

## The Transformation of the Heroine in Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove*

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For all differences of emphasis, there remains a critical consensus about the heroine in *The Wings of the Dove*. According to this consensus, the heroine, Milly Theale, is a Christlike martyr, who "rejects every lure that the world can offer and determines that the best mode of expressing her love for mankind and her forgiveness for its selfishness and greed is to die for it."<sup>1</sup> This kind of interpretation is indeed tempting, for the author himself suggestively evokes the religious atmosphere by frequent use of biblical allusion. Yet it has the objectionable effect of diverting our attention from more fundamental aspects of the heroine and the novel itself. Those critics who interpret the novel as a "fable of good and evil"<sup>2</sup> are, in their apotheosis of the heroine as a martyr, apt to minimize the personal experiences of Milly as a "young person conscious of a great capacity for life" but doomed to die early.<sup>3</sup> First of all, we must keep in mind that a part of James's idea of the novel is, as he tells us in the preface, to dramatize how the dying girl, "enamoured of the world," achieves "the sense of having lived."<sup>4</sup> Her will to live and passion for life is far more aggressive than what her image of a sacrificial dove evokes and it is almost improper to call her "Ophelia or Desdemona."<sup>5</sup> Secondly we must note Milly Theale is an American girl, into whom James projected his old image of a young American as the "heir of all the ages,"<sup>6</sup> and that the novel is about the American visiting Europe. Along with these fundamental aspects, there is another significant aspect that has not received due critical attention: the heroine's departure from her predecessors in James's novels.

As any reader of James's novels will readily recognize, there are two dominant character types; one is the observer and the other, the per-

former. Most of Jamesian heroes and heroines belong to the former category and they are characterized by their lack of "talent for life," reflective mind, and preoccupation with "seeing" rather than "doing." The latter type is represented by the so-called "villainous" characters, in most cases, Europeans or Europeanized Americans, outstanding for their power of action, mastery of appearances, and the effective imposition of their will upon the external world. In *The Wings of the Dove*, Milly Theale apparently joins in the long line of Jamesian spectators, and her antagonist, Kate Croy, in the line of actress-like characters, and certainly, as many critics observe, they are contrasting figures. The contrast, however, demands closer examination as the story advances, since Milly also becomes an actress, if we designate as such the one who enacts a fiction. Like other Jamesian protagonists, the heroine at first assumes a contemplative stance toward life, but with the deepening understanding of mode of seeing dominant in the London society, she realizes the emptiness and danger of her passive attitude. Then, anticipating the transformation of the heroine in *The Golden Bowl*, Milly's mode of being moves toward that of the mistress of appearances.<sup>7</sup> We may say that this is the first novel in which the heroine overcomes the inveterate detachment of Jamesian observer and acts out the roles not passively but actively.

How are we meant to understand this singular transformation of the Jamesian heroine? My concern in this study is to trace the transition of Milly's posture and explore its significance in James's fiction. Close examination of this aspect will, I believe, reward us with insight into James's solution to the problems inherent in the contemplative stance toward life and his notion of ideal mode of our existence in the world.

### I. The Observer and Copyist

The story of Milly Theale properly begins with her descent into the social world of London from the Alpine mountains. During meditating on the Alpine promontory, Milly has a premonition of an early death and determines to go straight to London for "scenery" "human and personal."<sup>8</sup> With her bold injunction "Risk everything!" (I, 140) to her

confidante, Mrs. Stringham, the scene is immediately transferred from the bleak heights to Milly's first banquet at Lancaster Gate. Milly's mind, "the kind of mind," as the narrator defines, "made all for mere seeing and taking" (I, 157), is entirely engrossed in watching the brilliant performance on the stage of English society, with her "awakened" sense and "alertness of vision" (I, 148). At the same time, we are made aware that she is a subtle cautious American girl, not a simple credulous one whom we often encounter in James's earlier novels. With startling quickness, she is awakening to the danger of the society and discerns that she has plunged into "the obscure depths of a society constituted from far back," and encountered the "phenomenon of complicated, of possibly sinister motive" (I, 154). She is so alarmed that even in the midst of the dinner party she feels a momentary urge to leave London immediately. Why, then, does Milly recklessly choose to stay there and lay herself open to the danger? It is, of course, partly because she is still ignorant of the nature of the danger she is to be exposed to, even if her intuition warns her. Yet what neutralizes her precaution is principally her almost morbid "appetite for motive" (I, 201), passion for observation and knowledge; and it is for this, above all, that she is prepared to risk her security, suffer anxiety, dread, and confusion.

This curiosity about human, in the first place, is exactly what she seeks to satisfy in London. When Milly feels, at the party, "how she was justified of her plea for people and her love of life" (I, 147), she is thinking of "people" as the object of observation, curiosity, and imagination, not as the object of personal relation — "people" as mere raw material of intelligence and food for imagination. We should recall her remarks to Mrs. Stringham before they leave for London:

[W]hat she wanted of Europe was "people" . . . . She was all for scenery — yes; but she wanted it human and personal . . . . [I]t was the human, the English picture itself, as they might see it in their own way — the concrete world inferred so fondly from what one had read and dreamed. (I, 134)

Her first impression of the dinner party that it is like “all touches in a picture and denotements in a play” (I, 148) also illustrates well the kind of stance she takes toward people and the world. As to Kate Croy, for example, Milly is much more concerned in observing her as “the amusing resisting ominous fact” (I, 150) than in cultivating intimate relation with her. By “a necessity of the imagination,” she places Kate in “a story,” sees her for “a heroine” (I, 172). With some irony, the narrator comments on Milly: she has “amusements of thought that were like the secrecies of a little girl playing with dolls when conveniently ‘too big’.” (I, 212).

It is this “odd beguilements of the minds” (I, 213) found in Kate that attracts Milly to her more than anything else and makes her willfully plunge into “abysses.” “That’s just the fun of it! . . . Don’t tell me [that] . . . there are not abysses. I want abysses” (I, 186) — this is Milly’s reaction when she encounters the strange situation that Kate keeps secret her relation with Merton Densher, who is also Milly’s acquaintance, and everyone else asks Milly’s silence about him. Milly is overjoyed rather than worried at the emergence of “an interesting complication” (I, 189), since it intensifies her interest in Kate and provides more stimulant to her imagination which has already begun to play actively about “the handsome girl.”<sup>9</sup>

Milly’s passivity to the manipulation of her English friends, which is often misunderstood as a sign of her feebleness or vulnerability, owes much to this fatal curiosity in Milly. If she is manipulated by others, she is perfectly aware that she is being “dealt with” (I, 275), and that with pleasure. Her recurrent impression in relation with her English friends clearly shows the manipulation is possible exactly because of her indulgence rather than her helplessness; she reflects she is in “current” “determined” by others through “her indifference, timidity, bravery, generosity” (I, 274). Milly consciously surrenders herself to others’ views and expectations of her because it gives her “odd beguilements of the mind.” Kate cannot endure the various interpretations imposed upon her by other people, whereas Milly enjoys observing the difference between her own view of herself and their views. She is far more inter-

ested in studying the character and motive of the manipulator, which is inevitably reflected in his way of treating her according to his view of her, than she is concerned with herself.

More significantly, her voluntary passivity is manifestation of her unwillingness or disability to get herself deeply involved in relation with other people. We should note well the degree she endeavors not to reveal her inner self in her intercourse with English friends, even if this effort is, we must admit, half due to her precautions against vaguely suspected danger. For example, Milly at the banquet suffers herself to be taken for "a mere little American" or "a cheap exotic" by Lord Mark simply because she wishes to "keep herself . . . in abeyance" (I, 166). Her willful surrender to others' views is a means of preventing them from seeing into her inner self. In her conscious submission, she is unwittingly playing a false self, which enables her to remove the real self from engulfment into the complex relations. So far as she is merely obedient to others' views and expectations, the true self is never threatened and is free, she fondly believes, from the responsibility for the result ensuing from their manipulation of her. In her passivity, Milly is refusing to commit herself to a direct relation with other people, and even to embody the true self in the actual world. In short, she is rejecting the responsibility for the Self-for-Others.

This peculiar indifference to the Self-for-Others is shared by almost all the Jamesian passive spectators. They are always exclusively concerned with observing others and playing with these figures in their imagination, and hardly aware of the impressions they themselves produce or the influence they unwittingly exercise upon others. It is chiefly because they presume themselves to be completely detached from the world as "audience" when they see the world as "picture," "drama," or "book." They believe their contemplative stance secures them distance from the actual chaotic world and that this distance gives them warrant for exemption from the responsibility for events they watch. Moreover, this contemplative stance protects them from the assaults of violent emotions accruing from direct involvement; while they are watching a play, they never need to suffer genuine agony. When Jamesian

protagonists prefer act of observation to direct participation in life, it is not only because their vicarious experience through observation of active participants promises enlargement of the limited self, but also because they fear the loss of freedom and equilibrium of mind in direct involvement.

In reality, however, this contemplative stance is never so secure as spectators fondly believe. They assume themselves to be outside of the drama and never consider they might be, in their turn, the object of observation; but, in the actual world, to be present at a certain scene, even as an observer, is to be exposed to others' eyes, and at once the observer is made a part of the drama he presumes to watch exactly because others are conscious of him as observing them. In other words, his arrival on the scene as audience starts the theatrical performance on the part of others. Carolyn Porter, in her study of problems implicit in American visionary being, stresses this complicity of observer in the events he presumes to be merely watching: "No matter how impotent, the seer cannot, after all, maintain a stance 'literally out of this world'. . . . Unless the seer is a thoroughly aloof and detached spectator, he is inevitably complicit in the events. . . ." <sup>10</sup> But Jamesian protagonists scarcely become aware of the Self as the object of others' vision and as a result, their complicity in the drama. This explains the reason why they are so easily deceived by villainous characters; for these actors offer the performance exactly because they have the sense of being watched. <sup>11</sup>

This lack of awareness of the self as the object of others' view, the Self-for-Others, in Jamesian protagonists, is characteristically American, for it implies their notion of man's existence in the world is limited to the spiritual existence and closed to the objective existence in society. The most revealing example of typical notion of the Self of these protagonists can be found in the following colloquy between Isabel Archer and Madame Merle in *The Portrait of a Lady*.

Asked about what her earlier suitor possesses, Isabel replies she has no concern for the material things her supposed husband might own; then Madame Merle frankly admonishes her:

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“That’s very crude of you. When you’ve lived as long as I you’ll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take this shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There’s no such thing as an isolated man, or woman; we’re each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our ‘self’? Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us — and then it flows back again. . . . One’s self — for other people — is one’s expression of one’s self; and one’s house, one’s furniture, one’s garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps — these things are all expressive.”<sup>12</sup>

Isabel’s reply to this advice shows American abhorrence of restriction imposed upon the free spirit by the exterior world:

“I think just the other way. I don’t know whether I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me. Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything’s on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one. . . . My clothes may express the dressmaker, but they don’t express me. To begin with it’s not my own choice that I wear them; they’re imposed upon me by society.”<sup>13</sup>

The two attitudes toward the definition of the self outlined in this condensed form represents the two aspects of the reality about what we call the Self; the Self-for-Itself and the Self-for-Others. The difference between Madame Marle’s notion of the Self and Isabel’s is simply that of point of view. Madame Merle sees the Self in terms of one’s relation with others, while Isabel sees the Self only from the inside, that is, in spiritual sense. When Madame Merle says there is no such thing as an isolated self, she expresses a deep truth about our existence in society, for, the Self is, to some extent, if not entirely, defined by “the whole envelope of circumstances,” in so far as others, for the interpretation of the Self, inevitably depend on the visible things as the Self’s manifestation of the Self. Madame Merle’s understanding of the Self that one’s

Self-for-Others is one's expression of one's self is based on the knowledge of the impossibility of intersubjective transparency in our relation with others. Therefore, she concludes one should express and project one's self in the visible. But she carries her notion too far, in that she mistakes for an end itself the things and appearances which are originally a means of self-expression.

On the other hand, Isabel is also too extreme and idealistic in her exclusive consecration of man's spiritual being and in contempt of things, man's outer "shell." In essence, her absolute belief in spirit's freedom and total independence from the exterior world means rejection of every definition of her being which is imposed on by her objective existence in the world. This attitude makes her indifferent to the "whole envelope of circumstances." Almost all Jamesian spectators share the same idealistic notion of the Self as Isabel's, and this is the chief reason for their irresponsibility for their being in relation with others and their fond belief in total independence from events they presume to watch.

Isabel's rejection of everything in the actual world as insufficient to express the Self involves the danger of losing contact with reality. In the actual world, all our communication depends on some conventionally established means of expression, and language itself, in the first place, is a convention. These conventions may be limitations on our free communication, but we must accept them as necessary conditions if we seek intercourse with others. To reject everything with strong belief in untranslatability of the inner self is to renounce a means to establish reciprocal relation with others, which simply means withdrawal into a world of solipsistic delusions, with no validity in the actual world. As Tony Tanner observes, "without any limits the self can never take on any contours, cannot become something real. The pure spirit of the self has to involve itself with the material world of things and society in order to work out an identity for itself, indeed in order to realise itself."<sup>14</sup> In *The Wings of the Dove*, Milly's passive acceptance of others' view is at once the rejection of her complicity in the events she is observing, and shrinkage from the realization of the Self in direct involvement



with others.

Milly's shrinkage from personal involvement with the world is manifested in the extraordinary concern she shows in lady-copyists in the National Gallery. Although Milly is by the time determined to live with more responsibility for her self, she is momentarily seized by an urge to escape from "personal question" and yearns for the impersonal life represented in lady-copyists. They seem to show her "the right way to live": "She should have been a lady-copyist — it met so the case. The case was the case of escape, of living under water, of being at once impersonal and firm" (I, 288). The meaning of her wish for "living under water" is obvious, if we remember the recurrent water imagery associated with human relations, among others, "the vague billows of some great greasy sea" or "the incalculable strength of a wave" (I, 150, 167), which represents the complex relations in Lancaster Gate. She desires to remove herself from intricate random flow of relations into a detached secure world. A lady-copyist is precisely an apt image for Milly's spectatorship without responsible engagement with the world, for a copyist has only to "stick and stick" (I, 288) to the painting, an embodiment of "a direct impression of life" of a great master,<sup>15</sup> in perfect exemption both from agony in creative process — search for ideal form for his imagination —, and from exposure to criticism for the validity of the work. It is this same act of copyist that we have hitherto witnessed in Milly. Her true self is never expressed in and through her outward appearance; while acting in conformity to other people's image of her, she finds assurance that whatever she is doing, she is not being herself and therefore her true self is never exposed to critical eyes of others. Her private self secures complete freedom and omnipotence in her imagination, which is also inviolable in the absence of direct confrontation with the real. We must do justice to her dread for exposing her true self in consideration of the rapacity of Lancaster Gate, but still her self-effacement in conformity to others' view is rejection of the possibility of reciprocal relationship with others and escape from the responsibility for her existence in the world.

Quite regardless of her willful self-effacement, Milly reflects "it was

so little her fault, this oddity of what had 'gone round' about her," and that she is quite blameless for people's universal view of her. Of course, we must admit she has some reason to complain that her English acquaintances have only a fixed view of her as "the awfully rich young American" (I, 219) whose wealth is "the truth of the truths" (I, 121), because these people have no imagination and spontaneity. In the materialistic society of Lancaster Gate, everything is judged by its tangible value and the assessment of value is entirely entrusted to Mrs. Lowder, virtually a presiding god of this society. Even the intelligent Kate depends on Mrs. Lowder for judgement of Milly's value instead of "seeing" her with her own eyes; she bluntly remarks to Milly that she believes in Milly's value because her aunt "took up" (I, 179) her. For the American girl, things are known and judged only after she has seen them separately with her own eyes, while these English people know everything before they see individually, and judge them according to established views. Naturally Milly comes to conclude that their interest lies in what it passes for rather than what it is, and that they cannot perceive beyond the visible.

These cognitive conditions — the people's limited perception and inability to have individual view — inevitably qualify their terms of personal relations. They know and judge before they see; therefore there is no dialectical or reciprocal relation with each other except systematic simplifying "kindness" — mere "kindness" which, as Milly deplores, makes relations "prosaically a matter of course" and supersedes the "operation of real affinities" (I, 301). When we consider these facts, Milly's refusal or resignation of direct involvement with them is not wholly gratuitous. But if her English friends know people, as Kate explains to her, "by something they had to show," "something that . . . could be touched or named or proved" (I, 178), and Milly wants them to have other views than that universal one, isn't it necessary for her to embody what she believes to be her true self — her spiritual, not material, value — in visible form, in specific actions? It is really equally *her* "fault," the "oddity of what had 'gone round' about her." How can one ascertain and narrow the gap between what one thinks the other is and what

the other thinks as himself, if the other accepts one's view without qualification?

The difficulty of genuine communication she experiences in her relation with those surrounding her primarily springs from the difference of their national characteristics, cultural backgrounds, and manners, but the difficulty is also a fundamental question every human being is confronted with in his relation with others. How one can establish an ideal relation with the other, who is other exactly because he has his own independent self and there is distance separating them — this is what James explores in his later international novels. One of James's concerns in this novel is the dramatization of the conflict between the Self and the Other through Milly's encounter with so radically different Others<sup>16</sup> (we may note Milly's first and last concern is "why the handsome girl was so different from her" [I, 153]). Attributing the impossibility of genuine relationship with the people to a "failure of common terms" (I, 190–91), Milly at first evades the issue and contents herself with passive and irresponsible spectatorship, unwittingly renouncing the possibility of reciprocal relationship. But she is to recognize the price she has to pay for the life of self-effacing observation when she is confronted with a portrait by the Mannerist painter Bronzino, at a party held in her honor at Matcham.

Unlike the modern, materialistic society of Lancaster Gate, Matcham is a genuine aristocratic society, where a tone of "gold" is "kept 'down'" by "the general perfect taste" (I, 208). It represents, to Milly's imagination, a manifestation of ideal "full" life achieved through interaction of the personal and the impersonal, the individual human life and the accumulated civilization. Milly is indeed exhilarated at the way "the brilliant life . . . just *was* humanly led" in the "great containing vessel" of "the largeness of style" (I, 209, 208). The fact that Milly is once again "success" here also heightens her exhilaration and gives her the taste of "her young life, the freshness of the first and only prime" (I, 209). Yet at the exalted moment of "magnificent maximum" (I, 220), she is forced to realize the grim reality about herself, when she is brought by Lord Mark face to face with her "sister" in the Bronzino portrait,<sup>17</sup> which everyone

says looks just like her. The portrait of a Renaissance noble lady is a mirror image of Milly grasped by “the kind eyes” and Milly finds in the picture at once the culmination of her social success and the implication of death in both physical and spiritual senses:

Once more things melted together — the beauty and the history and the facility and the splendid midsummer glow: it was . . . the pink dawn of an apotheosis coming so curiously soon. . . . [S]he found herself, for the moment, looking at the mysterious portrait through tears. Perhaps it was her tears that made it just then so strange and fair — as wonderful as he had said: the face of a young woman, all splendidly drawn, down to the hands, and splendidly dressed; a face almost livid in hue, yet handsome in sadness. . . . The lady in question . . . with her slightly Michael-angelesque squareness, her eyes of other days, her full lips, her long neck, her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds, was a very great personage — only unaccompanied by a joy. And she was dead, dead, dead. (I, 220–21)

In the portrait of a woman long dead, Milly perceives an omen of her death all the more because she is to visit Sir Luke, a great physician, to have her disease diagnosed the next day. The deathliness of the portrait also reminds her of the singular emptiness of her life up to this juncture.

The portrait which people say resembles her provides Milly with the first opportunity to see herself from outside through people’s eyes. She has always assumed herself as a spectator of a picture represented in the great canvas of Lancaster Gate and preoccupied herself in studying “a figure in a picture” (I, 171), for example, Kate. She has been so absorbed in observing the figures in the picture as to forget the fact that she might be the object of observation on the part of the observed. Now the situation is completely reversed and it is she who is a figure in the picture and watched by people; she is made aware of audience eagerly watching her and forced to see objectively the image she has presented to their view. A Bejeweled wealthy pale woman “unaccompanied by a joy” — this is the image reflected in their eyes, and she realizes, as the outcome of

her noncommittal spectatorship, the death of her self, the absence of her self in the image.

Thus the Bronzino portrait symbolizes Milly's spiritual death in the past and physical death in the future. But James also suggests that paradoxically the dead lady in the portrait, immortalized by art, urges Milly to assert her will to live. The lady is turned into a cold joyless image by the painter's own Manneristic style, in other words, the artist's mode of preception; but the living Milly is allowed to be an artist free to represent her image in her own style. When Kate inquires her, at the moment, whether she is seriously diseased, Milly declares her challenge to create her living image "with her eyes again on her painted sister's" "almost as if under their suggestion": "But I can go for a long time." "Not without a light in her face," she goes on to say, "That will be one of my advantages. I think I could die without its being noticed" (I, 227-28).

From the moment of her confrontation with the portrait, Milly acquires "a strange soft energy" (I, 226) and undertakes to assert her will and to express her own impression of life; she determines to engage herself with the world more actively than before. Her request of Kate to accompanary her to the doctor is her first act of direct involvement with people; as a token of her gratitude for Kate's kindness and friendship, Milly confides her secret anguish to Kate and proves her trust in Kate's sincerity by the request, because visible proof is what people in Lancaster Gate demand: "If she desired to *show* Kate that she really believed Kate liked her, how could she *show* it more than by asking her help?" (I, 229: italics mine). She has not entirely dispelled her suspicion about Kate's reserve on Densher, but in this affirmation of her faith, Milly is manifesting her wish for Kate to be faithful as well.

Her determination to live actively is further confirmed on her second visit to the doctor. The movement of her emotion in the scene bears a parallel to the one we have witnessed in the confrontation scene. She is thrown into sheer despair, when she divines the underlying truth from the fact that she is treated by the doctor "as if it were in her power to live." But it also strikes Milly that she is offered, in return, "the beauty

of the idea of a great adventure, a big dim experiment or struggle in which she might more responsibly than ever before take a hand" (I, 248). Once again Milly's mind ascends from the depth of despair to the aspiration of living by "her option, her volition" (I, 249).

In these two crucial confrontations with reality Milly is awakened to her potentialities, "will-power" (I, 258) and capacity for action, which have been suppressed because of her obstinate clinging to the private immune world. Sir Luke admonishes her: "You're active . . . by nature — it's beautiful: therefore rejoice in it. *Be* active, without folly . . . be active as you can and as you like" (I, 248). Hereafter, Milly does begin to *act*; instead of observing and copying the self framed in other people's style, she engages herself in creating her own portrait to achieve the authorship of her very being, and acting out the role of the play which she herself produces to rearrange the world in accordance with her ideal.

## II. The Actress and Artist

Milly's "acting as if" is essentially her effort to transcend the two limiting facts about herself — that she is mortally diseased and that she is reduced to a mere rich girl by objectifying views of others. Instead of resigning herself to the limitations, she makes assaults on them by creating appearances which she wishes to establish as reality. She struggles to achieve the authorship of her being by consciously acting out her ideal conception of herself and acquires, in the process, the sense of social identity which has been missed in Jamesian American protagonists.

One of the most important appearances that she endeavors to create is, though it is often neglected or misunderstood by critics, "the beautiful show" of life "in its freshness, made by young persons of your [her] age" (II, 128) as her doctor advises. As John Goode observes, Milly achieves life by "conquering death by the impression she makes."<sup>18</sup> In this case, it is advantageous to her that people in Lancaster Gate have no imagination for the invisible and judge everything by the visible, because she "could die without its being noticed" (I, 228) while she is "go[ing]

on as if nothing were the matter" (II, 123). Milly's determination to remain silent about her illness is never "the sin of pride," "the last temptation of the devil," to which some critic attributes Milly's disaster.<sup>19</sup> Acting as if "nothing were the matter" is the doomed girl's strategy to experience the sense of living based on her knowledge of mode of seeing predominant in Lancaster Gate. Her deeper understanding of English people makes her foresee the consequence of her disclosure of disease; they would simply pity and treat her as nothing but a dying girl, just as they are now merely being kind and regard her as a happiest girl because she is fabulously rich. What Milly aspires is not the experience of dying but the experience of living, not the bitter foretaste of dark abyss of future but the fullest taste of the present. Of course she dimly knows her doomed future but she chooses to believe in the "will-power" — that she could live if she would —, and to grasp the fleeting moment of living. Therefore, she creates the appearance of being "nothing were the matter" with her, and demands people to believe in it, because, in order to experience the sense of being alive, she must be treated as such. She is attempting to furnish her inner reality or belief with objectivity by using people's eyes as a mirror to reflect her desired image, exactly in the same way as Kate makes use of Densher's eyes as a mirror to reflect her ideal image.<sup>20</sup>

Much more important and inclusive is her "dovelike" acting, which gives her the opportunity to reconcile her ideal self with the role demanded by others. On one occasion, which seems to Milly to have "the quality of a rough rehearsal of the possible big drama" (I, 275–76), Kate designates Milly "a dove" with a ceremonious gesture, tacitly demanding that Milly should be only too innocent to have any doubt about anything and be a sacrificial animal for people's happiness.<sup>21</sup> Milly receives the dove image as "an inspiration," as "revealed truth" of her essence of being: "She found herself accepting as the right one, while she caught her breath with relief, the name so given her" (I, 283). For the first time, Milly voluntarily adopts Kate's view of her as a dove because she finds in the view some ideal foothold to the world to engage herself as someone other than a mere rich girl.

The dove image has a double advantage, for it is "the version that met their convenience" (I, 26), that is, the role which people require Milly to perform as an obligation of a social being; at the same time, it meets her convenience, by offering her an ideal form or manner to express her inner quality. Milly's ignorance of Kate's exact motive for calling her a dove makes it possible for her to reinterpret the assigned role, and it is by this reinterpretation that Milly transcends the imposition of others' will, while fulfilling her responsibility for both the Self-for-Others and the Self-for-Itself. Certainly the dove image is originally only a role cast by Kate, not her own invention, as some critics deplore.<sup>22</sup> But the image is saved from becoming a fatuous self-image by its not being her idealized mental picture of herself but a willingly adopted role, because a willingly adopted role implies an awareness not only of her own personality, but of her relation to an evaluating audience. More important is the fact that Milly is no longer a "lady-copyist" who copies the picture painted by Kate, who is once likened to "a master" (I, 74) because of her excellence in verbal rendering. Milly is inspired by the subject represented in the painting by a master's hand, but she is free to discover other meanings and express them in her own personal style and manner. Her creation of meanings through her own interpretation and imagination enables her to appropriate the borrowed image. Hereafter, "the dovelike" becomes the principle of her conduct, forming the expansive frame which contains the succession of masks and roles she assumes; and to study "how a dove *would* act" (we should note well it is neither "should" nor "could" [I, 284]) helps her to discover her own latent values and embody them in actions.

Milly's "the dovelike" is never so naive and innocent as the image evokes but highly artificial and practical. To protect people and maintain "easy" relations with them even by telling many lies — this is what she means by acting "the dovelike." "Easy" becomes her key term for the relationship which she wishes to establish with people, and she determines to let them treat her easily by concealing "the wisdom of the serpent" (I, 226) under the guise of an innocent dove. With the decision, she acquires an energy to reverse the situation of being



patronizingly pitied by others. Milly is far from infirm when she struggles to sustain Mrs. Stringham through her ordeal of telling Milly the doctor's diagnosis; it is Milly who gives Mrs. Stringham "the pledge of protection and support" (II, 102). When she visits Sir Luke just before leaving London, she exerts the same energy and once again reverses "their characters of patient and physician": "What *was* he in fact but patient, what was she but physician, from the moment she embraced once for all the necessity, adopted once for all the policy, of saving him alarms about her subtlety?" (II, 125).

The reversal of situation by her "doveline" acting is most concretely revealed when Milly glosses over the awkwardness of the unexpected encounter with Kate and Densher at the National Gallery. The scene also illustrates well Milly's developing sense of social tact and manners that only an American girl could achieve. At the first moment of their encounter, Milly senses that she is being "dealt with" by Kate as usual and that Kate is "in control of the scene" (I, 293, 294). Nevertheless, now that Milly has understood fully the necessity of conscious acting not only for the facility of relation with others but also for realization of the ideal self, "with a small private flare of passion," she decides to "*show* him how she eased him off," as "the one thing she could think of to do for him" (I, 294: italics mine). She abandons her inveterate post of observation and actively participates in the game and struggle of social manners.

By virtue of the awareness of playing a role before evaluating audience, the awareness which develops one's ability to see oneself from others' point of view, she discovers a part of her identity which she has not noticed for herself, "her unused margin as an American Girl" (I, 295). When she considers how she would look to Densher, who has just come back from America, she strikes on her spontaneity as an American. In the novel, James uses the imagery of process of refining a raw ore to delineate Milly's development; once she is figured by Mrs. Stringham as "a mine of something precious" which "needed working and would certainly yield a treasure" (I, 126); Kate later observes "He [Densher] *had* unearthed her [Milly], but it was they, all of them

together, who had developed her" (II, 45). As Kate points out, it is Densher who reminds Milly of this latent "social resource" (II, 215) of an American girl, and it is people in Lancaster Gate who enlighten her about the importance of manifesting inner values in visible form. Through the intercourse with them, Milly is awakened to the fact that spiritual values must be given some appropriate form to be appreciated by others.

For the demonstration of her charm to Densher, whom she still "likes," as well as for rearrangement of the embarrassing situation, she begins to act the part of the spontaneous American, sounding "her own native wood-note" (I, 295) in conversation with him and becomes "as spontaneous as possible and as American as it might conveniently appeal to Mr. Densher, after his travels, to find her" (I, 296). At last it is Milly the dove, much more than Kate the mistress of appearances, that controls the scene. She invites them to lunch, "proposed it as the natural thing — proposed it as the American girl" (I, 296), and her "lively line — the line of spontaneity — made everything else relative" (I, 299). Now Milly's conscious acting diverts the current which was determined by Kate at the beginning, and to be "dovelike" she "had only to *appear* to take Kate's hint" (I, 296: italics mine). She is almost aggressive, as James suggests, for "what Milly thus gave she therefore made them take" even if "it was rather more than they wanted" (I, 296). At this point, she is a manipulator as skillful as, or more cunning and subtle than, Kate in the sense that she is able to disguise her manipulation by appearing an innocent dove. But what distinguishes most Milly's mastery over others from Kate's is that Milly's is intended as "the right lubricant" (II, 255) of relations without impairing others' freedom. Furthermore, while Kate's acting, social tact, and manners are not so much an organic expression of her self as defensive weapon and mask to veil her brutality, Milly's are not just defensive or totally foreign to her nature but expressive of her inner quality. Kate employs acting negatively as a means of concealment and deception, but Milly finds positive uses for it as manifestation of her self and ideals. Since one of her ideals is to create "easy," harmonious relationship among

people, quite naturally she ceases to exercise her strange power, once she perceives that the social intercourse could proceed without her aid. Her deliberate concession of initiative to Densher without being noticed by himself exemplifies the kind of her manipulation through conscious acting.<sup>23</sup>

Reflecting the shift of power, the action is transferred from London to Venice, where James prepares perfect setting for Milly's brilliant performance of a "beautiful show" of life. The performance is enacted on the stage of a grand palace she rents in Venice. Her acquisition of the appropriate setting is, in itself, an index of her developing awareness of identity. With the gradual perfection of personal manner, Milly, unlike Isabel Archer, becomes conscious of her "shell," that is, her wealth, which she accepts as an inevitable part of her identity. She had to begin with "no manner at all" about her money unlike Mrs. Lowder, who had "a masterful high manner about it," "keeping her wealth as for purposes, imaginations" (I, 196). Yet Mrs. Stringham's anticipation that Milly might eventually acquire a "motive" and "manner" is fulfilled when Milly begins to think consciously of "complete use of her wealth" (II, 142) in the way it should manifest her inner quality. She makes use of her money to rent a Venetian historical palace, to have "the thorough make-believe of a settlement" (II, 135), to be "lodged for the first time as she ought, from her type, to be" (II, 206), and to give the concrete expression to her ideal vision of life, that is, perfect fusion of life and art, which she envisions at the "great historic house" (I, 208) at Matcham. So the palace is made "a temple of taste and an expression of the pride of life," yet, at the same time, "a jolly *home*" (II, 143). F.W. Dupee observes of Milly: "She plays the 'princess' to everyone's fancy" "in a rented palace many times too large for her small self and meager court."<sup>24</sup> But the point is just how well she appropriates the rented palace as her private symbol by her imaginative appreciation, exactly in the same way as she converted the borrowed dove image into something quite her own. As Mrs. Stringham explains to Densher, it is Milly who is "bringing out all the glory of the place" (II, 206). Densher also reflects that "the beauty of her whole setting" gains from

her “disconcerting poetry” “for effect and harmony” and that “her whole attitude” has “meanings that hung about it” (II, 184–85). Certainly it is ironical that the American disinherited from European tradition and culture should purchase the symbol of “the rich Venetian past” (II, 135) from the impoverished European with money — the symbol of developing America. Yet James suggests here that the disowned American might recapture European past by virtue of his evaluation and love for it, reviving its faded intrinsic value through new appreciative eyes.

Achieving personal style and the setting to enhance its effect, Milly begins to create her own society, shaping and molding the lifestyle of people surrounding her. In London she was a guest at the Lancaster Gate society; in Venice she has installed herself as hostess and welcomes people into her society, her “ark.” James finds the felicitous image of “the ark of her deluge” (II, 143) for the old palace towering over “the slow Adriatic tide” (II, 148). Away from London, where everyone is in “the current” of “working and of being worked” (I, 180) and at the mercy of “gregarious movements as inscrutable as ocean-currents” (II, 43), Milly offers, in “the ark,” a short “respite” (II, 144) from the social struggle, showing what genuine relations should be.

Nevertheless, stricken in the increasing complexities of personal relations, especially with Kate, Milly is once again tempted to retreat into the impersonal world of contemplation. She wishes never to descend from her grand sala which looks over the tide from “an altitude,” and to remain “aloft in the divine dustless air, where she would hear but the splash of the water against stone” (II, 147). Under the ceaseless assaults of the external world upon her consciousness, Milly is seized with the urge to remain at the “balcony” — James’s favorite image for the observer’s solitary but secure vantage point — for “the adventure of not stirring” (II, 148), namely, the adventure of imagination, without “going down” but only looking down upon the flow of relations. But she abandons the momentary “conceit” (II, 143) and defends her “ark” from the invasion of “the current” of mercenary relations when Lord Mark suddenly appears.

Many of the scenes in Venice parallel earlier scenes in London, providing us the measure of difference Milly's conscious acting creates. When Lord Mark turns up, Milly gives him a grand tour of her historical palace in memory of the day when she was led by him into the sanctuary within the great historical house at Matcham. As in Matcham, Lord Mark attempts to get Milly's acceptance to his proposal in his usual exquisite way, threatening the order of her society by bringing with himself the current of commercialized relationship in the society of London. He tries to drag her into the current, offering their worship and adoration in return. Milly once for all makes it plain that their commercialized terms of relations is quite foreign to her nature and definitely shows her disapproval:

"I must be attached to you as you will, since you give that lovely account of yourselves. I give you in return the fullest possible belief of what it would be. . . . I give and give and give. . . . Only I can't listen or receive or accept — I can't *agree*. I can't make a bargain. . . ." (II, 160-61)

Although in London she indulgently allowed herself to be dealt with in their own terms, here she prohibits "bargain" in her society and repels the peddler.

Before she left London, Milly was always placed in someone's composition of relations, and watched herself framed within others' view, as we have observed in the crucial scene of confrontation with the Bronzino portrait. In Venice, Milly becomes the author of her being and manager of the scene, qualifying the relations among people. Her conscious acting and tacit assignment of roles to others enables her to dramatize her vision of the world and relations. In short, she has become an artist of her own painting and drama. Her art of life is compressed in the dramatic party scene, in which Milly expresses at once her joy of life, and her gratitude and affection for her friends. The party which Milly gives in honor of Sir Luke is intended as a contrast to the garden party at Matcham, and a dramatization of her vision of ideal life which

she grasped at Matcham. At Matcham Milly believed life could be "humanly led" in the "containing vessel" of "the largeness of style," though not unaware of the latent element of social struggle for wealth and position. In this party, she converts "the pervasive mystery of Style" of the palace (II, 203) into the "containing vessel" and makes her "mildness" a medium for relations among guests, purging her guests from mercenary motives which could not be expelled even at Matcham. At the same time, spending more lavishly her money and her life, she composes her figure and the pictorial scene as a countermove to the dead image of the Bronzino lady. Although too sick to come down for dinner, she does descend from the high chamber for the party, dressed in white, casting off her "almost monastic, her hitherto inveterate black" (II, 214), to present her living figure in the scene of joyful feast.

As a contrast to the cold static image of the Bronzino portrait, James uses two paintings by Veronese to suggest the quality of Milly's art. Laurence B. Holland suggests that one is *The Supper in the House of Levi* and the other is *The Marriage Feast at Cana*.<sup>25</sup> James's comment on Veronese in his principal essay on Venice will explain his adoption of these paintings: "Never was a painter more nobly joyous, never did an artist take a greater delight in life [than Veronese]. . . ."<sup>26</sup> Joy of life is exactly what Milly missed in the Bronzino portrait and what she desires most to express in order to make it abide in people's memory as her image. It is true that the biblical allusions of these paintings strongly tempt us to interpret Milly as a Christ figure, but James lays more weight on the contrast of the cold Mannerism portrait and the splendid festal scene which Milly is going to represent.<sup>27</sup> More significantly the portrait was, in a way, symbolization of Milly's isolation from people, but in this scene Milly, circulating among guests, commingles with them and frames everyone including herself in a picture.

In the party, Milly's playing the role of American girl as a dove's device for the "ease" of relations attains success, and harmony diffuses among people. There are few American protagonists in James's novels who realize, like Milly, their American identity and learn to make advantage of it as a countermeasure against European society. In James's

mind "manners" represent "the very core of our social heritage"<sup>28</sup> and something the Americans must achieve, and a part of his pursuit in his international novels is to dramatize the formless American's search for form in his encounter with European artificial world. In this sense, Milly is the first and perhaps only heroine who succeeds in fusion of American naturalness and European artifice.

Densher, the "register" of the scene, comes to appreciate her social tact. While he was in London, he could not discern that the "ease" he enjoyed in his relation with Milly owed much to her subtle tact and conscious acting, and thought of Milly merely as a "specimen" of American girls, "the easiest people in the world" (II, 72). But he recognizes that the American character is her "large though queer social resource," something she is able "to keep down or to display" "by choice or by instinctive affinity" (II, 215). James assigns Densher the role of appreciator to provide validity to Milly's art, which, otherwise, might be interpreted by a cynical reader as her fatuous delusion. Then, far from deprecating her role-playing, James shows Milly to be the manager of the whole harmonious scene through Densher's eye and conveys to us the success of her art of life through his appreciation:

[H]e felt her diffuse in wide warm waves the spell of a general, a beatific mildness. . . . [H]e floated, he noiselessly swam in it, and they were all together . . . like fishes in a crystal pool. . . . They were only people . . . staying for the week or two at the inns, people who during the day had fingered their Baedekers . . . [and] differed, over fractions of francs, with their gondoliers. But Milly, let loose among them in a wonderful white dress, brought them somehow into relation with something that made them more finely genial; so that . . . the comparative prose of the previous hours, the traces of insensibility qualified by "beating down," were at least almost nobly disowned. (II, 213)

Indeed Milly suppresses the "current" of commercialized relations and creates "a crystal pool."

She also succeeds as an artist of her own being in her attempt to

express and communicate her inner quality. Densher comes to have his own view of Milly, which she has desired most, and he understands the dovelike quality of her spirit in its true sense, not through anybody else's interpretation. He sees Milly as a dove precisely because of her protective wings and perceives that all of the people are "nestling under them to a great increase of immediate ease" (II, 218). Protection and ease are what Milly has felt it necessary to provide in the commercialized world of Lancaster Gate and chosen as a form to manifest her inner quality. Densher's recognition of them attests the measure of success of her artistic activity, even though his action in this scene betrays his appreciation.

### III. The Art of Life

Now we must turn to the question as to what James means by the transformation of Milly from a mere observer to a role-playing actress. Before discussing the question, we shall begin with brief examination of James's notion of art and life.

To read James's autobiographical works is to know the process in which James converts his power of vision and imagination, what he calls elsewhere "my *seeing* imagination,"<sup>29</sup> into something that could compensate for his incapacity for direct participation in life and "the chill . . . of a foreseen and foredoomed detachment."<sup>30</sup> For James, to see and imagine is, first and last, nothing other than the essence of his act of living. In *Notes of a Son and Brother* James writes:

[O]n the day . . . when one should cease to live in large measure by one's eyes (with the imagination of course all the while waiting on this) one would have taken the longest step toward not living at all. . . . since vision, and nothing but vision, was from beginning to end the fruit of my situation among them [people].<sup>31</sup>

But, as his numberless works prove, he is not content with being merely an observer and "a man of imagination at the active pitch," and his "doing" is to convert his vision into art to achieve "objectivity, the



prize to be won.”<sup>32</sup> He finally arrives at the conclusion that his artistic activity is action itself: “[T]o ‘put’ things is very exactly and responsibly and interminably to do them. Our expression of them, and the terms on which we understand that, belong as nearly to our conduct and our life. . . .”<sup>33</sup>

His prefaces to the New York edition give us much help to understand the precise nature of his belief in artistic activity as a part of action and life. Briefly summarized, the law imposed upon the artist is that he shall search for “the hard latent *value*” in the vast “inclusion and confusion” of life and redeem it from “splendid waste.”<sup>34</sup> It is the “sublime economy of art”<sup>35</sup> that makes life more meaningful and in this sense he believes that his creative activity contributes to life itself.

In essence, Jamesian protagonists repeat the process their author has been engaged in. Like their author, they are deprived of the talent for action, but endowed with fine sensibility, subtle consciousness, and supreme imagination, they attempt to participate in life, even if indirectly, through observation. James always grants “those who appreciate” the superiority over “those who don’t,”<sup>36</sup> because the former characters redeem, through their consecrating appreciation, experience and meanings which might have been wasted by the latter insensible characters. Their “naive eye,” as Tony Tanner stresses, possesses the ability to discover the beauty and meaning buried in the familiar experience exactly because of its naivety.<sup>37</sup> And their imagination, the “power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things,”<sup>38</sup> pierces the surface of things and reconstructs the given chaotic world into the projection of their own artistic design. Richard Poirier is correct in observing that the Jamesian hero’s imagination always makes efforts to “transform things he sees into visions, to detach them from time and from the demands of nature, and to give them the composition of *objets d’art*.”<sup>39</sup> But if Jamesian protagonists are engaged in the artistic activity like their author, then, what is their counterpart of James’s “doing,” which is expression of his imaginative construction? While celebrating their moral superiority and active imagination, James never gives full sanction to their claim to call themselves genuine artists; on

the contrary, he always suggests that their imaginative construction is exposed to the danger of dissolving into mere fatuous delusion. So far as they confine themselves in their private world without efforts to embody their vision into concrete forms, they remain impotent artists full of ideas but little ability for "execution." In James, if half of the quality of art depends upon "the consciousness of the artist,"<sup>40</sup> the rest is determined by his "execution." It is only the artist who has acquired proper expression for his imagination through "search for form,"<sup>41</sup> that can properly claim the name.

James's preoccupation with "form" is not confined to literature but it refers to human behavior in general, such as manners. His high esteem for forms in general is reflected in his everlasting concern with theatrical behavior in his actress-like characters. If Jamesian speculative characters are artists of appreciation and imagination, these characters of theatrical behavior are artists of "execution," even if moral quality of their work is problematical. Owing to their European background, they are well aware of the significance of manners, forms, and appearances, and this awareness enables them to manipulate others' impressions, by fabricating certain appearances as they want. Their "execution," that is, their speech and appearances, is so splendid that their fiction or deception, whatever one may call, attains certain air of reality, and thereby controls reality itself.<sup>42</sup> James recurrently adopts these deceptive characters as antagonists from the necessity to cause bewilderment on the part of protagonists and provide them with a bait to incite their curiosity and imagination with dazzling surfaces. Yet it is not only as a device for fiction that they appeal to James's imagination. In his mind, these characters represent one aspect of the Self that is not accessible to his speculative characters. James is aware that their mastery of manipulating impressions proceeds from their understanding of the implication of our objective existence in the world — existence of watchful audience and the Self exposed to others' view, because the manipulation is possible only when one recognizes that the Self as the object for others never coincides with the Self as the subject for oneself and that others know the Self only through its expression. Admit-

ting that too much concern for appearances, in other words, the Self-for-Others, entails the loss of the individual inner self, yet James recognizes this aspect of the Self as inescapable conditions of our existence in society.

What James has attempted in *The Wings of the Dove* is the reconciliation of these contrasting types of artists in the figure of Milly Theale, and the reconciliation implies the integration of the two aspects of the Self, the Self-for-Itself and the Self-for-Others, which have been separately represented by speculative being and histrionic being. Duality of the Self is James's mature vision of our modes of existence in the world; his ironical sense of it is revealed through Kate's reflection: "There was no such misfortune, or at any rate no such discomfort . . . as to be formed at once for being and for seeing" (I, 33). Made for "seeing," man is privileged to comprehend the world in his vision; yet, made for "being," man is deeply involved in the world and thereby his subjectivity is inevitably threatened by objectifying views of others. "Misfortune" indeed, but it is undeniable that man can escape the solipsism and expand his horizons through the recognition of this duality — the ability to view the Self both from the inside and outside. To maintain the integrity of the Self in this dilemmatic situation, man must narrow the gap between the two Selves by embodying the Self in each specific action. Only through the "execution" of his vision, can man reduce the distance between the two Selves, and the distance separating the Self and Others.

In *The Wings of the Dove*, James succeeds in creating the heroine who achieves the authorship for her own being, synthesizing the Self-for-Itself and the Self-for-Others. Her various role-playing does not mean the loss of integrity, because all the masks and roles are integrated in the expansive figure of the dove, the symbol of her inner quality. Converting the appearances hitherto negatively used as mere disguise into organic expression of the Self and its vision, Milly has become a genuine artist, and James reminds us that our act of living in itself can be creative activity and our prosaic life can be alchemized into art.

## Notes

1. Quentine Anderson, *The American Henry James* (New Jersey: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1957), p. 237. Other contributors to this consensus are R. P. Blackmur, "The Wings of the Dove" (1958), collected in *Studies in Henry James* (New York: New Directions, 1983); Frederic C. Crews, *The Tragedy of Manners: Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James* (1957; rpt. Connecticut: Archon Books, 1971); R. W. B. Lewis, "The Vision of Grace: James's *The Wings of the Dove*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 3, (Spring, 1957), pp. 33-40; J. A. Ward, *The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James* (Lincoln: Nebraska Univ. Press, 1961).
2. Blackmur, p. 174.
3. Henry James, Preface to *The Wings of the Dove* in the New York Edition, collected in *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*, ed. R. P. Blackmur (New York: Scribners, 1934), p. 288.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
5. F. W. Dupee, *Henry James* (London: Methuen, 1951), p. 255.
6. James, *Prefaces*, p. 292.
7. We can observe the germ of such a transformation in the hero of *The Ambassadors*, though in his case the transformation is incomplete. In the earlier stage of the novel, Lambert Strether is merely a passive spectator who enjoys "vicarious experience" through watching youthful life of Chad and his friends. But his position begins to shift from the moment he promises Madame de Vionnet to help her, with his conviction of "virtuous" relation between Chad and Madame de Vionnet, and by the time the second ambassadors arrive, he already assumes the role of a performer, showing "the performance of 'Europe'" (II, 105) before them. Nevertheless, Strether is half afraid of being a performer and shows reluctance to be seen as such; when one of his friends suggests that he is "the hero of the drama" and bears the responsibility for the deceptive drama enacted for the second ambassadors, he confesses his fear and shrinkage from the responsibility, saying "He's [Strether himself is] scared at heroism — he shrinks from his part" (II, 179). Finally Strether renounces the given opportunity to be at once an observer with fine appreciative power and an active participant in the world, clinging to the secure detached position. In *The Golden Bowl*, the heroine's transformation is more conspicuous; when she begins to suspect the adulterous relation between Amerigo and Charlotte, she turns herself into a "mistress of shades" (II, 142) and "actress" (II, 231), disguising her suspicion under the guise of the innocent mask. Instead of disclosing the whole truth, she chooses to maintain peaceful appearance by "her dissimilated art" (II, 235), in order to save the whole family from irretrievable disintegration. Her mastery of deceptive appearances in this process almost exceeds that of Charlotte, and this is one of the reasons for disagreement among critics about Maggie's innocence.
8. James, *The Wings of the Dove*, Vols. XIX-XX (1909) in the New York Edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907-9), volume I, p. 134. All further references are contained in the text in the form: (I, 134). I use this edition as my text for all the novels referred to in this study.
9. This morbid inclination toward "abysses" is characteristic of Jamesian heroes and heroines, and it partly accounts for their culpability for the disastrous situation they incur. Lambert Strether, for example, is undoubtedly enjoying

the complication of the situation when he says to Maria Gostrey, "Make it [her report] lurid — for that makes my problem richer" (II, 139). The governess in "The Turn of the Screw" is a typical character who displays morbid delight in deepening enigma.

10. Carolyn Porter, *Seeing and Being: The Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams, and Faulkner* (Connecticut: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1981), p. 126.
11. Lambert Strether is a typical victim of deception. He is deceived because he does not fully understand the way he is seen by others. Even if he presumes himself to be a mere observer, he is, for other people, essentially an ambassador to bring back Chad Newsome; therefore, other people's reaction to him is naturally based on the fact. Yet Strether fails to distinguish their performance for the sake of Chad's ambassador from the reality itself.
12. James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, (I, 287–88).
13. *Ibid.*, (I, 288).
14. Tony Tanner, "The Fearful Self," *Critical Quarterly*, 7 (Autumn, 1965), p. 213.
15. James believes that the art of the painter and the art of the novelist are analogous and that the preoccupation of both of them is "to represent life," to represent "a direct impression of life." See "The Art of Fiction" (1884) in *Partial Portraits* (1888; rpt. n.p.: The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1970), p. 384.
16. James himself has been fascinated by the sense of otherness in people from the earliest years. See James, *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), collected in *Henry James: Autobiography*, ed. F. W. Dupee (1956; rpt. New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), p. 101.
17. The particular painting James had in mind has been identified by Miriam Allott with convincing accuracy as Bronzino's "Lucrezia Panciatichi," painted between 1532 and 1540. See Miriam Allott, *Modern Language Notes* 68 (Jan., 1953), pp. 23–24. For commentary on the Bronzino, see also Viola Hopkins Winner, *Henry James and the Visual Arts* (Charlottesville: The Univ. Press of Virginia, 1970), pp. 81–85; Laurence B. Holland, *The Expense of Vision: Essays on the Craft of Henry James* (1964; rpt. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1982), p. 302–03.
18. John Goode, "The Pervasive Mystery of Style: *The Wings of the Dove*," in John Goode, ed., *The Air of Reality: New Essays on Henry James* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 267.
19. Dorothea Krook, otherwise incisive critic, ascribes Milly's final ruin to "the sin of pride." See *The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James* (1962; rpt. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967), p. 213.
20. We should note how often Kate looks into Densher's eyes, and her strong impulse to keep his eyes to herself. He is a kind of looking-glass in which she can enjoy seeing her idealized self steadily reflected.
21. Kate's designation of Milly as a dove is one of her verbal strategies which she often employs with Densher to control reality according to her design. See Ruth Bernard Yeazel, *Language and Knowledge in the Late Novels of Henry James* (Chicago and London: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 76–84, for the discussion of ambiguity of Kate's language. Yeazel argues: "The effect of Kate's word is . . . curiously to blur the line between fact and desire and between the explanation of circumstances and the creation of them. . . . We cannot tell where Kate's real belief about the fact ends and the passionate will to shape and control those facts begins" (pp. 78–79).

22. See for example, Naomi Lebowitz, *The Imagination of Loving: Henry James's Legacy to the Novel* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 60, 76–77.
23. Nevertheless, still we cannot fail to recognize an aggressive aspect of her benevolent manipulation. Even in the small episode at the National Gallery, she “invented the image of his need as a short cut to accommodation” (I, 295) and when she is made to believe that Densher is a rejected suitor by Kate’s deliberate demonstration, her imagination jumps at the pretext for showing her kindness to Densher and blooms under the possibility that she might play a beneficent role for him. She treats him more than necessary as a man needing consolation, in order to satisfy her wish to be a protector.
24. Dupee, p. 255.
25. Holland, p. 306–08. See also Winner, pp. 84, 86.
26. *Italian Hours* (1909; rpt. New York: Horizon Press, 1968), pp. 30–31.
27. If James’s intention is to emphasize allegorical meaning of the party scene, why does James employ Veronese’s paintings here rather than Tintoretto’s, whose paintings, including those of the same subjects as Veronese’s, James obviously esteems much higher? We should note that the difference James perceives between these painters is that Tintoretto’s paintings are so reverent and grave while Veronese’s are secular and full of happiness and joy. See *Italian Hours*, pp. 70–82.
28. James, *The Question of Our Speech. The Lesson of Balzac: Two Lectures* (Boston, 1905), p. 14, as quoted in Christof Wegelin, *The Image of Europe in Henry James* (Dallas: Southern Methodist Univ. Press, 1958), p. 17.
29. James, *The Letters of Henry James*, ed. Percy Lubbock (London: Macmillan, 1920), I, 214.
30. James, *Autobiography*, p. 122.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 443.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 455.
33. James, *Prefaces*, p. 347.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
37. Tony Tanner, *The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965), p. 261–308.
38. James, “The Art of Fiction” in *Partial Portraits*, p. 389.
39. Richard Poirier, *A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), p. 124.
40. James, *Prefaces*, p. 46.
41. James, “The Art of Fiction,” p. 381.
42. Note Kate’s ironical remarks about her aunt, another powerful manipulator of reality: “The very essence of her . . . is that when she adopts a view she . . . really brings the thing about, fairly terrorises with her view any other, any opposite view, and those . . . who represent that” (II, 188).