the only respectability. (I, p. 125)

The words of Stanley Kunitz in an article, "American Poetry's Silver Age," discussing what makes a writer great in a dialogue between a poet and a young man

are applicable to Miriam. Kunitz insists that the essential thing is to keep one's image of oneself as a poet alive--to subordinate all else in life to that. He goes on:

Poet. Talent is cheap, you know. One of the attractive features of mediocrity is that you can count on it: mediocrity infallibly begets the mediocre. But you can never be sure what the gifted will do. So many of them go straight to hell. Talent without character is the worst kind of curse.

Young Man. I'm rather surprised-- may I say--to have you raise the moral issue. What about Baudelaire? . . . and Poe? . . . and Byron? . . . and . . . and Genet?

Poet. I should have said moral stamina. The morality of art is to endure. It's the capacity to endure that I'm talking of.²⁸

Peter Sherringham tears himself apart simply because he is unable to accept the irreconcilable in his relations to Miriam. Miriam will not give up her career to become a diplomat's wife, "the fine lady of a little coterie A nasty prim 'official' woman who's perched on her little local pedestal and thinks she's queen forever because she's ridiculous for an hour!" (II, p. 347)

He can not give up his diplomat's career and join in her life as an actress; "one might as well be hooked to a Catherine-wheel and whiz round in flame and smoke." (II, p. 254) Nash paints a picture of what such a man's life might be like:

Imagine him writing her advertisements, living on her money, adding up her profits, having rows and recriminations with her

agent, carrying her shawl, spending his days in her rouge-pot. (II, p. 244)

Miriam can recognize the irreconcilable. She knows she would be hopelessly unhappy giving up her art. She asks Peter, "And the demon, the devil, the devourer and destroyer that you are so fond of talking about: what, in such a position, do you do with that element of my nature?" Peter answers, "I'll look after it, I'll keep it under. Rather, perhaps, I should say, I'll bribe it and amuse it; I'll gorge it with earthly grandeur." (II, p. 254) But Miriam knows that what Peter admires in her are her artistic gifts: "Without my share of them I should be a dull, empty, third-rate woman, and yet that's the fate you ask me to face, and insanely pretend you're ready to face yourself." (II, p. 346)

Since no ambitious man can adapt to her career and she cannot give up her career, Miriam makes the necessary compromise in the personal side of her life. She marries a young actor-manager who will faithfully perform the chores outlined by Nash, in a reversal of roles assuming a function of support to a person of achievement that is ordinarily the woman's.

Miriam succeeds in her ambitions and will go on succeeding. There is a prediction by Nash that in time her nature will be coarsened and her art cheapened by the demands of stage life. If so, the cause will lie in the nature of the acting profession--the necessity of using the body as

an instrument of art, and the body's inevitable deterioration, and the close relationship between performer and audience--rather than in a defect in the woman herself.

CHAPTER V

A FINAL VIEW OF JAMES'S WORLD

The inhabitants of the Jamesian world are concerned neither with lower-class problems of inadequate food, housing and education, drunkenness and disease nor with middle-class job getting and keeping, family-raising and budget balancing. Petty financial calculations have no place in their lives simply because, as Margaret Schlegel says of herself and her friends in Forster's Howard's End, they "stand upon money as upon islands. It is so firm beneath our feet that we forget its very existence."²⁹

There are those in these novels who want money, at least in one period of their lives, among them Kate, Charlotte, Christina, Vanderbank, Maggie's Prince, and Lord Mark. They want it not in small quantities to keep the butcher at bay, however, but in an amount large enough to insure their acceptance or retention in this Golden World.

With one side of him James cannot blame them. The inhabitants of the Golden World are attractive. They look good, smell nice and chat charmingly. They play so well. And their surroundings appeal to the eye and the spirit. To a few dedicated souls like Densher, surroundings are a matter of indifference but to most, like those at Milly's Venetian party, the loveliness of a setting can have a beneficial effect. Surely, in any heaven on earth, this is the way human beings should live.

With another side of him, James demurs at giving them the highest rank in his own social hierarchy. With Hyacinth he is shocked at the inadequacy or lack of use of their libraries; with Densher he is appalled at the meagreness of the furnishings of their minds. He is not a Puritan to deny the satisfactions of sensual pleasure. He is enough of a New Englander to admire achievement, to give a higher social value to those who use and add to the accumulations of culture than to those who are merely consumer-spectators.

Consequently, the women who would achieve on their own, or help a man to achieve, have a higher social value to him than those who merely seek social success.

Unpuritan-like, James rates artistic production of all kinds the highest form of achievement. Of high merit also, whether higher than producers in other lines one could not say, are the informed appreciators of art, people like Verver or Nash or Raymond Mallet, those who form a vitally necessary understanding audience. What makes a man like Osmond anathema to James is that he pretends to be, and is accepted as, both artist and connoisseur and he is in reality neither.

Therefore, those who have the opportunity for making or assisting a creative career and let some other objective take precedence have chosen a lower social value. Examples of this sort of social decision are Christina's acceptance of the Prince, Kate's ultimate preference of money to Densher,

Nick and Roderick's choices, respectively, of popular success and dissipation over artistic self-discipline.

These are social values as distinguished earlier from moral values which concern one's treatment of others. And yet one can almost say that for James self-mutilation, harming oneself in not trying to realize one's highest potential, borders on the immoral. Allocation of blame would depend on the degree to which the person could help himself from choosing the lower alternative.

Of those women in these novels who knowingly act in a way that could injure another, none has the unscrupulousness of a Becky Sharp. Charlotte, Kate, even Mrs. Brookenham, all have developed consciences and the consequent need to justify and rationalize their courses of action to themselves and others, although Mrs. Brookenham's arguments are highly implausible and Kate finally drops her pretence to altruism. Still they cannot simply be equated with those like Maggie's Prince, Osmond or Lord Mark to whom self-interest is the only reasonable and possible guide for behavior. The necessity of justifying conduct in the light of accepted ethical principles acts as some sort of check.

James does give recognition to the motives behind behavior--there is no similarity between the ethics of a Den-
sher and those of a Lord Mark simply because there is a similarity in their relationship to Milly--and to degrees in the development of a conscience, its lower or higher melting

point. None of the three women mentioned feels guilty about her actions and yet, with favoring circumstances, each might be perfectly scrupulous in her dealings with people in the future. Densher, on the other hand, is so overwhelmed by guilt, and so devastated at this single instance of loss of integrity, that one can be absolutely certain that he will act with strict uprightness for the rest of his life.

Christina is a quite different sort of person from these women. She never calculates harm to anyone but her life is ruled by impulse. Her conscience operates sporadically. It can be appealed to, as Rowland does in Rome, and she dismissed Roderick. She can summon him back just as carelessly in Switzerland after her marriage. She does not think of people as having on-going lives that can be permanently damaged by contact with her. She is like a child playing a game that may hold her attention an hour or a year and other people are pawns to be used or kings to be captured. With no satisfactory outlet for the expression of her egomania, a woman of this sort has the potential for more havoc than the calculators.

The other women in these books suffer no censure as agents of harm. They get themselves involved in difficult, sometimes seemingly impossible, situations through no real fault of their own. Either deceit is practiced on them or they are blinded by love or idealism, usually misplaced. The test of their moral fibre comes when they wake from their

deluded state. Do they have the stamina to pick up the pieces and reorder their lives and go on? They do, and that can be said of all the women in these novels.

The four women who have been the victims of planned deception--Isabel, Maggie, Milly and Nanda--all have the information necessary to destroy or damage the lives of those who harmed them. They do not do so. There is no vindication here of revenge, no matter how sweet or "justified" it might seem under the circumstances. Instead they do what they can to reestablish equilibrium and harmony and to save the positive values of the situation which, is quite a tribute to Christian ethics.

NOTES

- ¹Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vols. III and IV (New York, 1908), I, xiii.
- ²Henry James, The Princess Casamassima, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vols. V and VI (New York, 1908), I, viii.
- ³Henry James, The Tragic Muse, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vols. VII and VIII (New York, 1908), II, 160.
- ⁴Bernard Berenson, Rumour and Reflection (London, 1952), p. 208.
- ⁵Henry James, The Awkward Age, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vol. IX (New York, 1908), p. 238.
- ⁶Portrait of a Lady, II, 26.
- ⁷Henry James, The American, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vol. II (New York, 1907), p. 165.
- ⁸Awkward Age, p. x.
- ⁹Henry James, The Wings of the Dove, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vols. XIX and XX (New York, 1907), I, 56.
- ¹⁰Henry James, The Golden Bowl, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vols. XXIII and XXIV (New York, 1907), I, 181.
- ¹¹Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre (New York, 1942), pp. 282-283.
- ¹²Marcel Proust, À L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs (Paris, 1925), tome I, p. 8.
- ¹³Esther R. B. Wagner, "The Stern and Rock-Bound Coast of Chicago," The New Yorker, June 28, 1958.
- ¹⁴Henry James, Roderick Hudson, New York Edition, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Vol. I (New York, 1907), p. 404.
- ¹⁵Henry James, The Ambassadors, New York Edition, The Novels

and Tales of Henry James, Vols. XXI and XXII (New York, 1907), II, 217.

16 Samuel Richardson, Clarissa Harlowe, 4 vols. (New York, 1952), IV, 501.

17 Golden Bowl, I, x.

18 Ibid., 251.

19 Virginia Woolf, Orlando (New York, 1928), pp. 199-200.

20 Katherine Anne Porter, "Gertrude Stein: A Self-Portrait," Literary Opinion in America, ed., Morton D. Zabel (New York, 1951), pp. 338-350.

21 Ogden Nash, "The Seven Spiritual Ages of Mrs. Marmaduke Moore," Modern American Poetry, ed. Louis Untermeyer (New York, 1950), p. 609.

22 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of Seven Gables (New York, 1892), p. 163.

23 Ibid., pp. 346-347.

24 George Eliot, Middlemarch (London, 1956), p. 88.

25 Ibid., p. 18.

26 Ibid., p. 25.

27 Phyllis McGinley, The Province of the Heart (New York, 1959), p. 22.

28 Stanley Kunitz, "American Poetry's Silver Age," Harper's, October, 1959, pp. 173-179.

29 E. M. Forster, Howard's End (New York, 1958), p. 61.