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HENRY JAMES'S TREATMENT OF ROMANCE

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HECTOR DAVID TORRES

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TESIS CON FALLA DE ORIGEN

HENRY JAMES'S TREATMENT OF ROMANCE

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MEXICO, D. F.

1968

HENRY JAMES'S TREATMENT OF ROMANCE

TO MY MOTHER

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INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this thesis is to study Henry James's treatment of romance in three works of fiction. The three represent three different genres: the short story, "the beautiful and blest" *nouvelle* (to use James's term for the novella, or novelette), and the novel. The short story is "Pandora" (1885), which contains about 25,980 words. The *nouvelle* is *An International Episode* (1878), which contains about 37,800 words. The novel is *Washington Square* (1881), which contains about 72,654 words.

The New York edition of James's collected works contains thirty-five volumes of works James himself selected, edited, and intended to leave thus in their final form. Why, of this enormous body of work, have the particular three listed above been singled out for study? The selection has not been altogether arbitrary and haphazard. First, of all, the three bear closely upon the topic itself: they are replete with certain

recurring "romantic" themes to which James was obviously attached. Second, the three exemplify every important genre in fiction to which James addressed himself. Observe also that they encompass a large span of James's creative years -from 1878 to 1885. As for quality, in form, style and critical reputation, each of the three is a prime example. Finally, personal taste had something to do with my choices. I have naturally preferred to devote a great deal of time and study to fiction which inspires my respect and admiration.

Not that I shall feel bound to restrict my comments to those three only. From time to time it may be illuminating to refer in passing to other short stories, _nouvelles_, and novels when these may throw further light upon a point under consideration. For example, this brief introduction might well end with a few remarks about the short story "The Death of the Lion" and the novel _The Europeans._ Both works end happily

with romances that succeed. One is almost inclined to recall Puck's impudent prognostication about every Jack's getting his Jill. But how actually does James deal with the romance in these works?

The end of "The Death of the Lion" is almost cursory."Fortunately I've a devoted associate in the person of a young lady who has every day a fresh indignation and a fresh idea, and who maintains with intensity that the prize will still turn up. Sometimes I believe her, but I've quite ceased to believe myself. The only thing for us at all events is to go on seeking and hoping together and we should be closely united by this firm tie even were we not at present by another."

In The Europeans: "Gertrude was for a good while a distant figure, but she came back when Charlotte married Mr. Brand. She was present at the wedding feast, where Felix's gayety confessed to no change. Then she disappeared, and the echo of gayety of her own, mingled with that of her husband, often came back to the home of her earlier years. Mr. Wentworth at last found himself listening for it; and Robert Acton, after his mother's death, married a particularly nice young girl."

The point I am trying to make, of course, is

that the romance in these works is not typical of James. The "The Death of the Lion" and *The Europeans* are rule-proving exceptions. Upon successful courtships, engagements, and marriages James expended little time and talent. He greatly preferred to treat the complicated, the perverse, the unfulfilled romance. Before undertaking an analysis of a few of these, I should in all honesty admit that there is more than a little irony in my title, "Henry James's Treatment of 'Romance'."

AN ABYSS OVER THE EDGE OF WHICH IT WAS BETTER NOT TO PEER

Since he is the first character to be called to our attention let us start this chapter with a detailed, careful study of Count Otto Vogelstein's chief physical, mental, ethical and cultural characteristics which in the long run account for either the success or, as in the present instance, eventual failure of the romance herein dealt with. Let us begin with an analysis of an important quality, intelligence.

The second line in "Pandora" depicts our hero as "an intelligent young German," bound on his first trip to America. Obviously the choice of adjectives in a writer who coveted every inch of his space cannot be accidental. Moreover, the count's intellect is explicitly alluded to throughout the story as his scholarliness, etc.

In this respect, Count Otto does not depart from the rather extensive gallery of smart, brainy types who people James's fiction: Doctor Sloper in

in Washington Square, the governess in The Turn of the Screw, Kate Croy in The Wings of the Dove are three names that occur to us among many others. Unfortunately, fine intellect, instead of leading to big smashing success on the sentimental level proves useless in the prosecution of romantic purposes. It seems to blemish Otto's personality; it is more of a handicap than a help in the attainment of his goals. Better explain our point in full detail.

First of all, though bright, he is slow of mind. Public recognition of his cleverness doesn't prevent his Washington acquaintances from labelling him a "slow" person:

"Gracious, you don't mean to say you've not found out that type yet!" Mrs. Bonnycastle exclaimed with a return of her hilarity. "What have you been doing all the evening? You Germans may be thorough but you certainly are not quick!" [1]

1. Henry James. Fifteen Short Stories, ed. M.D. Zabel (New York, 1961), p. 109. All subsequent quotations from "Pandora" are from this edition.

In truth, he is neither spared as a source of hilarity nor easily put out of countenance by his good hostess. Such as things are, his easy-going character, an inherent "natural benevolence," not at all different from that in Lord Lambeth, restrains him from a fit of anger or any violent explosion whatsoever, unbecoming to a man of his standing and upbringing. Like his countryman the professor or doctor or what not (Miss Miranda Hope never managed to get it straight in her mind) sharply described in A Bundle of Letters, Count Otto is a "splendidly educated intellectual broom." James seemed to possess pretty firm convictions of what Germans as a nation are like. The close kinship between the doctor, or whatever he is, and Count Otto Vogelstein is self-evident. They share, as we shall presently show, both virtues and shortcomings.

There is no end to the references to his learning, as the following quotation from the second page of the story will show: His mind

contained several millions of facts, packed too closely together for the light breeze of the imagination to draw through the mass (p. 77).

A particular sort of stylistic effect occurs here. A sentence beginning possibly as a compliment turns into a highly dubious if not outright derogatory depiction. The words "packed too closely together," complemented by "mass," produce a rather bad effect upon the reader. The unsavory impression received softens somewhat thanks to the metaphor "the light breeze of the imagination," by means of which one can ascertain the author's preferences. Indeed, James implies his respect for the Greek ideal of the golden mean: nothing too much. Any kind of excess - whether learning or Chauvinism - will naturally breed error, he seems to say. References about Count Otto's scholarliness do not stop here; they go on and on. On the first page one reads the following:

He was a model character for such a purpose - serious civil ceremonious curious stiff, stuffed with knowledge (p. 76).

Once again the choice of words -"stuffed with"- underscores a veiled adverse criticism rather than praise. His learning seems imposed from outside, enforced by the educational patterns of his homeland. His cultural patterns have been pressed upon him by his family. He is simply rendered an instrument of family action: Count Vogelstein was still young enough in diplomacy to think it necessary to have opinions. He had a good many indeed which had been formed without difficulty; they had been received ready-made from a line of ancestors who knew what they liked (p. 78).

Clearly this German diplomatic entertains no individual or professional opinions at all. When he chances to form any, they stem from someone else. In short, at present he doesn't know what he likes or doesn't like. The words "still young enough in diplomacy" hint at the possibility of a change for the better on that score. Meanwhile, improvement is an eventual possibility. But it may be useful to keep in mind that the quotation touches only upon his profession, "diplomacy," and leaves out a great deal. his private life.

Like his inherited opinions, the Count's reading habits appear to be not quite original. At sea he is reading (in the Tauchnitz edition, naturally) a novel by an American author that, "he had been assured," would help to prepare him for some of the peculiarities of American life.

Another facet of his education has been travel. When Pandora asks him late in the story whether he has been to Athens, he admits that he has. This piece of information strikes a remarkable note for two reasons: first, his tender age; second, the poor conditions of both roads and means of transportation in Europe at the time. But the wanderlust is not alien to a spirit for whom any "quarter of the globe offered a vast field of study."

Despite extensive travel about European countries, his ideas toward certain aspects of life remain unchanged, to judge by his proud attitude toward "the uninformed, the unprovided, the belated, the bewildered." Despite the impact

of new vistas and strange customs seen, travel has not dissipated his arrogance. Vastly informed and very well provided for by his government -he is not among "those less fortunate than ourselves"- Count Otto eschews humility. He stays as "stiff" a character as ever, as the text amply shows. The first page alone is heavily laden with evidence:

> To watch from such a point of vantage the struggles of those less fortunate than ourselves... is an occupation not devoid of sweetness, and there was nothing to mitigate the complacency with which our young friend gave himself up to it; nothing, that is, save a natural benevolence which had not yet been extinguished by the consciousness of official greatness. For Count Vogelstein was official, as I think you would have seen from the straightness of his back, the lustre of his light elegant spectacles, and something discreet and diplomatic in the curve of his moustache (p. 76).

His superior manners, upright mien, stern countenance, and faultless appearance powerfully express not so much body as brains, not so much elegance as innate pride. Sometimes, though, self-pride suddenly intermingles with modesty.

James himself hesitates between calling it modesty or scepticism, thanks to the Count's refusal to act upon a "marked man of the world's" advice, and have the reproduction of his coronet on the back of his sea-chair. Nonetheless, it is a difficult task to tell one from the other. It is true that he does not want to show off, advertize his nobility; nevertheless, how else can one take the next lines if not as a desire to impress people, Americans in particular?: It happened, however, that the blazonry was huge; the back of the chair was covered with enormous German characters (p. 80).

As naturally might be expected from a man of his temperament and breeding, Count Otto greatly respects social position. There is no question about his deeply imbedded "aristocracy." The general impression made upon him by Pandora's parents helps to illustrate his attitude: He could see for himself that Mr. and Mrs. Day had not at all her grand air. They were fat plain serious people (p. 84).

But he felt it to be a pity, as regards a possible acquaintance with her, that her parents

should be heavy little burghers, that her brother should not correspond to his conception of a young man of the upper class and that her sister should be a Daisy *en herbe* (p. 87).

What's her social position? (p. 91).

What's the social position of Mrs. Steuben? (p. 100).

Though the last enquiry, an echo of the former one made to Mrs. Dangerfield, does not deal with Miss Day's own family, it stresses his deep-rooted concern with people's social status. His respect for social position is matched only by his stubborn nationalism. Unlike Lord Lambeth, who cares little for these matters, in fact expresses only contempt and derision for them, Count Otto is but too eager to tout things German. He has boundless admiration for them. He fervently thinks Germanic rule and management of public affairs are the best available. All others mislead and cannot last long. Unmistakably aristocratic, he despises democracy, though not overtly. Likewise, a kind of national indoctrination enters the scene: Our young man was a stiff conservative, a Junker of Junkers; he

thought modern democracy a temporary phase and expected to find many arguments against it in the Great Republic (the U.S.). In regard to these things it was a pleasure to him to feel that, with his complete training, he had been taught thoroughly to appreciate the nature of evidence (p. 78).

It may be best to leave until the last part of this chapter the study of some other passages concerned with our hero's ineradicable chauvinism, since they are primarily connected with the romance's development and dénouement. Let it suffice at the moment to note his inflexible conservatism, his fierce opposition to democracy, the hedonistic pleasure he derives from thinking his judgments correct and, above all, his [illegible] inordinate pride in his position both as a count and as a diplomat. His overwhelming eagerness to start to work as soon as possible is not surprising. He was impatient to report himself to his superior in Washington, and the loss of time in an English port could only uncommode him, inasmuch as the study of English institutions was no part of his mission (p. 77).

The limitations imposed upon his critical faculties by his inordinate sense of duty are limitless. He is willing to undertake a study of America's institutions "with his ears, with his nose, with his palate, with all his senses and organs" thrown into the task, though quite unwilling to do the same thing with England's. Why? The answer is simple: Count Otto Vogelstein is literal-minded; he is unable to depart an inch from the task assigned and do independent research even though he places science far above happiness:

He knew that this was not an important question and that happiness was an unscientific term, such as a man of his education should be ashamed to use even in the silence of his thoughts (p. 77).

Thus literalness and narrowness of mind constrict and cramp culture in a highly learned man. His lack of the "light breeze of imagination" matches his lack of liberality in ideas and his consequent lack of freedom of action. There remains a third lack to speak of, humor, though on second thought one might better call it a paucity

rather than a complete lack. In this respect one can establish another point of comparison between Count Otto and the Teutonic character from "A Bundle of Letters."

Miss Evelyn Vane unhesitatingly finished her Paris letter dated September 30 with the sour, pitiless closing remark that her humorless German is "a great bore." Similarly, at the beginning of "Pandora" one is informed that Count Otto Vogelstein's "only fault was that his sense of comedy, or of the humor of things, had never been specifically disengaged from his several other senses." So much the worse for a man who is "on his way to explore a society abounding in comic aspects." Observe again the stress laid upon scholarliness. Notice the somewhat ironic "scientific" connotation in the choice of the infinitive "to explore" to describe Count Otto's general attitude toward life.

These "comic aspects" are not long in coming. They appear aboard the steamer itself in the young

person of Miss Pandora's brother, a great joke-teller. Troubles involved in the right interpretation of another country's idiosyncrasies immediately begin since "Vogelstein, well as he knew English, could rarely catch the joke." His lack of humor is nevertheless not total. Occasionally a mild sally redeems him from been truly "a great bore": Count Otto could joke a little on great occasions and the present one was worthy of his humor (p. 115).

To judge Count Otto's personality simply by the former pages would be misleading, at least it would render an incomplete picture of his temperament, hence an incomplete impression. He is not black through and through, replete with negative qualities. Among his virtues is sincerity with both other people and himself: at all events he always tries to be clear-headed and objective in his appraisals. On the voyage he whiles away the time with a Tauchnitz novel by an American author, hoping, expecting, to understand

Americans better. Apart from wishing to avoid embarrassing misunderstandings, he reads to anticipate things to come. Though he wants "to prepare himself for some of the oddities," he succeeds very little in his enterprise: What an odd place to meet her, her old shipmate thought, and how little one could tell, after all, in America, who people were! (p. 103)

His mystification increases instead of lesseing. Further ahead, toward the end of the story, we hear a reverberation of his mixed-up feelings and conceptions. "You are unlike any Mädchen I've ever seen - I don't understand you," said poor Vogelstein with the colour still in his face (p. 117).

Earlier there are further proofs on the same subject: "I suppose you've found out everything about everything."

"Oh no - there are some things I can't find out." (p. 107).

"All I want to know is what type it is! It seems impossible," he gasped, "to find out." (p. 108

He is undoubtedly thoroughly puzzled. His

perplexity is really sad. He goes so far as "to gasp"! His sincerity is touching, disarming. And his incapacity to grasp the full meaning of a lot of things around him is as great as his awareness of it. He seems doomed to remain in the dark concerning the things he values most. In this connection one recalls the principal male character of The Beast in the Jungle. Even the author himself forgets his usual irony as regards him and shows pity for his puzzlement, his short-sighted perspective, his ignorance, and his predicament. As Count Otto blushes, one also recalls Lord Lambeth, another blushing type.

II

If Count Otto Vogelstein's portrait rings a bell and brings to mind several other young men peopling James's fiction, the same holds true of Miss Pandora Day. Isabel Archer, Daisy Miller (there is even an impudent allusion to her in the text in connection with Pandora's sister), Bessie Alden, Miranda Hope, and Gertrude Wentworth share many

characteristics: youth, a zeal to improve their minds, charm, intelligence, and wit. But to start from the beginning, let us describe Pandora Day and see how she is distinguishable from other Jamesian heroines of her type. It would be unjust to deny her a place of her own, a personality.

This is how we see her through Vogelstein's eyes: She was slim, brightly dressed, rather pretty (p. 80).

We are told that her eyes are: brilliant and expressive, and surmounted a delicate aquiline nose, which, though pretty, was perhaps just a trifle too hawk-like (p. 81).

Miss Day acquitted herself of it with perfect simplicity and self-possession. She held up her head and stepped away, and Vogelstein could see that the foot she pressed upon the clean smooth deck was slender and shapely (p. 82).

Thus early in the tale the observer gains a full round picture of Pandora's main physical features and of some of her traits of character. Like a good many other Jamesian heroines, she is not a dashing ideal beauty, perfection incarnate.

But her very imperfection tends to enhance rather than spoil the picture. She exudes an odor of light, youth, quickness, and efficiency that cannot be mistaken. So much ofr the physical, external side of the question.

Perhaps the first thing to strike us about Pandora is the air of decision accompanying her words, acts, manners. Surely the resolution reflected in her gaze - she had fixed her eyes on Count Otto - accounts for his noticing her on the steamer. Unlike Catherine Sloper, who is painfully shy, Pandora feels no compuction whatsoever in proceeding according to her plans, whims, or wishes, and in carrying them out to the letter, as we shall have plenty of time to remark later on. Her self-assurance and energy in setting afoot what she has thought over has no small part in her ultimate success as a wordly woman. By means of her courage and determination she will overcome any obstacle placed in her path. Doesn't she remind him straightforwardly of

this encounter when they meet again in Washington? Doesn't her introductory speech give him the impression of being "rather a flippant mode of disposing of the fact"? In short, she seems to know what she wants, and she speaks and acts accordingly. She reflects her surname: she is as clear and direct as daylight.

From the beginning James pronounces her "competent," and the same note reappears during her conversation with the President of the United States: there was a high mature competence in the way the girl sounded the note of approval (p. 104).

The use of the eloquent adjective "mature" emphasizes the evolution undergone by Miss Day in the short span of two years. It is quite significant that not even in the presence of such an important personage does she feel ill at ease. She betrays no embarrassment. On the contrary, her naturalness is infectious, it aids conversation and dissipates his diffidence. He looked eminent, but he looked relaxed, and the lady beside him ministered freely and without scruple, it was clear, to this effect

of his comfortably unbending (p. 103).

Is she equally "eminent" that she doesn't need to bend uncomfortably?

If presidential authority doesn't awe her, how much less awe could we expect in the presence of familiars? Besides being master of herself on every occasion, she plays the leading role in her family as a matter of course. She is the materfamilias. She takes on herself the whole responsibility of traveling around Europe, persuading her parents and making them comply with her schemes. She is solely responsible for the family destiny and destination. She is frank about her control over them all: "Don't you remember I told you I was working for New York? Well, I worked - I had to work hard. But we've moved" (p. 106).

Count Otto is right in his calculations, arrived at through close observation of her behavior: Pandora overlooked and directed her relatives; Vogelstein could see this for himself, could see she was very active and decided, that she had in a high degree the sentiment of responsibility,

settling on the spot most of the questions that could come up for a family from the interior (p.85; italics mine).

She obviously likes to do things forthrightly, without delay, American style, whether it be to wangle a job for her fiancé or simply "to engage single-handed with the United States Custom-House" at the end of her long purposeful voyage to Europe. She displays the same presence of mind that distinguishes her from other slower, less business-like American girls. Her rapidity makes her exceptional even in America, a country noteworthy for her speed-loving people: The only thing that was exceptional was the rapidity of her march (p. 111).

Many of her qualities, such as activeness, a capacity for ruling, decision, energy, and a sense of responsibility might often be found in others; not so much can be said about the quickness of her step - stride, rather. "Settling on the spot" any question concerning her life directly affects her success, leads to it somehow. But, one might

wonder, does success in Amrican society mean simply efficiency? May anyone, provided he has it in sufficient degree, succeed without the help of some other qualities besides? Does chance, luck, lurk behind it? Is Miss Pandora Day's success spurious or legitimate? Is it lasting? Does it change her as a daughter, as a woman, as a friend, as a lover? There are multifarious answers to such questions, answers which affect the romance, answers which will be forthcoming in due course.

It is now time to explore in detail her amazing success. One of her major aids is financial ease. Her affluence partially accounts for her standing in American society. Even before the formal introduction of the Day family into the plot, James imbues the story with a global atmosphere. He begins with the poor and dispossessed, the "greasy and matted with the sea-damp." He next describes those, including the Days, whoe do not fit into "the greasy class." The purpose of this comparison is self-evident James shows his

interest in the portraiture of the upper class. He will solely deal with the "big fish," as F. Scott Fitzgerald would typically say.

Count Otto, the observer in the present instance, renders a detailed account of Miss Pandora's parents. He observes that they possessed

> the: fascination of prosperity, the confidence of security, which sometimes makes people arrogant, but which had had such a different effect on this simple satisfied pair (p. 84).

Evidently they are well-to-do, burgeoise people since they can afford a two-year, first-rate tour around Europe - they even go as far as Greece - with the whole family. However rich they may be, they are the rule-proving exception: they are not disgusting, but rather likeable people. It is quite plain that the author's sympathy lies on their side. Why so? There are two important reasons to explain James's partiality and sympathy for them. The first reason is manifold: it includes simplicity, quietness, a lack of ambition, and humbleness. Instead of being "arrogant," as might be expected

from their financial status, they are simple, quiet, unobtrusive folk. The second reason for James's bias, and perhaps the most telling for our point, is that they constitute the most desirable background for their daughter's greater brilliance. She is not eclipsed by her parents' brightness, as unfortunately happens with Catherine Sloper, for example. The opposite is true: she completely outshines them. Gray, subdued, and inflexible as they are, she can do with them whatsoever she pleases. Here occurs an evident symbiosis between parents and daughter. She couldn't have done so much, advanced so rapidly, without them in the background; and vice versa, most probably they would have been done for without her competence, superiority. In short, Pandora thinks that her mother and father are two puppets, two handy tools ready to obey her little finger's slightest indication. They provide her unconditional support. It was her parents who told her story; you always saw how little her parents

could have made her. Her attitude with regard to them might vary in different ways....Sometimes she had them in her wake, lost in the bubbles and the foam that showed where she had passed; sometimes she kept them in close confinement, resorting to them under cover of night and with every precaution, sometimes she exhibited them to the public in discreet glimpses, in prearranged attitudes (p. 110).

On and on might go this report about her ever-changing, paradoxical, always cunning behavior. She possesses both goals and means; she has enough eagerness and ability to thrive through the latter and achieve the former. Her versatility is not less amazing than her progress. She may play any role she takes a liking to. Her attitude reflects and satisfies the needs of the moment.

Mrs. Bonnycastle gives Count Otto a complete, detailed account of Pandora's fairy-like career that has made her New York's most conspicuous, talked-of belle of the day. Although there are several discrepancies from the original tale, Miss Day is thought to be a new, modern Cinderella. For one

thing, she comes from neither a poverty-stricken nor an obscure house. On the contrary, she enjoys an illustrious pedigree. She has the double right of birth and money to support her. This is how her ancestors are described: It's one of the first families. Her great-grandfather was in the Revolution (p. 108).

The last line is rather ambiguous, since we do not know the position her great-grandfather held. Nevertheless, from childhood on, she has moved about in an environment markedly different from poor Cinderella's. She has not had to toil incessantly from the crack of dawn till deep into the night to make a living. Her privileged station has enabled her to satisfy her keen appetite for things intellectual. Thus we come across a second divergence from the fairy tale formerly mentioned, solid culture. Very much like her Bostonian countrywoman Bessie Alden, Miss Day has, despite her youth, an impressive cultural background. Like the fashionable Russian ladies in Tolstoy's novels - by the way, all of them inhabiting high society also -

Pandora masters the French language. And she exercises her knowledge: She read a great deal, and almost always French books, in yellow paper; not the lighter forms of that literature, but a volume of Sainte-Beuve, of Renan or at the most, in the way of dissipation, of Alfred de Musset (p. 86).

Obviously there is nothing sham, fake, or flimsy about her culture. Her taste in books underscores the soberness and depth of her character. Immensely bookish, widely travelled, born rich, illustriously named, she has gained admittance to the best world in America by means of a third quality, culture: She had usually got into society more or less by reading, and her conversation was apt to be garnished with literary allusions, even with familiar quotations (p. 111).

Intellectual curiosity also has to be credited for much of her information. During a visit to the capitol building in Washington, she betrays an insatiable curiosity that not even travel, reading, and good conversation have been able to glut. Her

critical, inquisitive attitude - akin to Miss Alden's on her first visit to London - is demonstrated in the next passage: Vogelstein could see too that she wished to improve her mind, she looked at the historical pictures, at the uncanny statues of local worthies...she asked questions of the guide and in the chamber of the Senate requested him to show her the chairs of the gentlemen from New York (p. 113).

There is often something wrong with this kind of person. Quite often they are unbearable prigs, impossible asses. Their massive information about everything finally makes them self-centered, irritating, dogmatic, and dreadfully boring to others. Pandora is the exception to this rule. Although she is sometimes in peril of becoming a bluestocking, she miraculously avoids being so by means of simplicity, a lack of affectation, and spontaneity. How else could she have been pronounced "delightful" by people who know her? How else could she have earned countless attentive admirers, male and female? The fact is that she knows how to avoid an excess of

everything, including a display of learning.

Two more characteristics make for her success, brilliance, and ambition. Both are uncommon; both are part and parcel of her personality. In the whole text there is only a single overt, obvious example of each one of these traits of character. Is the paucity of examples due to James's carelessness? Does he deny them importance? Not quite. James does not believe in multiplying instances in every line. The story itself exemplifies both qualities. The text speaks for itself. Nonetheless, for consistency's sake, let us see how these characteristics are made clear.

Brilliance shows in both speeches and attitudes. The way she answers, lends an ear, retorts, asks questions, drops hints, and leads a conversation reveal her as a fine conversationalist and prompt people to enliven their parties with her presence because: She was not fast, nor emancipated, nor crude, nor loud (p. 110).

Daughter of small burghers as she might be

she was really brilliant (p. 107; italics mine).

Generally ambition shows in her behavior. First of all, she far-sightedly understands the advantages of moving from an insipid town in the interior of the country, devoid of many possibilities for an ambitious girl, to a richly sophisticated metropolis - New York - where she can cut a dashing, national figure and make her fortune forever. Secondly, not satisfied with the possession of birth and money, she craves fame, reputation of the widest possible range. Thirdly, in a trip not at all unlike the ones that are undertaken by the stars of nowadays (who tour for the sake of publicity and monetary profit too), she goes to Washington for the achievement of her purposes. Lastly, she wants to secure - and secure she will - her position through an official post for her future husband. Here is the passage where unparalleled ambition is explicitly cited: he had recognised the arch of her nose, which suggested a fine ambition (p. 103).

She is different from Cinderella, to push further

our initial comparison, in another respect. No fairy godmother, no magic wand, no piece of unexpected good luck ever come into the framework of her life. She gets only what she works for, and she works for those most important things she has set her mind upon. Her victory is due to her own virtue. She has fought a tough, rough battle (the text itself encourages us to speak this way: "she... mobilised her commissariat - the battle appeared virtually to have been gained") and unreservedly won it. She is neither a cheater nor a petty opportunist. In a country where free enterprise is highly valued, she develops her natural talents, exploits them, and enjoys what they gain her. Her nature would not have permitted her to cheat others to get what she wants. Consequently, her triumph is not a spurious one; it is legitimate: There wasn't in her, of necessity at least, a grain of the stuff of which the adventuress is made. She was simply very successful, and her success was entirely personal. She hadn't been born with the silver spoon of social opportunity, she had grasped it by honest exertion (p. 110).

Pandora seems to be a coherent, consistent character throughout the story. Despite her amazing advancement and evolution, she remains basically unchanged. She is honest with herself in every way. Blessed with a remarkable memory, she does not forget her old friends, even if they are not very close ones. Triumph does not blind her; it does not go to her head. She remains the straightforward friend of yesterday. Even though she "had an air of elation, of success," as Count Otto aptly notes in their meeting at a Washington ball, she behaves with him as if she were still the "atrociously provincial," oscure girl he accidentally met on the steamer. She is true to her word on the romantic plane, too. She is as trustworthy in friendship as in love. Fidelity is another distinctive characteristic of her personality that is tacitly recognized, accepted, and praised by people. Fidelity also pervades her relationship with her usually absent fiancé: "But with her present, with her future, when they change like

this young lady's, I suppose everything else changes. How do you say it in America? She let him slide."

"We don't say it at all!" Mrs. Bonnycastle cried. "She does nothing of the sort; for what do you take her? She sticks to him; that at least is what we _expect_ her to do" (p. 119).

We thus come to an end of the study of "the latest freshest fruit of our great American evolution...the self-made girl!"

III

By way of introduction, before we begin with the analysis of the romance itself, it may be wise to talk a little about two female characters who are strongly involved in it, Mrs. Dangerfield and Mrs. Bonnycastle. Mrs. Dangerfield appears in the first half of the story, Mrs. Bonnycastle in the second. There are several obvious points of connection between the two ladies listed. Neither ever personally talks with Miss Day in the text itself. Both spend their time talking _about_ her with Count

Otto. Mrs. Dangerfield abuses Pandora to her back; without having so much as an acquaintanceship, she feels authorized to critize and dilate on Pandora's negative qualities. She claims to know all about Pandora' even though she has not spoken to her yet. Mrs. Bonnycastle also claims, justifiably, to know her pretty well. But she does not heap abuse upon the "energetic girl's" head; on the contrary, she approves of, advocates, promotes, glories in Pandora's celebrated case. Perhaps without being fully conscious of the effect their words may produce upon the young German, both ladies unconsciously arouse Count Otto's interest in Pandora. This unsought effect constitutes one of many, many ironies strewn through the text. It is highly ironical that, by means of their respective speeches, Mrs. Dangerfield and Mrs. Bonnycastle awaken his curiosity, arouse his interest, and kindle his feelings toward Pandora. Because rather than want him to push his suit, they try to deter him from such a course.

From the beginning, Mrs. Dangerfield (isn't her surname sufficiently indicative of her role?) anticipates the subsequent turn of Count Otto's feelings. In this sense, we can say that she is kind of prophetess employed to foreshadow the development of the story: She assured him that if he didn't "look out" he would be committing himself to some American girl with an impossible family. In America, when one committed one's self there was nothing to do but march to the altar, and what should he say for instance to finding himself a near relation of Mr. and Mrs. P. W. Day? (p. 87).

There are some things in this quotation worth notice. First, she warns him to "look out" not so much of falling in love with the girl herself (Pandora is not wrong altogether, after all), but for her "impossible family"; second, besides the seriousness with which she seems to regard the future, her whole attitude emphasizes the legal, puritanical spirit prevailing in a love affair with an American girl. Is she afraid the stranger will make light of the girl's feelings and forsake her later on? Why does she think he may flirt for

flirtation's sake? Does Count Otto's attitude in the steamer arouse her "maternal" feelings (by the way, we do not know whether she and Mrs. Bonnycastle have any children of their own or not), and is that why she gives him a piece of her mind? Does Mrs. Dangerfield act out of sheer officiousness? Whatever her reasons are, the fact remains unaltered: Mrs. Dangerfield predicts the intensely romantic future turn of the story.

Mrs. Dangerfield's warning comes too early. Mrs. Bonnycastle's comes too late to be of much use. This lady also tries to save Count Otto from committing a mistake, though her reasons widely differ from Mrs. Dangerfield's. She does not object to Pandora's parents; she objects to a new engagement: "It's never safe to fix your affections on her (the American girl), because she has almost always an impediment somewhere in the background" (p. 118).

A third lady enters into the picture of the romance: Mrs. Steuben. Her policy highly disagrees with the traditional discouraging one displayed by the other two women. She does not obstruct Count

Otto's inclinations. She rather comes to his assistance: Mrs. Steuben remarked that if the Count and Miss Day wished to meet again the picnic would be a good chance - the picnic she was getting for the following Thursday (p. 109).

She willingly becomes the chaperone of the couple.

One can now turn one's whole attention to the relationship between Count Otto and Miss Day. It might be useful, for a better understanding of the romantic issue, to keep in mind certain antecedents concerning Count Otto Vogelstein's story. They are connected with earlier phases of his life. First, he has previous information about America, American girls in particular: he remembered what a lady in Dresden had once said to him - that America was the country of the Mädchen. He wondered whether he should like that, and reflected that it would be an aspect to study, like everything else. He had known in Dresden an American family in which there were three daughters who used to skate with the officers (p. 79).

One can draw the following conclusions from the quotation. 1) He is prepared beforehand to meet a

good many marriageable girls in America; 2) he seems to be willing to go into the matter personally in order to know them better; 3) he has an elementary idea of what they are like through his acquaintance with the American family living in Dresden. Was he one of the "officers" the girls used to skate with? Although James does not specify, one may guess so.

Even when "in the Dresden days feathers weren't worn quite so high" as they are in the steamer he is travelling in, one may presume by his attitude that Count Otto has tried his hand at "dating," however little time or energy his studies have left him. On the other hand, besides having had scant time to spend on frivolous matters of the heart, he does not - or at least did not, before leaving Germany - care much for the state of his happiness. Wasn't happiness an unscientific concept unworthy of his attention, as formerly observed?

One may safely assume that he devoted himself entirely to what he considered most important in

life, that is, a formal career and a polished education. An expected by-product of his zeal and work, he early got an official job overseas, wherein he can apply his talents, and do quite a lot on behalf of his beloved country. That is probably why he takes the steamer to America with "the agreeable consciousness that his own nest was comfortably made." And that is perhaps why James wants to teach him a good lesson, to punish with a severe hand his self-complacency and self-assurance. That is how things stand when the narrative begins.

The first part of this story achieves a two-fold purpose. First, it supplies an introduction to the two principal characters. Secondly, it provides them a chance to get acquainted with each other. James himself depicts the male character, whereas Count Otto describes the female one. But how do they meet? How do they get along together?

Their acquaintance stems from a sort of forward-backward movement created by Miss Day. She thrusts herself, as it were, into the German

official's ken. What is the literary device employed for throwing them into each other's notice?: a simple one, the loss of her sea-chair. She approaches him, asks him about it, speaks to him first. Thus a gain -a new relationship - makes up for a loss. Then comes the backward movement alluded to. After the recovery of the lost chair - and the disappearance of any pretext for her communicating with him - she goes back to the original silence from which she emerged. The damage is done, however. She has lost her former obscurity. Furthermore, she has already disturbed Count Otto's peace of mind, and her withdrawal leaves plenty of time and material for him to reflect about.

Evidently James plans for them to meet as soon as possible. Pandora is singled out from the mass of passengers to be the heroine. The only other woman in the field seems to be Mrs. Dangerfield, a matronly, older, garrulous, prejudiced lady, by no means a rival to fear. If Pandora appears and disappears like that, without seeming interested

in strengthening her new relationship, why does he so suddenly, however mildly at first, become interested in her?

Three main facts explain his interest. They are sex, isolation, and individuality. He is a man, young, healthy, and moreover impatient. She is a "rather pretty girl." He is single, so is she. He travels first-class, so does she. He is free and in a position to get married if it pleases him. So she seems to be. There is not any other girl - at least he never notices any one else besides Pandora - worth meeting on the ship.

He is away from home - and probably will be for a good while - in a foreign country he has only dim notions about - whose governmental and international policies he sincerely dislikes, distrusts. The only other person in the ship for him to talk with is Mrs. Dangerfield, who never tires of speaking, however ill, about Miss Day. Does it then sound unnatural to try to know more about the girl from Utica (an outlandish and mysterious name for him),

if he is completely by himself?

He is eager to find out everything about America. She comes from that country. She is a fine specimen of an American, too, worth the study. He has some notions about American girls through his acquaintance with the family who lived in Dresden. They fit the pattern contained in the novel he reads aboard the ship. Contrariwise, Pandora does not. She does not follow a stale pattern. She speaks, behaves, even retreats, in a peculiar manner. She owns a definite, marked personality which piques Count Otto's curiosity thanks to her originality.

Unimaginative, methodical, and unbearably thorough (keeping a diary at a regular hour instead of being a source of pleasurable interludes for him, as was the case with the narrator of W. H. Hudson's Green Mansions, is another proof of his "thoroughness"), Count Otto cannot resist, and yields to the attraction felt for a creature so different and unconventional, so competent and flippant, so natural and straightforward as Pandora

appears to be. He cannot label her; she eludes his efforts to classify her. He is dislodged from his initial security; he is puzzled, baffled. His interest has been aroused. He is on the way to be done for, as we will presently see: [he] now

> definitely judged that Pandora Day was not at all like the heroine. She was of quite another type (p. 85),
>
> and the moral of our little matter is that in spite of Mrs. Dangerfield, in spite of the resolutions of his prudence, in spite of the limits of such acquaintance as he had momentarily made with her, in spite of Mr. and Mrs. Day and the young man in the smoking-room, *she had fixed his attention* (p. 89; italics mine).

The "little matter" is not quite so little. It is rather a big, troublesome one (up to a certain moment "he had been unable to persuade himself that he was not absorbed" in her!) since, in spite of everything, his "attention" comes first and last, uppermost. It allows him no rest. His older friend's "emphatic warning," his native prudence, his reasonableness, her undesirable family, and so

forth, affect his sense and sensibility very little. As demonstrated by the eventual course of the action, early in the book, James stresses ironically the importance attached to their meeting and the devastating consequences it will entail later on: I have sketched in some detail the conditions in which he made the acquaintance of Miss Day, because the event had a certain importance for this fair square Teuton (p. 83).

To go back to our point, presumably for the first time in his life, Count Otto yields to his feelings. He slips away from the familiar path of reason. The problem is that his feelings, as regards Pandora, are not clear at all; they are unacceptable, unfamiliar, confused, disturbing, even alarming. The moral ensuing from the violation to his principles of action seems to be plain enough. He will have to pay a high price for it: his feelings will enslave him.

From the beginning such feelings rapidly gather strength. The day comes when they are too overpowering to be successfully subdued. In any

event, Count Otto changes a lot: he swallows self-pride, nationalism, a love for aristocracy; he vanquishes natural diffidence and finally approaches her many times, in the ship as well as in Washington. The struggle has been short though painful. He gives up: Count Otto yielded to an attraction peculiar in its nature and finally irresistible and, in spite of Mrs. Dangerfield's emphatic warning, sought occasion for a little continuous talk with Miss Pandora (p. 87).

The language employed above dispels any possible obscurity. The nature of his surrender - and the text invites this expression - is complete, lasting. The peculiar attraction she exerts does not correspond to a fleeting whim, easily forgotten afterwards. It is something which has to be reckoned with two years later. No, he is not the sort of man who changes according to his moods, maybe because they are so few. Because of his temperament and education it is particularly difficult for Vogelstein to attach himself to anyone. But once he accords his "fixed attention"

to someone, he accords it for good. Time does not ravage the original impression made upon him by Pandora; moreover, time does not seem to exist on that score. One finds the following revelatory, startling paragraph in the second part of the story: but at the touch of the idea that he might see her and hear her again at any moment she became as vivid in his mind as if they had parted the day before: he remembered the exact shade of the eyes he had described to Mrs. Bonnycastle as yellow, the tone of her voice (p. 101).

An evident suspension of time occurs here. Days long gone by are instantly recalled by the mention of Miss Day. Memory is set loose. The accurate image of the American girl springs to life by means of a sensorial, visual, and auditive device. Thus the role granted to the senses, to portray a shade of feeling, is absolute, and the description gains in vividness and concreteness.

One cannot really overrate how deep and poignant is the impression made by Pandora on the "emissary of Bismark," unless one carefully observes his odd

behavior both during the party given by Mrs. Bonnycastle and later on too. His conduct in Washington has little resemblance, if any, to how he acts at the outset of the narrative. Formerly he was polite but stiff, observant but a bit indifferent, curious but detached, thorough but self-assured. This picture belongs to the past tense. Now, two years later, Count Otto is overcome, swept away by a sudden rush of feelings which render him nervous, unsure, powerless. Up to a certain moment of the tale he is at a loss what to do next. It seems as if those emotions, freed up on her reappearance, demand to make up for the long time they have been bottled up without any expression: he saw it must be quite in Pandora's line to be mistress of the situation (p. 104);

she wasn't sufficiently alone for our friend's taste; but he was impatient and he hoped she'd give him a few words to himself (p. 106);

Count Otto clung to his interest (p. 107);

he was glad - in spite of the appeal - to make pretexts for seeing her again. He did so on the

morrow (p. 113).

For suspense had decidedly become his portion; he was under a charm that made him feel he was watching his own life and that his susceptibilities were beyond his control (p. 115).

Among other feelings, one can read jealousy between lines. This emotion fuels his interest; it does not diminish until the very end of the book, when he unequivocally learns that she has been as steadfast in her engagement as he has been in his feelings. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Bonnycastle's party - a parody of the social Washington of the day - signals the starting point for the development and final outcome of the romance. His interest increases by the hour. The impending climax approaches at breakneck speed, conspicuously so if compared with the stillness of the two years of separation between them.

Even though the struggle to conquer his emotions is short, it would be wrong and unfair to attribute to him either feebleness or rapidity. He desperately tries not to be carried away by his

romantic feelings. He struggles to dispel "the charm" he is under, by means of a "thorough" rationalization, mental review. He opposes reason to feelings; therefore, one runs across the ancient dichotomy of body and soul, mind and heart. But he is not destined to succeed in the enterprise. He mentally reviews, over and over again, questions of politics, lineage, nationality, competence, intellect, courage, personality, social position, learning, taste, career, beauty, financial situation, general way of living, and success. All to no avail.

Two main reasons partly explain the strength of his attachment, boredom and fate. There is nothing strange about either. Two passages from the text clarify them better than any other exposition: He went wherever he was asked, on principle, partly to study American society and partly because in Washington pastimes seemed to him not so numerous that one could afford to neglect occasions (p. 96).

As for fate,

it may at least be said that the thought of meeting Pandora Day made him nervous. The fact is certainly singular, but I shall not take on myself to explain it; there are some things that even the most philosophic historian isn't bound to account for (p. 101).

There are some secondary reasons besides - last but not least - which may also justify the growth of his affection. First of all, her attitude. She does not shy away when he appears at Mrs. Bonnycastle's party. She does not assume a haughty or cold attitude toward him. On the contrary, she is all smiles to him and plays the coquette with him. It seems as if she wanted to allure, "charm" him by means of her beguiling manners: She recognised him without a moment's hesitation and _with the sweetest smile matching to a shade the tone in which she said_: "I was watching you. I wondered if you weren't going to speak to me" (p. 106; italics mine).

Any student of James's fiction can tell how seldom and sparingly he uses superlatives to convey a feeling for a person of the opposite sex. He can consequently assay the importance of Pandora's

"sweetest smile" and intonation of voice underlined above. Yet Otto is still puzzled by her personality, despite his "earnest childlike questions." His curiosity to find everything about America and its people cannot be quenched: There was something in his expression that again moved Mrs. Bonnycastle to mirth. "How we do puzzle you Europeans! You look quite bewildered" (p. 105).

Again the question of culture arises. This quality enhances her in his eyes, because, in spite of its depth and width it is not cumbersome or irritating: Another thing, as he learned, was that you knew the self-made girl by her culture (p. 111).

She proved a charming fellow tourist; she had constantly something to say, but never said it too much; it was impossible to drag in the wake of a cicerone less of a lengthening or an irritating chain (p. 113).

The inevitable consequence arrives: he makes up his mind to propose marriage. Helped by the picnic and stimulated by the "fragant April days" and the lovely scenery all around, he seems to hint at his intention: and Pandora was first mystified, then

amused, by some of the Count's revelations. At last I think she was a little frightened, for she remarked irrelevantly, with some decision, that luncheon would be ready and that they ought to join Mrs. Steuben. Her companion walked slowly, on purpose, as they left the house together, for he knew the pang of a vague sense that he was losing her (p. 117).

The increasing warmth in this love scene is important: mystification, amusement, fright, then the desire to flee as soon as possible. But why does Count Otto lose her, if there are so many common interests and qualities between them such as youth, intelligence, singleness, ambition, learning, good looks, and so on? Is he a very bad match? Is he too clumsy to declare his love? Is he too abrupt, maybe? Does she play him false?

No, she does not deceive him, to start answering these questions. She has been straightforward, sincere, spontaneous, natural in her behavior with him. She attaches to him no importance whatsoever. He himself has sadly realized this on the ship: Her speaking to him that

first afternoon had been, he was bound to believe, an incident without importance for herself (p. 85).

Another proof of her open indifference toward Count Otto occurs when they land: to Pandora he offered an audible good-bye, which she returned in a bright friendly voice, but without looking round (p. 95).

Friendliness, indifference, fraternity sometimes are the various feelings demonstrated by Pandora; one never comes into examples of otherwise tender affection, love, and least of all passion.

Furthermore, there is plenty of evidence that she has been frank about her engagement without being in the least obvious or indiscreet. She refers to her fiancé as a "friend." This noun, however general and inoffensive, arouses Count Otto's suspicions from the beginning: Count Otto wondered if the friend she had written to were her lover and if they had plighted their troth (p. 89).

Farther ahead Pandora's little sister alludes again, with unmistakable emphasis, to the same subject: "I guess he's her lover!" the little girl

broke out." She was always writing to him in Europe" (p. 93).

Simple hints thrown off casually be Pandora as well as the suppositions Count Otto has begun to entertain once in a while almost acquire the certainty of facts in the scene with Miss Day's younger, observant sister.

The hints concerning her engagement increase in importance and number during the second part of the story. Even then, he is still disturbed by unpleasant misgivings about her true relation with "that gentleman," as he prefers to call him. However it may be, one thing is sure, Count Otto closes his eyes and pursues his courtship.

Mrs. Bonnycastle aptly remarks somewhere the lack of understanding between Europeans and Americans. Such is the case with this "Junker of Junkers": he is not the exception to the rule. He lacks the knack of catching the real American spirit even though he masters the English language. Moreover, he does not understand Pandora in particular. Nothing

has brought him nearer to comprehension: neither the novel by an American author read in the ship in order "to be prepared for some of the oddities" of American life nor the firsthand contact with its customs and diverse institutions. That is why so many passages, otherwise foreboding, increase the general irony prevailing throughout the tale.

Pandora points out the gap between them with a clarity and lucidity that verify her indifference toward him on the romantic plane : "Well, you never will understand me - probably; but what difference does it make?" (p. 117).

Wisely, she does not reject the possibility, however remote and uncertain, of a change in him for the better that could bring him round to a future understanding. But that is placed so far away for our purpose that it is as if it will never happen. The whole episode affects her little since she gains the things she wanted most, not so much can be said about Count Otto. He reaches the end of the story a maturer, richer, more complex and lonely man than

at the beginning. As a human being he is alternately pierced by the anxiety, restlessness, uncertainty, pain and exquisite joy of love. He is taught a hard lesson in humility and acceptance of personal limitations. He is led to accept the differencies between peoples of different languages and nationalities. But he is also compelled to accept something else, something far more difficult to accept, the total loss of his hopes on the romantic level: Two days later he saw in a newspaper an announcement that the President had offered the post of Minister to Holland to Mr. D.F. Bellamy of Utica; and in the course of a month he heard from Mrs. Steuben that Pandora, a thousand other duties performed, had finally "got round" to the altar of her own nuptials (p. 122).

NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET

Lord Lambeth, one of the two principal characters of An International Episode, along with Miss Bessie Alden, receives the best of the author's attention. From the beginning, James underlines the bitter youth of the "two young Englishmen" (Lambeth and his cousin Percy Beaumont) Who arrive at New York on a blazing midsummer's day, a season, by the way, that reminds us of W. Shakespeare's light comedy A Midsummer Night's Dream, and of its remantic complications and contrarieties.

There are abundant evidence of the English nobleman's and his cousin's tender age. No less than two dozen times the adjective "young" occurs in the first pages of the text. It often precedes a varying noun: young men, young Englishmen, good-natured young men, young travelers, young persons, etc. The women whom these two Englishmen - who naturally are accustomed to sleeping "the sleep of

youth and health" - see in New York and Newport are young too: young women, young ladies in white dresses, young ladies conversing, young ladies seated, pretty young girls, and so forth.

Stress on youth does not stop here. The odd and emphatic thing is that objects share this quality too; it does not apply solely to human beings. The writer is explicit on this subject; he talks about "the general brightness, newness, juvenility, both of people and things" in New York. The following description of Newport is similar: The morning was brilliant and cool, the villas were smart and snug, and the walk of the young travelers was very entertaining. Everything looked as if it had received a coat of fresh paint the day before - the red roofs, the green shutters, the clean, bright browns and buffs of the housefronts. The flower beds on the little lawns seemed to sparkle in the radiant air, and the gravel in the short carriage sweeps to flash and twinkle. [1]

1.- The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Novels by Henry James, published by the New American Library, A Signet Classic (New York, 1962), p. 33. All subsequent quotations from An International Episode are from this edition.

Words like "brilliant," "cool," "smart," "smug," "young," "entertaining," "fresh," "clean," "bright," "flower beds," "litttle lawns," "to sparkle," "radiant air," "to flash and to twinkle," lend a general atmosphere of freshness and a strongly romantic glow and splendor to the story.

In addition, constant blushing brings Lord Lambeth's youth to life. Two colorful, crimson illustrations are found in the course of his first and only interview with Mr. Westgate. "'Oh, I must be in Scotland,' said Lord Lambeth, blushing a little." Later on, during the same conversation, "Lord Lambeth stared, blushing a little." Something of the sort happens when he talks with Bessie for the first time. He sincerely acknowledges his illiteracy, "laughing a little and blushing." On meeting her again in London, he approaches Miss Alden "blushing and smiling."

Besides these diverse demonstrations of youthfulness, he possesses another quality common among youngsters: humor. Fresh, spontaneous, and

contagious humor enlivens him. He cannot pretend to seriousness, much less sterness, for very long. He cannot take things too seriously, or too sternly, even when they directly affect him. For instance, he cannot be angry with Percy for more than half an hour, although his cousin tattled on him to his mother, the Duchess of Bayswater. He jests about anything, whether respectable or not, without being bitter or sardonic, he seems to be in good spirits all the time. Many a lively exclamation indicates his humor. No less than half a dozen times he exclaims, "Oh, I say," "Fancy," "Really," "Oh, dear, no," to express both astonishment and gaiety. It goes without saying that he regards life as a pleasant holiday, his phrases betray his usual cheerfulness: "Very jolly place, isn't it?" said Lord Lambeth. "It's a very jolly place to sit" (p. 41).

And a little further along in the same conversation; "It might be so jolly to sit here, you know," Lord Lambeth went on (p. 41).

Lord Lambeth describes his birthplace to Miss

Alden: as he had an old-time liking for it, he was beguiled into describing it a little and saying it was really very jolly (p. 51).

He records his short stay in America in a similar fashion; Those days I spent at your sister's were awfully jolly (p. 67).

On the whole, any situation provokes his deep-seated sense of humor. We offer here two jocular passages from the first part of the <u>nouvelle</u> and two others from the second part. Weather provides material for the first funny remark; on the way to Mr. Westgate's office in New York, Beaumont comments: "He can't possibly have gone to a hotter place, you know,"

"Oh, there's only one hotter place," said Lord Lambeth," and I hope he hasn't gone there" (p. 22). After a careful reading of Dante's <u>Inferno</u>, one shares the young peer's hopes that Mr. Westgate has not been condemned to burn in hell.

The second example also constitutes a criticism of America. Like Professor Higgins in <u>My Fair Lady</u> Lord Lambeth jestingly critizes the American way of speaking: "I say," he resumed in a moment," I

suppose we must learn to speak American. I suppose we must take lessons."

"I can't understand them," said the clever man.

"What the deuce is he saying?" asked his comrade, appealing from the French waiter" (p. 19).

In passing, one may say that the preceding remarks become even funnier when one recalls that the French particularly consider American English an altogether different language from British English, as seen in translations of books, for example.

In the second half of the nouvelle, instead of critizing America, the characters make England their butt. In the first sample, Lord Lambeth makes fun of high-class, prominent, fashionable people with whom he has been on speaking terms from childhood on.

Discussing Madame Tussaud's wax museum: "We thought we should find your image there," said Mrs. Westgate.

"In the Chamber of Horrors?" laughed the young man.

"All the women were décolletés, and many of the figures looked as if they could speak if they tried."

"Upon my word," Lord Lambeth rejoined," you see people at London parties that look as if they couldn't speak if they tried" (p. 65).

This attitude, so heedless of conventions and proprieties, so dreadful and unthinkable for a conventional girl like Bessie, demonstrates Lord Lambeth's keen faculty for caricature. He ridicules people, himself included, places, customs, and institutions in an off-hand manner shocking to the tourist who reverently visits old London. He spares nobody, he mocks everybody.

His sanguine disposition pervades his first conversation with Miss Alden and Mr. Woodley in London. They discuss touristic places to see. Let us quote some lines from their talk to trace the increasing pitch of humor dominating it: "Lord Lambeth seemed greatly amused."

"I think there is nothing so charming as an old ruinous garden," said the young girl. "We must certainly go there."

"Lord Lambeth broke out into merriment." I say, Woodley," he cried," here Miss Alden wants to go to the Rosherville Gardens."

"Very well," he said," I'll write for a permit."

Lord Lambeth's exhilaration increased (p. 68).

"Amused," "merriment," and "exhilaration" set the

tone of the dialogue, and indicate Lord Lambeth's mood.

If his humor is that considerable and irrepressible, the same can be said of his sincerity. As a matter of fact, this trait of his character sometimes leads him to an abruptness which some might regard as grossness or agressiveness - neither an obliging quality, and neither true to fact. Far from it, despite surface appearances Lord Lambeth is neither aggresive nor gross in his conduct. He is, as we have seen, a very good-natured young man who bears no grudge against anyone; there is no basis to suppose him rough. He enjoys life as it comes and resents no frustration on any score. Maybe his lack of tact (and he does not possess it indeed) is more noticeable because he is a lord, scion of a distinguished house. Prejudiced beforehand, we expect him to behave otherwise. Maybe his unrestrained frankness would have passed unnoticed in any Jack in the street. Whatever the

reasons, one thing is certain, his tactlessness stems from his youth and from the urge to express forthrightly whatever he thinks or feels. On the other hand, his behavior shows both artlessness and simplicity. He is familiar with neither cunning nor roundabout ways. In this respect he closely resembles the main male character of Knut Hamsun's Growth of The Soil, Isak, though clumsiness cannot be imputed to the Englishman.

Advocating his point of view, Lambeth often contradicts his cousin or Miss Alden. Such an attitude appears in the next passage from the second half of the tale. He learns that Mrs. Westgate and her younger sister stay at the Jones's Hotel in London : "Oh, one of those places just out of Piccadilly? Beastly hole, isn't it?" Lord Lambeth inquired.

"I believe it's the best hotel in London," said Mrs. Westgate.

"But they give you awful rubbish to eat, don't they?" his lordship went on.

"Yes," said Mrs. Westgate.

"I always feel so sorry for the people that come up to town and go to live in those places," continued the young man. "They eat nothing but filth" (p. 66).

He thus candidly, stubbornly, rudely even, stands by his convictions to the last, regardless of courtesy with ladies. He does not ask himself what opinion she will form of him after this dialogue. Knowing that he is right, he does not stoop to flatter Mrs. Westgate. Nevertheless, he never assumes a superior manner or a proud attitude. He has nothing to do with arrogance, being deeply modest. On no occasion, under no pretext does he speak grandly about himself, his titles, or his possessions in England. On the contrary, he consistently avoids any discussion of the subject. He dislikes boasting: Attempts at impressiveness always made him feel awkward, and he now began to laugh and swing his stick (p. 44).

Evidently showing off makes him nervous, unsure of himself, and ill at ease - it is something alien to his nature. Therefore he has to dispel his

nervousness by means of laughter and movements with his stick. His reaction follows an instinctive reflex. His cousin refers to Lambeth's modesty at the end of the first part of the book - refers to it as a virtue: "There is nothing so charming as modesty in a young man in your position" (p. 53).

Whenever it becomes impossible to avoid speaking about himself personally, pressed by the curious Miss Alden, he speaks reluctantly, seizing the slightest opportunity to deviate from the subject. Here we present the reader with two different quotes bearing upon the theme: She asked him a great many questions, some of which bored him a little; for he took no pleasure in talking about himself (p. 50).

"Haven't you a great position?" asked Bessie Alden.

He looked a moment at the back of his glove. "I'll set that down," he said, "as one of your mistakes - to your credit." And as if he disliked talking about his position, he changed the subject (p. 69).

Many similar remarks occur throughout the story,

leaving no doubt about his unsurmountable dislike of arrogance or narcissim. He goes so far as to call himself a "beggar" at the end of the tale. Although he is neither a flippant man nor a real "beggar," he bears a close resemblance to Christopher Newman, the hero of The American, of whom "his hostess asked ...a great many questions about himself but on this subject he was an indifferent talker." Lord Lambeth represents the exact opposite of a woman like the governess, the principal character of The Turn of The Screw, who endlessly pours out on her little charges anecdotes, fancifully adorned, about her person in particular and life at the vicarage in general. He is markedly different too from a man like Count Otto Vogelstein, who appears to be obsessed with the question of position in society.

Though he derives no pleasure from swaggering, Lord Lambeth derives great enjoyment from the fair, so-called weaker sex. (Mrs. Westgate, Miss Alden, the Duchess of Bayswater, and Lady Pimlico's

behavior prove how strong a sex it actually is.) Another Don Juan, Lambeth goes his way eager for opportunities to associate with women. He is nevertheless neither overly loud, nor compulsive in his taste. His sexuality is mild. His has nothing of the intensely charged sexuality evident in some of D.H. Lawrence's characters. He is nothing of a Tom Jones, either. Rather, Lord Lambeth exemplifies the spirit prevalent in the age in which he lives; he is cut more in the subdued, Victorian fashion, where fondness for ladies seems harmless although it sometimes may worry and even alarm his closest relatives (as we shall see presently.) Most often he behaves with common sense. For instance, a timely, judicious word from Percy is enough to check his ardoruous impulses. His taste for girls is hinted at early and later stressed in the book. Here are some relevant passages from the text itself to illustrate these points:

young ladies were conversing across the street with other young ladies seated in similar posture and

costumes....One of our friends, nevertheless - the younger one - intimated that he felt a disposition to interrupt a few of these soft familiarities; but his companion observed, pertinently enough, that he had better be careful (p. 21).

"I want to see those pretty girls at Newport" (p. 29).

"My dear boy, I hope you won't begin to flirt," said Percy Beaumont.

"I don't care. I daresay I shan't begin" (p. 30).

"Your mother spoke to me about it, with tears in her eyes," said Percy Beaumont. "She said she felt very nervous. I promised to keep you out of mischief" (p. 31).

One can easily ascertain the importance given to this theme by looking at the multifarious elaborations of it spread throughout the nouvelle. To give a broad idea of its quantity, suffice it to say that the former four quotations come from the first half of the first part of the story. Lord Lambeth's preoccupation with girls is unquestionably considerable.

His fondness for girls is counterbalanced by his lack of interest in books. He is almost an

illiterate who could not care less for printed stuff. No genre of literature seems to appeal to his taste, least of all fiction, the Victorian fiction Bessie is so fond of. One sometimes receives the impression, through his detachment and adverse criticism, that he at bottom disapproves of, even despises, fiction. Anyway, he widely differs from a voracious reader like Miss Pandora Day or Miss Bessie Alden.

Self-acceptance of his lack of bookishness somehow redeems Lord Lambeth's shortcoming. He forthrightly confesses, pleading unfamiliarity with novelists and novels. His honest attitude firmly contrasts with the fraudulent, snobbish characters of "The Death of The Lion" - Miss Collop, Lady Augusta Minch, Lord Dorimont, and the whole coterie of frauds gathered in Mrs. Wimbush's summer house, Prestridge. By the lowest means available these want to pass for learned people, up to date in the latest literature: "Ah well, Thackeray, and George Eliot," said the young

nobleman, "I haven't read much of them."

"But these fashionable novels," said Lord Lambeth, "they are awful rot, you know."

"I am afraid I haven't read that, either," was the young man's rejoinder, laughing a little and blushing. "I am afraid you'll think I am not very intellectual" (p. 43).

Though his intellect leaves something to be desired, his person does not. Lord Lambeth enjoys a faultless physical appearance reflecting his excellent health. He is a model of handsomeness. Several passages of the tale stress this quality. His cousin is painted as a fair Englishman, but Lord Lambeth's good looks outshine Percy's by far. In due time we shall revert to this point, giving more evidence and connecting it with Miss Alden's "irritable" imagination (to use the word employed by James to describe its quickness.) One illustration suffices here: Lord Lambeth repaid observation; tall, straight, and strong, he was handsome as certain young Englishmen, and certain young Englishmen almost alone, are handsome, with a perfect finish of feature and a look of intellectual repose and gentle good temper which seemed somehow to be consequent

upon his well-cut nose and chin (p. 42).

In spite of his various accomplishments and assets, such as position, a striking figure, wealth (it seems convenient to keep in mind that he is the only son of the Duke of Bayswater, and that his financial expectations amount to a hundred thousand a year, "not to mention other attractions," as Percy says somewhat cryptically), charming manners, a deep sense of humor, and so on, Lord Lambeth's modesty remains intact. None of his speeches, thoughts, or actions betray the lightest vanity, a quality so typical in Morris Townsend, the suitor of Washington Square, who endlessly admires his appearance in any looking glass he comes across.

Up to now we have studied in some detail several of Lord Lambeth's salient characteristics which have a bearing on the romance between him and Miss Bessie Alden. Now we deem it convenient to do the same with hers. Let us start by speaking about her physique too.

Bessie matches Lambeth. She also enjoys the

magnificence of youth and health. She is also remarkable for her beauty. In her case, James once again resorts to a comparison to emphasize her physical qualities. Percy Beaumont is incidentally contrasted with Lord Lambeth; Mrs. Westgate is subtly compared with her sister, Miss Bessie Alden:

Some people preferred her sister, but Miss Alden was very different; she was in a different style altogether. Some people even thought her prettier, and, certainly, she was not so sharp. She was more in the Boston style (p. 40).

From "close vicinity," Lord Lambeth records her appearance: " a remarkably interesting young girl, with dark hair and blue eyes" (p. 39).

On the next page one finds new, revelatory information about her person and about certain inner aspects of her personality as well. These lead to a better appreciation of her behavior as regards Lambeth:

Though she was but a girl of twenty, she appeared to feel the obligation to exert an active hospitality, and this was, perhaps, the more to be noticed as she seemed by nature a reserved and retiring person, and had little of her sister's fraternizing quality. She

answering a single, simple question: 'For all her cleverness, however, he felt that she had to think a little what to say; she didn't say the first thing that came into her head; he had come from a different part of the world and from a different society, and she was trying to adapt her conversation' (p. 41).

The preceding illustrates her intellectual integrity and reserve and at the same time exposes her "cleverness." One cannot call her stupid or silly and impulsive, as Madame de Bellegarde is: Chapter VI of The American tells us the following about this unjudicious young lady: "She rattled this off with the air of a woman who had the reputation of saying everything that came into her head."

Bessie's reputation as a talker is as fine as her reputation for learning. Miss Alden seems to be, indeed, a happy combination of commendable qualities. Even more interesting than her being both a judicious conversationalist and a clever girl is the fact of her belonging to the intellectual class in America. Time and again she

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is considered a high-brow. Much of this reputation comes from her having lived long in Boston. James grasps this opportunity to laugh his fill at the long-standing American tradition that Boston is a very cultural town - the Athens of America. Mr. Westgate is charged with voicing the Jamesian mockery: "At Boston, you know, you have to pass an examination at the city limits; and when you come away they give you a kind of degree" (p. 27).

Whether intended as a big joke or not, Bessie used to live in Boston a great deal, and Boston afforded her the chance to receive a polished education, inculcating in her habits of reading and contemplation. There are endless bits of conversation that underscore her bookishness and proneness to reflection. For example, Mrs. Westgate sings her sister's praises: "She is very cultivated. She has studied immensely and read everything; she is what they call in Boston 'thoughtful' " (p. 46).

And from a dialogue between the two young Englishmen: "You prefer a bluestocking."

"Is that what you call Miss Alden?"

"Her sister tells me," said Percy Beaumont, "that she is tremendously literary" (p. 50).

Since Mrs. Westgate expresses her opinion of someone dear to her heart, united to her by blood and family sympathy, a rigorous reader perhaps cannot trust her objectivity and impartiality without further proofs. Bessie's own attitude, however, amply confirms Mrs. Westgate's pressing assurances. To judge by the host of things that Bessie accomplishes on her visit to London, her curiosity and restless seeking are bottomless. She covets to know everything, to visit every famous place in town, and to attend every show, every exhibit open to the public. In this sense, Miss Alden belongs to the numerous Jamesian family composed by young heroines who similarly reflect an inquisitive disposition. We have already studied a distinguished example of this sisterhood in the preceding chapter, let us now add that Bessie shows a colossal zest in trying to appease her hunger for knowledge: She went to balls and danced, she went

to dinners and talked, she went to concerts and listened (at concerts Bessie always listened), she went to exhibitions and wondered. Her enjoyment was keen and her curiosity insatiable (p. 77). The energy spent at these multifarious activities inspires awe for this model of human perfection. It goes without saying that she possesses an inexhaustible vitality, in other words, she manifestly matches the athletic stamina Lambeth possesses.

Bessie distinguishes herself from many another Jamesian heroine by means of two peculiarities, however, first, her far-flung imagination; second, her profound concern for things English. The author affirms plainly that she owns an "irritable imagination," to suggest the speed and power to catch any stimulus whatsoever and set to work immediately. This trait of character is all the more noticeable because Lord Lambeth regretfully has none. One can see in Bessie something of W. Somerset Maughman's self-portrait, vouchsafed in his autobiography The Summing Up: "I see everything

through the medium of an intense and searching imagination. All my personal sensations are magnified into the same gigantic proportions...by the same atmosphere of imagination through which they are perceived." Such words will acquire greater significance at a later stage of this analysis, when we undertake to study Bessie's boundless romanticism.

Her fondness of England runs parallel to her imagination, it is limitless, too subjective, and too literary; it has stemmed from books read, it has been fed by them, it has been increased a thousand times by her broad imagination. Even though she has not been in England before meeting Lord Lambeth, she has an enormous admiration for things English. To borrow a metaphor from James's vast stock, her fondness "seemed to cast a sort of aerial bridge over the impassable gulf produced by difference of race." Thus imagination makes up for the absence of first-hand knowledge. Bessie considers England her true spiritual homeland, she feels herself closer to it than to the United States. By the way, James

will constantly draw on this want of national spirit, on this lack, as it were, of "Americanism" and deep American roots, in such works as <u>The Portrait of a Lady</u> or <u>The Wings of The Dove</u>. Paradoxically, American heroines living abroad, scheming to remain abroad forever - since they never talk in earnest of coming back to America - behave more in the "American" way than if they were at home, that is to say, they conform to a pattern. Maybe one gets the same impression of Bessie because she constantly alludes to English literature, English novelists, English institutions, English manners and English ways of living, whereas she seldom, if ever, refers to the American ones. On the occasions when she does speak about America, she does so in connection and comparison with England. And she certainly does not catch fire speaking of the U. S. A. In passing, doesn't this infinite taste for England partially explain her affection for Lord Lambeth?

At any rate, Bessie clearly loves Britain as

deeply as she is concerned with social position - particularly with the nobility, a species non-existent in America. A deep kinship between her and Count Otto exists in this regard, though with a significant variation while the German noble possesses a coronet, she does not. It is also ironical that while she displays an enormous interest in the peerage, Lambeth does not give a damn for it, Mrs. Westgate does not care for rank either, outside the one afforded by money. Neither Mr. Westgate nor Mr. Wooley cares for it either. In the midst of this conspicuous isolation, Bessie's concern seems to be somehow unnatural. Better quote some fragments of a dialogue between Miss Alden and Mr. Beaumont that reveal, better than any argument, this trait of character:

"Mr. Beaumont," she had said, "please tell me something about Lord Lambeth's family. How would you say it in England - his position?"

"His position?" Percy Beaumont repeated.

"His rank, or whatever you call it. Unfortunately we haven't got a Peerage, like the

people in Thackeray."

"He is a peer, then?"

"Oh, yes, he is a peer."

"And has he any other title than Lord Lambeth?"

"His title is the Marquis of Lambeth," said Beaumont, and then he was silent. Bessie Alden appeared to be looking at him with interest. "He is the son of the Duke of Bayswater," he added presently.

"The eldest son?"

"The only son."

"And are his parents living?"

"Oh yes, if his father were not living he would be a duke."

"So that when his father dies," pursued Bessie Alden with more simplicity than might have been expected in a clever girl, "he will become Duke of Bayswater?"

"Of course," said Percy Beaumont. "But his father is in excellent health."

"And his mother?"

"And has he any other sisters?" (p. 48-9).

The former passage reveals several things about Bessie; it raises several questions as well. Aside from her insistent concern for nobility, she betrays "more simplicity than might have been expected in a

clever girl." Early in the second part of the
nouvelle, Mrs. Westgate touches again upon this
theme: "You are a little too simple, just a little,'
Mrs. Westgate tells Bessie. Furthermore, Miss Alden
appears to be a bit stubborn; she gets hold of an
idea and clings to it with all her might; she
raises endless questions upon every occasion with
anybody who might enlighten her on the English
nobility. She asks Percy Beaumont first and then
"She addressed herself directly to the young
nobleman," insensitive to both men's
unwillingness to answer. She ignores the nuances of
delicacy; she is a bit too sincere, almost abrupt -
in the fashion of Lambeth. In order to ascertain
personally Lambeth's genealogy, actual position in
Britain, and state of health, she goes so far as to
disregard certain "niceties" that many a Jamesian
character insist upon keeping. She seems to be
ridden by a morbid curiosity, even obssession,
concerning rank. She also constitutes the female
counterpart of Lambeth in her forthrightness and

her truthfulness - qualities becoming to fearless characters like them. Near the end of the tale Lord Lambeth tells Percy that Bessie is "not afraid, and she says things out." Inexperience breeds courage. Youth breeds artlessness. A combination of the four elements make up her character.

Now it is pertinent to list some of the questions raised by the foregoing quotation. Why does she submit Percy to a relentless cross-examination? Why does she keep on reverting to Lord Lambeth, in between questions about his family? Why does she desire to measure Lambeth's affluence? Why does she desire to ascertain what will be Lambeth's future on his father's death? The answers are fully given in the third section of this chapter.

Her taste for nobility is naturally related to her romanticism. As formerly observed, Bessie has read immensely notwithstanding her tender age. This habit has, to the best of our knowledge, influenced her thoughts to a very large extent. It has molded

her personality. Her whole life - speech, manners, ideals, attitudes, points of view, and what not - appears to follow literary patterns. She lives a life not her own - like an actress on the stage. She seems to be enacting a role in real life and expects others to respond accordingly; art comes first, actual life afterwards. (How much does she differ from Flaubert's Madame Bovary in this respect?) Conversely, reading is not an amusement, a source of information, a task; it is a tutor. Books provide her with models of action, nourishment, ways of living worth emulating, realms vaster than the wordly ones where "the light breeze of the imagination" may freely wander.

Habit may degenerate into vice; vice means death of freedom; death of freedom equals slavery. In a moment of insight, Lord Lambeth warns Miss Alden to beware of books, lest excessive reading enslave her.

"You mustn't mind what you read."
"Oh, I shall mind what I read!" Bessie Alden

rejoined. "When I read Thackeray, and George Eliot, how can I help minding them?" (p. 43).

"It's too lovely," said the young girl; "it's too enchanting, it's too exactly what it ought to be!"

"Well," said Bessie Alden, "that you would be more what I should like to be - what I should try to be - in your place" (p. 75).

"A hereditary legislator ought to know a great many things" (p. 76).

She had a kind of ideal conduct for a young man who should find himself in this magnificent position, and she tries to adapt it to Lord Lambeth's deportment, as you might attempt to fit a silhouette in cut paper upon a shadow projected upon a wall (p. 79).

In the preceding quotations some of Miss Alden's characteristics seem unattractive: literal-mindedness, boundless respect for literary celebrities, and dogmatism. She truly does mind what she reads, She implies that literary celebrities cannot be wrong on any account - she thinks they possess unchallenged wisdom. The emphasis laid upon the phrase, "How can I help minding

them," indicates that she intends to go on behaving in the same manner in the future.

Recurrence of that "too" in the second quote disquiets us greatly. Besides sounding shallow, it suggests exaggeration; hence it would be misleading to connect it with veracity and objectivity. She simply judges reality according to literary standards, without regard to the intrinsic value of things as they are outside literature.

The third quotation simply puts the accent on her dogmatism. The fourth stresses her rigid cast of mind, betraying her preconceptions. The author, subtly critizing her, underscores her stiffness of judgement by means of the suggestive line: "as you might attempt to fit a silhouette in cut paper upon a shadow projected upon a wall." Immediately the poetic figure employed conveys the idea of immobility, lifelessness, and artificiality.

Love for history and the topics it treats such as manners, buildings, ideas, dressing,

and people constitutes another facet of her formidable romanticism. Lord Lambeth pronounces Miss Alden "too historical" for his taste, so does Mrs. Westgate: "Bessie is really too historical," said Mrs. Westgate, catching a word of this dialogue. "Yes, you are too historical," said Lord Lambeth, laughing, but thankful for a formula. "Upon my honor, you are too historical!" (p. 75).

By "too historical" Lord Lambeth means her limitless admiration for things old, quaint, ruined and picturesque, things exuding a smell of the past. Miss Alden's rhapsodies over historical sights exceed the natural excitement of a tourist exploring unknown territory. Ancient buildings, beautiful in themselves or not, fill an important space in her mind; they fill her dreams, regardless of intrinsic beauty. Ruins form part of her idea of the "picturesqueness" of Britain "and poor Bessie Alden, like many a Yankee maiden, was terribly at the mercy of picturesqueness." The intention of the writer becomes clear. Bessie

becomes the living symbol of the young, pretty, American girl of her time. Representing no one in particular, she represents all American girls in general, she stands for the innocent, naive, fearless, inquisitive, restless, learned, inexperienced, frank, idealistic and, above all, profoundly romantic girl of her country. That is both the fortune and misfortune of Miss Alden! The fortune of being chosen as a symbol, the misfortune of not being chosen as a human being, with a life of her own.

Here we offer some fragments of a conversation between Lambeth and Bessie, displaying her interest in ruins.

"On Thursday I am going to the Tower."

"The Tower?"

"The Tower of London. Did you never hear of it?"

"Oh, yes, I have been there," said Lord Lambeth. "I was taken there by my governess when I was six years old. It's a rum idea, your going there."

"Do give me a few more rum ideas," said Bessie. "I want to see everything of that sort. I am going to Hampton Court, and to Windsor, and to Dulwich Gallery."

Lord Lambeth seemed greatly amused, "I wonder you don't go to the Rosherville Gardens."

"Are they interesting?" asked Bessie.

"Oh, wonderful."

"Are they very old? That's all I care for, " said Bessie.

"They are tremendously old. They are all falling to ruins."

"I think there is nothing so charming as an old ruinous garden," said the young girl (p. 67-8; italics mine).

This conversation gets us deeper into the character. One sees how much impatience Bessie shows to go to the ruins, her impatience and interest, for all its oddity and eagerness, contrasting vividly to Lambeth's indifference to the Matter. So indifferent is he to ruins that he has not been in the Tower since the age of six. He has no desire to return there soon either. At first mystified by her plans, Lambeth quickly catches the funny side of the question and, in a roundabout way, critizes her lust for the old.

A similar lack of discrimination plus a torrent of rhetoric used by James to underline

her romanticism and satirize it at the same time can be found in the following passage dealing with people instead of places, as the foregoing did:

she especially prized the privilege of meeting certain celebrated persons - authors and artists, philosophers and statemen - of whose renown she had been a humble and distant beholder, and who now, as a part of the habitual furniture of London drawing rooms, struck her as stars fallen from the firmament and become palpable - revealing also sometimes, on contact, qualities not to have been predicted of sidereal bodies (p. 77).

Notwithstanding these "qualities not to have been predicted of sidereal bodies," she does not harbor disappointment in her great expectations; she still clings fiercely to her old ideas, she still considers it a prize and a privilege to meet "certain celebrated persons," even though her more realistic, and maturer sister has done her best to destroy her bookish notions, pointing out weaknesses and shortcomings of such persons. Disenchantment awaits Bessie at the very end of the tale, after meeting Lambeth's hostile family.

Let us now study the romance itself. Once again, irony is the predominat keynote of this work of fiction simply because those who deliberately try to check either the young hero's " colloquial impulses" or the growth of the romance seem to have the opposite effect. This irony overtakes Percy Beaumont, Mrs. Westgate, and Lambeth's more immediate family,

Percy, the appointed custodian of his less clever cousin, neglects his duty in Newport. He does not pursue there the policy so conscientiously followed in New York. Rather, his vigilance is not se efficient as he wanted. However, his carelessness, or inefficiency, is not too obvious. On two occasions he tries to deflect Lambeth from Bessie's company: At this point Percy

Beaumont certainly looked straight at his kinsman; he tried to catch his eye. But Lord Lambeth would not look at him; his own eyes were better occupied (p. 46).

In a second attempt to separate them, Percy tries to dissuade Lambeth from accepting the

invitation to stay at Mrs. Westgate's summer house, but since "he had determined to go," Percy Beaumont would, of course, have been very sorry to allow him to alone; he was a man of conscience, and he remembered his promise to the duchess (p. 49).

Unfortunately these isolated attempts to obstruct the relationship are rendered ineffectual since Lord Lambeth is left alone with Bessie, as a rule, most of the time. On arriving at Newport, Percy immediately becomes Mrs. Westgate's most assiduous companion. Though "she is awfully argumentative" and they are "always discussing and differing,"they spend their time together. And, despite their mutual disagreement on everything, or perhaps thanks to it, Mrs. Westgate's company "evidently had its attractions, for Beaumont was constantly at his hostess's side."

Mrs. Westgate also furthers the romance, however involuntarily. Acting very much like Mrs. Steuben, she throws the couple together: "Mrs. Westgate declared, and she turned to her sister. 'You know you have to go to town. The phaeton is there. You

had better take Lord Lambeth' " (p. 45).

James also says a word on the subject. He declares that "she was not literally always in conversation with Lord Lambeth," a pregnant declaration though in so few words. The poignant implications of the adverbs "literally" and "always" cannot be slighted or minimized lest one miss a great deal.

The American cultural patterns also aid the growth of the love affair. In the country proverbial hospitality means freedom to intermingle with persons of the opposite sex with no restraint. The liberty to move about, and speak to, women vividly contrasts with the less free English society: "Lord Lambeth, who had stayed at many houses, had never stayed at a house in which it was possible for a young man to converse o frequently with a young lady (p. 50).

Besides company and conversation, a good many factors forward the attachment. First of all one should always keep in mind that Lambeth is the first Englishman she has ever spoken to, while

she is the first unmarried American girl Lambeth has ever spoken to. They represent an unknown experience to each other. Bessie confesses, "You are the first Englishman that - to my knowledge - I have ever talked with" (p. 44).

The introduction throws Bessie into a state of excitement, it impresses her. Why so? Various reasons support the hypothesis that this event, her meeting Lambeth, is of the utmost importance in her life. We had better review those reasons. First, she has been in the habit of leading a very quiet life in Boston; one may therefore assume that she did not enjoy much of a social whirl and consequently did not talk often with boys. Secondly, as far as one gathers from the text, her stay in Newport represents her debut in high society, as it were, an occasion she surely does not take lightly. She passes through a period of nervousness, mistrusts herself, and has no established standards yet rightly to measure people by. Thirdly, Lambeth is a handsome, good-natured,

polite, humorous fellow, who naturally attracts her. Fourthly, she possesses an "irritable imagination," and Lambeth happens to be a real lord, a marquis - in point of fact, the only male descendant of an illustrious house, the future owner of a castle. And finally, Bessie adores Albion, the island from which he comes.

There is a close resemblance between this story and "Pandora." Both tales deal with young American girls who become involved with a nobleman from a foreign country, the hero of the plot. The divergence between them is that Pandora is explicitly depicted as an intrepid girl, whereas Miss Alden is said by Mrs. Westgate to be "very shy," "extremely shy." Like Pandora, however, Bessie rather boldly introduces herself to Lambeth, so that, James writes ironically, Percy Beaumont "could not make out that, as Mrs. Westgate had said, she was shy. If she was shy, she carried it off very well" (p. 48).

Bessie's rather abrupt manner tells us many

things about her character. It reflects artlessness, inexperience, and a shocking sincerity seasoned with naivete - a suspicious naivete nonetheless. But above all it reflects frankness, an openness of spirit that rushes out through many a passionate exclamation. "It's the dream of my life!" she exclaims in front of Lambeth while they discuss London. On receiving the description of the peer's castle, "Bessie listened with great interest and declared that she would give the world to see such a place." Later on, near the end of the story, she expresses her opinion about castles and historical places at large: " Ah, you are fond of castles?" inquired her Grace.

"Immensely!" replied the young girl. "It has been the dream of my life to live in one" (p. 90).

The emphasis placed upon the initial exclamation, "Immensely!," plus the rest of the speech is very strong and strong proof of her deep-rooted romanticism. It matters little whether, as the duchess hesitates in classifying her, she is "either very artless or very audacious"; what

matters is that she has enough courage to voice outright her feelings without being awed by the imposing lady. At the same time, Bessie's words suggest that she very probably has dreamed of being the mistress of a castle, the mistress of a knight errant.

His Lordship certainly has many "attractions" to interest her. This is not a haphazard statement but an uncontested certainty, supported by three diverse pieces of evidence: Percy Beaumont's dialogues and attitude, the duchess's alarmed policy displayed in part one of the story, and Mrs. Westgate's cautious behavior in part two. Significantly, fear is the feeling shared by both families: Beaumont: "Depend upon it," he said, "that girl means to try for you" (p. 49).

Percy Beaumont was annoyed as well; he had deemed it his duty, as I have narrated, to write to the duchess, but he had not expected that this distinguished woman would act so promptly upon his hint (p. 53).

Here are several bits of conversation - of a

formal interrogatory, rather - between Mrs. Westgate and her sister: "Are you in love with Lord Lambeth?" she asked...."Because if you are," Mrs. Westgate went on, "I shall certainly not send for him."

Mrs. Westgate was silent a moment. "You are in love with him then?"

"My dear child, what is your point of view?"

"How do you mean - my point of view?"

"Don't you care for Lord Lambeth - a little?" (p. 61).

Not to be misled by the recurrent element of "fear," one should go back to the beginning of the action, a long way before Lord Lambeth meets Bessie. A truly prophetic character, Percy Beaumont foreshadows the subsequent events. (One may remark, in passing, that the use of "prophetic characters" is a literary pattern often to be found in James's works, as we shall have the opportunity to emphasize in the next chapter.) Again Percy's foreshadowing reveals a lot of fear : "My dear boy, I hope you won't begin to flirt...! With a married woman, if she's bent upon it, it's all very

well," Beaumont expounded. "But our friend mentioned a young lady - a sister, a sister-in-law. For God's sake, don't get entangled with her!"

"How do you mean entangled?"

"Depend upon it she will try to hook you" (p. 30).

Thus one early knows what to expect, what is almost certain to happen in the plot. But why, one may ask, does fear and not a milder sentiment hover over the romance all the time, as if it were a bird of bad omen? Why do both families fear that the romance will succeed?

Naturally the reasons accounting for the opposition to the attachment differ in each family. Mrs. Westgate fears that through Lord Lambeth Bessie will be disappointed in England since he will not be allowed to do as he pleases there. "At Newport he could do as he liked; but here it is another affair. He has to have an eye to consequences." In other words, Mrs. Westgate is fully aware of the different standards predominant in English high society; she considers the difference of nationalities; she seems to know what to expect from the conventions ruling the

lives of the well-bred, rich English population. She tells Bessie how the Butterworths were ignored by the Duke of Green-Erin when they arrived in England, though they had been very kind to him in the U.S.A. Constant warning on her side proves the former assertion; for instance, she informs Bessie that to go out alone would be improper for a girl like her. Mrs. Westgate's obtrusive attitude does not stem from spite, jealousy, or envy; it stems from tact, foresight, and experience accumulated over the years - something Bessie totally lacks. Mrs. Westgate implies, furthermore, that Bessie has not had her fill, Bessie cannot make a wise choice yet since she has been on the scene, as it were, but a short time. The subsequent turn of the action supports the elder sister's suppositions.

The attitude assumed by the young peer's family stems from suspicion and from a sense of superiority. They mistrust Bessie's motives: they fear lest she turn out to be a meretricious adventuress with money as a goal; they fear Bessie

wants Lambeth for class considerations - as a ladder to climb up to the best society; finally, they consider her far beneath their son. In short, the families mistrust each other, dislike each other, fight each other. They represent two particular national standpoints; a clash between nationalities seems inevitable here. Let us revert for the moment to the two principal characters of the *nouvelle*, since we will shortly have more to say on this score.

Whether Bessie tries "to hook" the peer or not, Lambeth does not remain indifferent to her. Interest in her appears immediately, the first time they are thrown together: "his attention was not vaguely distracted by close vicinity to a remarkably interesting young girl, with dark hair and blue eyes" (p. 39).

The three pairs of words: "not vaguely distracted," "close vicinity," and "remarkably interesting," show how deeply she has aroused his interest. Each new interview brings them closer together. Her physical aspect, so alluring to him

from the outset, is not marred by her "interesting" intellectual and moral virtues: they promote the interest. Each aspect of her personality is as charming as the others. At first, the nobleman acts with reserve, caution; he takes an ambiguous attitude toward the matter; he does not readily accept the idea of his interest in Miss Alden, but at the same time he does not reject it either: " 'In the first place, how do you know how fond I am of her?' asked Lord Lambeth. 'And, in the second place, why shouldn't I be fond of her?' " (p. 50).

Common sense informs both questions. At this stage nobody on earth can know for certain how deep are his feelings for her. Nothing prevents him from liking her too. Nevertheless, in the dialogue that closes the first section of the book, the nobleman doe accept his interest, makes a confession: "You were quite right, after all. I am very much interested in her" (p. 53).

Lord Lambeth's interest in Bessie increases steadily, though here one is again confronted

with a classical Jamesian period of separation. It seems as if James wanted to submit the feelings of the attached couple to the trial of time and distance in order to test the quality of their affection and endurance. One remembers, in connection with this technique, James's "The Story of A Year," the short story in which the principal female character, Miss Elizabeth Crowe, slowly loses her love for Mr. John Ford, at length ceasing altogether to care for him; or "The Death of the Lion," where the narrator and Miss Hurter attain their goal - marriage; or the novel The American, dealing with a North American millionaire, Christopher Newman, who, after a painful absence from Claire de Cintré, comes back to her sure, solidly sure, of his affection. The same fate awaits Lambeth. The period of separation seems to have increased, instead of lessening, his concern for Miss Alden. From a somewhat passive attitude, he proceeds to an active line of action: " 'Ah, now, don't be severe,

Miss Alden,' said Lord Lambeth, smiling still more. 'Please don't be severe. I want you to like me - awfully' " (p. 68).

The repetition of the line "don't be severe," then the entreaty "Please," followed by the naive confession of "I want you to like me," and finally, after a touching and eloquent pause, the powerful adverb "awfully," convey a heavy load of feeling. The speech convinces us of his interest and his artless straightforwardness. Fortunately, and unfortunately in the final analysis, things smooth down for him early in the second part of the book. It is good fortune to have Bessie nearby, willing to be shown the highlights of the city, willing to lend an ear to his speeches. Ironically, too, the policy carried by the young man's family, at first icy silence, furthers the romance since the nobleman has "to make up for the accidental absences, the short memories, all the other irregularities of everyone else. He drove them in the park, he took them to visit private collections of pictures, and, having a house of his own, invited them to dinner" (p. 77). Thus

the initial policy of his lordship's family becomes the worst enemy to their designs: it promotes what it was meant to impede.

The season, blossoming London spring, also aids romance. There is no one close enough to check our hero's "colloquial impulses." One must also consider the "feverish" state Miss Alden finds herself in. There is no exaggeration in the term "feverish." In addition to fulfilling the "ambition of her life," as she has formerly somewhat passionately stated, the weather is delightful, the people and the places are "what they ought to be," and she becomes the object of the tender attentions of a handsome nobleman. What could be more flattering to her feminine vanity? What could be a better stimulus to her irritable imagination. In sum, Bessie begins to give way; she begins to observe her feelings, to examine them, in an effort to attain truth. For the first time in the book, as well as in her life, she brings up love: "She was not in love with Lord

Lambeth - she assured herself of that" (p. 78). And the author continues to explore this romantic vein,

It will immediately be observed that when such assurances become necessary the state of a young lady's affections is already ambiguous; and, indeed, Bessie Alden made no attempt to dissimulate - to herself, of course - a certain tenderness that she felt for the young nobleman. She said to herself that she liked the type to which he belonged - the simple, candid, manly, healthy English temperament. She spoke to herself of him as women speak of young men they like - alluded to his bravery (which she had never in the least seen tested), to his honesty and gentlemanliness, and was not silent upon the subject of his good looks....Her imagination was excited and gratified by the sight of a handsome young man endowed with such large opportunities - opportunities she hardly knew for what, but, as she supposed, for doing great things - for setting an example, for exerting an influence, for conferring happiness, for encouraging the arts (p. 78-9).

The quotation represents three different stages. The first deals with her rather "ambiguous" state of feelings toward Lambeth; she does feel "a certain tenderness" endangering, or on the point

of becoming a danger to, her peace of mind, untroubled up to now. Moreover, one runs across an element non-existent in the first part of the tale: pretending. She has to resort to "pretending" in order to conceal her "tenderness,"from him, at least. In addition to the newness of this trait of character, concealment seems to mask a sort of shame; it is as if she were ashamed of feeling "tenderness" for him.

The second phase of the quotation dispels doubts: Bessie unquestionably likes Lambeth. In two sentences beginning alike - "She said to herself" and "She spoke to herself" - Miss Alden explains her fondness in terms of manners, behavior, moral virtues, and physical appearance; she reviews these mentally and seems pleased by the result of the review; she considers the duke's endowments, with a single exception, a palpable reality. The single exception which spoils her objectivity is bravery, a quality as yet untested. Her reservation is important because it foreshadows

other qualities in her. First, Bessie distorts reality, however little. Second, Bessie exaggerates the peer's qualifications.

Also revealed are her deep-imbedded romanticism and powerful imagination. These again bring to mind W. Somerset Maugham's confession, quoted in a preceding paragraph. Bessie disregards the actuality around her in order to create a reality of her own more in accordance with her wishes; she does so not to translate it afterwards into a work of art, as the creative artist does, but to enhance her hero. Spurred by romantic notions and fierce fantasy, Miss Alden feels forced to change, to transform, her immediate surroundings into a beautiful place, a vaster realm. Her eagerly sought departure from actuality is further pressed upon through the following illustration: "he looked very handsome, and he had a kind of splendor that he had not had in America. Bessie Alden's imagination, as we know, was just then active: " 'He is handsomer and more splendid than anything I have ever seen,' she said to herself. And then she

remembered that he was a marquis, and she thought he looked like a marquis' " (p. 64).

An avoidance of raw reality appears in the next passage too: "and she felt acutely that if Lord Lambeth's position was heroic, there was but little of the hero in the young man himself. Then her imagination wandered away from him - very far away" (p. 79).

Happily, for a time the Englishman shares in the secret ("to feel that she also liked him was very agreeable to Lord Lambeth"); he knows that Bessie cares for him.

Unfortunately, as often happens in James's fiction, the factors obstructing the success of the love affair prevail and eventually destroy it. Even though everything seems to be going perfectly well, the first signs of miscarrying have already begun to appear; failure creeps into the romance through disappointment. One of the last quotes plainly shows Bessie's unpleasant realization that Lambeth falls short of her ideals, that he lacks the "heroism" she ardently desires to find in him.

The author does not seem willing to indulge her wishes, any more than he subscribes to the old tradition in literature that depicts heroes heroically - no more Rolands to kill twenty thousand men singlehanded in one afternoon.

It is time now to devote ourselves to the study of the forces opposing a happy ending. The young folks' intellects differ widely, and the difference does not induce a satisfactory understanding between them. Early in the story one is told that Lambeth is much less clever than his cousin. He is also placed beneath Bessie in this respect. Lack of cleverness constitutes a serious handicap for the success of the romance because it affords other people, their antagonists, opportunities to critize and abuse him. Besides, it is not flattering to have a suitor who verges on dullness, if one considers brightness a great virtue, as does Miss Alden: "He is not clever," Mrs. Westgate declared.

"Well, there have been clever people whom I

have disliked," said Bessie Alden; "so that I suppose I may like a stupid one. Besides, Lord Lambeth is not stupid."

"Not so stupid as he looks!" exclaimed her sister, smiling (p. 61).

No need to exhaust the evidence on this theme because it abounds. Suffice it to say that he cuts a lamentable figure, inasmuch as she shines by means of her prodigious intelligence. Mrs. Westgate asserts that Bessie "is what they call in Boston 'thoughtful.'" Of course one cannot abide by her sisterly assertion without testing it. An unsympathetic character like Percy Beaumont has to agree with it: "he discovered for himself that the young lady was clever." Lambeth himself expresses his admiration; unselfishly he recognizes that she is "certainly very clever." Finally, Bessie's own dialogues display sufficiently her exceptional talents.

It would not be so distressing that Lambeth cannot compete with her if it were not for the

fact that he is also something of an ignoramus. Ignorance seems to be a corollary of his dullness, whereas Bessie's brightness seems to lead to scholarliness. The following remark, taken from Llewellyn Jones's text How to Read Books, exactly describes Lambeth's general attitude in regard to literature at large: "There are those who regard novels as they regard dandelions: so numerous in their recurring seasons...as not to be worth serious consideration per se." Once again, his lack of scholarliness stands falteringly besides Bessie's broad knowledge; it scarcely stands comparison. Let us see how she reacts to the paucity and abundance of learning: "You are very disappointing, Lord Lambeth," she said.

"Ah, now don't say that," he cried. "That's the worst thing you could possibly say."

"No," she rejoined, "it is not so bad as to say that I had expected nothing of you" (p. 75).

In the passage note the disappointment, the fear, and the expiring old expectations. In the first place, she cares a lot not only for erudition but for high-brows as well; in point of fact, no

other class of people has so many attractions for her : "They are the people in England I am most curious to see," she declares in the second part of the tale, and she means it too. Since Lambeth does not care for them, he has nothing to do with them, as shown by the next passage: "she to others at which his lorship was neither actually nor potentially present; and it was chiefly on these latter occasions that she encountered those literary and artistic celebrities of whom mention has been made" (p. 80). Aloof from those special circles, Lambeth fails to raise himself in Bessie's opinion. In addition to this new disillusion, their conversations widen the gap already existing between them. Time and again she receives no answer to her flood of questions. Humorous and modest, he makes light of his obtuseness, disentangling himself from embarrassing situations as best he can. A profusion of blushing, smiles, laughter, and exclamations replace answers. Not very rewarding company to keep, he is naturally "disappointing" as a guide. One could foresee whether it would be

marvellous to have him as a husband for life, sharing few common interests. He is beyond redemption. Even her flights of romantic imagination fail to comfort her. They do not blind her to Lambeth's inability to meet her in many fields; she realizes his narrowness.

Though the marquis is not very far-sighted, he feels that something is wrong; he fears lest he lose her. He realizes dismally that he falls short of her standards and fears the consequences: "Ah, now don't say that," he cried. "That's the worst thing you could possibly say" (p. 75). In a burst of sincerity, Bessie confesses that she used to entertain expectations concerning him. She does not contradict Lambeth. She simply shifts the accent of the question upon a confession no longer valid, since it described something alive in the past. The handling of the past tense, "I had expected," speaks for itself, the obvious implication being that she no longer entertains hopes.

To make things still worse, the nobleman does

not stop at showing ignorance on every possible occasion; up to a certain moment he emphatically critizes fiction in the presence of Bessie: "But these fashionable novels," said Lord Lambeth, "they are awful rot, you know" (p. 43).

Unaware of the wounding effect his deprecation may produce on Miss Alden, in the second half of the book he proceeds to critize literature in general: "Hang it! you are always at your books." Lambeth does not restrict himself to passing judgment on books, but goes on to disapprove of her activities, swearing to boot. His oaths intensify his attitude in contrast with his habitual gentleness. Bad as it already is, Lambeth assumes a patronizing air: "Ah, the novels always overdo it, you know," Lord Lambeth rejoined. "You must not go by the novels" (p. 42).

Somehow one cannot condone his posture because he has no right to judge printed stuff; Bessie is also dogmatic, however, a most unfavorable trait of her character: "I should expect you to know a great deal more," declared Bessie Alden.

"You have no right to be ignorant, at

all events," said Bessie.

"Well," said Bessie Alden,"that you would be more what I should like to be - what I should try to be - in your place" (p. 74-5).

These exhortative lines are meant to be a defense against Lambeth's attacks and to underscore her domineering bent. Anyway, they reflect her obssession with "places," something that Lambeth dislikes in her too. He ardently critizes her fondness for social status: "Ah, my place!" exclaimed Lord Lambeth. "You are always talking about my place!" (p. 75).

His words reflect vexation, hers disappointment. A towering disgrace approaches. The discrepancies in their outlook and tastes are reinforced by family opposition. We already know, having partially studied this question, that both families disapprove of the affair. So much so that even when there is no proof of a settled affair Lambeth's mother recalls him to Europe, acting on a hint thrown by Percy Beaumont, the unofficial guardian. We also know that this gentleman is

disquieted about the putative romance during the first part of the story, whereas Mrs. Westgate rather encourages it. The second half of the book brings along a change: Beaumont assumes the passive role of a spectator, while Mrs. Westgate begins actively to participate in the development of the affair. Beaumont changes places with Lambeth's mother: "I must decline on this occasion to do any more police duty. Her Grace must look after you herself" (p. 69).

Percy's resolution to withdraw into the background is discreet, intelligent, and understandable; nevertheless, it does not have salutary effects on the romance. His "police duty" - rather an unpleasant commission to fulfill - is marked by passivity; he contents himself with observing, warning, checking the young man's "colloquial impulses," and wiring his "boss" in order to inform her of his findings, but he never undertakes harsher, more conclusive measures against the relationship, maybe because such

action goes against the grain with him, or he is not given enough power to act otherwise. Forcseeing further complications in London, Percy is quick to wash his hands of the affair. Whatever the explanation, Mrs. Westgate realizes that an English mother can loudly assert her authority and be something of a nuisance if she makes up her mind to do so: "I don't know what power they have to interfere, but I know that a British mama may worry her son's life out" (p. 73).

Accordingly, Mrs. Westgate prepares her defenses, or rather she wants to take the offensive, planning to "frighten them." She propounds the nature of her objectives: "The policy I mean to follow is very deep." Notheless, at the beginning it does not appear so deep as bothersome to Bessie, since she is submitted to a considerable interrogation. Mrs. Westgate counterbalances Percy's role in America, as we have observed earlier. She tries to discourage Miss Alden from further intercourse with Lambeth.

She also tries her hand at warning, probing, and cross-examining. At length one gathers what "deep policy" means, the policy to be followed on both sides will be carried out covertly, as befits civilized persons.

Discouragement presently leads to espionage. Mrs. Westgate's fears of British mamas come true; she thus acquires a kind of prophetic grandeur too. Percy Beaumont corroborates her verdict: "They are afraid of you. They are afraid of irritating you and making you worse. So they go to work very cautiously, and, somewhere or other, they get their information. They know a great deal about you. They know that you have been with those ladies to the dome of St. Paul's and - where was the other place? - to the Thames Tunnel" (p. 83).

Such startling news betrays their opposition to the affair, their fear, their resourcefulness, their decision to spare nothing to fight the romance, their assertive position, and their meanness. They embody the philosophy of the means as a justification of an end. They can make

a hell of the life of their son, and their son's friends, and they are set upon doing so. They add excitement to the plot and complexity to the story. Instead of imposing "terror" upon the young couple, they vex them. Finally, having enough information from their "hidden sources" (the best agency of detectives possibly), raising tension to the highest pitch, they decide to intervene personally. We will study only some fragments of the dialogue between the British and the American parties (though one is tempted to quote it in full, thanks to its significance) in order to show the irony, bitchery, rivalry, and animosity that kindles it. "But we only go to see a few people - whom we like."

"Of course one can't like veryone," said Lady Pimlico.

"It depends upon one's society," Mrs. Westgate rejoined (p. 88-9).

Then, after an abundant exchange of "niceties" of that sort, they come straight to the main point, "Lambeth is very susceptible, but he is very

volatile, too."

"Volatile?" asked Bessie.

"He is very inconstant. It won't do to depend on him."

"Ah," said Bessie, "I don't recognize that description. We have depended on him greatly - my sister and I - and he has never disappointed us."

"He will disappoint you yet," said the duchess.

Bessie gave a little laugh...."I suppose it will depend on what we expect of him."

"The less you expect, the better," Lord Lambeth's mother declared.

"Well," said Bessie, "we expect nothing unreasonable" (p. 89).

Every statement constitutes a threat, a challenge not to be misunderstood, while it also bespeaks the sarcasm of the intelligent persons therein involved. The quote is moreover profusely tinged with ambiguity; for example, the last line of Bessie might be taken as a statement of fact, as an audacious threat, as a hope, as a veiled hint of marriage, etc. Even though the scene is not interpreted by Bessie as an "attempt to 'overawe' " then, it has benefited her

enormously; it has opened her eyes, as it were, to the gulf between her and Lambeth; it has shown her a reality diverging from the literary; it has disclosed to her a world of hostility, overbearing pride, and bitchery; it has led her to undertake an important decision concerning Lambeth: the decision to break with him.

There is an interval of some hours between the interview with the duchess and Bessie's next conversation with him - time enough for her to reflect upon the matter and see it in its true light. She possibly thinks it best to leave him alone for his family's sake; it would not do to go on "fighting" to assert her rights as a bride and a wife afterwards if she were to marry him. Hell would be her lot if she remained in England; the British ladies would never forgive her the wound inflicted on their pride. And Lambeth could not live in America, far away from everything he has been accustomed to, since he does not possess strength enough for the enterprise. Furthermore,

there are the discrepancies between them to be considered. One way or the other, Bessie dismisses Lambeth. The dismissal is performed, as the Greek classical dramatist deals with bloody affairs, offstage. One knows it has taken place only by induction. Mrs. Westgate meets Lambeth exiting from their hotel: "She thought he looked slightly embarrassed; he was certainly very grave. 'I am sorry to have missed you. Won't you come back?' she asked.

'No,' said the young man, 'I can't. I have seen your sister. I can never come back.' Then he looked at her a moment and took her hand. 'Goodbye, Mrs. Westgate,' he said. 'You have been very kind to me' " (p. 91).

Too seriously for his character, he bids Mrs. Westgate a definite farewell. And he implies that he cannot come back to see her again because he has talked with Bessie. To emphasize the conclusiveness of his good-bye he thanks her for her kindness. His dejection as well as his reluctance to speak frankly, as is his wont, makes us wonder about the conversation with Bessie. Mrs. Westgate hints that

there has been a proposal of marriage, an unsuccessful proposal: "Dear Bessie, I wish you might have accepted him."

"I couldn't," said Bessie gently.

"He is an excellent fellow," said Mrs. Westgate.

"I couldn't," Bessie repeated (p. 92).

Thus one infers that he proposed to her, since she does not deny her sister's suggestion. Nonetheless one lacks conclusive evidence. Bessie's taciturnity, no more usual with her than with Lambeth, increases the reader's as well as Mrs. Westgate's wonder about her motives in refusing the duke. One receives the firm impression that she will never, on any account, betray her "secret" because she stubbornly refuses to give more information than the simple repetition of "I couldn't." Her resolve to keep silent about the matter is firmly supported by her sudden urge to leave the city; she presses Mrs. Westgate to leave for Paris as soon as possible. Or is one to interpret her impatience to abandon London an indication that she cannot trust her firmness, if

by chance Lambeth should come back to her, and still refuse him? Does she fear lest she change her mind?

The ending of the story does not strike us as specially bitter, sad, or chilly, as is the case with the ending of The Aspern Papers. Perhaps the difference of tone stems from the difference between the heroines of these tales: Bessie is young, pretty, widely cultivated; Miss Tita is the extreme opposite. Life has still many opportunities on the romantic level for the former, none in store for the latter. In point of fact, rather than an ending, it seems to be the outset of a new, truer, more realistic, maturer phase of Bessie's development. A phrase of hers, uttered during the first part of the book, comes now to mind to demonstrate our point: "You must remember that you are only a beginning," she says to Lambeth. The phrase, after the failure of the relationship, acquires greater significance. Let us also remember that the title of the story underlines

the "episodic" nature of the romance. In short, an unsuccessful love affair has launched our heroine into the world with an altered point of view, firmer attitude, wider understanding of herself and other people, renewed zest for life, and less romanticism. On the other hand, one supposes that Lambeth, with magnificent assets to commend him fully, will sooner or later find a partner to share his humor with. It could be considered almost like the ending of a fairy tale after all.

THE WARMTH OF ONE'S HOME

Doctor Austin Sloper, the heroine's father, is one of the two principal male characters depicted in *Washington Scuare*. Like his sister Mrs. Penniman, Dr. Sloper witnesses from the outset the growth of Catherine's attachment to Morris Townsend. Far from being an inert spectator of his daughter's hopeless infatuation for Townsend, Dr. Sloper fiercely intervenes in the love affair. Most telling of all, Doctor Sloper evinces a remarkable power, foresight.

Without exaggeration one can affirm that he has "prophetic vision," since his "prophesies" or forebodings invariably come true in one form or another. No black magic or occult arts come to his aid. He never pretends to be a wizard or the priest of some weird sect. The fact is much simpler. Thirty years of uninterruptedly "laborious" medical practice have sharpened his natural talents for judgement and observation.

Familiarity with the oddest, weakest, darkest, innermost recesses of people has enabled him to acquire plenty of reliable knowledge of human beings. Hence most of his prognostications presently prove accurate. In this sense, he plays what might be termed a "prophetic role" akin to Mrs. Tristram's in The American: "When Catherine is about seventeen," he said to himself, "Lavinia will try and persuade her that some young man with a mustache is in love with her. It will be quite untrue; no young man, with a mustache or without, will ever be in love with Catherine. But Lavinia will take it up, and talk to her about it." [1]

The subsequent action proves him partially right and partially wrong in his forecast. He miscalculates by four years; Catherine is about twenty, not seventeen, when she meets Morris. But

1.- Henry James, Washington Square, The Europeans, ed. R.P. Blackmur, Dell Publishing Co., Inc. (New York, 1965), p. 20. All subsequent quotations from Washington Square are from this edition.

Lavinia does talk to her niece about the young man, pursuing the matter and trying to inflame her interest in him. Doctor Sloper errs in thinking that no one will ever be in love with Catherine because "John Ludlow, who was a year the girl's junior...was seriously in love with her." Nonetheless, his foreboding launches the reader into the romantic course the story will follow later on. Strictly speaking, his occasional miscalculations do not mar the picture of his character; they give him verisimilitude.

So intimately does Doctor Sloper know his sister that a second prediction concerning the same topic comes appallingly true: "Lavinia is going to get up a romance for Catherine. It's a shame to play such tricks on the girl" (p. 34).

This is the first time that the term "romance" is explicitly mentioned in connection with Catherine. The line quoted above discloses new, disturbing information about Catherine's father: he callously acts as a cool observer. He foresees a catastrophe in his daughter's preference for

Morris and gloats over it in anticipation - the way a fan enjoys in anticipation the bloody bull-fight he is about to witness. Despite his assertive authority (he is a regular authoritarian in his house), Doctor Sloper overlooks the "shame" entailed in Mrs. Penniman's meddling, and does nothing to prevent "such tricks" being played on his only child. He restricts himself to watching, persistently and morbidly, the enactment of the drama; he warmly welcomes the occasion: "By Jove,"

> he said to himself,"I believe she will stick - I believe she will stick! [to Morris]" And this idea of Catherine "sticking" appeared to have a comical side, and to offer a prospect of entertainment. He determined, as he said to himself, to see it out (p. 113).

The exclamation mark added to the repetition of the same thought, "I believe she will stick," charged with astonishment betrays his glee in testing Catherine's unexpected steadfastness to her lover. Besides, it reveals his sense of the ludicrous, his "black humor." In short, it is an extraordinary display of emotion for a man "who

was not addicted to easy enthusiasm." The passage also suggests a spectator comfortably seated in the first row awaiting the rise of the curtain to enjoy the performance of a thrilling play. The theatrical dimension is assiduously pressed upon the reader by much of the terminology that fills the novel - for example, "drama," "a little drama," "melodrama," "observer," "histrionic talent," "entertainment," "theatre," "secret passion for the theatre," "spectator," "prompter," "pull up the curtain," "performance," "Chorus," "scenic," "great scenes," "epilogue," and so forth. Along with his "black humor" and his fondness for the theatrical, however, one detects his deep-seated selfishness. He considers Catherine's loyalty a matter for comedy; it amuses him so much that he does not stop to think about her eventual predicament, her difficult position.

In the same quotation one finds excitement mixed with aloofness and curiosity tinged with both eagerness and patience. His resolution to

observe the enactment of the "little entertainment" to the last, no matter who may suffer in the meantime, also brings to light his "scientific" disposition, his unnatural feelings as regards Catherine, and his on the whole vicious attitude. While he is engrossed with the prospect of the "imminent romance" between his daughter and Morris and eager to see what it finally amounts to, the last sentiment to stir Doctor Sloper's conscience is sympathy, compassion for the suffering girl. This lack of tenderness toward his child eventually influences the trend of the romance. Catherine clings harder to Morris, looking in him for a crumb of affection and, contrariwise, growing farther apart from her unloving father. Even Doctor Sloper's favorite sister, Mrs. Almond, stresses his unsympathetic, abnormal attitude in an accurate phrase: "You are shockingly cold-blooded." Aunt Penniman, with more emphatic language, corroborates this judgement: "Your pleasures make one shudder!"

Since there is no crime without punishment, Doctor Sloper is duly punished for his detachment, coldness, cruelty, and immorality. James seems to condemn thoroughly the physician's lack of affection for Catherine, his tyranny, his excessive self-assurance, and his devilish pride. The author seems willing to teach him a lesson in humility, understanding, and fatherhood by means of the same person Doctor Sloper so much hurts, derides, and humiliates. Time and again Doctor Sloper, despite his "cleverness," without any inkling of what is going on, is deceived by the daughter whose weak intelligence he despises. Like St. Peter on the night of Jesus's betrayal, Catherine conceals the truth three times in a single night; for the first time she lies to her father right away after meeting Morris. But the most ironical blow aimed at Doctor Sloper's "immorality" comes at the end. While all of New York knows about the real state of Catherine and Morris's relationship. "The local celebrity" remains permanently in the dark;

he dies without learning the "truth" of the romance. He receives a punishment for life, as it were: He was certainly curious about it, and would have given a good deal to discover the exact truth; but it was his punishment that he never knew - his punishment, I mean, for the abuse of sarcasm in his relations with his daughter. There was a good deal of effective sarcasm in her keeping him in the dark, and the rest of the world conspired with her, in this sense, to be sarcastic (p. 186).

James thus chastises Doctor Sloper with the Old Testament philosophy: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Sarcasm is repaid with sarcasm. He suffers a shameful, public chastisement. Why do the New Yorkers join in the castigation too? It almost seems as if the author wanted to make Doctor Sloper a public example of perverse fatherhood who violated the established codes of good conduct, putting in peril the welfare of society at large.

Doctor Sloper is unfailingly accurate in his prophecies about Lavinia, partially accurate about Catherine, unfailingly accurate about Morris. The old physician estimates correctly, far in advance, Mr. Townsend's motives for courting Catherine; "He

is looking for a position most earnestly," said Mrs. Penniman.

"He is looking for it here - over there in the front parlor. The position of husband of a weak-minded woman with a large fortune would suit him to perfection!" (p. 58)

One could argue that there is nothing meritorious in fairly rating Lavinia or Catherine, inasmuch as he has lived with them for years on end. Such an argument, however, has no validity as regards Mrs. Montgomery and Mr. Townsend because he has spoken to them only once or twice, and then only for a few minutes. However that may be, we shall have ample opportunity in a later section to consider further his accuracy concerning Morris. At the moment we might venture some questions linked with Doctor Sloper's opposition to the love affair, and more particularly with his insufferable behavior with the two ladies living under his roof, with Catherine specially. Why doesn't he love his daughter? Why doesn't he pity her at least? Why does he hurt her all the time? Why does he treat

her as if he hated her?

Various emotions may account for the Doctor's dislike of Catherine: frustration, vexation, pain, and disappointment; all of them are negative; all of them deserve study. Frustration colors two different facets of his life: his marriage and his fatherhood. Two samples fully explain this subject: "He had married, at the age of twenty-seven, for love, a very charming girl" (p. 14). No wonder then that he was "both a devoted and a very happy husband." But his married life was star-crossed: "for about five years a source of extreme satisfaction to the young physician [it] suddenly came to an end with his wife's death." A second death in the family further embitters his life and brings about a second, unutterable frustration: "His first child, a little boy of extraordinary promise, as the Doctor...firmly believed, died at three years of age" (p. 15-6). The greater his wife and son's talents were the bitterer his frustration; the sooner they passed away the more inexpressible his frustration.

As for vexation, he has the impression that Fate (with a capital letter) has been

extraordinarily unfair to him; he suffers the vexation of a father who has entertained high expectations of the future of a brilliant son, the vexation natural to a skilful physician who has been utterly unable to extend the lives of his dearest relatives. His is a vexation akin to useless masochism: he escaped all criticism but his own, which was much the most competent and most formidable. He walked under the weight of this private censure for the rest of his days, and bore forever the scars of a castigation (p. 16).

Aside from the pain inflicted by his double loss, he must endure the pain of having a child who "was not what he had desired," a child about whom "there was nothing to be proud of" - a considerable pain for a remarkable man, plus the "irritation at having produced a common-place child" who very early falls short of her father's expectations. The pain stems ironically from having "a weak-minded woman" be the agent, however indirect and involuntary, of his "bright" wife's death when the former was born.

In passing, we may take the following quotation as the explanation of his permanent widowhood: "His wife had been a reasonable woman, but she was a bright exception... Such a conviction, of course, did little either to mitigate or to abbreviate his widowhood" (p. 18).

To resume the thread of our tale, unconsciously and endlessly the father blames the daughter for the disappearance of the wife. His acts always draw upon a huge fund of resentment toward the girl, hidden from the light of consciousness, of course. So much so, that he would be the first person to be surprised to learn that his behavior comes from resentment - his ethics would resent the discovery. Maybe that is why "for fear of being unjust to her, he did his duty with exemplary zeal." One easily realizes that he tries to be "just" to the girl not for the girl's sake but for his own peace of mind. He fears to be "unjust" although he does not fear to be "unaffectionate." He evidently overworks himself in carrying out "his duty with exemplary zeal." The phrase evinces effort, not pleasure, in

F. [illegible] [illegible] letter) has been

the task of bringing up the child.

Disappointment is the last clue to . understanding Doctor Sloper's attitude. The first chapter of the novel bluntly emphasizes it: "The little girl was a disappointment." This subject is recurrently touched upon in diverse passages of the text. Catherine seems to disappoint every one, on every score, on every occasion; hence, though "she was not quick with...anything," she comes to realize her "disappointing" nature: "Do you know you sometimes disappoint me," said Morris.

"I should think I might. I disappoint every one - father and Aunt Penniman" (p. 122).

Apart from "romance," the novel deals with the ancient conflicts between good and evil, dullness and brightness. Two gentlemen, the two chief male characters, exemplify brightness: Doctor Sloper and Mr. Morris Townsend. Two ladies, the two chief female characters, exemplify dullness: Miss Catherine Sloper and Aunt Penniman. Though the aunt involuntarily works more evil than good, one infers that James equates evil with brightness and

goodness with dullness in this novel. Or, rather, that the possession of one quality easily leads to the other. This apparent digression is meant to explain more fully and consequently to understand more fully the behavior of the three main characters, most particularly Doctor Sloper's.

If one credits Thackeray's assertion that a good man grows simpler as he grows older, then Doctor Sloper is not "good" since he grows more complex and harder to please as he grows older. He deviates from the traditional figure cut by the tender, warm, understanding father to become domineering, sarcastic, and pitilessly cool. In fact, he is an exceptional character in James's fiction, where one often comes across difficult, unmotherly mothers, but very seldom unfriendly, unfatherly fathers. The only other father one can now think of as being something of an enemy is Mr. Wentworth in <u>The Europeans</u>. But even he, despite his bad temper, asceticism, and old-fashioned ideas, does not show so much derision, lack of

affection, and cruelty toward his own children as does Doctor Sloper. Any comment from Catherine, any choice, any action, in short, everything about her provokes his critical rigor. Let us present a few examples. As Catherine enters dressed in an unbecoming evening gown, he asks,

"Is it possible that this magnificent person is my child?"...he almost never addressed his daughter save in the ironical form (p. 33).

"He is in love with this regal creature, then?" the Doctor inquired, humorously (p. 34).

"And who is the happy mortal whom you have honored with your choice?" (p. 69).

"You can wait till I die, if you like."

Catherine gave a cry of natural horror.

"Your engagement will have one delightful effect upon you; it will make you extremely impatient for that event."

Catherine stood staring, and the Doctor enjoyed the point he had made. She turned away, feeling sick and faint, and the Doctor went on (p. 111).

"I will try and be more cheerful," said Catherine.

"You certainly ought to be cheerful; you ask a

great deal if you are not. To the pleasure of marrying a charming young man you add that of having your own way; you strike me as a very lucky young lady!"

Catherine got up; she was suffocating (p. 184).

The Doctor had his revenge, after all (p. 185).

The text abounds with passages of this sort. Having thus studied the possible sources of Doctor Sloper's bitterness, let us analyse its chilling effects upon the romance. His policy, as so often happens with the antagonists of romances in James's fiction, produces contradictory effects; moreover, it is two-fold. Instead of arresting the growth of the attachment, Doctor Sloper's cruelty works the other way around: Catherine grows fonder of Morris. On the other hand, being constantly hurt by Doctor Sloper, her love, her admiration, her respect, and her devotion to her father seem to dwindle away, however imperceptibly. In the last analysis, this dwindling also promotes the love affair.

The weapons displayed to combat the relationship

faithfully reflect Doctor Sloper's varying moods. Sometimes, as he does twice with Mrs. Montgomery, he enacts the role of the solicitous father, worried and attentive to his daughter's best interests. On such occasions he resorts to his histrionic talent; he draws upon dramatic effects calculated to move his audience: "The girl was sharply touched by the pathetic ring of the words; it was the most calculated, the most dramatic little speech the Doctor had ever uttered"(p. 132). "That's all I ask of you - that you do tell me, that you give me definite notice. When a poor man is to lose his only child, he likes to have an inkling of it beforehand" (p. 143).

"You are a dear, faithful child," he said, at last. "Come here to your father." And he got up, holding out his hands toward her.

The words were a surprise, and they gave her an exquisite joy. She went to him, and he put his arm round her tenderly, soothingly; and then he kissed her (p. 109).

Pathos and drama, humility and resignation, flattery and warmth, anxiety and artfulness, persuasion and mildness are some of the emotions

pervading the foregoing quotes. Above all, falsehood characterizes them. Each feeling there displayed is feigned, designed beforehand to produce a studied effect. In this regard, Doctor Sloper parallels Mr. Townsend. Although sometimes Doctor Sloper shockingly comes right to the point, unmasked, as when he talks with Morris Townsend for the third time, he also knows the tricky arts of falsehood to further his purposes.

At times Doctor Sloper indignantly critizes the suitor to his face, to his own daughter, to himself, to Mrs. Penniman, to Mrs. Almond, or to Mrs. Montgomery: "As a son-in-law, I abominate you" (p. 76).

"He is extremely insinuating; but it's a vulgar nature. I saw through it in a minute. He is altogether too familiar; I hate familiarity. He is a plausible coxcomb" (p. 52).

He strikes me as selfish and shallow (p. 87).

"He is a selfish idler" (p..110).

Such outbursts of indignation are more remarkable coming from a detached, even-tempered,

calculating man who prides himself on exerting an admirable self-control in everyday life. When devastating criticism of the suitor's main deficiencies and shortcomings fail to make her quit him, Doctor Sloper resorts to threats.

The Doctor Threatens Catherine with disapproval, with rejection, with condemnation, and with poverty. If she persists in her relationship with Mr. Townsend she will become an outcast in her own home; she will be worse than fatherless. Apart from being exiled, Catherine will receive no money from her father's pocket. She does not fear in the least the last measure; she has no real attachment to money and never has had. The worst castigation comes from ostracism. Despite Doctor Sloper's beliefs to the contrary, she possesses a sensitive mind which readily conjures up images of nightmare, torture, and horror.

"Will you forgive me?"

"By no means" (p. 110).

"If you marry without my consent, I don't leave

you a farthing of money" (p. 112).

The mortal chill of her situation struck more deeply into her child-like heart, and she was overwhelmed by a feeling of loneliness and danger (p. 123).

Catherine tried to follow these words, but they seemed to lead toward a vague horror from which she recoiled.

Her father gave her his dreadful look again, as if she were some one else.

"Oh, father," she broke out,"don't you care even if you do feel so?"

"Not a button" (p. 131).

Fear of her father's curse utterly appals her; this fear fills many a page that, thanks to her illogical feelings (she magnifies the situation a million-fold), somehow brings to mind many a similar page of relentless torture in James Joyce's The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man. The latter also depicts the horrible sleepless nights and those ridden with nightmares suffered as a child by the principal character, Stephen Dedalus. The resemblance between the two novels and the reason for my comparison is the disquieting feeling of

unknown powers threatening Catherine and Doctor Sloper, the consequent trials they undergo, their initial recoil from a raw reality, their attempt to run away instead of reasoning and trying to understand the evil forces that upset them, the ultimate resolute confrontation with them, and their consequent growth.

Despite his multifarious shrewd techniques, Doctor Sloper fails directly to cut off the relationship, though he exerts an indirect influence. At any rate, it stops because Mr. Townsend retreats, not because Catherine obeys her father. Notwithstanding his renowned ability to judge people (he prides himself on being correct in nineteen out of twenty cases), he fails to appreciate Catherine accurately and fully. Perhaps the fact that he underrates Catherine accounts for his failure to arrest her attachment to Morris.

How does he misjudges her? First of all, he does not give her credit for having an imagination; the ball during which she is introduced to Morris,

for instance, proves the opposite. Second, he classifies her as unromantic and unsteady, incapable of enduring sacrifices for the sake of the beloved. Yet her character fits into the tradition of the romantic heroine: she is misunderstood, thwarted, deceived, and forsaken "for a wider career." Third, he does not consider her especially steadfast in her affection for Townsend; actually she does "stick" to him, to the utter amazement of Doctor Sloper. Fourth, he does not think her capable of lying; she grows used to dissembling more every passing day. Fifth, he does not think her brave enough to endure the trial he subjects her to; she stands it bravely and silently.

Doctor Sloper's foil in the novel is Mrs. Penniman, a "goose," as he early labels her. Fullfilling the prophecy of her brother, Mrs. Penniman takes sides with Morris, making his cause hers. She quickly becomes the young man's confidante, counselor, and messenger. Despite her eagerness to further the love affair, this matchmaker constitutes

more of a hindrance than a help. As ally, she is worse than the worst enemy, thanks to her utter lack of reasonableness, tact, judgment, and sense of proportion: "I am glad she is not on my side; she is capable of ruining an excellent cause. The day Lavinia gets into your boat it capsizes" said the Doctor (p. 81).

Catherine hotly agrees with this opinion: "Why can't you leave me alone? I was afraid you would spoil everything, for you do spoil everything you touch!" (p. 179)

It would be unrewarding to go deeper into the character of Mrs. Penniman simply because one cannot go deeper than the foregoing quotations. Even before her actual appearance in the tale one already knows her. Doctor Sloper has foretold her behavior; he has described her temperament, her silliness, her busy-body spirit tso well that one knows what to expect of her - and she never disappoints us. She has no surprises in store for us. One here recalls E. M. Forster's declaration concerning flatness in Aspects of The Novel: "The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing

way. If it never surprises, it is flat." According to this definition, Mrs. Penniman is as flat as she is inefficient in promoting the romance. As formerly attested, her assistance comes to naught and becomes a hindrance. But the corollary excess of intelligence (Doctor Sloper) can be as harmful as an excess of folly (Mrs. Penniman.)

It seems worthwhile to study, however briefly, Mrs. Almond's personality since she acts like a chorus character without aspiring to. Unlike Doctor Sloper or Aunt Penniman, she does nothing either to encourage or discourage the young couple. Living outside Washington Square, she enjoys a privileged perspective from which to observe the development of the affair. From afar she is able to gain a calmer view of the relationship. Why? Two reasons explain it. First, Mrs. Almond has no grudge whatsoever against Catherine, she rather likes, understands, and loves her niece. Second, Mrs. Almond does not blind herself with too many crazy notions about romance or misunderstood romance; she

exercises reasonableness, a quality that make Doctor Sloper prefer her to his other sister. However, she does not remain indifferent to the romance; she reacts to it, giving advice, warnings, criticisms, and scoldings to both Doctor Sloper and Aunt Penniman whenever she thinks it suitable. She feels no "terror" of her brother as does Aunt Penniman. She feels no aversion to Lavinia, as does Doctor Sloper. In other words, she preserves a desirable balance; she symbolizes equilibrium "Mrs. Penniman saw much less of her sister than while the Doctor was at home; for Mrs. Almond had felt moved to tell her that she disapproved of her relations with Mr. Townsend. She had no business to be so friendly to a young man of whom their brother thought so meanly, and Mrs. Almond was surprised at her levity in foisting a most deplorable engagement upon Catherine" (p. 137).

Common sense informs this whole passage along with a firmness not to be misconstrued as harshness. Her arguments to disapprove Lavinia's "levity" bespeak sense and straightforwardness.

She and Doctor Sloper enjoy harmonious relations.

So much is intimated by the customary Sunday evenings spent at her house by the Slopers. Nonetheless, she also disapproves of Doctor Sloper's policy as regards the engagement. Many a time Mrs. Almond tries to introduce understanding, affection, flexibility, patience, and tenderness into her brother's attitude. She herself is all sweetness and gentleness. And she wants others to be the same: "If she is to have a fall," said Mrs. Almond, with a gentle laugh," we must spread as many carpets as we can". And she carried out this idea by showing a great deal of motherly kindness to the girl (p. 157).

"All the more reason you should be gentle with her."

"I _am_ gentle with her. But I can't do the pathetic; I can't pump up tears, to look graceful, over the most fortunate thing that ever happened to her."

"You have no sympathy," said Mrs. Almond; "that was never your strong point" (p. 187).

Two main reasons account for the failure of the romance in _Washington Square_: family opposition, and such personal differences between Catherine

Sloper and Morris Townsend as temperament, outlook, intellect, age (she is twenty-one; he is "upward of thirty"), physique, tastes, etc. Having dealt with family opposition above, we shall limit the scope of this section to an analysis of the couple's respective discrepancies. A last word before coming to the point. Since in this particular novel the protagonists differ so widely in every conceivable aspect, we have deemed it convenient to deviate from our usual method and simply review their incongruities.

Unlike a great many Jamesian young heroimes, Catherine Sloper does not shine for her cleverness; she has not even an average intelligence; she is rather dull. So important, not to say disgraceful, is this shortcoming that the author devotes many passages throughout the book to underscore it. But why is this limitation se important? Why is it disgraceful? It is important because it hinders much in the afeairs of life, it does not help her to tell a gentleman from a "vulgar, insinuating

nature"; it does not help her to understand the nature of the affection offered by Mr. Townsend; it does not help her to comprehend her father's opposition to her fiancé; it does not gain her the esteem, much less the admiration, of Doctor Sloper; it does not provide her a good reputation among New Yorkers. In sum, it makes her life a lot drearier and unhappier than it could otherwise have been. It is disgraceful because her mother and her father were tremendously clever: Catherine is the intellectual lack sheep of the family, as it were.

> Catherine was decidedly not clever; she was not not quick with her book, nor, indeed, with anything else. She was not abnormally deficient, and she mustered learning enough to acquit herself respectably in conversation with her contemporaries - among whom it must be avowed, however, that she occupied a secondary place (p. 21).

This unfavorable description illustrates our contention. The first sentence categorically denies her cleverness; its conclusiveness stems largely from the adverb "decidedly" and is further supported by the rest of the sentence. The second part of the first sentence, being less assertive, gains in explicitness and concreteness; it informs us about the way Catherine carries out her various activities; it sets

up a general urle. The first part of the second sentence, though negative in form, is positive in content; it stresses her inferred slowness of mind by means, once again, of an adverb, "abnormally," placed before a highly derogative adjective, "deficient." Even if one changes the sentence, putting it in the affirmative ("she was normally deficient"), still her "deficiency" would be the conspicuous characteristic. Her implied "abnormality" is backed up by the two following verbs, neither very complimentary, since they mean or rather imply a maximum effort and a minimum result. The rest of the sentence likewise harshly critizes her mental faculties and informs us about her footing in New York society, not a very comfortable footing.

Her blunt intellect would not be so noticeable if it were not for the alarmingly intelligent people who, by contrast, surround her: her late mother, her father who is very much alive, and, still more threateningly alive, Mr. Morris Townsend.

Morris' enormous mental capacity constitutes one of his chief qualities; his intellectual powers are so enormous indeed that they can unfalteringly compete with Doctor Sloper's. He is smart beyond doubt; everybody agrees about

it; everybody knows it; everybody praises his intellect unreservedly: "Most people like him - he's so brilliant."

"I suppose you can't be too clever," said Catherine, still with humility.

"I don't know. I know some people that call my cousin too clever."

Catherine listened to this statement with extreme interest, and a feeling that if Morris Townsend had a fault it would naturally be that one (p. 38).

In order to avoid possible partiality, since both Catherine and the other speaker above, Morris' cousin Arthur, are tied to Morris with ties of love and blood respectively, we next quote what Doctor Sloper, Morris' fiercest enemy on earth, has to say on the subject: "The Doctor was struck with his appreciative guest; he saw that hw was not a common-place young man. "He has ability," said Catherine's father, "decided ability; he has a very good head if he chooses to use it" (p. 50).

Townsend excludes untidiness from his life. He advocates cleanliness; he exemplifies it; in point of fact, he is not only scrupulously clean but elegant as well, Beau Brummel incarnate. That is one of the uses to which Morris puts his remarkable head, elegance. He ~~makes the best of his~~ intelligence and fine taste to appear, all through the book,

faultlessly and dashingly dressed. It seems as if travel, "knocking about the world," as he nonchalantly puts it, has taught him which clothes fit him best; that is to say, his dress reveals his "wordliness." Is elegance in a poor man sheer extravagance, Not at all. He has plenty of reasons to choose the best clothes available; he wants to make a tremendous impression; clothes may elp him to make his way toward success. Anyway, his elegance sets him apart from other New Yorkers, and his distinction accounts not a little for the rapid infatuation of Catherine Sloper. It is common knowledge that clothes reveal the man. Doctor Sloper instantly realizes Morris' exceptionality; by no means a "common-place" young man, the Doctor pronounces him. Morris is also egocentric. "I wonder you have discovered he is selfish," exclaims his won sister, Mrs. Montgomery, in Chapter XIV. Doctor Sloper's assumption proves right. Besides selfishness, Mr. Townsend has a "vulgar nature." He unscrupulously lives upon his sister. Somewhere in the text even the unpleasant verb "sponge" appears. He feels no compuctions whatever about asking her for money, despite her extreme poverty, in order to take care of his not altogether justifiable expenses. His elegant dress also reveals his narcissim, a good deal of

vanity, self-centerness. Like the Narcissus of the Greek myth, he is very fond of staring at himself at every opportunity: "he declared, passing his hand through his hair and giving a glance at the long, narrow mirror which adorned the space between the two windows"(p. 64).

And he stood a moment, looking down at his remarkably neat shoes (p. 61).

Morris smothed his hat - it was already remarkably glossy (p. 77).

Even at the end of the novel, after an unsuccessful life spent on endless attempts to succeed by marrying someone rich, he still appears before Catherine "prefectly dressed." The quotes bring to mind the memory of Baroness Münster's colossal vanity, recurrently displayed in The Europeans. The extraordinary resemblance between these two characters, both of them selfish, proud, "worldly," impoverished, unscrupulous, with good looks, elegant, and infinitely ambitious, raises three questions. Does James consider exceptional elegance a sign of corruption, Do deceitful natures disguise their baseness through a dashing façade? Can we generalize that elegance largely conceals shallowness of moral principles?

Morris sartorial felicity contrasts with Catherine's infelicity. Decidedly she has no taste in dress, none

whatever. To judge simply by this novel, intelligence and selfishness, pride plus narcissim lead to elegance, whereas dullness, generosity, and modesty plus lack of vanity lead to inelegance. Morris could well exemplify the former, Catherine the latter. Indeed she always makes, involuntarily, the wrong choice of attire; instead of passing unnoticed, as she anxiously desires, she attracts attention to be abused by people: "Catherine, who was extremely modest, had no desire to shine, and on most social occasions... you would have found her lurking in the background" (p. 21);

she sought to be eloquent in her garments, and to make up for her diffidence of speech by a fine frankness of costume. But if she expressed herself in her clothes, it is certain that people were not to blame for not thinking her a witty person (p. 24).

Therefore, notwithstanding her understandable intentions, she does "shine" only to achieve various undesirable and unsought ends. First of all, her failure to dress tolerably diminishes her already scanty self-assurance, simultaneously increases her "painful" shyness, and widens her isolation since she seeks the "bakcground" instead of the foreground as Mr. Townsend does. Moreover, she becomes the center of people's criticisms, lowering their low opinion of her. The

greater the liveness of her garments, the less her opportunities to get a boy friend, the greater her distress and loneliness. "She is so large," says Mrs. Almond to her brother, "and she dresses so richly. They are rather afraid of her." Once more Doctor Sloper, almost prophetically, foresees the dangers involved in her lack of eloquence in garments. He hints that thanks to her "self-advertising" she is liable to be wooed by the wrong kind of men. "It simply appeared to him proper and reasonable that a well-bred young woman should not carry half her fortune on her back." In other words, she unconsciously looks for possible fortune-hunters.

Catherine differs from many of James's heroines in one respect: she is not beautiful; she did not inherit a single feature of her mother's famous beauty. This plainness contributes enormously, as attested in the preceding section, to a lessening of her father's esteem and to her spinsterhood. Even so, good health somewhat redeems her unattractiveness: "She was a healthy, well-grown child, without a trace of her mother's beauty. She was not ugly; she had simply a plain, dull, gentle countenance" (p. 20). "Her appearance of health constituted her principal claim to beauty" (p. 23). Both illustrations underscore the two principal traits of her outward appearance: health and plainness. Both samples are

charged with irony - the irony that her mother, a New York belle, could not survive long to go on making Doctor Sloper thoroughly happy, while Catherine does survive, "with a plain, dull, gentle countenance," to go on making her father thoroughly unhappy. Her plainness vexes the physician; he "had moments of irritation at having produced a common-place child." Then Catherine, "though she was an heiress," does not stir men; she appears hopelessly devoid of sex-appeal. Morris, though he lives on next to nothing, stirs ladies; he appears fully endowed with sex-appeal.

Catherine is struck at first sight by his handsomeness; she feels attracted to his "beauty" from the start. In point of fact, her love originally stems from sheer, mute admiration: "he was so handsome, or rather, as she phrased it to herself, so beautiful" (p. 29).

He had features like young men in pictures; Catherine had never seen such features - so delicate, so chiselled and finished - among the young New Yorkers whom she passed in the streets and met at dancing- parties. He was tall and slim, but he looked extremely strong. Catherine thought he looked like a statue (p. 30).

No wonder, then, that even an adverse critic such as Doctor Sloper thinks to himself, and later on tells his

favorite sister, that Mr. Townsend "is uncommonly well turned out; quite the sort of figure that pleases the ladies." Though the verb "pleases" falls short of the mark, it indicates Mr. Townsend's corporeal exceptionality. It seems convenient too to notice the accent placed upon the adverb, "uncommonly," chosen to describe Mr. Townsend. It pointedly separates the common or commonplace from the uncommon, and everything indicates the uncommonness of the relationship: the uncommonness of the obstacles the couple has to vanquish in order to get to the threshold of marriage; the uncommonness of the circumstances surrounding them from the outset; the uncommonness of the place where they meet each other - a ceremony to announce publicly an engagement, that is to say, a symbolic ceremony; the uncommonness that he has just arrived in New York in time for attending the party; the uncommonness that she, although "painfully shy," feels at home with Mr. Townsend from the beginning; the uncommonness that he, a strikingly handsome young man, shows so much eagerness to be acquainted with a plain, dull, overdressed girl; the uncommonness that she is legally "of age"; the uncommonness of the rapidity with which the relationship advances.

The element to strike us about the last quotation above is excess. Mr. Townsend possesses handsomeness in excessive quantity; to use Catherine's language, he is "so beautiful" as to deserve instantly, and unreservedly, her excessive admiration. Catherine is literally swept away in her contemplation of Morris. Unlike her father, who is described as "shockingly cold-blooded," the passage reveals her infinite, though till now unexpected, passion. The end of the second chapter tells us the following: "she seemed not only incapable of giving surprises; it was almost a question whether she could have received one - she was so quiet and irresponsive." In the ball she not only surprises us by her astonishing passion but is profoundly surprised herself by Mr. Townsend's appearance.

The importance of their meeting stems from various facts. First, it marks the starting point of the attachment. Second, it changes her altogether - her values, ideas, and feelings. Third, she slowly but surely begins to acquire "roundness" of character (as E. M. Forster would put it, she begins to surprise us in a convincing way). Fourth, in a roundabout way, it forces her to oppose her heretofore revered father. Fifth, it sets the plot to going; it initiates the book.

Along with passion and admiration one discerns unchecked imagination in the quotation under discussion. Catherine links Morris with art; firstly with painting, "pictures"; secondly with sculpture, "statue." She distinguishes him from the common New Yorkers she has seen in the streets or elsewhere. One may infer, accordingly, that she is not so "unobservant" as she may appear. Lastly, one has to consider excess of strength: "he looked extremely strong," as the passage runs. Thus the contrast between both protagonists is rather complete. Though both enjoy good health, he is "slim" and she is plump. The author tells us that "she was something of a glutton," who habitually devotes "her pocket-money to the purchase of cream-cakes." As a result, "Catherine's back was a broad one." As Doctor Sloper suggests, her "corpulence" helps her to put up with her predicament.

Having already incidentally touched upon her "painful shyness" in dealing with her unbecoming garments, let us turn our attention to Morris' boldness. The stronger his intellect, the greater his resoluteness seems to be. Strictly speaking, notable resoluteness does not spring

from cleverness alone; long independence, his sex, and his far-flung ambition account for it too. Morris' boldness smooths his approach to Catherine. Seasoned with felicitous eloquence to express his simulated feelings, this boldness rapidly undermines and vanquishes her usual diffidence. The way he manages to be introduced to Miss Sloper, the way he suavely talks with her, the way he approaches, talks to, and gains Mrs. Penniman's sympathy on the same occasion, the way he steps into Doctor Sloper's house, the way he behaves with him - in sum, his whole behavior attests his intrepidity: "He criticised them very freely, in a positive, off-hand way. Catherine had never heard any one - especially any young man - talk just like that. It was the way a young man might talk in a novel; or better still, in a play, on the stage, close before the foot-lights, looking at the audience, and with everyone one looking at him, so that you wondered at his presence of mind. And yet Mr. Townsend was not like an actor; he seemed so sincere, so natural" (p. 31).

This passage incidentally reveals several other aspects of the personality of the hero and the heroine. It tells us about Morris' nonchalance, his fluency of speech, his self-control, his air of strangeness, and his falsehood. It informs us of her flights of imagination, her fondness for the theater, her admiration for Mr. Townsend, and her

simplicity.

His nonchalance and related flippancy seem to grow from diverse sources: a first-rate head, wide travelling, learning, and experience. One infers that he is learned. For example, he agrees with Miss Sloper that books are "tiresome things" but that you have to read a good many of them in order to find out. He seems to know both himself and people pretty well; he knows what he is aiming at; he knows whom to address to accomplish his aim quickly and easily; he knows how to set his schemes in motion. His nonchalant attitude probably stems from his immense stock of self-asurance. In Chapter VII, Doctor Sloper says, furiously irritated, "He has the assurance of the devil himself!" Needless to say, his eloquence runs parallel to his nonchalance; it asserts itself at the outset.

Another of his assets is self-control, a formidable asset for a fraud. It helps to vitiate many embarrassing situations; it helps him to disentangle himself from them without too much noise. He uses it to disguise a rather impatient nature and to defend himself. About Morris hovers something of a legend fostered by people from bits of information about him and increased a hundred-fold by the most imaginative folk. His

obscure past, his "knocking about the world" incessantly, his fast dissipation of a legacy, his own confession that he was "wild" in his early youth though one never knows up to what extent, his resourcefulness, the discrepancy existing between him and the New Yorkers in terms of manner, dress, speeech, and physical appearance, and his abrupt arrival all help to keep the legend alive. The legend is disquieting to the most pedestrian minds - Cätherine's for example. In fact, Morris suggests "irreality"; let us remember that in a desperate attempt to understand his air of "foreigness" Catherine connects him with works of art and, in the quotation under analysis, with fictional characters and with actors of the theater. Since the topic is closely connected with her sudden interest in him, let us quote some lines about it: "he felt very much like a stranger...he was a great stranger in New York" (p. 30).

It was the way a young man might talk in a novel; or, better still, in a play, on the stage (p. 31).

"He is a perfect stranger - we don't know him."
this brilliant stranger - this sudden apparition (p. 40).

His falsehood, vaguely intimated, can only be inferred at the beginning. The inference may be drawn from a single

verb preceding two adjectives, one on truthfulness, and the other one on naturalness, whose link, in both cases, is formed by an adverb of quantity that implies excess: "he seemed so sincere, so natural," as to arouse disbelief in us. The verb employed does not correspond to a certainty: he is not sincere and natural; he, hypothetically, or rather apparently, is: he seems. However that be, this passage foreshadows his falsity very early in the novel.

Like Miss Alden, Catherine Sloper has a flighty romantic imagination prone to draw fanciful comparisons of her suitor with characters invented by professional artists. To a restricted, secluded private life under the suveillance of a stern father corresponds, as if in an act of compensation, an unrestricted, too free, subjective imagination. But unlike Miss Alden, Catherine Sloper does not pass for a "bluestocking." She does not possess the knowledge of the ages tightly compressed in her mind. She only "had a secret passion for the theater, which had been but scantily gratified, and a taste for operatic music - that of Bellini and Donizetti... which she rarely had an occasion to hear, except on the hand organ." Thus neither of her two cravings is ever fully satisfied; she is thwarted, frustrated. The recourse

left her is to channel her "secret passion" otherwise.

Naturally her admiration for Townsend and her responsiveness to his handsomeness are emotional, disproportionate to the occasion, and therefore unreasonable. Morris' air of foreignness sets loose her unexpended sense of wonder - the wonder a masterpiece may loose in a reader, spectator, or listener. Every unspent feeling comes to the fore. In her simplicity she does not realize that she is heading toward deceit and suffering. She unconsciously blindfolds herself to his obvious falseness. It is as if the author wanted to punish harshly her lack of discrimination. Why is she so simple as to believe him? Why does he so easily fool her, The answer is simple too: she is worse than alone in the world. The persons she lives with, a goose and a tyrant, underrate her, do not provide her with enough warmth and affection. Mrs. Penniman repeatedly shows disappointment in Catherine; she expects her niece to act according to her own silly and sentimental notions; the aunt never grasps the meaning of Catherine's reserve and, at bottom, despises her. Doctor Sloper, as we know, has adverse feelings toward her too. Outside her chilly house, Catherine has no male friends, except her cousins. She has

no suitor, nor even the prospect of having one in the remote future. She is wretchedly, bleakly alone and unloved.

Loneliness and a paucity of affection, then, stand out as the two main reasons for her sudden attachment. How could any maiden fail to care for a man if such a man seems kind, handsome, polite, strong, solicitous, affectionate, witty, and passionate in his demonstrations as does Morris, Doesn't Miss Tita in The Aspern Papers literally cling to the literary critic for similar reasons and under similar circumstances? Catherine has the expectations of a fortune; Miss Tita has acess to papers that mean a fortune. Both heroines are easy preys to fortune-hunters; both are equally naive, gullible, and lonely; both suitors are artful and false.

A careful investigation of Morris' behavior with Catherine and her family leads us to the conviction that he courts her for extra-emotional reasons. His policy, describing a full, perfect circle, reveals four distinct stages: exemplary conduct at the start, a gradual change for the worde, open baseness and, lastly, a reversal to technique number one: exemplary conduct.

The first stage, which broadly speaking covers three chapters (IV, V, and VI), discloses smiles, glances, kindness, flattery, respect, gentlemanliness, humor, tact, politeness, concern, eagerness, and delicacy, to list some of the salient items composing Morris' technique. Here are some samples from the text to sustain our point.

Mr. Townsend, leaving her no time for embarrassment, began to talk to her with an easy smile, as if he had known her for a year:...He asked her, with a deeper, intenser smile, if she would do him the honor of dancing with him (p. 29).

He was very amusing. He asked her about the people that were near them; he tried to guess who some of them were, and he made the most laughable mistakes (p. 31).

He looked at her still, in psite of her blush, but very kindly and respectuflly (p. 39).

There was a smile of respectful devotion in his handsome eyes:...His talk, however, was not particularly knightly; it was light and easy and friendly:...he asked her a number of questions about herself (p. 42).

"That's what I like you for; you are so natural. Excuse me," he added; "you see I am natural myself" (p. 42).

These diverse proofs of his interest, too sudden and incomprehensible to any one but Doctor Sloper, result from a thorough study of the situation and the lady sought, so one is free to guess. He leaves her "no time for

embarrassment," or meditation, one may add. He takes her by surprise, as a shrewd general might enter a long coveted citadel, under cover of night. In sum, Mr. Townsend strives to gain her confidence in the same way as the astute narrator of The Aspern Papers.

Unfortunately he appears unable to sustain his initial line of conduct for long. Trusting too much in himself, Mr. Townsend slips into deplorable lapses that, little by little, disclose his dirty play. Surely such lapses of mind will lead him to failure. Again, these wrong moves begin to appear very early in the story. Some of them occur even prior to his first conversation with Doctor Sloper. The second stage is characterized by omissions, incipient signs of impatience, revelatory soliloquies, too gross familiarity, recurrent hints and allusions to money matters, too many (suspicious) protestations on the purity of his intentions, and greater need of self-control: "He seemed more at home this time - more familiar; louging a little in the chair, slapping a cushion that was near him with his stick, and looking round the room a good deal, and at the objects it contained" (p. 42).

Mr. Townsend's attitude evidently resembles that of a

hawk-eyed dealer in furniture, or a prospective buyer of real estate who goes to survey and inspect the conditions of the furniture and house before the actual purchase. He has seen Catherine only twice and visited her house once before this occasion. Such familiarity with the surroundings is premature. Let us review some further samples.

He had omitted, by accident, to say that he would sing to her if she would play to him. He thought of this after he got into the street (p. 43).

There is every reason to suppose that he desired to make a good impression; and if he fell short of this result, it was not for want of a good deal of intelligent effort;... Morris was not a young man who needed to be preseed, and he found quite enough encouragement in the superior quality of the claret (p. 49).

Morris reflected that a cellarful of good liquor - there was evidently a cellarful here - would be a most attractive idiosyncrasy in a father-in-law (p. 50).

[The] Doctor, if he had been watching him just then, would have seen a gleam of fine impatience in the sociable softness of his eye. But there was no impatience in his rejoinder - none, at least, save what was expressed in a little appealing sigh (p. 51).

"You know how little there is in me to be proud of. I am ugly and stupid."

Morris greeted this remark with an ardent murmur, in which

she recognized nothing articulate but an assurance that she was his own dearest (p. 63).

Mr. Townsend is, through and through, everything these samples indicate plainly : vulgar, " a plausible coxcomb," forgetful, false, addicted to drink (in Chapter XXVII, for instance, after the Slopers' voyage to Europe, there is another allusion to his pointed addiction to wine), impatient, and gross. But perhaps his worst features are ambition and dishonesty. These two "particularities" about our exceptional hero are important enough to deserve further space.

Ambition for money constitutes one of the most conspicuously recurrent themes in the novel. As Townsend's chief reason to court Catherine, its ubiquitous presence hovers over the affair like an invisible bird of ill-luck. As early as the first chapter we are confronted by it. The writer asserts that Doctor Sloper had married "for love" to a woman who "had brought him a solid dowry." Thus there is an immediate, striking distinction between two classes of marriage, that for love, and that for money. The same paragraph touches again upon the monetary subject; it informs us that Doctor Sloper's wife "had ten thousand dollars of income." The next paragraph once more deals with

this pecuniary matter: "his having married a rich woman made no difference...and he cultivated his profession with as definite a purpose as if he still had no other resources than his fraction of the modest patrimony...this was, roughly speaking, the programme he had sketched, and of which the accident of hiw wife having an income...and his wife's affiliation to the "best people" brought him a good many of those patients whose symptoms are... at least more consistently displayed." The passage supplies a fair picture of the author's intentions; without preamble, he sets about describing what will eventually become the central motif around which the romance develops. The insistence upon the subject of money strongly foreshadows future events.

Chapter I achieves a four-fold purpose. First, it introduces us to some of the characters alive and dead alike, Doctor Sloper, Catherine, Catherine's brother, and Catherine's mother, respectively. Second, it sets the background of Doctor Sloper's affluence, which proceeds from three sources, his father's legacy, his wife's dowry, and his medical practice. Third, it depicts Doctor Sloper's love of work. Fourth, it subtly affords the ground for a

contrast to Townsend's poverty, dissipated inheritance, and idleness. In truth, this is just one of the many allusions to money and ambition that occur all throughout the novel. The language employed to describe it is expressive too: "prostect of thirty thousand a year," "means of subsistence," "rich man," "the fortune," "penniless swain," "mercenary motives," "fortune-hunters," "impoverished," "money," "lives upon her," "large fortune," "honest penny," " I have nothing," "offer of assistance," "I must seek my fortune," "It won't make my fortune," "poverty," "mercenary," and so forth. An impressive verbal parade indeed. These random words come from the first third of the novel and on no account exhaust the total evidence. In Cahpters IX, X, and XI, for example, the adjective "mercenary" occurs no less than a dozen times.

Morris does not distinguish himself for his honesty. All of his character smacks of dishonesty: his spicy speeches, his artificiality, his means of subsistence, his attitude, his thoughts, and his goals. Once more the first chapter provides us material for a comparison with Doctor Sloper since it foreshadows Morris' dishonest nature. Though Doctor Sloper is "a man of the world I hasten to add," says the author, "to anticipate possible misconceptions, that he was

not the least of a charlatan. He was a thoroughly honest man." Traditionally, honesty involves goodness; dishonesty involves evil; thus Doctor Sloper is to be considered good in this sense, and Morris evil. In the present case, honesty also involves gentlemanliness; lacking honesty, Mr. Townsend is not a "gentleman"; he is an untrustworthy fellow whose word is unreliable; in brief, he is evil. Doctor Sloper, "being something of a physiognomist," indicates Mr. Townsend's bal moral character in a single phrase: "He is not a gentleman." This special use of the word and implications of immorality bring to mind The Turn of the Screw, where the valet Quint lacked "gentlemanliness"; Mrs. Grose and the governess accordingly associate the lack with evil itself.

In the third stage of his behavior, Morris publicly unmasks his base nature, altogether discarding the tact, delicacy, and tenderness portrayed in the first stage of the courtship, to assume instead a supremely bitter, critical attitude. The language, up to now sweet and melodious, turns into harsh comments, sarcastic expressions, and double meanings: "Do you know you sometimes disappoint me," said Morris (p. 122).

"Gracious Heaven, what a dull woman!" Morris exclaimed

to himself (p. 134).

"I don't earn my living with you," said Morris. "Or, rather," he cried, with a sudden inspiration, "that's just what I do - or what the world says I do!" (p. 168).

It seemed to her that a mask had suddenly fallen from his face. He had wished to get away from her; he had been angry and cruel, and said strange things, with strange looks (p. 171).

One already knows that Catherine receives a similar "treatment" from Doctor Sloper, but at least one may argue that her father has certain natural, legal, and moral rights to be severe with her. Townsend, on the other hand, has none except the slim ones bred by affection.

In the fourth and last stage, Morris reverts to the policy followed at the beginning of the novel. He plays the role fo the gallant knight. In a desperate attempt to win her confidence and her affection back, he plies the same old tricks. In two respects he deviates from his initial technique, however: he stammers, and he shows too much humility. Yet on the whole Morris is his former self (though time has not been particularly benevolent with his body): shrewd, false, ambitious, and idle. He has grown older, balder, fatter, although not an inch wiser, truer,

more honorable, or less idle. It appears that his set of values has undergone no change at all. He also seems to expect to find the former Catherine, still clinging to her former passion. The possibility of Catherine's development, since he last saw her, has never entered into his brilliant mind. Therefore he is not pleasantly surprised on finding an altogether different Catherine invulnerable to the ancient techniques.

He stood in a deply deferential attitude, with his eyes on her face. "I have ventured - I have ventured" he said

"I offend you by coming?" He was very grave; he spoke in a tone of the richest respect.

"It would be a great satisfaction - and I have not many." He seemed to be coming nearer; Catherine turned away. "Can we not be friends again," he asked.

"We are not enemies," said Catherine. "I have none but friendly geelings to you."

"Ah, I wonder whether you know the happiness it gives me to hear say that!"

"You have not changed - the years have passed happily for you."

"They have left no marks; you are admirably young" (p. 202-4).

It would be unfair to James and to Townsend to think that

Morris is evil personified, incapable of a good thought; he is too interestingly complex a character to be black all through; many a time, to give a single example, he hesitates to break with Catherine; he wants her to afford him a real motive to retreat, seeming reluctant to hurt her and deceive her furthermore, as seen in Chapters XXVIII and XXIX.

Whether Morris' opinion about the youth of Catherine is true or not, she changes a lot during the novel - how much, the last interview with Mr. Townsend suffices to show. There is a wide gulf between the self-assured, cold, rude, slightly hostile middle-aged woman of the last chapter and the shy, unsure, gullible girl of the start. She changes as a woman, as a lover, as a daughter, and as a niece. She grows while Morris at a certain moment becomes stationary. Mos amazing of all is the rapidity of her early infatuation. Hers is a kind of "love at first sight." She is consumed by passion, by admiration, by hopes, by despair, by love, above all by unchecked passion. Contrasted with the sober restraint prevailing in, say, The Beast in The Jungle, where the wildest outburst of passion, to place one's hands upon the beloved's, occurs

after long, uninterrupted years of close relationship, Washington Square is possibly one of James's most violent and turbulent works: "she simply let him put his arm round her waist - as he did so, it occurred to her more vividly than it had ever done before that this was a singular place for a gentleman's arm to be" (p. 29).

In this passage, from the chapter where they are introduced, one feels as if the author seeks deliberately to focus on Catherine's waist to emphasize the carnal side of the affair. Moreover, that simple act tends to arouse her dormant femininity, her consciousness of womanhood till now unknown even to herself. Some minutes after the introduction, Catherine unequivocally reveals her fast-growing interest in the "sudden apparition": "She knew his back immediately, though she had never seen it" (p. 32).

Although prescience is not generally among the qualities of a "weak-minded woman," Catherine does seem to possess that virtue. The sureness of her impression, the verb employed, the adverb indicating quickness, and the fact that "though she had never seen" Morris' back she knows it indicate the quality of her interest. In passing we may remark that the text abounds with physical

demonstrations of love unusual in James's fiction. Quite often, and quite early too, the hero either embraces or kisses the heroine. So seldom these demonstrations of affection occur in other James's works that one cannot help posing a question. Does the author link honor and gentlemanliness with restraint, as with most of his romantic heroes (Robert Acton and Christopher Newman, for instance)? At any rate, Chapter Iv dealing with Mr. Townsend's appearance on the scene, marks the starting point of both Catherine's development as a character, Catherine's love, and Mr. Townsend's courtship. She is enormously surprised by Morris - for the better; she is swept away in her admiration for him; she feels at ease for the first time with a "gentleman"; she begins to be wooed; she begins to lie to her father (a memorable feat if one keeps in mind that Doctor Sloper, paraphrasing his own words, capitalizes on the salutary terror he inspires in his household). Along with loneliness and isolation, perhaps the principal reason behind her sudden attachment is artlessness.

Unlike Morris, Catherine represents artlessness in its pristine form. She is, somehow or other, everything the

term implies: naive, innocent, gullible, blushing, etc. She has not, again to pick up Doctor Sloper's figurative speech, "the salt of malice in her character." Two passages illustrate our contention: "As for Catherine, she scarcely even pretended to keep up the conversation; her attention had fixed itself on the other side of the room; she was listening to what went on between the other Mr. Townsend and her aunt:...Catherine would have liked to change her place, to go and sit near them, where she might see and hear him better" (p. 36).

She skips the rules of etiquette; she does not feign attention to Arthur; she calls his attention to her inattention; she does not conceal her feelings; she mirrors them on her face. The other illustration chosen refelcts her incredible naivete: "Catherine expected a good deal of Heaven, and referred to the skies the initiative, as the French say, in dealing with her dilemma...But she could at least be good, and if she were only good enough, Heaven would invent some way of reconciling all things" (p. 94).

Neither Catherine nor Doctor Sloper, Aunt Penniman nor Morris, ever shows signs of being very religious. They are rather the opposite, atheists. At least, Doctor Sloper certainly relies on science, on the practical, on

pragmatism. Then why does the author use a whole large paragraph, overloaded with images drawn from religion to stress her simplicty? Does he disapprove her faith? Does he critize her illogical passivity? Does he object to her passivity, Whichever be the author's intention, the fact is that Catherine has always completely accepted paternal authority, so much so that she thinks of her father as if he were a god: "She had an immense respect for her father, and she felt that to displease him would be a misdemeanor analogous to an act of profanity in a great temple." Now, in the midst of her "little drama," and before committing herself to an open opposition to her father, she waits for something to happen, something that will bring Doctor Sloper round. Yes, so artless is she that she does not understand Doctor Sloper's abhorrence of her fiancé; so artless is she that she believes wholeheartedly - for a damagingly long while - in Morris' disinterestedness and protestations of impetuous love.

Whatever her derelictions, Catherine Sloper suffers punishment. She has to endure a horrid ordeal whose main composites are criticism, opposition, ostracism, irony, deceit, and, last but not least, a series of betrayals - Aunt Penniman's, Doctor Sloper's, and Mr Townsend's.

Mrs. Penniman tells Morris everything about her niece right away; Doctor Sloper reduces "Catherine's share to a fifth of what he had first bequeathed her": Mr. Townsend gives her up "for a wider creer," as he puts it. However, she does not constitute an exception in this regard; each of the three principal characters receives final punishment. Catherine's trustfulness, for instance, provokes deceit; Mr. Townsend's ambition leads to continual poverty; Doctor Sloper's curiosity remains unsatisfied on the ultimate turn of the engagement. A last question on the theme: why is Catherine so artless?

The answer can be inferred from the text by means of a comparison. In The Aspern Papers one runs across two similar characters: the hero, artful, deceitful, experienced, intelligent, and ambitious; the heroine, artless, trustful, inexperienced, unintelligent, and unambitious. The author seems to indicate that Miss Sloper's artlessness largely stems from similar qualities but especially from inexperience in any field. Like Miss Tita, Miss Sloper has been dependent all her life on an elder, more experienced, authoritative person who, one is allowed to suppose, has grappled with the material and non-material problems of everyday life. Growing older in comparative seclusion, they

have not had time or reason to mistrust people, to put on a mask, to observe every single gesture or syllable.

Whether or not our supposition is right, neither Miss Tita nor Miss Sloper spoils her dependence by idleness. In this sense, once more, Catherine differs from loafing Morris. In the midst of her tribulation (maybe as a means to appease it; or, to use the technical language of the psychologists, "to sublimate" it), Catherine goes on working as efficiently as ever. In Chapter XXXII Doctor Sloper communicates these news to Mrs. Almond: "she is always knitting some purse or embroidering some handkerchief, and it seems to me that she turns these articles out about as fast as ever." The obvious implications drawn from the news are that Catherine works incessantly; she has always done such fancy work, and in her great fortitude of spirit, her moral misery does not diminish her usual output. Let us also remember that she used to copy in her "beautiful handwriting" long pasages from books. So deep-seated is her addiction to work that a sentence bearing on the topic closes the novel: "Catherine, meanwhile, in the parlor, picking up her morsel of fancy-work, had seated herself with it again for life, as it were."

CONCLUSIONS

Of the several themes particularly dear to James in his treatment of romance, some are too conspicuous in the works studied to be minimized. They appear time and again, though with certain variations, in his diverse romantic writings. Hence their special importance. Sometimes it is possible to detect two or more of them in a single story. A paragraph taken from James's elucidating collection of essays The Art of Fiction, besides expressing his artistic credo, leads us to the first of these recurring "motifs." "Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps Fiction upon her feet" (italics mine). Vacillating life is one of the main themes in Washington Square. Its effects on the lovers are both ironical and devastating, since they always somehow remain apart. The romance follows a zig-zag kind of pattern that thwarts the communication and understanding of the couple. At the beginning, the hero pushes his way into the heroine's life, passionately pressing his courtship. For a while, until he secures his position, he assumes the leading

role in the attachment. Then he relapses into a sort of passivity, while Miss Sloper becomes the active agent of the romance. Towards the end of the novel, Townsend reassumes his initial role while Miss Sloper remains aloof.

This kind of "seesaw" pattern reappears in another novel treating "love" and ambition, The Europeans. One gets the impression that the characters enmeshed by the "strange irregular rhythm" never even get a clear glimpse of this "strenuous force" that deranges their lives and, ultimately, accounts for the failure of their love affairs. On the ethical level, the author seems eager to protect, like a guardian angel, his "good" creatures (Miss Sloper and Mr. Acton from the stories listed above) from the evildoings of his "villains" (Mr. Townsend and the Baroness Münster). Oddly enough, James often establishes a marked difference; he associates intelligence, worldliness, and limitless ambition with lack of moral principles and "evil" in general, whereas blunt intellect, provinciality, and simplicty are allied to sound moral principles, and "goodness" at large.

A French proverb describes our second theme. Il y a toujours l'un qui embrasse et l'autre qui tourne la joue. Despite the numerous characteristics and interests shared

by the chief protagonists of "Pandora," and An International Episode, love proves unsuccessful, and while one kisses, the other turns the cheek. No matter how ardently the heroes, Count Otto and Lord Lambeth, express their sentiments, the heroines, Miss Day and Miss Westgate, remain relatively irresponsive to the last.

Many a time this theme occurs in stories dealing with the international confrontation - though works like The Beast in the Jungle and The Aspern Papers are exceptions to the rule. Let us remember, by the way, that James "expressed his belief that the American writer of fiction must deal, by implication at least, with Europe," as the introduction of his Notebooks informs us. According to James's idea, supported by a long sojourn on the Continent, whenever two persons of different countries try to involve themselves emotionally they are doomed to failure thanks to a divergence in culture, background, moral values, and what not. It is of no consequence if the plot develops in American territory, as it does in "Pandora" and partially in An International Episode, or in European settings as in The American and The Portrait of a Lady, because national idyosincrasies obstruct love.

Family opposition constitutes another theme that

frustrates love. It appears again and again, under varying guises and circumstances and settings, in short stories like "The Story of A Year," *nouvelles* like *The Aspern Papers*, and full-length novels like *The Bostonians*. Frequently one or both sides of the protagonists' families do their best to interfere with the youngsters' romance, preventing a happy ending. Their interference, provoked by various causes and enacted without scruples as to the means, always attains its purpose directly or indirectly.

We may now turn to another point, economy. Notwithstanding the opinions of many superficial readers that James is verbose, we hold the opposite view. Our opinion stems from three main sources. First, the three works herein studied clearly reflect the writer's longing for economy, as we shall presently prove. Even such a novel as *Washington Square*, by far the lengthiest among the three stories analyzed, contains no obvious superfluities; it rests on the essentials.

James's own *Notebooks* provide our second basis for thinking James economical. Faced with the rather discouraging American editorial demands for short works, James has always to keep them in mind while in the process of writing any piece of fiction and even before

beginning to write lest he starve to death, since, as Wilard Thorp tells us in his foreword to The Turn of The Screw and Other Short Novels, "a large part of his income was derived from sales to the magazines." In fact so many of the entries of his Notebooks dwell on the number of words and pages in manuscript that it almost becomes an obssession with him.

His other fictional works constitute the third source. By and large, they reveal James's deep concern with the economy of language. He makes it a point of honor to deal in as succint a way as possible only with the "fine, the large, the human, the natural, the fundamental, the passionate things," as he used to label his subject matter. Two samples of this sought "solidity" of style are two full-length novels, The American and The Europeans. Both deal with "romance," and both, further, right away introduce the reader to their particular tone and characters. This naturally leads us to speak about James's technique.

As a rule, James immediately takes the reader into the general atmosphere of the story. Such is the case, for example, in The Aspern Papers and An International Episode. In the formre, by the end of the first paragraph one already knwos who will be the main protagonists and what of plot one

can expect. By the end of the first part, no ohe can mistake the narrator's "romantic" intentions as regards Miss Tita and how well the glamorous "scenario" (as James used to call his settings) of Venice induces the special mood. An International Episode, as formerly indicated, follows a similar pattern.

Besides directness, the proper choice of "scenarios" is another virtue of James's technique in his romantic writings. Superbly depicted, they never fail to count, inflaming to a high pitch the feelings of the lovers. Let us recall that in "Pandora" Count Otto presumably proposes marriage to Miss Day "on fragant April days" and in the midst of "all the magnificence of the view; the immense sweep of the river, the artistic plantations, the last century garden with its big box of hedges and remains of old espaliers." This skill in matching passion, weather, and background and blending them into a harmonious whole occurs in James's other "romances."

Unlike Dickens, James very often treats a quite small set of charcters in each work. "Pandora" evolves around a single couple, Miss Day and Count Otto Vogelstein, besides two or three very secondary characters, Mrs. Dangerfield, Mrs. Bonnycastle, and Mrs. Steuben, who

only supply information about the principal protagonists. An International Episode also centers upon a pair of youngsters, Miss Bessie Alden and Lord Lambeth, plus two close observers of their ultimately unsuccessful attachment, Mrs. Westgate and Percy Beaumont. The female side of Lord Lambeth's family participates in a solitary but telling scene, inserted at the end of the story. Washington Square presentss us with a single, rather ill-matched pair of lovers, Miss Sloper and Mr. Townsend, plus a trio of familiar spedtators, Doctor Sloper, Mrs. Penniman, and Mrs. Almond.

This paucity of characters can be extended to most of James's various "romantic" fictioanl works. In the four diverse examples of this sort we next cite, only one couple, with few or no bystanders people The Portrait of a Lady, The Altar of the Dead, The Beast in the Jungle, and The Jolly Corner. The Europeans, based on two opposite types of attachment (one sincere, and the other insincere), and three observers from the family circle, becomes rather an exception in James's treatment of romance. It may be worth remarking that James contrives here a contrapuntal pattern to underline the discrepancy of motives and ideologies among the characters. We are confronted once more, as frequently

when James deals with the "clash of nationalities," with the "corruption" of Europeans and with what Leslie A. Fiedler in his essay "Daisy: The Good Bad Girl" calls the "mythically innocent" American girl, though here Mr. Acton shares the "innocence," perhaps to a larger extent than Miss Gertrude Wentworth.

In other words, as Morton Dauwen Zabel says of James's prudent restrictions, in an introduction to Fifteen Short Stories by Henry James. "The world of his fiction, in spite of its geographical scope, is a small one: it is confined to very definite and selected segments of society." Furthermore, "James concentrated his attention on the selected fragment of destiny, the particular and esoteric workings of fate, even at times on the seemingly trivial crises of petty, selfish, or obscure existences."

James's apparent "limitation" of subject matter, like that of his greatly admired Flaubert, makes the most of lives such as Miss Tita's or Mr. Marcher's, delving deep into the "chamber of consciousness." Instead of being diverted by the tantalizing magnitude of a literary compass such as Tolstoy's in Russia or Balzac's in France, James's modest compass allows him to go thoroughly into his creatures. As. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock

say in their preface to The Notebooks of Henry James, " 'Form,' in the sense of ordered construction, was essential, but as means not as an end. The end was the revelation of character."

Aside from James's obvious interest in psychology, his works reveal his interest in multifarious questions of his day. The fact that he "lived between two hemispheres, two continents, two countries, and two centuries," as Zabel puts it, accounts for his emphasis, even in his most "romantic" works, upon the topics stirring the minds of his contemporaries. The next quotation, from Ira Progoff's book on Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning, underscores our point: "The individual expresses in his personality the characteristics of his culture as a whole, and particularly the qualities and problems of the particular historical phase in which he lives." We know how poignantly James expressed his personality in his writings and how studiously he grappled with such current themes as manners, chauvinism, democracy, aristocracy, the zest for living, independence, zeal of knowledge, rationalism, pragmatism, social standing, ethics, morals, high society, cruelty, snobbishness, selfishness, and falsehood, not only in the

three works we have studied but in his whole output.

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