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Gabler, Janet Ann

RHETORICAL MYTH IN HENRY JAMES'S "THE BOSTONIANS," "THE WINGS OF THE DOVE," AND "THE GOLDEN BOWL"

The Ohio State University Ph.D. 1982

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RHETORICAL MYTH IN HENRY JAMES'S THE BOSTONIANS,
THE WINGS OF THE DOVE, AND THE GOLDEN BOWL

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Janet Ann Gabler, B.A., A.M.

* * * * * * *

The Ohio State University

1982

Reading Committee:                  Approved By
James Phelan
Thomas Woodson
Walter A. Davis

Walter A. Davis
Adviser
Department of English
VITA

May 29, 1953 ........... Born - Canton, Ohio

1975 .................... B.A., Ohio Wesleyan University

1975 - 1976 .............. Teaching Assistant, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois

1976 .................... A.M., Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois

1979 - 1980 .............. Editorial Assistant, College Composition and Communication, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1978 - 1982 ............. Teaching Assistant, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Nineteenth Century American Literature
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Critical Theory
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### Chapter I. The Bostonians: The Birth of a Rhetorical Myth

1. Introduction

II. The Evolving Myth: Rhetorical Artistry in *The Wings of the Dove*

III. The Golden Myth: Rhetoric in *The Golden Bowl*

BIBLIOGRAPHY
INTRODUCTION

Once, while wandering through the market stalls in a piazza in Florence, Italy, I pulled out a sketch from the pile of Renaissance reprints scattered carelessly on one oblong table. It was done in colors of earth, brick-red, and softest gold, and out of the shadows of color emerged a man's outstretched muscular arm, gracefully imploring hand and a hastily scrawled signature, "Michelangelo," in a bottom corner. The sketch was quite beautiful, yet it made me feel odd and isolated from contemplation of the projected final art work as a thing in itself. Rather, I felt my intimacy with the artist and with the conceived idea of masculine beauty and power that he wished the hand to represent. I felt that I was in the presence of an artistic excitement primarily intellectual; if I was to appreciate this artist's work, I was not simply to remain within it, but to use those figures in his drawing as metaphors through which to achieve communion with the artist's ideological vision. I would not rest very long with the figures on the canvas, questioning the accuracy, for example,
of the arm's dimensions. That arm, with beauty more than human, was Michelangelo's conception of man's possibility, and of the way the human body should be.

It is in much the same sense that I think we are to understand Henry James's characters. Complexly oriented and realistically conceived as they might seem, I believe these characters also raise intellectual questions of moral and psychological dimension. James invents moral and psychological complexity in a character not only to enhance our sense of a character's authenticity, but also to increase the complexity of the moral questions which James raises through him. One can perceive in James's works an overriding ideological framework intended to resolve all moral dilemmas and to provide a working philosophy for how to live in the world.

Rhetoric is the study of successful persuasion and thus examines the dynamics between the orator and his audience. Rhetoric focuses upon three important determinants of the communication process, the writer, the subject matter to be discussed, and the writer's audience. Every discourse can be considered essentially persuasive since it it the intent of the orator to persuade his audience to adopt the point of view of the oration. In actual fact, current rhetorical studies often equate "rhetoric" with the notion
of "communication" itself and encourage the necessity of studying the art of composition as a rhetorical process. The dramatic situations in James's novels The Bostonians, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl are rhetorical, in even the most narrow definition of the term. In The Wings of the Dove, for example, two women fiercely compete for the ability to have both wealth and the love of the same man, and they employ very conventional rhetorical weapons to do so.

In fact, these three novels are best studied in light of the rhetorical situations they dramatize, since the major characters in each function as both orator and audience, responding to the rhetorical arguments of others and generating their own. Although especially the later novels elude easy interpretation, a theory of Rhetoric can be applied to James's ethics which leads us to an understanding of James's treatment and evaluation of character.

The stability and health of a thriving rhetorical community in a James's novel depends on a dynamic interaction between the individual and his environment. The individual can only expand his horizons through Rhetoric because it is only through communication with others that the individual accumulates knowledge. At the same time, he must retain his integrity or sense of self. In James's
world, the individual has a love-hate, or, at least, love-fear relationship with his environment. Any contact with stimuli outside himself threatens the individual's sense of self and of stable self-identity, yet if the individual does not allow his mental vistas to grow through active contact with those different from himself, he will stagnate.

The theory of Rhetoric which ensures this dynamic interaction is Moral Rhetoric, which has been explained historically by George Campbell, implied by the work of William James, and which has informed the rhetorical philosophy of Kenneth Burke and Wayne Booth. Moral rhetoricians assume that the most successful rhetorician is one who does not take advantage of his audience's trust in the language that he uses but who instead attempts to use language in a way that conforms as closely as possible to reality as both he and his audience can imagine it. The individual's communication should reveal his sense of self and his needs rather than masking them, which would determine that the individual would satisfy his needs through dishonest methods. Communication should also reflect the orator's sense of empirical reality, reflect those facts which he knows to be true through his experience.
Cultural stability depends on the individual's respect for the integrity of another human being and his individual needs. Thus the individual who uses language deceptively, abusing the integrity of another, threatens the community and is negatively judged by James, even if that character is initially drawn sympathetically.

The major concern which inhibits the self or the community from flourishing is rhetorical dishonesty because the individual who forcefully subordinates the perception of another individual to his own perception can never expand and he also threatens to overwhelm the community. In *The Bostonians*, James depicts the American Eastern culture as one full of meaningless rhetorical cant, and he explores the possibilities for spiritual growth in such a cultural wasteland where the individuals in the community engage in meaningless communication. We can apply the term "metaphor" to the healthy rhetorical process because in order for the individual to engage in the world outside himself, there must be something in that world outside both different from himself from which he can gain and similar to himself which he can latch onto and through which he can identify with the outside world. James conceives of America's Boston as a dead metaphor. Its representative feminist movement which, as suggested by the portrait of
the earnest and benevolent, yet elderly, Miss Birdseye, might once have been a living language, an alien and new form in which people engaged in an effort to expand self-definition, is now simply a dead language which can be used to rationalize any selfish desire the individual might entertain who is stuck in this dead material world. This dead material world is the world of publicity, where self-worth is to be sacrificed for the sake of being in the public eye. Being in the public eye is the greatest ambition such a world can foster. This is the world where Selah Tarrant would sell his soul to get in the newspaper columns and Matthias Pardon his to write them. Even Olive Chancellor's greatest ambition is to groom Verena for the public eye. Unfortunately, this public eye is crass and materialistic and incapable of yielding any spiritual response. Olive's tragic irony is that she tries to subsume a living, vital form within a dead metaphor because she blinds herself for personal reasons to the hypocritical vacuousness of the culture which she wishes Verena to respond to. Olive's own inability to accept the aesthetic and, perhaps, sexual, basis for her pleasure in Verena blocks Olive from truly coming into contact with her and causes her to treat Verena as a dead metaphor which she can subsume and use for her own purposes rather than as a
living metaphor whose differences Olive could respect and who could possibly help Olive grow out of the spiritual limitations of her own character.

In The Bostonians, Basil Ransom and Verena Tarrant seem to emerge not so much out of the fabric of this culture, as out of James's sense of his rhetorical myth. In this novel as in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl, those characters whom we find least likely to conform to our sense of the reality of either the American or European culture are most likely those characters whose personalities conform most profoundly to the requirements of James's Moral Rhetoric. James had little first-hand acquaintance with America's South but it did seem to promise an escape from the constrictions and hypocrisies of the East. Basil Ransom, with his golden mane of hair and the erotic associations connected even with his name, offers Verena the appropriate sexual metaphor to complement her own graceful liveliness and the promise of fertility suggested by the way she is repeatedly associated with Nature. Although Basil does convince Verena to adopt his way of life, he does so in accordance with Verena's own sexual needs and he himself becomes invigorated and motivated to action in the world through contact with Verena's vitality.
The resolution of *The Bostonians* resides in the harmony of myth since in their union Basil and Verena escape the corruptive influences of the culture from which they flee, yet there is a realistic restoration of conflict in the novel's final pages. The mention of Verena's future tears draws attention to the fact that both Basil and Verena are themselves microcosms of culture, engaged in a union which exacts compromise on the part of both, since contact with another involves a compromise of self in the acceptance of stimuli outside oneself. Basil's rhetoric has been both honest and complementary to Verena's sense of self; he presents her with the appropriate metaphor through which to grow and allows for the integrity of her own sexuality from which he himself can profit. Olive tries to draw Verena in with lies and appeals to Verena's sense of social duty. Ironically, she tries to obstruct Verena's growth by cutting off the very sexual and creative forces to which she was initially attracted. Olive's sense of culture is stagnant, since she will not allow any incoming stimuli to disrupt her own precariously balanced rationalization system which allows her to hide from a part of herself that she fears.

In *The Wings of the Dove*, we again see how an idea can become either a dead or living metaphor and the implications of this for spiritual growth and perpetuation of
culture. Beautiful and compelling as Kate Croy might seem, she is condemned by the fact that she was born into a materialistic, inchoate culture form which her escapes are futile. Kate's very compassion and love of life which inspired her choice of Merton Densher as a metaphor through which to grow spiritually also create obligations which make her love for Densher impossible. The unrelenting demands of her materialistic family force Kate, out of a sense of love and obligation, into much the same paradoxical position as Olive Chancellor, since Kate attempts to achieve growth through her contact with Densher yet at the same time she undercuts this possibility by remaining in a stagnant culture and utilizing its dishonest rhetorical methods. When Kate suggests to Milly that she be a dove, the word is for Kate a dead metaphor which simply operates as a means to further her own interests. She is not examining the genuine creative possibilities of a metaphor for changing the nature of reality. She is not concerned with how closely that metaphor conforms to Milly's own personal integrity. Kate denies herself the possibility of change or growth by subordinating the differences of others within her own will. The communication system breaks down because it is totally solipsistic; Kate does not project outside of
her own vision of the world; thus she shuts herself off from others.

Milly Theale, on the other hand, welcomes the offer of the dove metaphor as the means through which to nourish her own creative possibilities for living. Unfortunately, Milly's imaginative flight into future possibilities for both herself and Densher is cut short by Lord Mark, a representative of the material, stagnant culture who cannot project beyond the narrow limitations of his own culture to imagine the implied truths of future possibilities.

Merton Densher emerges as the novel's successful hero. In Merton Densher's development, one sees that for James mental growth is a higher value than the satisfaction of passion, or, rather, that the object of one's passion determines the worthiness of the passion. Kate Croy is an inadequate metaphor for Densher's spiritual growth because her rhetoric is dispassionate in its dishonesty. Communication as an ideal is perverted because Kate's closed system of values implies a use of language and communication as simple pragmatic functions rather than as means by which new meanings can be affirmed through one's imaginative grasp of them. Densher's mental imaginative leap into a new meaning system with Milly marks his own spiritual
growth, his ability to re-create creatively his own past so as to find in it an appropriate metaphorical link with this new experience. When he selectively re-interprets the significance of his times with Milly in New York, he controls his own destiny: he begins to make his own decisions about what form of reality will be most spiritually satisfying to accept. If Densher's decisions in the novel's final pages are on a literal level difficult to accept, one might shift focus slightly and hypothesize that Densher is more an intellectual question than a realistic character; he functions for James as a character caught in a situation where he must make a particularly difficult decision about his moral and spiritual life and, in the terms of James's rhetorical myth, makes that decision successfully.

The Golden Bowl raises the question of what constitutes effective communication between two individuals, dramatizing this dilemma in even more challenging and disconcerting terms than do The Bostonians and The Wings of the Dove. Charlotte's cultural affinities with Amerigo and similar beauty of appearance and manners predict that Charlotte and Amerigo are the ideal compatible couple and that wealthy American scavengers Maggie and Adam Verver are intruders into one already effective rhetorical scene.
Nevertheless, James appears to have considered the relationship between Charlotte and Amerigo as too limiting, preferring the greater opportunities for mental growth suggested by a relationship between the greatly disparate Amerigo and Maggie. Charlotte and Amerigo's contact would be stagnant because there is nothing they can offer each other that they do not already have, except passion, which in James's world is certainly a powerful rhetorical force itself, but one that can be wilfully sacrificed by a character or invented for the sake of higher spiritual interests. Amerigo and Maggie have to offer each other diversely different cultural backgrounds from which they can both profoundly learn.

In James's rhetorical myth, he assigns to the European and American cultures special positive virtues to be found in the noblest representative of each. Maggie and Amerigo are those noblest representatives, and, as a final comment on James's replete rhetorical myth, it is tempting to fall back on two traditional American critical phrases, the myth of innocence and the myth of experience. James seems to suggest in *The Golden Bowl* that a merging of these two ingredients creates the ideal rhetoric. Innocence, arising from the beginnings of the American culture, consists in an ever-fresh desire to respond honestly and
openly to new experiences. As such, innocence is the force which inspires Moral Rhetoric. This trust in the human experience, paradoxically, is bred, as with Maggie, from a certain naivete and lack of contact with the full range of human experience. The corruption of this viewpoint consists in an absolute refusal to engage in experience because of the self-disillusioning contact with human deception that might result. European experience, on the other hand, represented by Amerigo, involves a constant doubt of the validity of any rhetorical contact because of past experience with complex motivations and selfish, dishonest rhetoric. This attitude, corrupted, poses the ultimate threat to Moral Rhetoric because it implies a stagnant culture which cuts itself off from growth because it cannot trust a rhetorical overture from any other human being.

In Maggie's and Amerigo's final resolved relationship, James abstracts out of these two attitudes the best possibilities and suggests that a successful rhetorical relationship implies Maggie's impulse to trust communication and Amerigo's cautious, judicious selection of whom he is going to trust. Each learns from the other. Maggie learns to trust selectively, judging only Amerigo's rhetoric as trustworthy and thus she responds honestly to
him accordingly. And Amerigo learns to respect Maggie's need for honesty and to attempt to satisfy it, as a fundamental basis for any creative communication.

James's world is a sad and solemn one, full of sacrifice and wasted human emotion, and one that often terminates in silence. Yet it is a silence weighted with the words that characters have spoken to each other during the course of the James novel, and it is a silence after an authorial judgment has been made. The outcome of the final James's novels embraces an attitude about the ethics of human communication and the ill fate of those who abuse it. Quality of human life in James's world depends on the quality of communication: self-respect and respect for the integrity of others fosters an honest rhetoric through which the individual can creatively explore his universe.
Chapter One: **The Bostonians:**

The Birth of a Rhetorical Myth
Nabokov was not the first foreign author to have an affair with America. For in The Bostonians and in his much later essay, The American Scene, an alien James endows his view of America with a foreign flavor of estranged wonder and studies his topic with a vengeance. James is no more narratively omniscient than when he views America. Ironic and detached, yet obviously absorbing what he sees, he dramatizes his own endurance of cultural deprivation in his once native land. By examining both The American Scene and The Bostonians, we can see that what constitutes a quality civilization and the way that American culture fails in this respect is a crisis issue for James throughout his entire literary career. James struggles with the paradox that a country so materially fertile and, in a sense, so rich with ideals, could be so "uncivilized."

Since James wrote The American Scene in 1906 after his return to an America from which he had been absent for twenty years, most critics commonly apply this work to James's later fiction, most notably, to The Golden Bowl. Yet the crisis which James plainly articulates in this work of non-fiction through his troubled accounts of his attempts to discover some central cultural consciousness sheds a light on the same crisis which is expressed in the more symbolic terms of fiction in James's much earlier The Bostonians, written in 1886.
Reading *The Bostonians* in the light of *The American Scene* not only points out a fundamental consistency in the theme which concerns James throughout his career, but it also suggests an interesting tendency in the evolution of James's fiction. While we still see James's troubled reception of an America which he found even more bereft of culture in 1906, James's fiction of this later time no longer deals with this issue as directly as does *The Bostonians*. It seems that James's troubled feelings about America will remain consistent, while the increasing subtlety of his fictional form implies that these feelings will surface more clearly in his later fiction rather than in his fiction.²

Thus we see in *The American Scene* and in *The Bostonians*, a companionship of frankness about the American culture which James has sublimated in his fiction by the time he writes *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*, where the symbols which he creates to express the dilemma of human communication are far removed from the literal social arena of America.

By applying *The American Scene* to *The Bostonians*, we can see at times a very close association because in *The Bostonians* James's symbolic uses of America seem to be in their most primitive fictional, thus in their most easily recoverable, form.
Nevertheless, The Bostonians is a fictional work and in fiction, as Kenneth Burke has suggested in Lexicon Rhetoricae, a writer's fundamental concerns are rendered dramatically, condensed into symbols which verbalize the author's pattern of experience. Because of this, at times The American Scene can be used almost as a handbook through which to recover the meaning of those symbols. The "symbols" in The Bostonians are compelling; they suggest in their dramatic presence many of the frustrations with America James would later express in The American Scene.

The major and minor characters in The Bostonians are indeed symbolic formulas. Each embodies a word, the plot of the novel is a conflict between these words, and the resolution of the novel suggests an emergent ideology dependent on the victorious word or words, an ideology which suggests itself to the American reader who experiences the novel and which resolves to some extent the internal frustrations of the novelist.

The Bostonians depicts the conflicting claims of the democratic attitude and the aristocratic attitude in an evolving world such as America; into whose hands should the question of culture be placed and for what justifications? James found his symbol for the aristocratic attitude ingeniously, reaching into the haunted past of the South to create the melancholy yet charming Basil Ransom. Basil
seeks refinement, the finer artistic pleasures and the sequestered life of the connoisseur. Since Basil applies his philosophy practically, Olive Chancellor, although his respectably formidable opponent for the devotions of Verena, is not symbolically Basil's polar opposite. The elitist notions which Ransom actually lives out in his world can be contrasted with the crude translation of democratic ideals one finds in a character like Selah Tarrant. Basil Ransom is obviously a positive symbol: he represents the possibilities of civilization and tradition in a new world. But the novel's minor rabble, Selah Tarrant, Mathias Pardon, symbolize dammingly the practical application of democratic ideals.

If the struggle were just this simple, one between the coarsely democratic and the beautifully aristocratic, the rightful victor would be obvious and I doubt that James would have cared to write *The Bostonians*. No interesting moral dilemma emerges from allegory; frustrations only apply when the subject under question engages us in its ambivalence, its containment of both admirable and regrettable qualities.

Symbolic subtleties arise with consideration of James's remaining two symbols, Verena Tarrant and Olive Chancellor. These are subtleties which render dramatically the dialectic which more obviously takes place throughout
the pages of the later non-fiction work *The American Scene*. Literally and symbolically, Verena is the unsullied territory to which all of the characters in the novel lay claim. She is not an America already spoiled — the one most commonly depicted by the narrator of *The American Scene* who sees the later America in an even more advanced state of cultural depravity — she represents ideal America, America as potential, what it could become and how it could be exploited. She is perceived by Basil, Olive, and the narrator of *The Bostonians* as pure form and this is really the most profound significance of her symbol. She represents innocence, potential, guileless art, beauty, desire. We find her equivalent in *The American Scene* in James's discussion of Nature because for this later more disillusioned James, Nature seems to be the only remaining element of America which is uncorrupted.

As the desired symbol, Verena's primary role in the novel is to show Olive in the glare of all her ambivalence. Olive is the symbol of the tragic attitude in the novel; she is the character in the novel most expressive of confusion and frustration. Olive is the symbol of alienation yet desire, of the clash between public and private conscience. She represents ambivalence, or, rather, she represents an ambivalent attitude waiting to be expressed in that her own ambivalence is not realized until her
engagement in the action of the novel involves her in her own self-contradictions, such as when she responds to a spirited discussion at a gathering of her women's movement: "And yet people said that women were vain, that they were personal, that they were interested! While Miss Birdseye stood there, asking Mrs. Farrinder if she wouldn't say something, Olive Chancellor tenderly fastened a small battered brooch which confined her collar and which had half detached itself."\(^5\)

Her complex attitude is a result of the fusion between democratic and aristocratic ideals: her frustration results from not being able to find a workable solution to living in America with these conflicting senses of obligation. She is a daughter of New England yet apart; she feels a duty to democratic ideals, yet a ravenousness for culture; she knows the virtues of the social masses yet cringes from their coarseness. With her own inability to establish successful contact with American life, she resembles the narrator in *The American Scene*.\(^6\) Since that persona is so intentionally the voice of Henry James, we may speculate that Olive is the symbol for James's profound frustration with America. Further, Olive's symbol may have more than this significance. It would be slighting the complexity of Olive's symbol and perhaps the profound honesty of James's art not to intuit in Olive's
frustrated sexuality her creator's rueful consideration of these sexual necessities which rule the world.

Midway through *The American Scene*, James still voyages across the vast borders of the American states in search of a cultural mecca. In retrospect, James relates, "It was in respect to the South, meanwhile, that the calculation had really been fondest . . ." (367). To James, his tragic history ennobled the Southerner with an historical story:

Thus they affect one as such passive, such pathetic victims of fate, as so played upon and betrayed, so beaten and bruised by the old burden of their condition, that I found myself/conscious, on their behalf, of a sort of ingenuity of tenderness (374-5).^7^ With feelings remarkably similar, Olive also turns toward the South, in *The Bostonians*, expectant of cultural dividends. She impulsively invites her distant cousin Basil Ransom to visit her in Boston because "The most secret, the most sacred hope of her nature was that she might some day have such a chance, that she might be a martyr and die for something. Basil Ransom had lived, but she knew he had lived to see bitter hours" (9). The Southern character represents romance for both the narrator of *The American*
Scene and Olive considers the Southern character similarly, as the stuff of bitter history that they can experience vicariously.

Although this is the note struck for Olive as well as for the narrator of The American Scene, it can't be the one attributed to her overture. As Kenneth Burke comments, "When the poet has converted his pattern of experience into a Symbolic equivalent, the Symbol becomes a guiding principle in itself. . . ." I think also that the transformation of the symbol may show the author's frustration in all its complexities, when the original frustration may seem deceptively simple. James's anxiety about the inadequacies of American culture is transformed in The Bostonians by the plot of the drama James creates, shown through Olive Chancellor's contradictory actions rather than openly articulated as in The American Scene. Olive Chancellor is not the eager observer of human life that narrates The American Scene. This is a persona seldom troubled by his own moral consciousness and, when he is, he openly admits it. Olive is, rather, earnestly involved in a Boston social movement. In her capacity in the dramatic development of The Bostonians, she functions as a morally earnest suffregette who cannot accept her own romantic yearnings. Therefore, whereas the narrator in The American Scene openly searches for the exquisite character type, Olive, in
her moral distress, must convince herself that all
appreciation of other human beings can be made only in
terms of her ambitions for the feminist movement. Since
she cannot accept her own earthly desires, she can recog-
nize the other characters in the novel solely in terms of
how they can help her to reconcile her conflicting moral
and artistic consciousness. In her pursuit of compan-
ionship, she has to believe that her actions are motivated
by a democratic impulse; thus, she rationalizes her invita-
tion to Basil by placing it within the spirit of democracy:
" . . . what was sufficient for her was that he had ral-
lied, as the French say, had accepted the accomplished
fact, had admitted that North and South were a single,
indivisible political organism" (10).

Olive expects Basil to be her token reformed
Southerner; perhaps she can even enlist him in her cause.
She is greatly disappointed that Basil does not appear more
battered. Further, she is wounded by his amused considera-
tion of the women's movement. Olive's immediate animosity
toward Basil partially results from the fact that Basil
does not help Olive to camouflage her own cultural tastes.
Since he is clearly not democratic, he embarrasses Olive in
her consideration of her intentions. Olive's moral con-
sciousness dictates sacrifice of individual taste to the
democratic cause. This means she must satisfy her
aesthetic needs surreptitiously and her companions must unwittingly help her do this.

The subtle way that James depicts the irony of Olive's behavior seems sharply at odds with the narrator's open condemnation in *The American Scene* of the brazen young American woman who has taken over the cultural scene in America and in Europe, allowed to do so because she has been stranded by the young American male who claims business as his mistress. James views the resultant feminine social arena dismally and ruefully:

Superficially taken, I recognize, the circumstance fails to look portentous; but it looms large immediately, gains the widest bearing, in the light of any direct or extended acquaintance with American conditions. From the moment it is adequately born in mind that the business-man, in the United States, may, with no matter what dim struggles, gropings, yearnings, never hope to be anything but a business-man, the size of the field he so abdicates is measured, as well as the factor of the other care to which his abdication hands it over. It lies there waiting, pleading from all its pores,
to be occupied - the lonely waste, the boundless gaping void of "society"; which is but a rough name for all the other so numerous relations with the world he lives in that are imputable to the civilized being. Here it is then that the world he lives in accepts its doom and becomes, by his default, subject and plastic to his mate; his default having made, the unexampled opportunity of the woman - which she would have been an incredible fool not to pounce upon. It needs little contact with American life to perceive how she has pounced, and how, outside business, she has made it over in her image. . . (345).

Certainly such a quotation reveals some apprehension that the American woman has become predatory and not totally pleasant in her social aggressiveness. And such an attitude applied to The Bostonians would have to show an author working against his protagonist. This seems to be the case. Whereas in The American Scene the American woman's social ambitions are referred to in a generalized
sense, in *The Bostonians* James halves the social sphere into two conflicting interests -- social, i.e., democratic, interests and cultural needs. By showing how these two areas contradict each other in Olive and wreak havoc in her life and in the lives of those whom she attempts to dominate, James parodies the supposed cultural self-sufficiency of the woman. As a narrator, detached from his character, depicting the irony of the ineptitude inherent in Olive's self-righteous independence, James seems to take vengeance on the woman who "produced by a women-made society alone has obviously quite a new story -- to which it is not for a moment to be gainsaid that the world at large has, for the last thirty years in particular, found itself lending an attentive, at times even a charmed, ear" (347). The world lends the charmed ear, not James.

James's solution in *The American Scene* to the imbalance between the American man and woman is expressed by the social scenario of Washington, D.C., where the man acquires a measurable amount of social dominance, willingly relinquished him by his mate. It will not be too difficult, in a moment, to find that same scenario acted out in the drama between Basil and Verena in *The Bostonians*. What may seem questionable, however, is the integrity of the parallel drawn between Olive and James himself, when Olive
so clearly seems to represent the type of woman James fears somewhat awesomely, and when the candid narrator of The American Scene seems so opposite in tone to the hypocritical purveyor of life Olive seems to be.

Yet in the nature of his reaction to women and thus in the possible ambivalence of the narrator's supposedly strong grasp of his own point of view, the narrator of The American Scene resembles Olive. Both Olive and the narrator of The American Scene distrust and seem to dislike their opposite sex. Both seem to sublimate that aversion in a sociological ideology. Olive resents a male-dominated world, expecting the new liberated woman to rule more wisely. Basil Ransom easily senses her barely sublimated resentment and immediately backs off from marital speculations. This resentment is primarily responsible for Olive's dislike of this gentleman. The narrator of The Bostonians calls Olive on the initial ambivalence of her own posture toward Basil: "If she had supposed he would agree, she would not have written to him" (11). Indeed, Olive dislikes him before she knows he will not conform to her social views. She is bound to that reaction regardless of what Basil does because of her own ambivalence:
Olive had thought it very possible he would come that day if he was to leave Boston; though she was perfectly mindful that she had given him no encouragement at the moment they separated. If he should not come she would be annoyed, and if he should come she should be furious; she was also sufficiently mindful of that (74).

Olive does have the perceptiveness to see that her reaction to Basil embodies a logical fallacy. But her awareness does not extend to how her own personal emotions enter in. Olive avoids self-scrutiny; she attributes any aversion or desire, either aesthetically or emotionally based, to an abstract cause. Basil's threat clearly derives from the indications of his masculinity — "she had never seen anyone so free in her own drawing-room as this loud Southerner" (76) — yet she hides behind moral rationalization so as not to confront her own emotions:

She thought him very handsome as he said this, but reflected that unfortunately men didn't care for the truth, especially the new kinds, in proportion as they were good-looking. She had, however, a moral resource that she could always fall back
upon; it had already been a comfort to her, on occasions of acute feeling, that she hated men, as a class anyway" (17-18).

Olive's classing of people is compatible with her democratic instinct; she projects personal emotions into a safe distance and reduces the direct threat posed to her by the individual. She may dislike all men, but she dislikes "men," not a class. As the preceding passage suggests, what Olive may fear most is her own confused emotions, including an attraction for the threatening man. Basil disconcerts Olive because "Months before, when she wrote to him, it had been with the sense of putting him in debt" (18). By classing him, or, by enslaving him, Olive wins the power struggle by reducing the ego of the "other" to a negligible element.

The narrator of The Bostonians presents Olive dramatically; through the avenue of his ironic detachment, the reader sees the troubling discrepancies in Olive's emotional behavior. The narrator of The American Scene seems candidly uninhibited in the expression of his doubts about the American cultural intellect. However, there is an underlying anger similar to Olive's about losing the power struggle to the opposite sex.
This narrator shows his bitter edge when he speculates on how American women might come to view a re-adjusted social relationship with the American male; how, for example, they might have already come to accept the more socially liberated Washington male:

They could not, one reasoned, have been in general, so perfectly agreeable unless they had been pleased, and they could not have been pleased without the prospect of gaining more than the other beneficiary. That would be, I think, the feminine conception of a readministered justice. Washington, at such a rate, in any case, might become to them as good as 'Europe,' and a Europe of their own would obviously be better than a Europe of other people's. There are, after all, other women on the other continents (351-52).

Even without the ironic final sentence and the allusion to the woman's need for a disproportionate justice, the sense remains that this narrator perceives the American woman as an aggressive battle general. This narrator is not simply concerned with how a woman, inevitably, would react to the altered situation; he seizes the opportunity to vent exasperation. His championing of the
European woman is faulty; he dramatizes the supposed vulnerability of the dispossessed European woman to make her counterpart into an ogre. Perhaps, on some level for the narrator, the threat of being overwhelmed by a woman is monstrous in proportion.

Fear of the woman is not the only undercurrent in *The American Scene's* narrative. On the surface, the narrator expresses a very legitimate concern with the skewed cultural consciousness of the American culture, a disturbance caused by "... one's inner perception still more of the power of the purse and of the higher turn for business than of the old intellectual, or even of the old moral sensibility" (248-49). The narrator's emphasis in this statement is important; moral sensibility is a means to a cultural ambiance; he is certainly not referring to the absence of a Puritan conscience but to the broader sense in which morality embodies a richness in human relationships.¹⁰

In the later *American Scene*, when James has returned to America after a twenty-five year absence, James discovers that the force of human contact and the art which it evokes have yielded to a materialistic ethic. Of churches, which classically symbolize a city's depth of artistic character, James wistfully comments: "If quiet interspaces, always half the architectural battle, exist no
more in such a structural scheme than quiet tones, blest breathing-spaces, occur, for the most part, in New York conversation, so the reason is, demonstrably, that the building can't afford them" (95). And when the narrator of The American Scene does find some evidence of a depth to human intercourse, such as he discovers by visiting the Waldorf Astoria, he is like a nervous concert-master who is very unsure of his orchestra: "Such was my impression of the perfection of the concert that, for fear of its being spoiled by some chance false note, I never went into the place again" (107).

Oddly enough, however, the narrator is seduced by the pure energy of this new force, much as Henry Adams celebrates the machine as a sexual force in the Virgin and the Dynamo image in The Education of Henry Adams. Further, the magnetism of money is bound to the gaudy, yet exciting and clamorous city, and with the American saga of the immigrant, that enigmatic personality that has forced itself upon the American consciousness and culture as a result of the opportunities which American wealth promises and which best exemplifies the democratic impulse. The appeal " is in that note of vehemence in the local life of which I have spoken, for it is the appeal of a particular type of dauntless power" (74). The power pulsates from "... all the sounds and silences, grim, pushing, trudging
silences too, of the universal will to move - to move, move, move, as an end in itself, an appetite at any price" (74). Doesn't the American woman seem also, to the narrator, to have an appetite at any price?

The narrator obviously fears and distrusts the seductiveness of this overwhelming force for its possible destruction of culture as he would care to define it. James describes the immigrant as anonymous, as having relinquished his cultural antecedents when he steps on American soil; what James fears is this loss of individual diversity, the loss of the individual personality. He is again engaged in a power struggle, as he was with the American woman. He feels his ego threatened and the impending loss of personality to "an immeasurable bourgeois blankness" (298). America is, indeed, James's great white whale.

The narrator is, then, seduced and appalled. But his profound ambivalence lies in a conflict between artistic and moral conscience. Of The American Scene, W. H. Auden felt that:

... James is writing a religious parable, that is, he is not describing some social utopia, but a spiritual state which is achievable by the individual now. ... and
the money [is] a symbol of the sacrifice and suffering demanded to attain and preserve it (xxii).

Certainly this is too optimistic a point of view. Although James observes the American scene and in that process admits that democracy promises social amelioration, he does not advocate democracy. Auden should also sense the narrator's begrudging reluctance to pay the cultural cost of such amelioration. When the narrator finds in America "clamorous signs of a hungry social growth... that works [sic] night and day for a theory of civilization" (298) he utters paradox, hopeful pathos. He seems driven to acknowledge the moral virtue in a culture of the masses, but he underscores his true dread of this process with anxious diction; "clamorous," "hungry;" - such words seem antipathetic to "civilization." Contrary to what it might seem, the narrator of The American Scene does not have a simple point of view or a crystalline conscience. The reader bears the burden of responsibility to perceive the ambivalence underlying his narrative. The symbol figures in the drama of the earlier Bostonians actually simplifies this process because the narrator intercedes and explains to readers how they are to interpret the complexities of
the symbol. He destroys his own frustrations by projecting them into the cold clear light of objectification.

For example, the narrator of The Bostonians likes to mock Olive. He often does so with rapier wit: "It was a curious incident of her zeal for the regeneration of her sex that manly things were, perhaps on the whole, what she understood best" (102). This narrator likes this type of cruel desertion of his dubious heroine. It is unusual in James's fiction to find this sort of energy expended in narrative interjection, to find the focus diverted from the drama and given over to the external narrative element. This intrusion also seems eccentric because there is enough vengeance wreaked upon Olive's character in the course of the novel's events to make this comment unnecessary. The implications of this are intriguing. This narrative zeal may be part of a purging process. Possibly by taking vengeance on Olive's hypocrisies, James takes vengeance on his own. Since he closely identifies with Olive, the narrator of The Bostonians must maintain an exaggerated distance from the characters and drama he describes. By constantly alluding to the artifice of his creation, he avoids the danger of narcissism, falling into his creation and never regaining his objectivity. The more closely an author identifies with one of his characters, the more
emphatically he may use narrative distance to avoid the confessional genre.

James accomplishes this narrative distance in several ways. Each of these may cause the reader some alienation from the verisimilitude of the fiction, but function primarily to protect the author's ego from being overwhelmed by his characters. Occasionally, James deserts his characters, primarily Olive, through either scornful references or sudden withdrawal from insight into their minds. One instance of the narrator openly mocking his character is the previously noted reference to Olive's understanding of men. Since James's fiction shows his knowledge of women and The American Scene more openly his apprehensions, the reference seems like a secret code, a little joke James plays on himself, and a way of objec­tifying a personal paradox.

James also mocks Olive through symbolic language, such as when he describes Olive and Verena at the Boston concert hall, the only place Olive feels she can engage safely in cultural activity:

It lifted them to immeasurable heights; and as they sat looking at the great florid, sombre organ, overhanging the bronze statue of Beethoven, they felt that this was the
only temple in which the votaries of their creed could worship (152).

The undeniable sexual innuendo in this passage sardonically undercuts Olive's confirmation of a sexless culture.

The narrator also withdraws from his characters through sudden selective omniscience. Usually, for example, the narrator has privileged insight into Olive's consciousness; occasionally, however, he prefers to feign ignorance and a tone bordering on indifference, as when he describes Olive's relief from jealousy when the glib orator Mrs. Farrinder leaves the Boston scene:

I hardly know, however, what illumination it was that sprang from her [Olive's] consciousness (now a source of considerable comfort) that Mrs. Farrinder was carrying the war into distant territories . . . (138).

After this remark, the narrator presumes to explain Olive's relief, but in the rational tone of a speculative treatise; in other words, in a tone which implies what her probable reasons are for disliking Mrs. Farrinder. The reader should remember that earlier in the novel the narrator knew every fine corner of his heroine's mind; every nuance of
her feelings, for example, about Basil Ransom. Why would
the narrator suddenly disclaim this privilege and assume
the mocking pretense that his ominscience is lost? One
could suppose the author wants to part abruptly, for a
moment, to gain some distance from his character or from
the embarrassment of too close a narrative identification
with his character.

James also uses literal and hyperbolic symbolism
which tends to parody the complexity of the characters.
The Bostonians is uncharacteristically barren of complex
and meaningful metaphorical patterns identified by Ruth
Yeazell as eminent in James's later novels. Possibly,
rather than signalling an earlier Jamesian novel, such rare
metaphorical barrenness in this novel about America
parodies an American cultural inheritance, the Puritannical
distrust of art. The novel often seems to imitate an
allegory, and the predominant strand of imagery is
religious.

Crucial names, for example, are religiously
suggestive. Just as Olive Chancellor is the symbol of
ambivalence in the novel, her name is also symbolically the
most complex. The Olive branch is of course a religious
symbol of peace. But the shade "Olive" is a drab
grayish-green, often connected with strictly serviceable
cloths such as wool and cotton, diminishing the effect of
this religious symbol into a sort of pedantry. Olive's last name also denotes ambivalence. A Roman Catholic priest concerned with diocesan business transactions is titled "chancellor" and thus her last name may allude to the way in which Olive's religious fervor for her cause is firmly tied to her money and to the American materialistic ethic. One step removed is the word "chancery," which, since it can mean a stranglehold which encircles the neck, seems obviously suggestive of Olive's possessive behavior toward Verena in the novel.

This is a stranglehold performed ostensibly in the name of religion. Olive considers her mission to liberate women a religious cause: she describes hers and Verena's work as "holy work" (103). Olive openly perceives her own mission as such, but the sense of this is also embedded in the symbolic imagery which surrounds her, although the inherently questionable status of her religious motivations are implied in this symbolism. Basil captures the occult sense of Olive's practically monastic lifestyle in the eerie observation that her face "might have been likened to a thin ray of moonlight resting upon the wall of a prison" (5). The walls of her summer refuge are adorned with two photographs of the Sistine Madonna (photographs rather than portraits emphasizing Olive's curious mixture of progress with religious fanaticism.) And the cottage books include
all George Eliot's writings, alluding to another heroine, Dorothea Brooke, whose religious enthusiasm is also in concert with repression of her more physical desires.

The remaining evocative names imply religious symbolism which also confutes the nobility of Olive's religious intentions. But the counter images are also only primitively developed and are external to plot and character development in the novel. They are descriptive of character and events, but not inherently essential to the novel's meaning. They function almost as a joke between the reader and the narrator and the joke is primarily on Olive. Basil Ransom's name, for example, foreshadows the novel's entire plot development and comments ironically on Olive's eventual loss of Verena's loyalty. "Basil" is a sort of magical name, with both religious and sexual powers which would serve as antitodes to Olive's religious power. There was a famous St. Basil in religious history and the word derives from the Greek word meaning "royal," since this was an herb used in royal baths or medicines as a soothing agent. The herb has had erotic as well as mystical powers attributed to it. As well as the typical more well-known lyrical connections of basil and eroticism made by Keats, G. W. Cable's The Grandissimes alludes to the belief among the Creoles of Louisiana that basil gave the
individual the power to attract love, an allusion appropriate to the Southerner, Basil Ransom. If James was aware of its dual character in Greek and Italian traditions, he embedded a warning to Olive in the labelling of her foe that only the reader could of course perceive; in legends basil could be both erotic and sinister. Certainly sexual power would be the sinister force for Olive because this is the one way she cannot have control over Verena.

Basil functions as a goel in the novel so it is appropriate that his last name is Ransom. If Olive represents the stern religious forces of the Old Testament, Basil ushers in the more sensual love implicit in the New, and delivers his Israel from captivity. But James does not utilize this imagery consistently throughout the novel; instead he chooses to pick up playfully on his religious imagery. Basil thinks of the Boston concert hall where Verena is to speak as the Roman colliseum, the audience as the Romans, and of course of Verena as the sacrificed Christian martyr. He also decides that on his arrival at Verena's door, "she would know in a moment, by quick intuition, that he was there, and that she was only praying to be rescued, to be saved" (363). Such religious metaphors are consciously chosen by the character as appropriate to the situation; they do not enter into the cognitive growth of the character's mind, a process we
often see when later Jamesian characters use metaphors as a functional tool through which to apprehend the universe.

Religious references are even more flippantly attached to secondary characters. James's typical contempt for journalists directs his description of Mathias Pardon, who found:

. . . conversation on some subject or other . . . evidently a necessity of his nature. He talked very quickly and softly, with words, and even sentences, imperfectly formed; there was a certain amiable flatness in his tone, and he abounded in exclamation - 'Goodness gracious!' and 'Mercy on us!' - Not much in use among the sex whose profanity is apt to be coarse. . . . For this ingenuous son of his age all distinction between the person and the artist has ceased to exist, the writer was personal, the person food for newsboys, and everything and every one were every one's business (105).

Again, James shows evidence of his fear of the individual ego being swallowed up by the masses; a journalist such as Mathias Pardon is a spokesman, apologist of, a pardoner
for, this democratic profanity of the artistic personality. The name of his newspaper is the Vesper, a term commonly applied to Evensong or Evening prayer. Mathias might be considered an apologist for the false religion of democracy.

James's religious symbolism implies that making a religion of democracy is a heresy; it is misapplied religious fervor. This symbolism, however, does not penetrate far into the complexity of the text; it seems more illustrative than informative. It is part of the narrator's repartee with the reader which reminds the reader of the presence of the narrator and removes the reader slightly from the characters. He may seem to be destroying the closeness of the character to the reader, but he is also achieving his own cavalier distance from the characters.

The narrative technique in this novel seems uneven since occasionally the narrator's communication with the reader is no longer subtle or occult. The narrator we have been discussing is aloof and controlled, clearly the "author" of the novel. But in Book II it seems that James risks narrative unevenness to find yet another way to achieve narrative distance from his characters. The novel's prose lapses occasionally into another narrative voice. This narrator makes occasional self-conscious
references to his own role as storymaker in a way which seems slightly inept and cliched. At times, this narrator, resembling a product of the hey-days of Victorian convention, intrudes into the storyline to discuss his own technique disconcertingly, even awkwardly. Here, for example, is part of a passage where he describes Basil Ransom's New York neighborhood:

The two sides of the shop were protected by an immense pent-house shed, which projected over a greasy pavement and was supported by wooden posts fixed in the curbstone. Beneath it, on the dislocated flags, barrels and baskets were freely and picturesquely grouped; an open cellarway yawned beneath the feet of those who might pause to gaze too fondly on the savoury wares displayed in the window; a strong odour of smoked fish, combined with a fragrance of molasses, hung about the spot; the pavement, toward the gutters, was fringed with dirty panniers, heaped with potatoes, carrots, and onions; and a smart, bright waggon . . . imparted an idle, rural, pastoral air to a scene otherwise perhaps expressive of a rank civilization (157).
This minute attention to the specific details of scene occurs more frequently in a non-fiction narrative whose purpose is primarily the depiction of scene and thus it seems out of context in the dramatic account of *The Bostonians*. Even more disconcerting is the narrator's comment on the gratuitousness of the passage: "I mention it not on account of any particular influence it may have had on the life or the thoughts of Basil Ransom, but for old acquaintance sake and that of local color; besides which, a figure is nothing without a setting, and our young man came and went every day, with rather an indifferent, imperceiving step, it is true, among the objects I have briefly designated" (157-8). Well, for whose old acquaintance sake is this passage? If we are to assume this reminiscence is for the reader who may have forgotten such neighborhoods, it is a courtesy possibly extended at a sacrifice to the formal principle of coherence in the novel. Even if this information about Ransom's environment functions dramatically as a part of his characterization, there is still the narrator's self-conscious explanation of the scene which sets the passage apart from the rest of the text. Diffidently, he asserts his identity, plays the role of a fidgety hack writer hiding behind his cliches -- "a figure is nothing without a setting." He pauses unnecessarily to address the whole question of his right to narrative
intrusion in the novel. This distancing device is hypertrophic. James achieves distance from the characters by creating a narrator who intrudes with his own identity at the risk of diminishing the fictional reality of his characters; and James achieves distance from that narrator by creating a slightly neurotic narrative persona who in his obvious intrusions is obviously not James. This final technique simply reemphasizes what lengths James has travelled to avoid identification with any of the characters in this book, even with the narrator. One might suppose that he protests too much.

James also throws the reader—and perhaps himself—off the track of recognizing his identification with Olive through the simple fact that Olive's opponent in so many ways represents the seldom-found American male openly approved of in the later American Scene. Basil Ransom, in his commentary on feminism and on the proper role of the American male, often expresses feelings shared by that book's narrator.

The narrator of The American Scene applauds the rare eccentric personality found in America:

As the usual, in our vast crude democracy of trade, is the new, the simple, the cheap, the common, the commercial, the immediate,
and, all too often, the ugly, so any human product that those elements fail conspicuously to involve or to explain, any creature, or even any feature, not turned out to pattern, any form of suggested rarity, subtlety, ancientry, or other pleasant perversity, prepares for us a recognition akin to rapture (67).

James B. Colvert has observed that even though Basil "is often as the result of James's restless skepticism and irrepressible penchant for irony, brought to heel by satire, James is generally sympathetic toward him. . . ." Basil is introduced in The Bostonians as "this lean, pale, sallow, shabby, striking young man, with his superior head, his sedentary shoulders, his expression of bright grimness and hard enthusiasm, his provincial, distinguished appearance . . ." (2). He is a rare element introduced into the vast crude democracy and his attitude toward sex and the woman's role introduce into barren New England "the stabilizing powers of a healthy and viable domesticity."20

Undeniably, the narrator of The American Scene would appreciate this provincial gentleman as an oasis in the American cultural desert. Since Basil is "... a
hungry young Mississippian, without means, without friends . . ." (158), he corresponds even more intensely to the narrator's interests. The South appeals to the narrator of The American Scene because of its sense of history and insistence on privacy. What troubles the narrator about the cities of the American North is that most have "been arranged . . . with an hostility to the town-nook which has left no scrap of provision for eyes needing on occasion, a refuge from the general glare" (294). In The Bostonians, Basil feels a similar hostility to "the stupid, gregarious public, the enlightened democracy of his native land" (271) and his intentions toward Verena are to provide her a refuge from the general glare. He has the same appreciation of privacy and yearns for the same kind of cultural fulfillment.

Although Basil's artistic sensibility is not itself refined since, we are told, it "had not been highly cultivated . . ."(12), he has the same marked ability to sense and appreciate cultural effects, realizing, for example, that in Olive's home ". . . he had never felt himself in the presence of so much organized privacy or of so many objects that spoke of habits and tastes" (12).

Basil's yearning for culture is shown in his appreciation of Harvard as one of the rare instances of
rich, cloistered existence in America. When Basil sees the Harvard library he remarks:

This edifice, a diminished copy of the chapel of King's College, at the greater Cambridge, is a rich and impressive institution; and as he stood there, in the bright, heated stillness, which seemed suffused with the odour of old print and old bindings, and looked up into the high, light vaults that hung over quiet book-laden galleries, alcoves and tables, and glazed cases . . . as he took possession, in a comprehensive glance, of the wealth and wisdom of the place, he felt more than ever the soreness of an opportunity missed . . . (203).

In the later American Scene, the narrator also coincidentally seeks in Harvard an alternative to the barrenness of the American culture:

This vision, for the moment, of a great, dim, clustered but restlessly expansive Harvard, hushed to vacation stillness as to a deep ambitious dream, was, for the impossible story-seeker, practically the
germ of the most engaging of the generalized images of reassurance . . . . Reassurance is required, before the spectacle of American manners at large . . . . It takes no exceptional exposure to the promiscuous life to show almost any institution pretending to university form as stamped here with the character and function of the life-saving monasteries of the dark ages. They glow, the humblest of them, to the imagination -- the imagination that fixes the surrounding scene as a huge Rappacini garden, rank with each variety of the poison-plant of the money-passion -- they glow with all the vividness of the defined alternative . . (57).

A fundamental distress of the narrator of The American Scene who has returned to America after his long absence is that old buildings are torn down and any sense of the history of the American culture has been perpetually obliterated. This narrator's respect for the sense of history which provides a culture with its own continuity and thus identity is reflected also in Basil's sense of
history, evidenced in his reaction to the Memorial Hall at Harvard. Basil finds that:

The effect of the place is singularly noble and solemn, and it is impossible to feel it without a lifting of the heart. It stands there for duty and honour, it speaks of sacrifice and example, seems a kind of temple to youth, manhood, generosity. . . . For Ransom these things were not a challenge nor a taunt; they touched him with respect, with the sentiment of beauty. He was capable of being a generous foeman, and he forgot, now, the whole question of sides and parties; the simple emotion of the old fighting-time came back to him, and the monument around him seemed an embodiment of that memory; it arched over friends as well as enemies, the victims of defeat as well as the sons of triumph(205).

As this last passage shows, James's artistic sensibility as embodied in Basil necessitates a strong moral sense informing it and contributing to the intensity of the artist's sensation. This morality does not imply a conventional public conscience. We learn that, for
example, "Ransom's conception of vice was purely as a series of special issues, of explicable accidents. . . . He, too, had a private vision of reform, but the first principle of it was to reform the reformers" (15). Rather, this moral apprehension is motivated by a sense of the sacredness of human emotion. It implies a respect for the pain of others, a compulsion for honesty in communicating with others, and a reverence for the significance of private bonds over public. What is admirable about Basil is not necessarily the essence of any philosophy which he might hold but the privacy of his vision and his adamant refusal to allow his identity to be swallowed up by the great American populace. Basil seems to function in The Bostonians as the novel's most positive symbol. He is a keeper of the novel's repository of the sacred, those symbols which Olive tries to translate into coarse common terms to justify her own intercourse with them, and thus, to desecrate. The initial tension between Olive and Basil occurs because Basil will not hand her over the South for common consumption. Basil solemnly resolves:

To be quiet about the Southern land, not to touch her with vulgar hands, to leave her alone with her wounds and her memories, not prating on the market-place either of her
troubles or her hopes, but waiting as a man should wait, for the slow process, the sensible beneficence, of time -- this was the desire of Ransom's heart. . . (92).

Of course, the essential plot conflict in The Bostonians is Basil's and Olive's battle for Verena, or, in other words, the question of whether the American woman should be a public or private symbol. Just as in The Bostonians before the interference of Basil there seems to be no interfering masculine force to keep Verena out of the clutches of the public, the grievance in The American Scene is that the American woman's sacred femininity has been corrupted because she has been deserted by her protectors: "While their sweethearts and sisters are waltzing together, our young men are rolling up greenbacks in counting-houses and stores" (476). In such a light, Basil's self-appointed shielding of Verena from the public eye is the act of a knight in shining armour. Although the narrator of The Bostonians ostensibly criticizes Basil's compunction that "He was too shamefully poor, too shabbily and meagrely equipped, to have the right to talk of marriage to a girl in Verena's very peculiar position . . ." when he comments that "His scruples were doubtless begotten of a false pride, a sentiment in which there was a thread of moral
tinsel, as there was in the Southern idea of chivalry; but he felt ashamed of his own poverty, the positive flatness of his situation, when he thought of the gilded nimbus that surrounded the protegee of Mrs. Burrage" (271), in actual fact, the narrator seems to be chiding his audience rather than Basil, anticipating that they will not appreciate Basil's need to play the traditional protective role toward Verena. This role, however, seems to be one that James would advocate.

Accepting Basil's positive status is a disturbing challenge to the sensitive reader. Basil's opinion of women is less than fully complimentary. The reader is early appraised that he likes women "... not to think too much, not to feel any responsibility for the government of the world ... If they would only be private and passive, and have no feeling but for that, and leave publicity to the sex of tougher hide! ... it must be repeated that he was very provincial" (8). Further on, the reader discovers that Basil perceives women "... essentially inferior to men, and infinitely tiresome when they declined to accept the lot which men had made for them" (163).

Can the narrator of The Bostonians, on these occasions in such omniscient control that he seems to be James himself, really be in full accordance with Basil? One is tempted to suppose so. The allusion to
provinciality seems to mock the reader's judgment of Basil, hinting that Basil's assessment of women is really to be considered positively by the reader. As Colvert remarks, what seems to be "the true distinguishing feature of Southern character," as exemplified by Basil, is "its touchy consciousness of sex and its fear of that perversity which would deny, in the name of social freedom, the name of nature. As one of James's critics observes, Ransom 'expresses his cultural fears in the most personal way possible, translating them into sexual fear, the apprehension of the loss of manhood.'"\(^{24}\) This gains additional reinforcement from a recollection of James's underlying fear of the aggressive female in *The American Scene*. In both cases, the fear of the dominant female seems to be a fear of the loss of ego or individual identity and the assertion of the dominant male suggests the salvation of a healthy culture. By the end of the novel, we sense that the real is between Vasil and Verena and we sense the inevitability of their union.\(^ {25}\)

Olive comments early in the novel on the ideal union produced by her relationship with Verena:

To Olive it appeared that just this partnership of their two minds - each of them, by itself, lacking an important grasp
of facets - made an organic whole which, for the work at hand, could not fail to be brilliantly effective. Verena was often far more irresponsible than she liked to see her; but the happy thing in her composition was that, after a short contact with the divine idea -- Olive was always trying to flash it at her, like a jewel in an uncovered case -- she kindled, flamed up, took the words from her friend's less persuasive lips, resolved herself into a magical voice, became again the pure young sibyl. Then Olive perceived how fatally, without Verena's tender notes, her crusade would lack sweetness, what the Catholics call unction, and, on the other hand, how weak Verena would be on the statistical and logical side if she herself should not bring up the rear. Together, in short, they would be complete, they would have everything, and together they would triumph (133-34).

The reader immediately senses what will be the fatal irony for Olive of her misperception that Verena's form suits the
content of her idea, of Olive's solipsistic appropriation of Verena to suit her own needs.

_The Bostonians_ is finally a book about rhetoric and Olive's rhetoric vacillates between the two categories Kenneth Burke calls the magical decree and the religious prayer. Olive's naming of the situation implies a kind of magical decree, as this rhetoric is described in _The Philosophy of Literary Form_. According to Burke, "The magical decree is implicit in all languages . . . ." and "the ideal magic is that in which our assertions (or verbal decrees) as to the nature of the situation come closest to a correct gauging of that situation as it actually is."26 In other words, we decree something, and thus it already is if our decree approximates the concrete situation. Olive would like to consider that her decree about Verena is magical, but, since her logical argument about the need to reject men is inappropriate for Verena to assume, her naming involves an inaccurate gauging of the situation: what she is really engaged in is prayer.

Olive senses from the beginning that she will have to strain to hold together her "organic" whole. But she justifies her attempts by considering her tutelage of Verena a divine mission and her union with her a sacred pact which cannot be broken. Olive prays that Verena not consort with men, in fact, requesting that her avoidance of
men be practised religiously: "Don't promise, don't promise!" she went on 'I would far rather you didn't. But don't fail me -- don't fail me, or I shall die!'" While Olive makes this request, she has "... a tone of softness and sympathy, a gentle dignity, a serenity of wisdom, which sealed the appreciation of those who knew her well enough to like her, and which always impressed Verena as something almost august" (117).

Olive adopts the rhetorical tone of prayer, not realizing that the adoption of the prayer form denies the magical nature of her supposedly organic union with Verena. "A prayer," writes Kenneth Burke:

is a strategy for taking up the slack between what is wanted and what is got.

Hence, a 'prayerful' sanction implies that the thing sanctioned by the prayer is thus impulsively sanctioned because it is not of the essence prayerfully attributed to it .. .. Hence, in the ordination there is implied a recognition of its tendency to 'fall' from the role assigned to it (54).

Olive refuses to admit that by asking Verena for a pledge she acknowledges the disparity between her needs and
Verena's. She would still like to believe that she is naming what is instead of requesting something to be.

Although Olive desires a pledge "that would have an absolute sanctity for Verena and would bind them together for life," (95) she also "wished to extract a certainty at the same time that she wished to deprecate a pledge, and she would have been delighted to put Verena into the enjoyment of that freedom which was as important to her by preventing her exercising it in a particular direction" (118). The rhetoric in this sentence dissolves into paradox, Olive's paradox. A freedom allowed to be exercised in only one direction is not freedom.

Olive wants to believe that Verena is a natural-born reformer, but her own strained attempts to keep Verena in check should alert her that this is not so. Burke writes that to develop a full persuasive strategy, one must:

be realistic. One must size things up properly. One cannot accurately know how things will be, what is promising and what is menacing, unless he accurately knows how things are. So the wise strategist will not be content with strategies of merely a self-gratifying sort. He will 'keep his
weather eye open.' He will not too eagerly 'read into' a scene an attitude that is irrelevant to it. He won't sit on the side of an active volcano and 'see' it as a dormant plain (298).

The Bostonians chronicles how pathetically Olive tries to keep her weather eye open: she always misapprehends what is promising and what menacing to her mission because of her own initial adamant blindness about what Verena's nature is really like. Her system is in a constant state of panic because of her expended energy. The more strenuously she has to fight to keep possession of Verena, the more elaborately she must convince herself that her mission is still magical, the promoting of a natural, organic union. 27

In her panic, she always blocks the wrong offensive player. She convinces Verena to check her interest in young Mr. Burrage, who turns out to be harmless. This then thwarts her later attempts to use the Burrages to block Verena's interest in Ransom. She tries to divert Ransom's interest in Verena by encouraging relations between Ransom and her worldly sister, Mrs. Luna, thereby underestimating the refinement of Ransom's tastes in her eagerness to thwart Ransom, and there are times that
she even allows herself to believe Verena's claims of disinterest in Ransom because of her own eagerness to believe them. Olive would be more alert if she were not so busy deluding herself.

The pathetic reality is that Olive cannot help but do the wrong thing at the wrong time. There is too much initial disparity between Olive's goals and Verena's interests. The union was never magical and Olive's religion was too perverse. Olive's lack of self-perception clouds her ability to assess the initial situation clearly.28 Verena repeatedly informs Olive that she doubts her own social enthusiasm and Olive always discounts the warning signals. In one early conversation, Verena asks, "Do you know, Olive, I sometimes wonder whether, if it wasn't for you, I should feel it [the zeal for women's liberation] so very much!' 'My own friend,' Olive replied, 'You have never yet said anything to me which expressed so clearly the closeness and sanctity of our union'"(132).

This union implies a perverse and violent sanctity, against logic and against nature. And Olive would not have been blinded to Verena's inevitable destiny if she had not so desperately required to possess some malleable person who could satisfy both her aesthetic needs and her moral need to transform those needs into an openly expressed social enthusiasm.
We sympathize with Olive in this passage which responds to so many other similar scenes in American literature:

Olive lived over, in her miserable musings, her life for the last two years; she knew, again, how noble and beautiful her scheme had been, but how it had all rested on an illusion of which the very thought made her feel faint and sick. What was before her now was the reality, with the beautiful, indifferent sky pouring down its complacent rays upon it (344).

From Hawthorne to Melville to Fitzgerald, the inscrutable sky offers no solace for the American idealist. There always seems to be the suggestion that there is something fundamentally paradoxical about the American ideal itself. And, sadly, the irony beyond Olive's own realization that she misjudged the vehicle for her noble and beautiful scheme is that the scheme itself is neither noble nor beautiful. Like Jay Gatsby's gaudy mansions and garish clothes, Olive's rhetoric is corrupted by the dogma of crass American naturalism with which it becomes entangled. The refined New England spinster who secretly loathes the common masses, even masses of common
yet coarse women, becomes the champion of democracy to avoid her fear of men and to purchase absolution for her own highly refined tastes.

The final irony is that, in so doing, if she attempts to possess any symbol of art, she will befoul it because of her grosser associations and her need to betray that symbol to the forces of democracy in order to ease her own conscience. As Kenneth Burke states, "As we move into the aesthetic of social realism . . . the 'dangers' become those of hypocrisy, smugness, outworn tradition, material interests pumped up into idealistic balloons, wrong but powerful, but with impiety taking the form of 'indictment' and 'debunking'" (62).

_The Bostonians_ is preoccupied with rhetoric. Selah Tarrant, Matthias Pardon, Mrs. Farrinder, Olive Chancellor, Verena Tarrant, and Basil himself is characterized by his/her rhetorical style, his/her inflections and persuasive turn of phrase. Everyone in this novel talks distinctively; Mrs. Farrinder, in a dignified tone "rich and deep," Verena in tones mellifluous. But this study of American rhetoric is made to debunk it and Basil performs this task. The narrator chooses to stress Basil's articulation of "very" with " . . . the curious feminine softness with which Southern gentlemen enunciate that adverb" (4) which distinguishes Basil's
rhetorical skills from those of any of the other characters in the novel. Basil himself also questions "... whether for a hungry young Mississippian, without means, without friends, wanting too, in the highest energy, the wisdom of the serpent, personal arts and national prestige, the game of life was to be won in New York" (158-9). (italics mine). He perceives himself as a dreamer who "wondered whether he was stupid and unskilled, and he was finally obliged to confess to himself that he was unpractical" (159). Basil's rather unformulated idealism anticipates that of a later Jamesian idealist, Merton Densher, and neither seems to know quite how to maneuver within the rhetorical worlds in which they exist.

Basil's naive skills can be contrasted with the facile rhetorical prowess of other characters in the novel. Mrs. Burridge, for example, "had a light, clever, familiar way of traversing an immense distance with a very few words" (258). Mrs. Farrinder is the epitome of American rhetoric. She seemed:

to ask you how a countenance could fail to be noble of which the measurements were so correct. You could contest neither the measurements nor the nobleness, and had to feel that Mrs. Farrinder imposed herself.
There was something public in her eye, which was large, cold, and quiet. . . . She talked with great slowness and distinctness, and evidently a high sense of responsibility; she pronounced every syllable of every word and insisted on being explicit. If, in conversation with her, you attempted to take anything for granted, . . . she paused, looking at you with a cold patience, as if she knew that trick, and then went on at her own measured pace. . . . She was held to have a very fine manner, and to embody the domestic virtues and the graces of the drawing room . . . (24-25).

Even Selah Tarrant who, according to his wife, "didn't know how to speak" has that public rhetorical consciousness: "Even in the privacy of domestic intercourse he had phrases, excuses, explanations, ways of putting things, which, as she felt, were too sublime for just herself; they were pitched, as Selah's nature was pitched, altogether in the key of public life" (62).

Although Basil adheres to the forms of Southern chivalry, he does not have this public delivery which characterized the consummate American rhetorician, but we
must only consider this fortunate for him. The rhetoric in The Bostonians is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. James portrays it as base. Inspired by the wisdom of the serpent and informed by crass materialistic values, this rhetoric does not even have for James the saving grace of being artful because, in his opinion, the American masses craved the empty rhetoric of glaring footlights, not the subtle rhetorical intensity of shared hidden glances. Only Mrs. Burrage, among this group of facile rhetoricians, seems to win the narrator's approval, and this is probably because her rhetoric is of a more European caste than American. She moves within a cultured circle and serves its ends, a distinctly anti-American instinct and thus she unwittingly aligns herself with Ransom in trying to save Verena from Olive. The public glare to which she would have Verena exposed seems exceedingly tempered in comparison to Olive's proposed arena.

Rhetoric, or prayer (since all rhetoric is prayer because it attempts to wrest conviction out of doubt and to persuade an audience to accept something of which they are uncertain) would have to be an inevitability for action or communication. The dilemma in The Bostonians is that since the prayerful rhetoric of America is corrupt, the resolution of conflict in this novel can not be
accomplished rhetorically unless James is willing to create and accept a corrupt world. Apparently he is not: with Verena's move toward acceptance of Basil, the novel moves into the magical realm, purging itself both of America's corrupt rhetoric and of the author's, or Olive's, inevitable ambivalence about this corrupt rhetoric.

Arguing the women's issue, Olive challenges Ransom: "'What women may be, or may not be, to each other, I won't attempt just now to say, but what the truth may be to a human soul, I think perhaps even a woman may faintly suspect!'" Ransom replies caustically, "'The truth? My dear cousin, your truth is a most vain thing!'" (79). Verena stands between them, silently listening to this interchange which really alludes to what truth will be for Verena. Ransom is convinced Verena's truth is not the rhetoric of the women's movement and the public arena. What he sees in the compromised Olive is a woman to pity and what he sees in charming Verena is a woman to love. At the Boston concert hall, in the novel's final scene, "Verena was not in the least present to him in connection with this exhibition of enterprise and puffery; what he saw was Olive . . . conforming to a great popular system" (362). Basil is determined that Verena not be sacrificed for the sake of Olive's need to conform: "the deepest feeling in Ransom's bosom in relation to her was the
conviction that she was made for love, . . . She was profoundly unconscious of it, and another ideal, crude and thin and artificial, had interposed itself, but in the presence of a man she should really care for, this false, flimsy structure would rattle to her feet . . . " (280).

Obviously, Ransom is right. As the narrator of The Bostonians remarks of Verena, "it was in her nature to be easily submissive, to like being overborne;" thus, "... the struggle of yielding to a will which she felt to be stronger even than Olive's was not of long duration" (278). And because Basil perceives what Verena is, that perception is magical.

Although Olive perceives that Verena seems to symbolize pure form itself, desire suspended and waiting for a need to respond to, she fails to acknowledge "the epicurean in Verena's composition," (298), Verena's admiration for the frivolous and stylish Mrs. Luna, and the way in which Verena's need to please can be most intensely fulfilled. Verena "would expose herself, give herself away, turn herself inside out, for the satisfaction of a person who made demands of her" (319). What Olive refuses to realize is that the most intense demands that can be imposed on a woman made for heterosexual love can come only from a man.
This is something Verena must finally admit to herself. With consistent exposure to Basil, Verena realizes that:

It was simply that the truth had changed sides; that radiant image began to look at her from Basil Ransom's expressive eyes. She loved, she was in love - she felt it in every throb of her being. Instead of being constituted by nature for entertaining that sentiment in an exceptionally small degree (which had been the implication of her whole crusade, the warrant for her offer of old to Olive to renounce), she was framed, apparently, to allow it the largest range, the highest intensity (323).

Basil decrees magically because he names what Verena actually is, which is something she will be incapable of resisting. For Verena, "Olive's earnestness" (which implied the content she offers Verena to comprise an organic whole, "began to appear as inharmonious with the scheme of the universe as if it had been a broken saw..." (251). Basil's magic decrees that she realize her true self by fleeing the compelling, although discordant, forces of her past world, to join with him, as Basil perceives:
... he saw that he could do what he wanted, that she begged him, with all her being, to spare her, but that so long as he should protest, she was submissive, helpless. What he wanted, in this light, flamed before him and challenged all his manhood, tossing his determination to a height from which not only Doctor Tarrant, and Mr. Filer, and Olive, over there, in her sightless, soundless shame, but the great expectant hall as well, and the mighty multitude, in suspense, keeping quiet from minute to minute and holding the breath of its anger - from which all these things looked small, surmountable, and of the moment only. He didn't quite understand, as yet, however; he saw that Verena had not refused, but temporised, that the spell upon her - thanks to which he should still be able to rescue her - had been the knowledge that he was near(370). (italics mine).

Verena has no choice but to fulfill the function her form requires.\(^{32}\) She must join Basil to "glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall." Like Keats's Madelaine,
Verena represents potential to be realized, and there is never any question about how that potential is to be realized. The readers' frustration with Olive's manipulations of Verena is a formal one. Olive keeps getting in the way of the aesthetic pleasure we know we will feel when the picture is finally painted. Like the Baron and warrior-guests, Olive and the Tarrants and the democratic mob in the Boston concert hall are public intrusions into the private aesthetic world of two lovers who, in their realization of each other, create a formal closure which eliminates conflict. "The Eve of St. Agnes" and The Bostonians dissolve into magic to be immortalized in timelessness" "And they are gone: aye, ages long ago/ Those lovers fled away into the storm. . ."

Strangely enough, however, The Bostonians does not frame itself so neatly. At the last moment, James backs away from his magical resolution with a disconcerting statement about Verena's fate with Basil: "It is to be feared that with the union, so far from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these were not the last [tears] she was destined to shed"(378). That James chooses to undercut the harmony of their union is puzzling. Why does he disrupt the formal closure that the whole of the novel's action has been striving toward? Why does he bring
us back into the world of action when he seemed to have rejected it.\textsuperscript{33}

I suspect that James is uncomfortable with his magical resolution, feeling that it evades the question of how to engage in action in an imperfect world.\textsuperscript{34} Introducing conflict into the harmonious union detracts from the sense of a static ending and stresses that Verena and Basil's organic union will be a dynamic, ongoing relationship, necessitating adjustments and compromises.\textsuperscript{35} James's final lines are the first step toward introducing an ideological myth of rhetoric purged of corrupt and sophistic implications. \textit{The Bostonians} also suggests in its portrayal of Verena the destiny of James's rhetorical myth as it will come to fruition in his later novels.

Although most of the American rhetoricians in \textit{The Bostonians} seem trivial or corrupt, Verena is the significant exception to this general rule.\textsuperscript{36} Verena's extraordinary rhetoric seems to bear no taint, which is why Basil and Olive set such a high price on her. As Olive remarks "... it was impossible to see how this charming, blooming, simple creature, all youth and grace and innocence, got her extraordinary powers of reflection ... her precious faculty ... had dropped straight from heaven, without filtering through her parents ..." (73). Any art
in America would be rare, according to the precepts of The Bostonians or The American Scene, but the charming innocence of Verena's art would be a rare commodity anywhere.

The narrator of The American Scene speaks of another American commodity in comparable terms, and that commodity is Nature, which:

seemed to plead, the pathetic presence, to be liked, to be loved, to be stayed with, lived with, handled with some kindness, shown even some courtesy of admiration. What was that but the feminine attitude? - not the actual, current, impeachable, but the old ideal and classic; the air of meeting you everywhere, standing in wait everywhere, yet always without conscious defiance, only in mild submission to your doing what you would with it. The mildness was of the very essence, the essence of all the forms and lines, all the postures and surfaces, all the slimness and thinness and elegance, all the consent, on the part of trees and rocks and streams, even of vague happy valleys and fine undistinguished hills, to be viewed, to their humiliation,
in the mass, instead of being viewed in the piece (20).

James here depicts Nature's art as being helplessly at the mercy of the perceiver, yielding up its graces with no ability to fend off the irreverent New England eye, being interpreted according to the predisposition of each individual viewer. At first, Verena seems to be this same vulnerable, feminine symbol, vulnerable to the abuse of her charm by the same common or skeptical eye as is the New England Landscape. One tends, for example, to view Basil's skepticism about the innocence of Verena's art as a product of his own cynicism or fancy. Basil sees Verena's charm as a paradoxical mixture of innocence and artfulness:

He had never seen such an odd mixture of elements; she had the sweetest, most unworldly face, and yet, with it, an air of being on exhibition, of belonging to a troupe, of living in the gaslight, which pervaded even the details of her dress, fashioned evidently with an attempt at the histrionic. If she had produced a pair of
castanets or a tambourine, he felt that such accessories would have been quite in keeping (49).

This is obviously Basil's own interpretation of Verena's eccentricity, and yet pains are taken to point out the paradox of Verena's art repeatedly. Is Verena a "natural" artist or an artist successfully contriving to seem natural? The narrator does not provide any answers; he continues to tease the audience with the question: "She had expressed herself, from the first word she uttered, with a promptness and assurance which gave almost the impression of a lesson rehearsed in advance. And yet, there was a strange spontaneity in her manner, and an air of artless enthusiasm, of personal purity" (44). There is a significant difference, then, between the depiction of Nature in 38The American Scene and James's description of Verena.38

James insists on maintaining the paradoxical state of Verena's "strange, sweet, crude, absurd, enchanting improvisation"(50). He does this because he wants to retain the sense of Verena's innocent purity while allowing her at the same time a self-awareness and a capability for taking responsibility for her own art.39 Through Verena we see the beginnings of James's eventual rhetorical myth. Embodied in Verena is the paradox of New Rhetoric as it is
adapted from its Aristotelian origins and expressed in the
century previous to James's by Scottish rhetorician George
Campbell. This rhetoric, and Verena's, responds to the
myth of the Fortunate Fall by correcting it. Although
innocence is prior to knowledge, art, experience, or
whatever phrase one might use to express self-awareness,
rather than being lost through experience and later
regained, the innocence remains ever-present, informing and
tempering the art. Olive describes Verena's words as being
"as genuine as fruit and flowers, as the glow of the fire
or the plash of water. For her scrutinizing friend Verena
had the disposition of the artist, the spirit to which all
charming forms come easily and naturally. It required an
effort at first to imagine an artist so mistaught, so poor
in experience . . . only an exquisite creature could have
resisted such associations, only a girl who had some
natural light, some divine spark of taste . . ." (99).

This divine spark or purity of intent distin-
guishes Verena from the corrupt American rhetoricians. As
a matter of fact, her rhetorical appeal seems to stem more
from the "shining softness" of her eyes than from her
discourse, "full of school-girl phrases, of patches of
rememembered eloquences, of childish lapses of logic, of
flights of fancy which might indeed have offended the taste
of certain people . . ." as Ransom remarks.
Verena is the moral rhetorician described by George Campbell in the *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Her rhetoric is informed by a divine humane essence whose origin, described only vaguely, is far less important than its presence: "She proceeded slowly, cautiously, as if she were listening for the prompter, catching, one by one, certain phrases that were whispered to her a great distance off, behind the scenes of the world. Then memory, or inspiration, returned to her, and presently she was in possession of her part. She played it with extraordinary simplicity and grace . . . " (50).

Thus begins the symbol for James's rhetorical myth. In both *The American Scene* and *The Bostonians* we see James's scorn for American rhetoric and fondness for European. Yet James also reveals a begrudging awe for the innocence and moral integrity of the democratic ideal purged of its materialistic complications. Olive's ambivalent feelings about art and democracy reveal explicitly the underlying tension felt by the narrator of *The American Scene* about America. In reference to the narrative perspective of *The American Scene*, D. W. Sterner remarks that:

James may well be the only significant commentator on America not to have remarked
certain at least partially saving traits in the American character. George Santayana . . . discovers an untapped potential for good in the very naivete of American materialism, of its foundation in good fortune - a potential, in short, for idealism. James might legitimately reply that such is not his concern, blind idealism being insufficient to generate culture. Yet it is a source of hope that once the thrust of her materialism is blunted, America might possibly have yet another word to utter, a word which in the face of difficulties, might flower into a culture. 41

Indeed, James did have this same sense of optimism, at least, the dream that what was good and naive in the American culture might be transplanted to flower in a more fertile soil. Verena is James's other word to utter about America. And later adaptations of Verena in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl will bring their innocence to Europe and take root in the fertile cultural soil of Europe, learning their rhetorical skills when they get there. 42 But they will retain a quality the Europeans lack. They will retain their sense of humanity, their
innocent otherworldliness. In *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*, this American heroine will become the moral rhetorician par excellence, the shining symbol of James's resolution of his European tastes with his own American innocence. The faltering scepticism which plagues most of James's non-fiction prose does not obscure the clarity of his mature fictional ideology.
NOTES

1 Although there are undoubtedly differences in James's vision of America from the time of The Bostonians to the time when he wrote The American Scene twenty years later after his long absence abroad, the purpose of this chapter is not to make a historical study of those differences (undoubtedly James's perception of America became increasingly more bleak). This chapter points to a consistency in James's fundamental conception of American mentality in terms of his evolving rhetorical myth. My approach is more theoretical than historical.

2 My decision to use The Bostonians as a point of departure from which to outline the development of James's moral vision in his later novels is a result of my feeling that James engages himself most primitively in The Bostonians with the dynamics of cultural values that will later arise as more subtle and complex issues in The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl. By examining The Bostonians rather than a work such as The Portrait of a
Lady which is more obviously aligned in style, theme, and time to the later novels, I hope to show the beginnings of James's rhetorical myth and the dynamics of the cultural issues which in James's later novels he chose to symbolize more abstractly.


4 R. A. Morris in "Classical Vision and The American City: Henry James's The Bostonians" (New England Quarterly, 46(1973), 543-57 notes the persistence of pastoral imagery in the novel, both in description of urban and rural landscape and in characterization. He suggests that the novelist is trying to "idealize both his characters and the natural and urban environment." Morris classifies this attempt as one that is heroically desperate and a self-admitted failure. Verena, according to Morris,
appears more truthfully when she is pictured as part of a gypsy troupe, exotic and contrived, much as the urban city presents a jarring note. This chapter will argue that James knew what he was about when he described Verena in both natural and artful terms. In The Bostonians, James re-locates his Nature myth from American landscape to American personality. Verena embodies the innocence of the American landscape while animating it with her own self-consciousness.

5 Henry James, The Bostonians (New York: Dial Press, 1945), p. 31. Future references are to this edition and will be annotated within the text.

6 James Kraft implicates the narrator of The American Scene's own identity in his feelings about the New England landscape. Not coincidentally, as phrased by Kraft, these feelings could describe Olive: "New England's reality creates a sparseness of life and a neurotic compulsion that restrict and contort expression, revealing deep and horrible strains in us. This complex impression of and insight into New England is delicately woven and thus stretched like a thread throughout the book." James Kraft, "On Reading The American Scene, Prose, 6-7, (1973), 115-36.
Henry James, *The American Scene*, ed. W. H. Auden (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), pp. 374-5. Future references are to this edition and will be annotated within the text.


Adeline Tintner also acknowledges Olive's devotion to women's rights as her means of rationalizing her own desires but Ms. Tintner classifies those desires more narrowly as basically sexual. Ms. Tintner reads *The Bostonians* as James's adaptation of the French nineteenth-century novel, notably Balzac's: "James and Balzac: *The Bostonians* and *La Fille aux yeux d'or,*" *Comparative Literature,* 29, (1977), 241-254. This plot concerns "... the struggle between a man and a woman to master and emotionally dominate a young girl, a struggle in which the woman loses out to the man and in which the girl herself is destroyed by her passive, slave-like role."

This is an interesting reading but overlooks the aesthetic nature of Olive's yearnings and the psychological dynamics which might motivate the author of *The Bostonians* and *The American Scene* to portray a fear of ego submergence through encounter with a significant other and to investigate the
persuasive psychological power of sexual forces. Olive's homosexuality could quite possibly have its origin in the decadent novel, but her homosexuality seems more a result than a cause of her other psychological problems.

See also Sara DeSaussare Davis's very opposite reading of The Bostonians as an historical commentary on the plight of the feminist movement during James's time, sympathetic toward Olive, reporting on the Southern gentleman's battle to subordinate a woman's will, and commenting on the ironic growth of Verena's right to be a feminist: "In order to gain the experience she must be wrested away from the platform, away from the fight for women's rights, and into the kind of sexual relationship that renders necessary the struggle for women's rights."


Note also Oscar Cargill's source study "The Bostonians," in The Novels of Henry James (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961) where he points to W. D. Howells' Dr. Breen's Practice, Hawthorne's The Blithedale Romance, George Eliot's Adam Bede, Daudet's Evangeliste, and Sophocles' Antigone as sources for The Bostonians. However, Cargill finds James's most potent source "his

10 See D. W. Sterner's reading of The American Scene, "Henry James and the Idea of Culture in 'The American Scene," Modern Age (Chicago), 18 (1974), 283-90. Sterner discusses James's ambivalent feelings about America and its cultural needs, culture involving "balance . . . stability. . . permanence." Cultural change is necessary but with some adherence to an underlying essential sense of how past, present, and future link to provide some sense of security, repose, and identity. Without using the term, Sterner defines James's sense of culture as essentially rhetorical in that dynamic relationships interracting within a stable framework of meaning allow for harmonious, coherent diversity.

See also Louis Auchincloss, "Henry James's Literary Use of His American Tour (1904), The South Atlantic Quarterly, 74, 1975), 45-52 where he discusses how James treats America in his later fiction and makes the interesting observation, "I find after a lifetime of involvement with the works of James that I am still irreconcilably ambivalent in my attitude to the author of The American Scene. . . .I suspect that Ezra Pound was
shrewdly correct when he implied that James's love of the past was a shallow thing, with little historical consciousness of Rome, Greece, Byzantium, or even the Middle Ages." Perhaps Auchincloss is picking up on James's ambivalence. At any rate, whether James's historical consciousness was factual is irrelevant; his expressed need for a sense of history is bound up ideologically with his conception of what a "culture" should represent.

Interestingly enough, Denis Donogue, "The American Style of Failure," Sewanee Review, 82, (1974), 407-32 states that Adams's response to America's frightening, dehumanizing forces was to embrace them in failure, mocking them but finally giving in to them. He chided James for attempting to remain afloat. Considering this, James's fear of losing his individuality to the seductive mechanistic whole may have an added personal urgency because of Adams's response to the dilemma. See also Oscar Cargill, "The Bostonians," in The Novels of Henry James (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961) where he discusses James's intimate discussions with Henry Adams on such subjects as sex in America.

"The alien will rise in America, but the rise is at a price he must pay - a loss of certain spiritual identity," Kraft, p. 127.
Gordon O. Taylor, "Chapters of Experience: The American Scene," Genre, 12, (1979) 93-116 comments on James's ambivalence about aliens in The American Scene, remarking on his aloof distaste yet acknowledgement of a possibly invigorating change represented by the influx of aliens, a change of which he does not feel a part.

James Kraft, "On Reading The American Scene, Prose 6-7, (1973), 115-136 asserts even more strongly that the central theme of The American Scene is "the importance for man in the twentieth century of the American experiment in democracy."

For a good discussion of James's emergent political ambivalence at the time he wrote The Bostonians, see Theodore Miller, "Muddled Politics of Henry James's The Bostonians, Georgia Review 26, (1972), 336-46. Miller writes that "despite his frequent scorn of mass audiences, James could in certain moods be as avid for popular success as any one of Alger's characters." Miller implies that James may identify with Olive since her fate proves "that any idiosyncratic individual would be humanly destroyed in the unavoidable glare of liberal democracy." And his primary argument is that James's mixed feelings about liberalism and conservatism were probably responsible for his unstable characterization of Basil, to whom James's own
psyche was perhaps too dangerously close to allow James full aesthetic control. Miller asserts that James often parodies his own idealized portrait of the Southern conservative, and thus he suggests that with James's final reference to Verena's tears, the novel ends in "nihilistic despair." However, I see James's depiction of Basil as more consistently positive, especially if we use as a norm James's edicts on the American male in *The American Scene*. The reference to Verena's tears does not rise out of the action of the novel but appears instead to be James's last-minute decision to explode his own myth.

Interestingly, Kraft describes James's search for culture in *American* in analogous terms: "The synthesis that James cannot see for American civilization is somewhere in this great proliferating organism that James represents through these themes - if one could only find the eye big enough to see with."

An interesting and somewhat different reading of James's narrative technique in *The Bostonians* is provided in Alfred Habegger, "The Disunity of *The Bostonians*," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 24, (1969) 193-209. Habegger claims that the traditionally noted disunity between the two volumes of the novel actually emerges because a different narrative device characterizes...
each. The first book uses a satiric persona and concentrates on mocking characterization. This narrator's "... inflated style serves to increase the distance between the narrative voice and the voice of the characters, to stress the disparity between the implied standards of the author and the vulgarity of The Bostonians..." Book Second concentrates on plot and "James's characteristic techniques -- a train of cumulative events... fully restricted point of view, the self-effacement of the narrator and a tone more reportorial than didactic -- not only come to the force, but account, in large part, for the loss of address and concentration noticed by an earlier generation of readers."

Rather than viewing these two narrators as alien counterparts, I tend to view narrative progress in The Bostonians as evincing various degrees of the same narrative personality; evidences of the same self-conscious author dealing in his improvisation of a narrative persona with his own immediate or less immediate need to distance himself from his characters.

Just as Book I contains some evidence of a narrator limited to the point of view of his character's consciousness, Book II has instances of the detached narrator commenting on his characters satirically, as in the final lines of the novel when the narrator announces
Basil and Verena's future fate. The concentration on one narrator or another probably depends more on the subject James is considering at the time and the amount of emotional detachment he needs from it rather than from some clearly conceived difference of purpose in the two books. Book I focuses more on the secondary characters from whom James can maintain distance easily. However, as Habegger points out, Book II treats primarily the consciousness of Basil and Olive, two symbols to whom James clearly responds. He cannot risk much narrative contact with the characters here and when he does intrude narratively, it is often with a hyperbolic self-effacement which mocks his own narrative distance and thus provides an even more exaggerated distance.

Even so, James's awareness of his own involvement in the novel would render him vulnerable to attacks against this novel's narrative devices, such as those his brother William levelled against him, and he understandably would admit, as John L. Kimmey points out that he did, that he spent too much time "'describing and explaining and expatiating.'" Kimmey, "The Bostonians and The Princess Cassamassima," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 9, (1967-68), 537-546.
When Habegger discusses the occasional self-effacing tendency of the Narrator of Book II, he seems to involve himself in a contradiction. The narrator, according to Habegger, is the superb objective craftsman of James's later works, concerned with scrupulous chronology, elaborate scenic descriptions, restricting the development of characterization to the central consciousness of his characters. Yet, this narrator has careless lapses. His own apologetic self-references in Book II "show[s] a truly Jamesian self-consciousness about his narrative's point of view and a strangely fussy uneasiness at a momentary exception to it." This strangely fussy uneasiness is actually a deliberately crafted hypertrophic self-consciousness contrived by James to actually escape the trap of a solipsistic narrator.

Morris alludes to this passage in his discussion of pastoral imagery in *The Bostonians* as an example of how desperately James wants to invest the urban landscape with some sense of pastoral harmony. Morris does not mention *The American Scene* when he refers to this passage, but he might well have. In both instances, James wistfully attempts to invest the American city with some sense of beauty or grace. It is understandable that surrounded with such a bleak environment both Basil and
Olive yearn aesthetically to immerse themselves in Verena's charm.


20 James B. Colvert, p. 62

21 In Maria Jacobson's recent reading of this novel, "Popular Fiction and Henry James's Unpopular Bostonians," *Modern Philology*, 73 (1973), 264-75, she alludes to this passage as a harbinger of the novel's pessimistic conclusion. According to Jacobson, James synthesizes two conventional novel genres of his time -- emerging feminist fiction and the novel of Civil War reconciliation -- only to topple these conventions with his own gloomy resolution about the "continuing discontents" of American life. According to Jacobson, Basil's recognition here that all soldiers fought bravely is one of the conventions of the Civil War novel but in *The Bostonians* what is begun in Memorial Hall "is only the most tenuous of alliances." Verena and Basil do not unite North and South; the novel ends in disunity. However, James's imaginative sympathy with the Civil War soldiers in *The American Scene* so closely follows Basil's own line of
thought that it would seem more likely that James is portraying Basil positively rather than undermining him.

Many critics, such as Elizabeth McMahon, "Sexual Desire and Illusion in The Bostonians," Modern Fiction Studies, 25, (1979), 241-251 cite such lines as proof that James is seriously undercutting the cultural panache and delicacy of his hero. I think he seems to be mocking instead the contemporary definition of "provincial." A very interesting study of James's narrative technique in The Bostonians would seem to corroborate this point of view. Philip Page suggests that this "narrator is extremely conscious of his readers, even to the extent of being uncertain and suspicious of their reactions. . . . His own attitudes toward the characters are ambivalent, and he wants to induce the same mixture in his readers." What he wants, according to Page, is to engage his readers in an active quest for meaning, but his "manipulation of the reader is often strained and even inconsistent . . ." Philip Page, "The Curious Narration of The Bostonians," American Literature, 46, (1974-75), 374-383. I think that as with Melville in Pierre, James is deliberately mocking at times what he anticipates as his reader's defensive reaction to James's proffered vision of what America should be. If his tone seems strained and
sometimes ambivalent, this may be the evidence of James straining to remain detached from his characters.

23 For a good summary of critical views on James's relation to Basil, see Sara DeSaussure Davis's article, "The Bostonians Reconsidered," Tulane Studies in English, 23, 50-51. Those views range from asserting that James depicts Ransom as a mountebank, to maintaining that he is a clear Jamesian representative. Davis feels that James portrays Ransom to show how the notion of Southern chivalry can disintegrate into a mere power play and can be used as an apologist label for blatant chauvinism. Regardless of our own predelictions toward judging this type of character, James's own prose seems to indicate clearly that Ransom is a positive symbol. However, the uncertainty may arise from our sense that Ransom is not perfect and he does not seem fully the narrator. My suggestion is that James personally identifies more closely with Olive and that Ransom is simply an extension of his vision of what could save America. David Howard's study, "The Bostonians" tends to support this viewpoint, suggesting that Olive and Basil are in The Bostonians as "the two chief discriminators of the age." They both sense the mediocrity of the age and one would treat it with the
great feminine element and one with the great masculine element.

24 James Colvert, 62-3.

25 The inevitability of their union because of Verena's fitness for Basil causes some critics, such as Philip M. Weinstein, *Henry James and the Requirements of the Imagination*, p. 96, to see Verena's choice to marry Basil as forced, rather than as freely made. However, James's characters who make "free" choices usually have to alter some facet of their emotional outlook to make the choice.

26 Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1951), p. 7. Note also that Howard D. Pearce in "Witchcraft Imagery and Allusion in James's *Bostonians*," *Studies in the Novel* (North Texas State University), 6 (1974), 236-47, notes the pervasiveness of witchcraft imagery throughout *The Bostonians* and the way in which it creates an ironic language implies that Olive is a demon attempting to possess Verena, as Coleridge's Geraldine seduces Christabel. Pearce notes that witchcraft imagery also surrounds Basil but feels that since Basil is a much more positive force, this imagery is not as damaging as that
surrounding Olive. Both shield Verena with a cape, but Olive's gesture is threatening and Basil's protective, for example. (One might suggest that good magic goes hand in hand with good rhetoric.) Sara DeSaussure Davis reads the significance of these two cape scenes just the reverse, seeing Olive's gesture as protective and Basil's a denial of Verena's identity. Yet a third critic, Philip Page in "The Curious Narration of The Bostonians," American Literature, 46, (1974-75), 374-83 alludes to the cloak scenes as the narrator's means of showing that both Olive and Basil want destructively to possess Verena.

Although she does not concur in her general reading, Elizabeth McMahon makes this same point about Olive. She says that "Olive, who is quite as possessive as any husband might be, deludes herself into thinking she allows her friend to be 'as free as air.' . . . This costly illusion [that Verena is safe from Ransom upon receipt of her verbal guarantee] stems largely from Olive's desire to keep Verena for her very own" (p. 244). (Ms. McMahon calls critics who praise Ransom "phallic critics." She quotes the typical lines used to discredit Basil, such as the editor who declares him 300 years behind the age. Are we to assume that American contemporary journalism would be viewed positively by James? At any rate, for McMahon,
succumbing to Basil is Verena's fatal succumbing to her sexual hormones.)

28 I disagree with Sara Davis's depiction of Olive as an individual fully aware of all her motives ("The Bostonians Reconsidered"), more protectively inclined toward Verena, and more generous with Verena because she shares Verena with the public whereas Basil wants her all to himself. James certainly does not approve of the American public and shows Olive as an individual who evades full self-recognition.

29 My reading of this passage is contrary to a recent reading of this passage (Sara DeSaussure Davis, "The Bostonians Reconsidered) which compares Olive's illumination here to Isabel's epiphany in Portrait of a Lady, thus asserting that Olive has full self-awareness at the end of the novel.

Gerald Haslam expresses a similar view in "Olive Chancellor's Painful Victory in The Bostonians," Washington State University, 36, (1968), 232-236. Haslam sees Olive as finally becoming victorious since, in her decision to take the public platform, she transcends her own fear.

30 Curiously enough, Gordon O. Taylor compares the narrator of The American Scene to the narrative voice
of *The Great Gatsby*, both gazing finally on the unresolved ambiguities of finding ideal possibilities in America. This comparison reinforces the sense of identification between James and Olive, and the sense that a search for ideals will never be resolved in America.

31 Sara DeSaussure Davis points out that Basil casts a spell over Verena "by the charm of his voice" just as Verena similarly affected Basil. Davis criticizes this, calling their relation merely physical. Perhaps instead we are to contrast this rhetorical contact with the empty words of American rhetorical cant.

32 Habegger believes that the intrigue plot common to later James's novels is concentrated in Book II; thus, that Book I treats characterization, not plot. This intrigue plot involves the bonding of two individuals through their sharing of a secret and the growth of consciousness of a third who comes to see the deception. Since the person not privileged to the secret is Olive, the intrigue plot seems gratuitous to *The Bostonians* because neither Ransom nor Verena will gain growth from a knowledge they already have. Thus James "... divorced this formula from its inner vivifying meaning." However, if one concentrates instead on the way this novel plots itself from the beginning as the story of Verena's inevitable
coming to realization of her form, then her perception of a secret or private bond between herself and Ransom transfers her sense of pledge from Olive to Basil, thus bringing her closer to the realization of her true form presaged from the beginning of the novel.

Maria Jacobson thinks this is James's "denial of that pervasive political myth of the eighties that the Civil War had not irreparably altered American life." Perhaps so. He is indeed forging a rhetorical myth that will find harmony within the disparity between individuals rather than attempting to deny individual differences.

The status of James's paradoxical resolution in The Bostonians may possibly be illuminated in different terms by Denis Donoghue's study of different narrative approaches to the problem of America, "The American Style of Failure," Sewanee Review, 82, (1974), 407-32. The failure of America is survived by its writers through their "recourse to a certainty pageantry of form." Typical American approaches are curial, hyperbolic, ironic and angelic. Donoghue classifies James's style as hyperbolic, but, curiously enough, I think The Bostonians has recourse to all four approaches. The curial approach, typified by the Southern cavalier attitude that "a defeated general looks well on a high horse" involves the invention of a
grand mythology where the "literature which has good reason to know the taste of failure in its circumstances and has therefore practised a talent for transforming failure into a high and lordly style, reaching for aesthetic and moral victories to make up for its defeated army." Basil certainly embodies this cavalier approach to American culture. The ironic narrative approach is Henry Adams's; it involves a self-mocking low style and a final immersion in the technological, mechanistic universe the narrator so detests. The narrator of The Bostonians employs the same detached irony to mock American culture and himself but he evades immersion into the culture by the haughtiness and exaggerated nature of his ironic detachment. The approach of the symbolic imagination or the hyperbolic approach is that of an imagination "incorrigibly related to the given world," but transforming that boring world with the richness of its own curiosities and impressions. Finally, the angelic mind is so skeptical about the world that it tries to disintegrate it through an excess of feeling, will, or intellect, as Allen Tate defines Poe's artistry. It seems that James hovers between the angelic and hyperbolic approach in the conclusion of The Bostonians because either approach would involve for him an artistic lie due to the impossible conditions of the America James perceives. The transformation by the narrator of the bleak
American culture into a cultural richness practically involves a fabrication out of nothing, thus a transcendence of the nothing that is there rather than a dynamic relationship with it, just as the Angelic imagination also denies the real world. James's resolution of this dilemma is to leave the world in the curial mood, where the author still upholds his values in a world which cannot respond to them, with a promise of the Verena mythology which promises better worlds to come in future novels, worlds which the narrator can respond to rhetorically.

35 An evocative reading of *The American Scene* (Gordon O. Taylor, "Chapters of Experience: The American Scene," *Genre*, 12, (1979), 93-116 incidentally provides support for this reading of the conclusion of *The Bostonians* and for relating *The Bostonians* closely to *The American Scene*. Taylor suggests that in *The American Scene* James is constantly exploding his own attempts to create an Arcadian myth out of the American landscape; his "recurrent note of reluctance to leave Arcadia suggests a need to do just that." James's inclination is to look "more purposefully, less peacefully, toward the problem of his own relationship to the American 'age to come.'" Both *The Bostonians* and *The American Scene* resist a static retreat into an idealized picture of America.
John L. Kimmey notes that originally The Bostonians was titled Verena. ("The Bostonians and The Princess Cassamassima," Texas Studies in Language and Literature, 9, 1967-68), 537-546.

This is a view commonly held by critics. Theodore C. Miller, for example, calls Verena "an empty cipher who can receive meaning from only one of the two antagonists."

Sterner notes that the only element of American culture he can think well of is the New England landscape: "It is a curious notion, that the summer residents might be educated by the land, even a romantic one, and it expresses more than James's hopes for America; it reveals his own pleasure in the New England landscape. . . " However, Sterner finds even James's appreciation of this land incomplete since James seems not to find this land yielding of sufficient expressiveness, obviously not realizing that "the absence of artifice, of the human element itself, is part of the land's appeal." Possibly Sterner is incorrect in assuming this, for in Verena we see James's creation and much greater appreciation of the beautiful landscape (Verena) which bespeaks or suggests human artifice and individual will. Understandably, James could find meagre solace in an inanimate culture.
This opinion of Verena is contrary to a recent reading of Verena as an empty shell, totally dependent on her outside environment for her meaning, a spiritual medium through whom others move and in whose clutches she lacks total will. Susan Wolstenholme, "Possession and Personality: Spiritualism in The Bostonians," American Literature, 49, (1977-78), 580-591.

David Howard discusses the charming oddness of Verena's character at some length, "The Bostonians," in The Air of Reality, ed. John Goode (London: Methuen and Co., 1972). Howard sees in Verena some Whitmanesque, revitalizing element which sacrifices itself upon union with either Olive or Basil. However, Howard denies that she can be tragic because she is too superficial and "nothing American can be that symbolic." Nevertheless, although Howard eventually decides that Verena is simply James's depiction of the curious, at times his analysis seems suggestive of Verena's potential importance in James's maturing fiction. She possesses, for example, "a creative innocence like that of Huck Finn's . . . ."

Sterner, pp. 288-89.

It is interesting, along these lines, that Cargill notes that The Bostonians also anticipates creation
of James's bad heroine: "Olive Chancellor is the first really to fill that role in the novels - the prototype of Rose Armiger, of Charlotte Stant, and of the most memorable of them all, Kate Croy, one of the great feminine figures in fiction."
Chapter Two: The Wings of the Dove:
The Evolving Myth;
Rhetorical Artistry in
The Wings of The Dove
Several scenes in *The Wings of The Dove* haunt the memory. One scene is the dingy apartment of a faded paternal aristocrat; Kate Croy stands poised before the mirror, dusky hair curled provocatively beneath her hat, her dark eyes charming and wary as she prepares to battle against impossible odds for the man she loves. The other scene is a lonely crag in France where a frail young woman named Milly Theale gazes longingly over the precipice, her pale, eccentric face turned downward beneath a mass of strange red hair, waiting for the "adventure" she can not seem to will for herself.

These scenes haunt because they point out the apparent hopelessness of the human condition as it is portrayed in *The Wings of The Dove*. Neither Kate Croy nor Milly Theale will be able to satisfy their lifes' longing because their struggle to achieve their desire is frustrated by the part of each which is culturally bound. As strenously as Kate tries to escape it, her world is predicated by total loyalty to materialistic, self-serving values. Milly's American self, on the other hand, seems dominated by transcendental values which prescribe that the only way to life life is to escape it.

Both Milly and Kate select Merton Densher as the vehicle, as, actually, the metaphor, through which they can grow past their own cultural limitations because, as we
will see, Densher's own cultural inheritance is a mixture of both material and transcendental values, the combination of which provides each woman with a relatively non-threatening means of growth.

The disconcerting fact is that, try as hard as they might, both heroines are tragically unable to rise above their own cultural limitations. This certainly suggests that in James's view, spiritual growth is a solemn and difficult task and one which, in the case of Kate and Milly, apparently proves impossible. However, in an ultimate sense, James seems meticulously to set up the naturalistic terms of his fictive world only to refute them. In The Wings of The Dove, James concocts the proper formula to make spiritual growth seem possible. He appears to reject a naturalistic definition of human relations, which portrays the failure of the individual to defend his own identity against the pressure of an oppressive environment, in favor of a rhetorical reading of the world, which suggests that the individual can grow through a dynamic response to his environment.

The key to an optimistic reading of The Wings of The Dove is to acknowledge the rhetorical situation the story sets up and to accept or reject individual character in terms of its potential capacity for successful rhetoric. Successful rhetoric, or the ability to grow fruit-
fully through human contact, requires crucial personality components which become, in James's world, the essential moral values. In other words, certain personality traits enhance the communication process; thus, those traits become distinct moral values. To understand this novel in what I believe to be its proper positive light, focus must be shifted from the sombre and tragic fate of the two heroines themselves, to the fate of Merton Densher. One must follow Densher's progress, experiencing vicariously the way he gradually learns to judge successful rhetoric and, thus, to become a successful rhetorician himself. In their attempts to engage Densher's affections, both Milly and Kate use rhetoric, but their rhetoric is informed by distinctively different personalities, thus their rhetorics have different implications in James's scheme of ethics. When Densher chooses to validate Milly's trust in him, thus making his rhetoric conform to his own knowledge of reality, he chooses the form of rhetoric most conducive to his own spiritual growth. His choice clearly indicates that through his experiences with Kate and Milly, he learns to distinguish between higher and lower forms of rhetorical art.

The difference between higher and lower forms of rhetorical art is well illuminated by eighteenth-century rhetorical theory with which Henry James inevitably had
acquaintance. In his essay, "The Stream of Thought," William James quotes George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*.\(^1\) Scottish faculty psychology, from which James's psychological theory evolved, proposes a companion theory to eighteenth-century Scottish rhetoric, and Henry James, so conversant with his brother's cultural milieu, would undoubtedly have also read Campbell's work. At any rate, the source provides invaluable insight into the rhetorical scheme of *The Wings of The Dove*. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, closely applied to the facts of this novel, illuminates a sad stage where two sympathetic heroines vie for the love of one man and rise and fall not only on the basis of the cleverness but also on the basis of the ethical quality of their persuasive tactics. Merton Densher, as the object of their rhetoric, finds in his discretionary response to them, his own rhetorical consciousness and way of responding creatively to the world.

From the moment Kate Croy eyes herself in her father's living room mirror and gives her black hat the proper tilt, she is the mistress of form, skillfully presenting her physical appearance as a persuasive argument.\(^2\) Like Aunt Maud, she is part of a continental culture which bequeathes to its inheritors the machiavelian ability to arrange all possible resources artfully to promote as much as possible the self-satisfaction of the
Ill artist, or, as Kate describes Maud to Densher in one of the novel's later commentaries, to promote the artist's idea:

The very essence of her . . . is that, when she adopts a view, she - well, to her own sense, really brings the thing about, fairly terrorizes, with her view, any other, any opposite view, and those with it who represent it. I've often thought success comes to her . . . by the spirit in her that dares and defies her idea not to prove the right one (348).³

Perhaps Kate, unlike Maud, does not terrorize with her view but, then, she does not need to. The idea she conceives is so beautiful and welcome to her audience that all she has to do is present it and meet with immediate acceptance. Unlike Aunt Maud, Kate's resources are of the finest source, which is fortunate since they are certainly less copious. Maud promotes her social view through that gross and ponderous material, money. Kate's view of how her friends should act is sold through the pure virtue of its ideal beauty, through happy conception of a beautiful and fitting form.

Ironically, although Kate's continental inheritance provides her with the knowledge of forms to be a
skillful rhetorician, her cultural background will also be her doom. Practically any section of the first volume of *The Wings of The Dove* concerned with Kate portrays scrupulously her consistently thwarted attempts to evade moral deception and to respond honestly to emotional attachments, both those emanating from her family community and those emerging from a reciprocal and potentially healthy relationship with Merton Densher. Surprisingly, although her eventual rhetorical tactics are quite similar to those of Charlotte Stant in *The Golden Bowl*, in her initial desires, ambitions, and emotional instincts, Kate bears much more resemblance to Maggie Verver.

Kate and Maggie also, as will be seen in discussion of *The Golden Bowl*, seek in a marriage companion someone outside the realm of their own cultural possibilities. For Kate, Densher's appeal consists in "the high, dim things she lumped together as of the mind. It was on the side of the mind that Densher was rich for her, and mysterious and strong; and he had rendered her in especial the sovereign service of making that element real" (42-3). Densher offers Kate the world of the non-material, a potential nurturance for her own spirit. Their potential relationship, in James's world, implies great spiritual growth since "any deep harmony that might eventually govern
them would not be the result of their having much in common -- having anything, in fact, but their affection; and would really find its explanation in some sense, on the part of each, of being poor where the other was rich" (42). Kate, of course, would offer Densher the opportunity of grounding his ideals in the real world.

Kate's dilemma, in the opening pages of *The Wings of The Dove*, is essentially no different than that of Maggie Verver in the beginning of *The Golden Bowl*; in fact, they use the same words to describe it. As Kate remarks, she needs to work Densher's various attractions "in with other and alien things, privately cherish them, and yet, as regards the rigour of it, pay no price" (50). The price that either Maggie or Kate have to pay for their fledgling love relationships is the loss of their old cultural affiliation which is a hostile presence to the potential new community of each. One crucial reason for the difference between Maggie and Kate's eventual character development and quality of rhetoric is that Maggie's father eventually supports her decision to leave him and emerge in a new culture while Kate's father, a cruelly decadent representative of the corrupt European cultural tradition, demands filial duty from his daughter. Paradoxically, Kate's emotional integrity causes her spiritual defilement
because the initial source of her emotional loyalty -- her father and her family -- is corrupt.

Lionel Croy and, in a more minor light, Kate's sister, Marion, are the novel's cruelest and most sophistic rhetoricians, exploiting Kate's emotional vulnerability for their own selfish, materialistic ends. They are a mockery of a family, yet they bind Kate by appealing to her own strong emotional integrity. One of the most ironic speeches in the novel is that of Lionel Croy to his daughter, when he lectures her on filial duty: "'Do you know what you're a proof of, all you hard, hollow people together?' He puts the question with a charming air of sudden spiritual heat. 'Of the deplorably superficial morality of the age. The family sentiment, in our vulgarized, brutalised life, has gone utterly to pot!'" (19). The family sentiment, according to Lionel Croy, dictates that one take advantage of the appearance or status of a family for material advancement. If this means denying the family for the family's material gain, both Lionel and Marion approve. Obviously, Lionel's definition is the one superficially moral.

Kate's family is Dickensian, obsequious, self-serving, parasitic and yet they can manipulate Kate and even force her into false situations by appealing to her own sense of pity:
The sharpest pinch of her state, meanwhile, was exactly that all intercourse with her sister had the effect of casting down her courage and tying her hands, adding daily to her sense of the part, not always either uplifting or sweetening, that the bond of blood might play in one's life. She was face to face with it now, with the bond of blood... Her haunting, harassing father, her menacing, uncompromising aunt, her portionless little nephews and nieces, were figures that caused the chord of natural piety superabundantly to vibrate (30).

Paradoxically, Charlotte's difference from her own cultural background, her genuine ability to feel compassion and value human emotion above material gain, is the very reason why she is helpless to resist it, for she must pay emotional homage to those pursuing the utterly materialistic life which she is trying to escape. The question of human will in this context becomes moot because there is simply no way that Kate can constructively apply will to alter the situation. She simply cannot alter her family's values and therefore her obligation to the very materialistic goals which will frustrate her own nobler desires for
spiritual growth. Far from condemning Kate's inability to change her world, James seems to sympathize with this dilemma as particularly a woman's plight. He sympathetically invests Kate both with a defiant need to purge her background and with the sense of her own futility in trying to do so, even though:

"She hadn't given up yet, and the broken sentence, if she was the last word, would end with a sort of meaning. There was a minute during which, though her eyes were fixed, she quite visibly lost herself in the thought of the way she might still pull things round had she only been a man. It was the name, above all, she would take in hand -- the precious name she so liked and that, in spite of the harm her wretched father had done it, was not yet past praying for. She loved it in fact the more tenderly for that bleeding wound. But what could a penniless girl do with it but let it go? (11)

The disturbing reality for the reader is that Kate uses her background in the only way she can to achieve her desires. The irony of this is that in succumbing to the seductive yet faulty rhetorical practices of her own
culture, Kate adopts the same machiavelian attitude she despises so in her father, and divests herself of the moral integrity which is her communication link with Densher. Yet it is hard to detach one's sympathy from Kate even when she does begin to engage in her self-serving and sometimes seemingly callous deceptions, because James put Kate in an impossible situation where she can either retain her moral integrity by denying Densher and sacrificing herself to a materialistic ethic or she can attempt to retain Densher and thus lose her moral integrity by either abandoning her family or engaging in deception. From James's subsequent development of Kate's sophistic rhetoric, it is clear that he condemns the practice but not the person. Rather than being critical of a character such as Kate, James seems to be condemning the culture which could force a well-meaning and valuable individual such as Kate to such reprehensible behavior. In his depiction of Kate, James seems to be suggesting that blind adherence to a culture can be a fatal flaw.

Kate's sophistic rhetoric seems to be encouraged by the very circumstances in which she finds herself. Events simply seem to fall into her hands. Trapped in the lofty heights of her aunt's house with Maud stalking below, Kate's access to Densher is limited and she certainly cannot marry him since Maud makes clear that she has other
ideas for Kate and, if Kate were to rebel, she and her family would be abandoned. Maud Lowder's sponsorship of Kate and Susan Stringham's of Milly seem endemic of the present yet distinctive cultural limitations plaguing the heroines of *The Wings of The Dove*. Though Susan Stringham as a representative of Milly's culture may support Milly, she certainly does not understand her, and it has been Milly's fate to have never been understood, thus allowed to really live in anything but cultural isolation. Maud, on the other hand, as a representative of Kate's cultural inheritance, understands her too well, at least, requires that Kate conform to Maud's narrow, limiting, and corrupting idea of how she is to be.

However, when Kate suddenly confronts Milly, a moneyed and dying young American heiress who has met Densher in America and, apparently, developed her own affections for him, and senses her aunt's own expedient scheme to couple Milly with Densher, Kate really thinks she can conquer several different sets of cultural limitations, both her own tie to Aunt Maud and Milly's failure to find the adequate terms upon which to understand herself or to be understood. Kate resorts to the rhetorical resources of her own cultural background so that she can try and keep Densher without paying a price. Kate's initial warm response to Milly and genuine commitment to human emotion
imply that her decision to revert to inherited cultural practices is a desperate one. However calculated Kate's rhetoric becomes, and it certainly becomes so quickly, it always seems more defensive than offensive. One always has the feeling that Kate, aggressive and treacherous as her tactics might become, has early on been backed in a corner.4

Nevertheless, faced with the opportunity to escape her dilemma, Kate resorts quickly to the use of two sophisticatedly rhetorical devices which will "cover all," persuasively satisfy others that their goals are being met while she pursues her own ultimate desire both to be wealthy to satisfy her filial duty and to marry Densher to satisfy herself. These devices are: the rhetorical use of silence and the introduction of a lively idea which will stand as its own persuasive argument.

The facts of Kate's situation do indeed predict a very subtle rhetoric. Discounting Aunt Maud, who Kate can presume is in Milly's camp adopting Milly's line of argument, Kate must concentrate on two audiences. Since Kate quickly perceives Milly's affection for Densher, Kate must find a way to convince Milly that he is both marriageable and accessible so Milly will feel free to indulge in her feelings and consider marrying him. Her aunt will then be placated for she will feel her schemes have worked and Kate
can then marry her wealthy lover after Milly's death. She also needs a line by which she can secretly maintain her relationship with Densher in the meantime and convince Densher to comply with her scheme. Thus, Kate must relate both to Milly and Merton Densher in intricate rhetorical ways.

"Never does the orator obtain a nobler triumph by his eloquence," maintains George Campbell, "than when his sentiments and style and order appear . . . naturally to arise out of the subject . . ." (121). Such a statement reveals the moral ambivalence of rhetoric and thus the problematical nature of interpreting the ethical soundness of the rhetorician. Rhetoric is a conscious art. Since the rhetorician adapts his form to promote his content, his use of language suggests that it must be rhetorical. He does not necessarily use words as transparent vessels, but instead consciously selects them to present subject matter in a desired light. However, in many situations a successful rhetorician must try to downplay his own creative role in the communication process so as to convince his audience of his sincerity. The most effective rhetoric will seem to imply an organic relationship between language and subject matter since audience perception that the rhetorician is expressing the true facts of any situation to the best of his ability is the basis for trust, belief, and assumption
of meaning. Kate, then, as a rhetorician, must be wary of the words she speaks to Milly because the magnitude of what she must conceal makes any conscious selection of words a risky business.

However, Kate's skill as a rhetorician affords her another mode of action. A rhetorician can assume that an audience will be responsive if its own self-interest is addressed. Kate's astute perception of Milly is how very much Milly wants to be persuaded there is nothing between Kate and Densher. Since language in this situation breeds too much tension -- there is too much disparity between what Kate might strive to tell Milly about her feelings and the true fact of her relationship with Densher -- Kate's recourse in this early stage of her friendship with Milly is silence and dependence on Milly to convince herself that Densher is available. This tactic is successful. Maud, Densher, and Milly willingly comply with Kate's silence.

Milly, as she progressively will appropriate all of Kate's tactics, even goes so far as to take Kate's silence as a cue to initiate her own. Upon indirect discovery of Kate's former familiarity with Densher (a discovery not allowed so immediately to Maggie in *The Golden Bowl,* ) Milly tells herself that she will adopt silence also about her knowledge of the situation. The reader intuits she is trying to wrest control of the
situation from Kate, or at least to convince herself that she has it. Generally in James, a character assumes power, a leverage point, by knowing something about the "other" that the "other" may not know. In this case, Milly knows "of Mr. Densher's propinquity" for Kate and feels this to be privileged information. Milly, observes the narrator, "hadn't the excuse of knowing it [this question of mutual affection between Kate and Densher] for Kate's own, since nothing whatever as yet proved it particularly to be such" (139). [italics mine]. Milly ponders her own excitement and "betrayal" of Kate through her privileged point of view. Nevertheless, Milly seems to be "play-acting" with herself by assuming such power. She really seems to suspect strongly that Kate has awareness she is hiding. In possibly the greatest passage of deliberate self-deception in the novel, Milly rationalizes why, if Kate has knowledge of Densher's affections, she has not told her great friend, Milly:

What happened was that afterwards, on separation, she wondered if the matter had not mainly been that she herself was so 'other,' so taken up with the unspoken; the strangest thing of all being . . . She should never know how Kate truly felt about
anything such a one as Milly Theale should give her to feel. Kate would never — and not from ill will, nor from duplicity, but from a sort of failure of common terms — reduce it to such a one's comprehension or put it within her convenience (139).

Milly here denies the possibility that Kate's silence could be deceptive because she wants to maintain her innocence about Densher and Kate's situation. Milly's thoughts also presume that verbal rhetoric, or language, communication, is perfectable and by definition ethical, since Milly's perception of this instance providing a failure of common terms, implies the sense that this imperfect instance is an exception to the common run of situations. One can read into this assumption of Milly's her American transcendental background which fosters the view that language can be reduced to a transparent yielding of meaning. Nevertheless, the irony of her thoughts, and thus their irony in reference back to her own culture, is that they are clearly self-deceptive since her own decision to remain silent yet knowledgeable undercuts her forced certainty that Kate's silence must be innocent. Milly's sense of power is obviously a whistling in the dark and as long as Milly plays into Kate's game,
for whatever reasons, Kate's silence will work quite well to cover those feelings she has which she must warily hide from Milly.  

At a critical point in Kate's game, however, Aunt Maud intercedes and forces Kate's hand. On her way to the theatre with Susan Stringham, she asks Milly to discover, through Kate, if Merton Densher has returned from America, which is Maud's way of enlisting Milly in an assessment of Kate's present relations with Densher. By this time in the novel — about one-third of the way through it — Kate's point of view has long been shut off from the reader and we see the scene of this inquisitional evening through Milly's eyes. However, enough is known about Kate's desires and anxieties to see the brilliance of her next rhetorical move when pressed by Milly. "The occasion," muses Milly this crucial evening now alone with Kate, "in the quiet late lamplight, had the quality of a rough rehearsal of the possible big drama. Milly knew herself dealt with — handsomely, completely; she surrendered to the knowledge, for so it was, she felt, that she supplied her helpful force. . . . It easily and largely came from their present talk. . . that the handsome girl was in extraordinary 'form '") (197). Milly seems to feel, from Kate's performance, that possibly she is about to be understood, which produces in her a feeling of mixed fear and awe.
Into the badinage which ensues, Kate transparently introduces Lord Mark as a red herring to deflect the conversation from a discussion of Merton Densher, whom both know to be a mutual love interest. If Milly was not suspicious before, Aunt Maud certainly alerts her to Kate's possible interest. Using Lord Mark as a decoy, Kate superficially teases Milly about her need to learn the more advanced European forms of thought from Kate and, concurrently, about how Maud begrudges the way Lord Mark seems to be attracted to Milly. Milly counters by inquiring about Kate's standing with Lord Mark. Both know that Milly is actually indirectly inquiring into the nature of Kate's relations to Densher. Kate expresses exasperation with Lord Mark's inscrutability, but what Milly notices is Kate's failure to declare her feelings for him which might imply Kate's feelings lie in another direction. Milly presses again, alluding to Maud's surprising patience with Milly if she is the object of Mark's interest. It is obvious she is trying to assess the exact nature of Kate's emotional state. This time Kate counters with the suggestion that Milly should "drop" Kate and her entire entourage as not being good enough, explicitly criticizing "poor" Mrs. Stringham's misplaced enchantment with them.

Apparently, Milly has struck too close to home. Kate must sense Milly's impulse to become ruthless in her
questioning and Kate, backed into a corner, presents Milly with a thinly-veiled either-or-alternative, which Milly, at first, tries not to recognize for what it is. Instead, "Milly tried to be amused, so as not -- it was too absurd -- to be fairly frightened. Strange enough indeed -- if not natural enough -- that, late at night thus, in a mere mercenary house, with Susie away a want of confidence should possess her" (202). Milly uneasily recognizes that both Kate's attempted rejection of Susan Stringham and her literal absence remove her as a source of security against Kate's present explicit threat.

The ensuing interchange between the young women is violent and swift:

For all her (Milly's) scare, none the less, she had now the sense to find words: 'And yet without Suzie I shouldn't have had you.' It had been at this point, however, that Kate flicked highest. 'Oh, you may very well loathe me yet!' Really at last, thus, it had been too much; as, with her own least feeble flare, after a wondering watch, Milly had shown. She hadn't cared; she had too much wanted to know; and, though a small solemnity of
reproach, a sombre strain, had broken into her tone, it was to figure as her nearest approach to serving Mrs. Lowder. 'Why do you say such things to me?' (202)

This is an alarum in James' world. Acquaintances seldom remonstrate openly, and, when they do, always in the form of an outpouring against blatant deception. Milly's reaction is a bit more ambivalent and gives Kate her opening. The fact that Milly's concern addresses Kate's words and not her actions -- not, why do you do such things to me, but why do you say such things to me? -- indicates that she admits fear of discovering an unpleasant truth. After pursuing Kate relentlessly all evening in search of the "truth," Kate makes her realize that she, in fact, does not really want it. If the empirical evidence about Merton Densher that Kate might present Milly should be loathsome, given Milly's timid nature and her desire for Densher, she could not endure it. She has no choice but to address Kate on the level of language, where the possibility exists that the "truth" of the empirical world; i.e., the true facts of Kate and Densher's relationship -- can be covered, so that Milly's secure world and hopes will not be swayed. She literally asks Kate to provide a way to make the sudden emergency situation again seem safe.
In the pact which results between Kate and Milly, reality is spun backward from the level of language. Oddly enough, Kate's most aggressive rhetorical act is related within Milly's point of view and perceived by Milly to have resulted from her own ability to move Kate. Undoubtedly, James quite deliberately wants the reader to see how Milly sets herself up to be deceived. In fact, Milly is as much her own rhetorical audience as she is Kate's with one important exception: she lacks the advanced form enticing enough to defeat her own instinct about the truth. Poor Susan Stringham's pale romantic notions gleaned from sentimental novels have not been a sufficient cover. As mentioned earlier, those notions do not provide the adequately complex text by which Milly can be understood or understand herself. But Kate with her natural inspiration for forms provides for her:

This, unexpectedly had acted, by a sudden turn of Kate's attitude, as a happy speech. She had risen as she spoke, and Kate had stopped before her, shining at her instantly with a softer brightness. Poor Milly hereby enjoying one of her views of how people, wincing oddly, were often touched by her. "Because you're a dove" (202).
The dove metaphor informs the entire remainder of the novel, picked up by every major character as a particle of language supposedly resonant with worlds of meaning and with the capability of dictating everyone's response to each other. In fact, the first several hundred pages of this novel are really a prelude to this critical juncture, a place where desires have been accumulating, practically pulsating, in search of a form by which to be understood.

Kate's desires are served well by the dove metaphor. If Kate can convince Milly to accept the argument that she is a dove, with all Kate's intended implications, she can rely on Milly's adoption of that form to cover all. The dove's innocence ensures Milly's innocence of any relationship between Kate and Densher: thus, Milly will be free to minister to Densher as the jilted lover. And the self-sacrificing quality of the dove will imply to Milly the type of person she must be in her relations with the world.

Kate's dove metaphor is especially well-chosen. In fact, as an argument, it uniformly complies with the criteria for success suggested by rhetorical philosopher George Campbell in *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Campbell suggests that a metaphorical argument is accepted by an audience if it appears strikingly appropriate, lively, and sublime. He proceeds further to suggest that, if accepted,
a metaphor is one of the most convincing argumentative forms. Milly's response to Kate's proposed form shows these criteria an accomplished fact in this instance.

When Kate first suggests it, the dove seems a lively and appropriate idea indeed to Milly: "It was moreover, for the girl, like an inspiration. . . . She met it on the instant as she would have met the revealed truth; it lighted up the strange dusk in which she lately had walked. That was what was the matter with her. She was a dove" (202).11 Again, in a curious inversion which implies Milly's seeming egocentricity, she assumes that the truth to be discovered is about her, just as she assumes Kate's suggestion of the form is a result of Kate's having been "touched" by her, as so many people are. Although James obviously intends Milly's self-deception to be read ironically, the irony is definitely mitigated by the perception that Milly's self-deception is deliberate, that there is an underlying truth that Milly really knows and deliberately backs away from. Thus, she welcomes this form of behavior which, once accepted, she can act out. It is both lively and appropriate, because, as a dove, she can both plead innocence of Kate's and Densher's present relationship and also consider such innocence a result of her own propensity to self-sacrifice. The form also responds to Milly's own fears of illness. Obsessed with
her own illness and ominous fate, Milly has been provided with the form she herself had been groping for.\footnote{12}

The metaphor acquires the element of sublimity through divine associations called forth by the dove. Again, Kate has managed to insinuate her own form into Milly's susceptible consciousness by gratifying Milly's own desire to see herself as something splendid: ". . . she felt herself . . . embraced . . . in the manner of an accolade; partly as if . . . one were also a princess with whom forms were to be observed" (202). The biblical images denoting divinity and self-sacrifice are not mentioned here as Milly's understanding of the image's divine meaning. Other characters do pick up on this association, however, and as Milly's role in the novel is later outlined, her own integration of this meaning into her self-concept will be seen.

The metaphor is so convincing an argument, according to Campbell, because it involves the descent from the level of experimental or purely scientific reasoning to the level of the analogical, where "we may be said to come upon a common \[sic\] to which reason and fancy have an equal claim" (74). Campbell writes that "If then it is the business of logic to evince the truth to convince an auditory, which is the province of eloquence, is but a particular application of the logician's art" (34). Eloquence, or
rhetoric, since Campbell uses the terms synonymously, exists in the province of metaphor, where both empirical fact and imagination produce an idea convincing to the mind, fanciful, but rooted in the logician's art. The rhetorician is, by nature, the maker of metaphor.

The metaphor, then, is convincing because it presents some idea (vehicle) which, through its similarity to a known quantity (tenor), seems to be "so" based on experience and yet incites us with wonder because it excites the imagination by the gracefulness of the image. More fundamentally, just as rhetoric mediates between science and poetry, a metaphor involves interaction between the vehicle and the tenor so that the two seem to fuse and to embody in their profound fusion an underlying truth which is perceived by the audience only through its mental process of fusing the two ideas together in its mind. Since in this instance Milly is the audience, Kate's form, the dove, fuses with Milly's notion of her own self as a "fact" formulated from past experience, and the profound truth of Milly's future existence, a truth upon which all the characters act, resounds from the potency of the fusion.

Kate's rhetoric kindles passion in Milly's soul for an idea. To move Densher, Kate's tactics must be quite different. Although Densher is enchanted by Kate's ideas,
she recognizes that the 'idea' of her scheme alone is not sufficient to enlist Densher's cooperation, especially since he is apprehensive about its morality. She realizes that, as Campbell states, "When persuasion is the end, passion also must be engaged. If it is fancy which bestows brilliancy on our ideas, if it is memory which gives them stability, passion doth more, it animates them" (77). Campbell identifies two goals that the orator must accomplish before he can take firm hold of his audience's passions: he must first excite a passion, and then he must convince his audience that "there is a connexion between the action to which he would persuade them, and the gratification of the desire or passion which he excites" (77-78).

Kate has no problem arousing Densher's passion. It is Milly's task as a rhetorician to divert Densher's passion from Kate to herself. But Kate must convince Densher his desire will be gratified. Because of Densher's touchy moral sense, she cannot describe explicitly how her scheme will work. She is operating under the basically Machiavellian principle that the end justifies the means, but to say coarsely that she wants Densher to woo a woman to death for her money so that Kate and he can live off the pickings may push Densher too far. In fact, Densher's self-pride and sense of honor have been pushed to the limit.
in Venice; he approaches nearer and nearer, in his dealings with Milly, the limit of what he can reconcile with his own moral sense.

He challenges Kate to prove that his desire for her will be gratified if he proceeds to attend to Milly: "There's nothing for me possible but to feel that I'm not a fool . . . With you I can do it -- I'll go as far as you demand, or as you will yourself. Without you -- I'll be hanged! And I must be sure" (357). Kate's liaison with Densher is her last rhetorical card. Why her rhetoric ultimately fails with him -- and it does fail -- is largely explained by Milly's greater rhetorical claims, claims of which Densher slowly becomes aware.

Campbell's rhetorical assumptions about the function of language illumine the nature of Milly's claim:

Now if it be by the sense or soul of the discourse that rhetoric holds of logic, or the art of thinking and reasoning, it is by the expression or body of the discourse that she holds of grammar, or the art of conveying our thoughts in the words of a particular language. . . . As the soul is of heavenly extraction and the body of earthly, so the sense of the discourse ought to have
its source in the invariable nature of truth and right, whereas the expression can derive its energy only from the arbitrary conventions of men, sources as unlike, or rather as widely different, as the breath of the Almighty and the dust of the earth (34).

Several important assumptions emerge. Language, although necessary for communication, is not necessarily reliable because men use it, and thus language is subject to their whim. Language appears to relay what is true because it derives its source from what Campbell calls invariable truths, but, since it is created by the orator, it might possibly only relay what the orator wants it to. Kate, for example, extends the dove image to Milly as a metaphor for her existence, not seeking to express through language what she perceives as the invariable truth of Milly's identity, but to suggest what would be most expedient to consider as Milly's truth. Kate's rhetorical decisions (her use of language) are not based on a sense of what is invariably true, nor, however, is she particularly disposed to deception as a consequence. She simply cashes in on the value of language's arbitrariness to make it say what is most convenient for her in her situation.
That language is rhetorical is undeniable since language is needed to convey meaning verbally, therefore to persuade. A quite popular tendency is to invert this proposition by suggesting that rhetoric "is" language, that since the art of persuasion requires language, it is determined by it. Critics of Boothean rhetoric suggest that since rhetoric is therefore determined by arbitrary conventions, rhetoric itself is arbitrary. The art of communication is inevitably unreliable because it has no attachment to invariable truths. As one of James's recent critics observes, "Language creates the conditions under which perception is possible . . . [but] we know only what those words are made to mean." And, even more to the point, "When the characters in James's late fiction talk, the reader suffers from a kind of epistemological vertigo, for he is granted no secure position from which to judge the moral or even the factual truth of what is being said." To begin and end with language would indeed create this moral vacuousness, and not only in a James's novel. But to assume something prior to or co-existent with any given articulation, an empirical knowledge of certain experiential facts and an inner sense of certain truths attached to human emotion, would once more re-establish a position for both a Jamesian character and a
Jamesian reader from which to judge the moral and factual truth of any statement.

Campbell's preceding passage suggests that Rhetoric is the discipline which explores this particular position. Rhetoric is more than language; it straddles the world of language and the world of invariable truths. Rhetoric is a marriage of pragmatic and platonic conceptions; its vehicle is language, the arbitrary, man-made convention, but its tenor is the invariable nature of truth and right. Campbell goes further. Not only should the speaker base his rhetoric on what he perceives to be the true nature of things, but he will be more successful if he does so:

Hence it hath become a common topic with rhetoricians, that, in order to be a successful orator, one must be a good man; for to be good is the only sure way of being long esteemed good, and to be esteemed good is previously necessary to one's being heard with due attention and regard. Consequently, the topic hath a foundation in human nature (97).

And a good man, in Campbell's terms, is one who does not
deviate from fundamental truths. Lloyd Bitzer's introduction to Campbell's work cites this observation made about Campbell from one of his contemporaries:

'The most prominent feature, in his moral character, was his love of truth. No man was ever more strict in speaking truth; and the least deviation from it was accompanied with the strongest marks of his disapprobation' (xiv).

This comment points to Campbell's propensity to define truth in several different ways. There is the truth that is the opposite of deliberate deception; in other words, a truth which Campbell aligns to the individual's intellect and consciousness. Intellectual truths are derived from mathematical evidences. Mathematical evidences are usually inapplicable to human behavior. Truths derived from consciousness require an adherence to the sensory facts of the world as the individual perceives the world through his consciousness. He also remembers sensory experiences through his intellect. On the level of consciousness, Kate encourages Milly to be consciously false to the facts of Kate's and Densher's relationship, thus violating those truths concerning which Campbell states that "the denial of them implies a manifest
contradiction" (43), obviously because the individual denies what he knows from his own experience.

There are also those invariable truths upon which rhetoric should be based. How are these truths perceived? Through the faculty of common sense, "an original source of knowledge open to varying degrees to all mankind." Common sense refers to the individual's sense of what is right, which is, according to Campbell, intuitive and instinctive, which does not "derogate in the least from the dignity, the certainty, or the importance of the truths themselves. Such instincts are no other than the oracles of eternal wisdom" (43). These truths imply the more profound rhetoric that responds to the pulse of humanity, from the wells of human love and suffering.

Finally, those two truths which govern human behavior coalesce. An instinctive sense of the profound truths implies a sense of morality, a good man, who will certainly adhere to the intellectual and sensory facts he perceives. Kate's perception of these eternal truths is shallow. Indeed, she is motivated by love, but short-circuited to any other profound perceptions by her dependency on and adherence to the material world. Even though James sympathetically portrays Kate forced into the narrow position through family pressures and her love for Densher, undeniably Kate finally succumbs to being a
materialist. As such, she has no qualms about a rhetoric which manifestly contradicts the truth of her relationship with Densher. Ironically, in the process, she thereby denies herself access to a marriage between the pragmatic and platonic, to her anticipated rhetorical marriage between herself and Densher.

An impoverishment other than cultural materialism haunts Milly. "It was wonderful to her," the narrator reports after her visit to her famous doctor, Sir Luke Strett, "... she had been treated -- hadn't she? -- as if it were in her power to live; and yet one wasn't treated so -- was one? -- unless it came up, quite as much, that one might die. The beauty of the bloom had gone from the small old sense of safety -- that was distinct: she had left it behind her there forever" (178).

Milly's suspicions of her impending death provoke her to seek a larger definition of life, a greater adventure than that prescribed within the narrow confines of her Puritannical upbringing. It is as if the vacuous American culture had provided no solid background against which to define herself. Ironically, only through perception of her anticipated loss of herself does she find "her first approach to the taste of orderly living" (70). In Campbell's Rhetoric and in this novel, ways of knowledge are either scientific or rhetorical, and although rarely in
the world of human behavior can one find oneself defined scientifically, in the words and friendship of Sir Luke Street Milly thinks she finds a way of knowing herself that is scientifically verifiable. She finds herself, with Sir Luke Street, in the 'brown old temple of truth" where "she accepts the doctor's interest as regular in the highest type of scientific mind. . . . she could take it as a direct source of light upon herself . . . " (172). However, what Strett seems to diagnose is that Milly's ailment is cultural, that her background is indeed her definition in that it has not provided her with a way of knowing how to live. Whether or not Milly has perceived Strett's message accurately is irrelevant to the sense of mission which she takes away from their meeting, that her life is to be defined by trying to find some way to live whose exuberance is prompted by her own self-knowledge of potential death. While Kate's materialistic background seems to imply a pattern that is irreversible, Milly's background possibly implies an attitude of transcendence which would allow Milly to transcend that background itself and possibly live, by engaging in human contact with human beings.

Milly literally thinks of herself as Hester Prynne transplanted, with license to pursue a bolder path:
It was as if she had had to pluck off her breast, to throw away, some friendly ornament, a familiar flower, a little old jewel, that was part of her daily dress; and to take up and shoulder as a substitute some queer defensive weapon, a musket, a spear, a battle-axe . . . demanding all the effect of the military posture (178).

Milly's brush with her own mortality encourages her to find her way into humanity at large through London's obscure little by-ways and side-streets. She first intends to defy the common citizen with her incongruous drapings and air of wealth. Faithful to her reception of Kate's dove form, Milly is constantly concerned that others see her as special, even the common citizen who may perceive her as strange in his surroundings. Milly's tendency to displace her personality -- perhaps because her sense of it is still so new to her -- and to see her own identity as dependent on others makes her especially vulnerable to those who would manipulate her for their own interests. Additionally, her own need to seek herself in others, although a symptom of her insecurity about her own identity, often makes her self-analysis seem like a fairly selfish self-absorption.
A more profound instinct emerges, however, as Milly approaches "Regent's Park, round which, on two or three occasions with Kate Croy, her public chariot had solemnly rolled" (179). Whereas Kate on her jaunts only penetrates the outer circle of the park, since her intent is to be seen and to manuever in the world of appearances, Milly:

... went into it further now; this was the real thing; the real thing was to be quite away from the pompous roads, well within the centre and on the stretches of shabby grass. Here were benches and smutty sheep; here were idle lads at games of ball, with their cries mild in the thick air; here were wanderers, anxious and tired like herself; here doubtless were hundreds of others just in the same box ... The last scrap of superiority had soon enough left her, if only because she before long knew herself for more tired than she had proposed" (179). 17

Milly's ability to walk into the shabby inner circle of humanity at Regent's Park and to recognize her fellow sufferers, "the real thing," determines her informing
spirit. This love for her fellow man seems as much a cultural consequence as is her initial lack of knowledge about advanced rhetorical forms. Milly's link to the universal community through her sense of their common mortality determines that the way she chooses to live her life, in other words, that the form she adopts, will be closely aligned to the truths uttered from the heart.

Consequently, Milly's adaptation of the dove form is the story of how her own consciousness grows to meet that form so that the image of Milly and the image of the dove become one. Milly's rhetoric thus triumphs over Kate's because it is a rhetoric based on internalized truths rather than covering forms. This is how reality is spun backward from the level of language. Milly consciously invests her life with the meanings implicit in the term "dove" that she is given. Her rhetoric creates an inextricable relationship between form -- the linguistic term "dove" -- and content -- the conforming way in which she acts out the implications of the term.

At the beginning of *The Wings of the Dove*, Milly's consciousness is almost a "tabula rasa." Milly expressly desires to learn the subtle forms of European thought from Kate, but she finds this difficult:
in certain connections the American mind broke down. It seemed at least . . . not to understand English society without a separate confrontation with all the cases. It couldn't proceed by . . . both analogy and induction, and then, differently, instinct, none of which were right: it had to be led up and introduced to each aspect of the monster, enabled to walk all round it. . . . It might, the monster, . . . loom large for those born amid forms less developed and therefore no doubt less amusing . . . (198).

Notice how James' use of analogy, induction, and instinct to classify Milly's possible modes of knowledge parallels Campbell's classification of truths derived from mathematics, consciousness, and common sense. Even more to the point, Milly's initial failure to integrate ideas alien to her within her own consciousness coincides with Campbell's description of the mind encountering an alien experience:

When I explained the nature of experience, I showed that it consisteth of all the general truths collected from particular facts
remembered; the mind forming to itself, often insensibly, and as it were mechanically, certain maxims from comparing, or rather associating the similar circumstances of different incidents. Hence it is, that when a number of ideas relating to any fact or event are successively introduced into my mind by a speaker; if the train he deduceth coincide with the general current of my experience . . . my mind accompanies him with facility, glides along from one idea to another, and admits the whole with pleasure. If, on the contrary, the train he introduceth run counter to the current of my experience. . . my mind attends him with difficulty, suffers a sort of violence in passing from one idea to another, and rejects the whole with disdain: . . ." (83).

And then Campbell paraphrases his point by quoting Horace from *Ars Poetica: *"'For while upon such monstrous scenes we gaze,/They shock our faith, our indignation raise" [italics mine] (83).

Milly, in fact, experiences such a scene, coming upon Kate and Densher together, in the art gallery, when
they ostensibly have no relation and Kate has just recently left her "confidante" blind to Kate's plans, obviously intentionally. In Milly's view, Kate adroitly diminishes possible tension in the scene, while still leaving "... all due margin for amusement at the way things happened, the monstrous oddity of their [hers and Kates] turning up in such a place on the very heels of their having separated without allusion to it" [italics mind]" (210). The margin for conjecture is allowed Milly by Kate, but the thought of monsters is thoroughly Milly's. Although Milly persists in telling herself that Kate's subtle forms amuse her, the tone of narration belies neurotic tension and the consciousness is definitely confronting a monster.¹⁹

Campbell's description of the thought process implies that the mind learns through metaphor since a new idea introduced to the mind can only be integrated within the mind if the idea bears some similarity to ideas already comprehended by the individual. In such a scheme, the mind would contain its knowledge, the tenor, and would encounter an idea alien to it, the vehicle. The will would operate the fusing process between the two. And the mind, being accumulated experience, would be a new structure, having integrated a new pattern of thought. Milly's fear of alien forms yet desire to learn about them regardless is also an expressed desire to be presented with a metaphor through
which her mind can recognize them. Milly's visible relief at Kate's suggestion of the dove partially results from Milly's perception that this is one form which is definitely not a monster because it bears some resemblance to the way Milly thinks about herself:

"She met it on the instant as she would have met the revealed truth; it lighted up the strange dusk in which she lately had walked" (203)

There is something of a mystery, however, for both Milly and the reader about how this metaphor exactly functions. The specific qualities about the dove to be abstracted out and coincident with similar qualities in Milly are a matter of individual interpretation. As Milly studies the "dovelike," she has these thoughts: "That, with the new day, was one more law -- though she saw before her, of course, as something of a complication, her need, each time, to decide. She should have to be clear as to how a dove would act" (203).

Such a perception could well create in both Milly and the reader a sense that interpretation is chaotic, therefore meaningless, since what the metaphor "dove" means to either Milly or anyone else as a way of knowing depends on the individual. It is fine to assert that Milly's
consciousness grows to synthesize the dove form as a way of knowing and acting in the world, but who is to say what the "essence" of dove is, that Milly's definition is more meaningful than any one else's? Certainly enough characters in the novel play with the definition. And if both Milly and Kate play with their own ideas of what a dove is, using the word arbitrarily, to further their own self-interests, where are the moral values in this world which would cause Densher to choose the memory of Milly over the living Kate?  

Moral rhetoric affirmatively denies this interpretative dilemma. Rhetorical meaning is derived both inwardly and outwardly, inwardly from a spiritual sense of moral rightness, and also a conscious memory of all former contacts with the outside world. Milly remembers a dove in her past experience, knows its properties to relate it to herself, and feels, perhaps, some of its inherently gentle qualities, rather like a narrator feeling beauty in a Hopkins poem. Outwardly, Milly will have her interpretation confirmed by a community consensus of what her peers are willing to agree upon as true. For without community consensus, the most intuitive conviction of the individual would be irrelevant, because he would not be allowed by others to apply this belief in the world of experience.
Whereas Kate only bargains for Milly's silent cooperation, Milly's sense of ethics and pragmatics determines that her use of the dove form as a cover by which to deceive herself is only a preliminary ambition. Milly's need to know how a dove would act is an aggressive desire; far from indicating a lack of concern with whether the dove will conform to her image of herself, she is willing to grow into the form, if she can discern what the form entails. Her own aggressiveness to change something so that she can grow into the role of the dove might seem contradicted by her musings at the portrait gallery after recent acquisition of the form:

It was immense, outside, the personal question; but she had blissfully left it outside, and the nearest it came, for a quarter of an hour, to glimmering again into sight was when she watched for a little one of the more earnest of the lady-copyists. . . . 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. There it was before one -- one had only to stick and stick (206).
Although this passage expresses Milly's desire to avoid and deny the personal lurking horrors awaiting her -- what the dove form affords her -- it does so in a curious way. The lady copyist represents for Milly the mode of life most akin to escape and to the impersonal yet Milly remembers her own personal problems for the first time in the gallery only when she sees the artist. Obviously, Milly feels a great affinity with the lady copyist. This particular earnest artist is not the first lady copyist in nineteenth-century American fiction. Hilda in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, copies Raphaels as if her soul could reach to heaven. She is a particular Hawthorne type, a transcendental artist, whose spirit is infused with the spiritual truth of the art work she copies. And although Hilda remains aloof from the world until a crucial occurrence late in the novel, her art work is infused with a sense of eternal truths. Milly also is a transcendental artist, infusing her own canvas with an intuitive sense of "how a dove would act," yet Milly's artistry deviates in one important sense. Whereas Hilda's art is sold in the marketplace while she remains isolated in her tower, Milly must stand in the marketplace herself, to be seen, to be bought. For Milly becomes her own canvas by agreeing to adopt the dove form. She integrates within her consciousness anything alien to her mind about the dove
and actually "becomes" the dove. Therefore, Milly's desire to escape the world is paradoxical, because as long as she chooses to portray herself as the dove, she has to take an active role in her own composition, constantly intuiting with each new situation just how a dove would act.

Milly's inevitable commitment to action is one of several paradoxes created by Milly's rhetorical convictions about form. The real dilemma is that Milly is striving to grow into a form which is the antithesis in some ways to her own already complex view of things. The dove is innocent; even if faced with deception, the dove is incapable of seeing a corrupt world. How can Milly even attempt to adopt this form by pretending to be innocent, pretending not to know what she knows about Kate and Densher, when this form obviously requires a total lack of pretense? The only answer for Milly is to envision a reality spun backwards from the level of language; to try to urge the necessity of her rhetorical form upon Densher to such an extent that, by so doing, she can convince Densher to transfer his loyalties from Kate to herself, thus transforming reality itself into a state of innocence. By urging herself upon Densher as the dove whose innocence Densher must validate for Milly's very identity to be true, Milly places Densher's ethics on the
line, causing him to question the value of meaning in the world.

Central to Densher's role in this novel is his own cultural ambivalence which enables him to choose freely his own metaphor for culture without being bound to the constraints of a rigid cultural past. While Densher's appeal for Kate and Milly undoubtedly can be found in the physical attractions of his lean frame, his social charms, and in his lively intelligence, for both Kate and Milly Densher's primary value seems to be this cultural ambivalence which allows both ladies to feel familiar with him at the same time that they experience growth from contact with Densher's cultural differences. While Kate desires contact with Densher's lively mind, she still senses in him the familiar strains of European culture with which she is familiar. But, oddly enough, Milly's background also finds a responsive chord in Densher. Milly's name is not the first woman's name linked with a lady-copyist in The Wings of The Dove. The first lady抄ist mentioned is Densher's mother, who:

... copied, patient lady, famous pictures in great museums, having begun with a happy natural gift and taking in betimes the scale of her opportunity. Copyists abroad of
course swarmed, but Mrs. Densher had had a sense and a hand of her own; had arrived at a perfection that persuaded, that even deceived, and that made the disposal of her work blissfully usual. Her son, who had lost her, held her image sacred. . . (73).

Although Densher's potential to recognize in Milly the same sacred image is subdued at first by his more immediate sexual response to Kate, he is inherently capable of responding more strongly to the higher form of art.

From the very beginning of her contact with him, Milly's use of her form to woo Densher is her only possible rhetorical ploy:

And there was no chill for this in what she also presently saw — that however he had begun, he was no acting from a particular desire, determined either by new facts or new fancies, to be like everyone else, simplifyingly 'kind' to her. He had caught on already as to manner — fallen into line with everyone else . . . Whatever he did or didn't, Milly knew she should still like him . . . but her heart could none the less sink a little on feeling how much his view of her
was destined to have in common with -- as she now sighed over it -- the view. She could have dreamed of his not having the view, of his having something or other, if need be quite viewless, of his own, but he might have what he could with least trouble, and the view wouldn't be, after all, a positive bar to her seeing him (215).

Although Milly shrewdly perceives that Densher's eagerness to perpetuate "the view" is an implicit rejection of any genuine intimacy between the two rather than a positive statement at this point about herself, she also realizes that contact with Densher is possible because she presents herself as a dove who won't trouble him with any sense of obligation. This small hope soon escalates into a concrete rhetorical strategy intended to win Densher from Kate. To gain Densher's affections, Milly must tread lightly since the route to Densher's heart is obstructed, Milly is aware, by his passion for Kate and he would react to passionate overtures from Milly with aversion. Milly's rhetoric must therefore be passive-aggressive, her designs upon Densher so intensely subtle they appear negligible.²⁴

Milly's subtle tactics, as well as Kate's, find precedent in Campbell's combined philosophy-handbook
because as Campbell reminds his reader, the same rhetorical tactics can be used for the higher or lower form of the art. Obviously, any rhetor competing with one who preceded him must first neutralize the audience before leveling his own argument. In a section of the rhetoric entitled, "How an Unfortunate Passion must be calmed," (93) Campbell suggests two effective ways to convert an audience which illuminate Milly's rhetorical progress with Densher.

First, the former passion of the audience can be either annihilated or diminished, which can be effected by proving "the utter incredibility of the future event, on the supposed truth of which the passion was founded . . . "(93). In other words, if a passion can be shown to elicit no concrete satisfaction, the audience will eventually relinquish it out of frustration. When Densher finally forces the sexual issue with Kate, subconsciously he is probably resisting for one final time the insidious suggestibility of Milly's skillful rhetoric.25 He is trying to maintain his rhetorical link with Kate since, sadly, although Kate's image of Densher has been consistently idealized, Densher's feelings for Kate from the beginnings of their relationship are consistently bred from passion. Although at first Densher seems drawn to Kate by a vicarious pleasure in her worldliness, he still finds Kate's initial vision of their beautiful life
together insufficient: "... he agreed with her, found himself moved to wonder at her simplifications, her values. Life might prove difficult — was evidently going to; but meanwhile they had each other, and that was everything. This was her reasoning, but meanwhile, for him, each other was what they didn't have, and it was just the point" (50). And when Densher is finally morally repelled by Kate's materialism, the only link remaining is sexual.

Milly's tactics have forced the sexual issue by heightening Densher's resentment of Kate's sexual control. When Milly concedes to Kate's scheme and responds to Densher as the jilted lover who requires commiseration because his love is not returned, she annihilates the object of Densher's affection by the power of suggestion. Perhaps if Kate had responded to Densher sooner, Milly would have had less room to work in. But the vacancy created by Densher's increasing doubt that he will ever have Kate to himself leaves space for Milly to attempt a second strategy for diverting Densher's passion, identified by Campbell as exciting another passion which will overshadow the first.

Again, Milly's usurpation must be subtle, seemingly non-assertive so that Densher will not back away from her in fear. To do this, Milly uses a device which can be found in the Campbell handbook under the label of
interrogation. Campbell describes its elusive effectiveness:

It... appears difficult to account for the effect of interrogation, which, being an appeal to the hearers, though it might awaken a closer attention, yet could not, one would imagine, excite in their minds any emotion that was not there before. This, nevertheless, it doth excite, through an oblique operation of the same principle. Such an appeal implies in the orator the strongest confidence in the rectitude of his sentiments, and in the concurrence of every reasonable being. The auditors, by sympathizing with this frame of spirit, find it impracticable to withhold an assent which is so confidently depended on" (94).

Milly is clever in employing this device. What Densher perceives to be the sincere innocence of her questions engages his spiritual integrity, making him wish he could genuinely conform to her confidence in him. In one instance, prompted by Kate to remain in Venice with Milly after the rest have left, Densher feels threatened by the possibility that Milly might question his motives. But
recognizing Milly as a dove, he reasons with himself that Milly will let him off and that "what made her mercy inscrutable was that if she had already more than once saved him it was yet apparently without knowing how nearly he was lost" (384). He feels that because of Milly's innocence, he will be let off the hook: "He was kept on his feet, in short, by the felicity of her not presenting him with Kate's version as a version to adopt. He couldn't stand up to lie -- he felt as if he would have to go down on his knees" (384).

Milly, however, does not let Densher off the hook. She asks him telling, directed questions in her innocent role which Densher answers with no sense of any complicity on her part. Densher thus becomes increasingly remorseful simply by responding to what he perceives to be her innocent questions in his own guileful way. At one point, he is even forced to admit he is not writing a book in Venice, as he had formerly claimed, to soothe his conscience. Pressed finally into giving concrete reasons to Milly, he admits he has stayed behind for her, the motive least truthful, but the one he senses that she most wants to hear. He utters this and his conscience smites him; he is certain she believes him. But actually, she has lead him to admit the thing she would most like him to say while aware that it was not his intention. And that is
interrogation, her cleverest overt tactic for her non-assertive role. Milly makes an appeal to Densher by showing him the strongest confidence in the rectitude of her own sentiments, in other words, confidence in her own innocence and therefore belief in the innocence of his motives. Milly's appeal, therefore, is to perpetuate the reality of her innocence by really shifting his focus of attention to her:

   It was amazing what this brief exchange had at this point done with him. . . . what had taken place for him, however -- the drop, almost with violence, of everything but a sense of her own reality -- apparently showed in his face or his manner . . . "

(387).

Densher is increasingly approaching the sacred remembrance of his mother, the grace and beauty of an art which strives toward truth.

   Acknowledging Milly's rhetorical skills and their obvious impact should disarm conventional interpretations of Milly. She is not a wilted wallflower who dies to gain attention. She is not rejected by Densher or by anyone else for that matter. Milly is killed by a deus ex machina in the form of Lord Mark lowered down onto the Venice stage.
James's reason for obstructing Milly's path may be a final hesitancy before commitment to the replete moral vision of *The Golden Bowl*, or it may simply be that Densher's ultimate rhetoricity is primarily James's concern. But Lord Mark appears in the novel to perform this final function of blighting Milly's imagination. Mark's final visit to Milly, his insistence on bringing her the true facts of Kate's and Densher's relationship, is not a purifying act, cleansing the air of deception. Apart from his own questionable self-interest, Mark may suffer, as Milly once observes, from a lack of imagination, (119) which affords him no sympathy with Milly's own powers. More to the point, Mark seems a particularly appropriate harbinger of Milly's doom because from the little we know about him in the novel, he seems to symbolize the corrosive potentials of both the European and American cultures. He and Lionel Croy are odd bedfellows in Maud Lowder's camp but they are both avowedly there for the same self-gratification and their attachment to Maud is warily based on what they can get out of her. Mark's link to transcendentalism is that he exists solely in the realm of possibility and can never translate his potential into the real world of experience. A failed and bitter transcendentalist himself, he seems to be jealous of Milly's careful progress into
that very world so his visit to Venice is intended to
frieze Milly back into the frame of the Bronzino.

Mark's insistence on the literal facts and
unwillingness to see beyond the probable seems to be a
deliberate rhetorical thwarting of Milly's flight. Mark's
harsh words are a bitter antidote to the hope which
inspires Milly's visionary art: Milly's wings are folded
by Mark. Her tenuous flight, her ability to imagine
herself innocent, had allowed her mental space to re-create
the real details of her relationship with Densher so that
her innocence would no longer be a pose. Pressed by "the
truth," she loses this grace. She also loses the truth of
her pose. She is no longer innocent. Her dove form is
doomed to be a false cover. Her rhetoric is a lie.

When Milly decides to confirm the sacrificial
possibilities of the dove form, she affirms the moral
convictions informing her rhetoric.\textsuperscript{27} Fatalistically,
she ascends from the marketplace to the tower. Milly's
ability to walk into the shabby inner circle of humanity at
Regents Park and to recognize fellow sufferers foreshadows
her last sacrificial act of faith to Densher in that both
involve a nobility of heart. Healthy rhetoric involves the
earthly attempt to diminish the discrepancy between the
"content," or, in this case, the human being who is
hopefully informed by intuitive ethical considerations, and
the "form," in this case the manner in which the individual presents himself. Since Milly can no longer ever possibly reconcile her own knowledge with the innocence of the dove form she adopted, she must transcend herself to remain true to the form; she literally must escape her own consciousness, which she does, through death. She actually transcends her own content, fusing form and content into one, becoming her own metaphor. In the process she becomes non-rhetorical, ideal. Milly is finally a transcendental artist, sacrificing life to the truth of her form. The question remaining is how to understand Merton Densher's response to her idealized form in rhetorical terms.

Volume II of *The Wings of the Dove* shifts point of view from Milly to Densher. This is a clever change, making Volume II tactically parallel to Volume I. The reader judges directly neither Kate in Volume I nor Milly in Volume II. Instead, the reader sees the results of Kate's and Milly's rhetoric through the mental responses of their audiences, and judges the actions accordingly. Thus, the author does not comment on the active rhetor's thoughts and the reader does not reject the author as a moral dogmatist who indicts his characters by revealing their possibly devious thoughts. The shift also allows James to concentrate upon Densher's artistic growth in response to his
perception of Milly's innocence rather than upon the problematics of Milly's innocence.

Densher is a budding artist from the outset, literally a dilettante journalist. In his initial passive state he is more an appreciator of artistic form than an initiator of it. He is artist-voyeur, depending on the artistic ability of others to kindle his own imagination, which Milly obviously can not do at the point of their first reunion in England: "Little Miss Theale's history was not stuff for his paper; besides which, moreover, he was seeing but too many little Miss Theales. They even went so far as to impose themselves as one of the groups of social phenomena that fell into the scheme of his public letters" (224). As an accurate assessment of Milly, one might question the facile nature of his impression. Densher is, after all, a journalist, and journalism as an art form is concerned with surface appearances and impressions. Although Densher's background suggests that he has potential promise as an artist, his impulse to stereotype Milly Theale and his tendency to recognize only Kate's potential may show his initial lack of artistic subtlety or his initial concentration upon the one facet of his personality which seems least involved with his own creative responsibility as an artist.
Blurred artistic vision is, in fact, the subject of one fascinating introspective passage which follows immediately upon the heels of Merton's thoughts about Milly:

His full parenthesis was closed, and he was once more but a sentence, of a sort, in the general text, the text that, from his momentary street corner, showed as a great grey page of print that somehow managed to be crowded without being 'fine.' The grey, however, was more or less the blur of a point of view not yet quite seized again; and there would be colour enough to come out. He was back, flatly enough, but back to possibilities and prospects, and the ground he now somewhat sightlessly covered was the act of renewed possession (225).

This extended metaphor probes intriguingly the quality of Densher's mind and art. It implies Densher's eerie sense of his own absence even from his own words since he assigns the responsibility of his life to a power greater than his own, sensing he is part of a text from which he was momentarily, if parenthetically, absent. He indirectly acknowledges his author, Henry James, and the process of his own composition by James. James' rhetoric
is seductive: Densher's trek outside the world of the novel magically affirms the reality of fiction. Densher's self-conscious reference to himself as a work of art indicates a consciousness of his own creation which would seem to put him in some way on the same level as James; it makes his consciousness seem larger than fiction.

However, the passage also points inward to the world of the novel and to Densher's experience there. In this direction, the comment is indicative of Densher's inadequate artistic vision since he reveals himself constantly dependent on someone outside himself to create his sense of self. The text Densher literally alludes to is his social sphere, notably Maud and Kate. A quick reading of the passage suggests that this world is momentarily crowded, grey, indistinct. Actually, the passage indicates that the world is not blurry, but Densher's perception of it, or point of view, is because he keeps denying his own responsibility in the creative process. Densher is, paradoxically, a part of the world he observes -- he is a sentence in the text -- but also apart from it at the same time, standing aside and observing it of necessity from his own point of view, and dependent on it, since he derives his consciousness from his own experience of the world.
Ironically, rather than responding directly, thus creatively, to the world himself, Densher unfortunately defines the world with help from Kate. By deferring his point of view to Kate, letting her be the artist of his subjective vision, he absents himself from the world as much as is possible, because Kate being part of the outer world, subsumes his own perception. He does not take responsibility for his own sense of what he believes to be true about the world.

Kenneth Burke proclaims that form is desire, or a constructive directed pathway through which desire can be expressed. Densher admires Kate's ability to live life by envisioning forms through which desire can be gratified. Densher recognizes, for example, how Kate acts out a form to appease her aunt. He:

... now recognized in it something like the artistic idea, the plastic substance, imposed by tradition, by genius, by criticism, in respect to a given character, or a distinguished actress. As such a person was to dress the part, to walk, to look, to speak, in every way to express, the part, so all this was what Kate was to do for the
character she had undertaken, under her aunt's roof, to represent (241).

With the arrival of Milly on the scene, Kate realizes she can satisfy a variety of needs by involving both Milly and Densher in her scheme. She thus provides the focus for both their worlds, the points of view they adopt, which is an interesting link between the two.

Milly and Densher are soul mates in ways crucial to a rhetorical reading of this novel. Both tend to be initially passive, yet hanging fire, wanting exciting experiences in the world but hesitant to initiate interaction with it. Both depend on Kate to promote their affairs, although for different reasons. Milly lacks the experience to respond to a complex world in a sufficiently sophisticated way. But Densher's dependency on Kate seems to be the result of a weak will since he is listless professionally and unable to supply Kate with any way to circumvent their mutual poverty. Not coincidentally, both Milly and Densher respond eagerly yet nervously to the roles Kate assigns them. Merton views his self-conscious promotion of a point of view alien to his own as not "being right with himself"; nevertheless, Merton as well as Milly calls this task the adventure he has been waiting for:
In default of being right with himself he had meanwhile, for one thing, the interest of seeing -- and quite for the first time in his life -- whether, on a given occasion, that might be quite so necessary to happiness as was commonly assumed and as he had up to this moment never doubted. He was engaged distinctly in an adventure -- he who had never thought himself cut out for them, and it fairly helped him that he was able at moments to say to himself that he mustn't fall below it (345).

The adventure itself is the adoption of a point of view alien to what Milly and Densher know to be true of the world. Milly's dove form requires an impossible innocence of Kate and Densher's mutual affections. Densher similarly apprehends that "The single thing that was clear, in complications, was that, whatever happened, one was to behave as a gentleman -- to which was added indeed the perhaps slightly less shining truth that complications might sometimes have their tedium beguiled by a study of the question how a gentleman would behave " (345).[italics mine]. As Milly perceives her need to be innocent in her dove role, Densher's thoughts of his role lead him "to a
degree of eventual peace, for what they luminously amounted to was that he was to do nothing" (391). Densher plays along with Kate by silently acquiescing to her insinuations that he is romantically available. To understand why he does this, despite his reservations, requires insight into the exact state of Densher's consciousness when he responds positively to Kate's suggestion.

Just as Milly's tutorship in moral rhetoric seems grounded in George Campbell's theory, Densher's initially more advanced consciousness is clearly aligned to the more sophisticated yet complementary psychological and philosophical theories of William James. Although both James and Campbell ultimately argue the necessity of the same moral actions, James reasons more courageously since he does so in the stark light of a scientifically rigorous definition of consciousness befitting the complexity of Densher's mental growth.

Campbell participated in the same philosophical society as Scottish faculty psychologists Dugald Stewart and Thomas Reid and derives his notions of consciousness in this milieu. The Scottish faculty psychologists identified mental functions as aligned to various faculties located in different areas of the brain. Thus, Campbell defines consciousness as one of several different mental faculties, others including Memory and Imagination. The faculty of
consciousness absorbs sense impressions, but does not evaluate them. Impressions are stored in the memory and a consciousness understands future experiences metaphorically on the basis of what it can call from the memory of past experiences. Understandably, then, Milly is eager to accumulate experiences so as to expand the horizons of her consciousness. In Campbell's scheme, Memory, however, is not sole arbiter of one's response to one's world. There is a selective principle that causes one to discriminate between the memory of various sense impressions called common sense. "Common sense" is fundamental to Campbell's moral rhetoric and one of Milly's essential traits, as has been discussed. Common sense, not originating in a precise way, is intuited transcendentally in harmony with a universal moral norm. Common sense is described as that conscious receptor of the truths uttered to the human heart, that sense which Milly experiences on her solitary trek through Regents Park. Milly's memory provides all her potential responses but her decision to act in a certain way depends on this moral sense of what is "right."

William James also explains the mechanism for response to a received idea, but he seems to adopt Campbell's notion of common sense on one hand, and yet to reject it on the other. In "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth" James says that to verify an idea, "You can say of
it then either that 'it is useful because it is true' or that 'it is true because it is useful.' Both these phrases mean exactly the same thing, namely here is an idea that gets fulfilled and can be verified." But James's statements actually do not mean the same thing: one notion claims that certain inherent truths will inevitably be verified by the consciousness and one asserts that "truth" or Campbell's "common sense" principle, is an archaic epistemological necessity subordinate to verification and certainly not inevitable. Whereas Campbell's theory links to the first notion and explains Milly's position as the moral rhetorician, William James's definition of consciousness seemingly dispenses with common sense and thus in its more complex affirmation of morality James's theory better explains how Densher's sophisticated consciousness arrives at moral decisions.

William James resolves all the faculty divisions of Campbell's scheme into one principle, the consciousness, which is composed of various particles of experience constantly readjusting their composition as new particles are introduced. James's theory of consciousness hinges on the notion of choice or selectivity, but not in Campbell's sense. Selectivity, or the decision of the consciousness
to accept or reject incoming particles of experience, is the functional adaptation of consciousness to the environment, not an instinctive decision apart from the consciousness based on an inherent sense of what would be right or true. The consciousness will instead accept alien particles of experience pleasing to it, non-threatening because they bear some resemblance to ideas already in the mind or, if alien, delightful and thus pleasing to the mind's appetencies. The integrating principle which accepts incoming particles is called the "will."

Campbell's explanation of the metaphor as the paradigm for knowledge implies William James's similar notion of the will responding to a charming likeness, sufficiently similar to be non-threatening and sufficiently foreign to be intriguing and consciousness-expanding.

Along these lines, Merton Densher accepts the role of gentleman because his consciousness perceives itself confronted with an idea which is both similar to his own experience of himself as relatively passive and capable of satisfying his mind's appetencies, in this case, his desire for Kate. His response corresponds to behavior described in W. James's essay, "Will." When Densher meets Kate, his consciousness feels "desire, wish, will... states of mind which everyone knows, and which no definition can make plainer. We desire to feel, to have, to do, all sorts of
things which at the moment are not felt, has, or done" (184). When the reader meets Densher, Densher is in a suspended state in which when "attainment is not possible we simply wish. . ." (684). This would also describe a state where the consciousness is not functionally adapting to any new incoming particles. When Densher accepts Kate's assigned role, he progresses to the state where "if we believe that the end is in our power, we will that the desired feeling, having, or doing shall be real; and real it presently becomes, either immediately upon the willing or after certain preliminaries have been fulfilled" (684). The will becomes active because the consciousness sees the end of its desire placed outside of it needing acceptance.

When Densher conspires with Kate, of the five types of determined action James describes in "Will," he chooses the least decisive, the type where "the final fiat occurs before the evidence is all 'in'" (695). Will is, according to James, a matter of attention, of focusing on one idea with all one's force in order to make that idea a reality. In this instance, fiat results because:

We grow tired of long hesitation and inconclusiveness, and the hour may come when we feel that even a bad decision is better than no decision at all . . . our feeling is
to a great extent that of letting ourselves drift with a certain indifferent acquiescence in a direction accidentally determined from without, with the conviction that, after all, we might as well stand by this course as by the other, and that things are in any event sure to turn out sufficiently right" (696).

Deciding in such a way suits Densher's initially passive state. The amoral pragmatism of such a movement echoes Kate's purely pragmatic manuevres, but with the notable exception that for Merton his amorality is such a decided posture, an outright adventure. Densher's initial state is one of moral ambivalence because, although he does have the potential capacity for making moral decisions, he does not want to take responsibility for doing so. Moral scruples, however, plague him from the outset. In fact, he concentrates for a long while on the relatively passive nature of his response so that he can negate responsibility for his cooperation in Kate's scheme, and on the do-nothing nature of his task so that he can rationalize his own participation in a conscious deception. The way Densher thus interprets "gentleman" reflects ironically on the connotations of the term.
Densher does indeed desire to absolve himself from responsibility in the deception of Milly. This implies that within himself he has the capacity for recognizing the dire implications of deception for healthy human relations. Accordingly, he rationalizes that his silence should indicate to Milly his own lack of feeling for her, which is why he even ignores the state of her health:

... he hadn't even the amount of curiosity that he would have had about an ordinary friend ... Where, therefore, was the duplicity? He was at least sure about his feelings - it being so established that he had none at all. They were all for Kate, without a feather's weight to spare. He was acting for Kate, and not, by the deviation of an inch, for her friend. He was accordingly not interested, for had he been interested he would have cared, and had he cared he would have wanted to know. Had he wanted to know he wouldn't have been purely passive, and it was his pure passivity that had to represent his honour (359).

Unlike Kate, Densher is clearly preoccupied with morals. His own attempts to deny moral responsibility are
only temporarily successful and even then intruded upon by his unerring sense that abstention from truth is itself morally reprehensible. His knowledge that "it was false that he wasn't loved" by Kate is tempered by his own self-reassurance "that he had himself as yet done nothing deceptive," (271) but immediately checked by his continued speculation:

It was Kate's description of him, his defeated state, it was none of his own; his responsibility would begin, as he might say, only with acting it out. The sharp point was, however, in the difference between acting and not acting; this difference in fact it was that made the case of conscience. He saw it with a certain alarm rise before him that everything was acting that was not speaking the particular word" (271).

Densher is alarmed because he knows that there was particular words which could be said to conform to truth, or to have their frame of reference in the truth of experience. Just as Milly's higher artistic sense causes her to be preoccupied with the truth or morality of metaphor, Merton's active conscience causes him finally to
recoil from his own reprehensibly deceptive behavior. His eventual transferral of loyalties from Kate to Milly is consistent with his mental and emotional development throughout the latter half of the novel.

Although William James's psychology tends to present consciousness as a pragmatic function and ethics as a system of beliefs solely based on pragmatic concerns, in his more philosophical moments, James often portrays the consciousness as ultimately receding into the realm of mystery, where what he labels "the strenuous mood" ultimately yields the consciousness upo to a sense of divine truths reminiscent of Campbell's transcendental common sense and reminiscent as well of Densher's retention of the sacred image of his mother. Although Merton Densher has the Jamesian consciousness, he also has the soul of the Jamesian moral philosopher. He is eventually poised so tenuously between pragmatism and transcendentalism that it is difficult to know whether his truths are operationally or intuitively affirmed, as those that "work" or those that are the "most divine." Merton, as well as William James, seems to have it both ways.

Consistently throughout the novel, the moral question is inextricably bound up with the artistic one. Conforming to the truths of experience and to the truths of the human heart may make for the best moral decision, but
it also makes for the higher art. Kate's attraction for Densher is always articulated in terms of her artistry and, conversely, Milly's understated presence causes Densher initially to ignore her. However, by the end of the novel, this situation has turned around and the reader not too bedazzled by Kate's initial brilliance can carefully follow Densher's transformation under the spell of Milly's imagination.  

Densher's aversion to "too many little Miss Theales" has changed to awe by the time in the novel that Mrs. Stringham describes to him her mistress' establishment in Vienna:

She's lodged for the first time as she ought, from her type, to be; and doing it -- I mean bringing out all the glory of the place -- makes her really happy. It's a Veronese picture, as near as can be -- with me as the inevitable dwarf, the small blackamoor, put into a corner of the foreground for effect. If I only had a hawk or a hound or something of that sort I should do the scene more honour. The old housekeeper, the woman in charge here, has a big red cockatoo that I might borrow and
perch on my thumb for the evening

Densher's response to this now is to feel his own art is inadequate: "What part was there for him, with his attitude that lacked the highest style, in a composition in which everything else would have it?" (360). Striving for definition now in Milly's composition instead of Kate's, not coincidentally in the same meditative passage, Merton recognizes that, with his behavior in Italy, "He had incurred it, conscious responsibility. . ." (361). It is clear Milly makes him feel it.

It can be argued that Merton Densher's final decision to refuse Milly's money and therefore Kate's scheme results from an attack of conscience upon Milly's death. According to William James, this type of decision:

comes when, in consequence of some outer experience or some inexplicable inward change, we suddenly pass from the easy and careless to the sober and strenuous mood . . . . The whole scale of values of our motives and impulses then undergoes a change like that which a change of the observer's level produces on a view. The most sobering possible agents are objects of grief and
fear. When one of these affects us, all 'light fantastic' notions lose their motive power, all solemn ones find theirs multiplied many-fold. The consequence is an instant abandonment of the more trivial projects with which we had been dallying, and an instance practical acceptance of the more grim and earnest alternative which till then could not extort our mind's consent. All those 'changes of heart,' 'awakenings of conscience,' etc., which make new men of so many of us may be classed under this head (696, "Will").

No matter how influential Milly's death is in cementing Densher's convictions, the transformation of his consciousness or mental attitudes is not abrupt. Densher's development as an artist is perhaps the central issue of the novel. He is certainly not an artist in Volume I, in that all his actions are orchestrated by either Kate or Maud Lowder. He has not actively pursued any idea of his own. Even through a portion of Volume II he is still an artist manque: "Never was a consciousness more rounded and fastened down over what filled it. . ." (381) but what filled it was Kate's idea of what his behavior should be,
which he is grimly copying and this quotation reveals the tension in a discrepant form and content, an art form not only copied, but an imperfect art form at that.

The consciousness grows through accumulation of ideas foreign yet complementary to it. Therefore, it can be thought of as an artistic function constantly creating its own meaning and in the process often creating meaning for compliant others. When Densher wills to fasten his consciousness down over Kate's dictates, he stifles the growth of his own consciousness, rigidly implanted in a repressive point of view, which stifles his own possibility to be creative.

The adoption of Kate's point of view, therefore, wears both morally and artistically on Densher's astute intelligence. Densher, as a moral being with a strong sense of the sacredness of human emotion, sees the discrepancy between the deceptive way he presents himself to Milly and what he truly is. He also becomes disenchanted with Kate, seeing how, even given their eventual physical relation, she can still place pragmatic considerations above that emotion. When he suggests they announce their marriage instead of continuing in their scheme with Milly, she demurs; at which point "... he could but stand there with his wasted passion... his horror, almost, of her [Kate's] lucidity. They made in him a mixture that might
have been rage, but that was turning quickly to mere cold thought, thought which led to something else and was like a new dim dawn" (458). Densher eventually falls from Kate, detached because of her own emotional detachment, which implies to him that there is something illicit in their relation, something causing "the need to bury in the dark blindness of each other's arms the knowledge of each other that they couldn't undo" (487).

In order to square his conscience after Milly's death, Densher sees one of two choices: to deny the entire deceptive structure upon which Milly's faith in him is built through giving up Milly's money, the result of his deception; or, to re-invest his past with meaning differently apportioned so that he can affirm the form he has adopted, claiming love for Milly and interiorizing this as a truth. He appeals to Kate one last time to shed the hypocritical veil of their past behavior by denying the money. The fact that Kate is stunned by Densher's suggestion and thus fails him both as artist and human being is a tragic instance of how estranged Kate has become from the noble emotions which once inspired her.

When Densher does not deny Kate's accusation that he has fallen in love with the idea of Milly, he reveals the impossibility of his going back to Kate. Densher has travelled a long journey, as an ethical philosopher,
from the point at which he perceived his adventure to be discovering if "being right with himself" was necessary to his happiness. He starts at a point where Campbell's inherent moral truths are to be rejected for a more pragmatic way of thinking and arrives finally full circle back to Campbell's moral values.

Densher's "adventure" fits well within the scheme of what William James describes to be the philosopher's grand experiment; when he perceives that truths are at best functional, and that supposedly "inherent" truths intuited by common sense are simply truths that have been conventionalized throughout history and may have well worn out their usefulness:

... although a man always risks much when he breaks away from established rules and strives to realize a larger ideal whole than they permit, yet the philosopher must allow it at all times open to any one to make the experiment, provided he fear not to stake his life and character upon the throw (623).

Densher chooses to abandon momentarily his own established moral rules -- that inherent aspect of his own personality -- in light of an apparently more useful scheme with Kate.
Densher's decision to reaffirm his own moral standards is as much the pragmatist establishing ethics as it is a response to an inherent need to be moral. Every claim made on an individual by others expresses a desire directed toward himself and often satisfying the desires of others will benefit the individual. Thus, the ethical philosopher, according to William James, must recognize every claim made on him as an obligation. He will strive to establish a stable system of unified moral relations with minimal internal conflict causing the least amount of stress to himself and others. In The Bostonians, The Wings of The Dove, and The Golden Bowl, the tragedy of the human condition is that demands compete against each other, so that the individual responding to them often has to sacrifice the lesser for the greater, basing his decision upon which claim appears superior. The protagonist in Henry James's works does this by deciding which claim will render more pleasure to the consciousness. Surprisingly, that protagonist will invariably find that the highest pleasure seems to result when he adopts what William James characterizes as the strenous mood and decides by listening to "the 'everlasting ruby vaults' of our [his] own human hearts, as they [it] happen [s] to beat responsive and not irresponsive to the claim" (617). [italics mine].
Densher rejects his moral sojourn into Kate's culture as a result of a rigorous self-investigation into who has the greater claims on him, Kate or Milly. Milly has mere numbers on her side; the pressure of her claim is made known by Maud, Susan Stringham, and, ironically, even by Kate herself. More profoundly, by recognizing Milly's higher art and being moved by her sacrifice in death, Densher is deeply penetrated by the higher fidelities, sacrificing easy gratification to higher claims because he senses the need for what William James would call divinity: "In the interests of our own ideal of systematically unified moral truth, therefore, we, as would-be philosophers, must postulate a divine thinker, and pray for the victory of the religious cause" (678). Even before her death, Milly, in her relations to Densher, represents a Christ figure, "divine in her trust, or at any rate inscrutable in her mercy. . ." (384). She does indeed seem to appeal to Densher's sense of the sacred. William James, when pleading as in the previous passage for what we ought to be, comes close to Campbell's claim for what we are. In both cases, the truth lies within, as James asserts, our "interior characters." The potential to listen to the higher claims "is not in heaven, neither is it beyond the sea; but the word is very nigh unto thee; in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (678).
That Densher "does it" disturbs many exasperated readers who discount him as simply another misguided American idealist too inept to deal with the given conditions of the world, safely in love with a woman who is obviously impossible to attain. Undoubtedly, Densher's loss of the beautiful Kate and her own loss of her essential inner beauty casts a sombre twilight in the novel over a past which was never accessible to Densher or to Kate because their own limiting cultural conditions prohibited it. But the magnitude of what Densher sacrifices when he accepts that fact and makes his decision makes it seem all the more courageous. With both Kate and Milly off the stage, the reader must finally focus on Densher and celebrate a timely birth, the birth of a creative consciousness, the birth of a rhetorical being, the birth of an artist. What we have finally witnessed in The Wings of the Dove is the evolution of Densher's consciousness as an active force which constantly re-adjusts its form to the content of experience, even, at crucial times, working with its memory of past events and re-shifting them to incorporate a richer integration of experience. Densher's next relationship with an individual will be based on moral certitude and upon ethics that are unwavering.
Milly and Densher are soul mates finally because their inherent idealism encourages them to employ their consciousnesses creatively to change reality, both concerned with the quality of their ideas, but equally concerned that those ideas conform to the facts of experience as they know them. Whereas Milly assumes provisionally that her innocence will some day be validated in the future if she can win Densher's love from Kate, Densher turns to his own past to re-interpret the quality of his emotion for Kate. Won over by Milly's insistent innocence, shown in "Milly herself, and Milly's house, and Milly's hospitality, and Milly's manner, and Milly's character, and, perhaps still more than anything else, Milly's imagination . . ." (382) Densher evolves as an artist because his consciousness re-invests his past with a shifted significance which incorporates past and present into a synthetic unity. He wills a re-creation of his past to honor the feelings which Milly has for him. He depends upon a fragment of his past to enact the change of focus. Riding in Venice with Milly, Densher reflects that:

Her [Milly's] welcome, her frankness, sweetness, sadness, brightness, her disconcerting poetry . . . his renewed remembrance, which had fairly become a habit, that he had been
the first to know her... It had worked as a clear connection with something lodged in the past, something already their own. He had more than once recalled how he had said to himself, even at that moment, at some point in the drive, that he was not there, not just as he was in so doing it, through Kate and Kate's idea, but through Milly and Milly's own, and through himself and his own, unmistakeably, as well as through the little facts, whatever they had amounted to, of his time in New York (346-7).

This is a clear dramatization of William James's thoughts on how the mind works. "The mind, in short," writes James, "works on the data it receives very much as a sculptor works on his block of stone. In a sense the statue stood there from eternity. But there were a thousand different ones beside it, and the sculptor alone is to thank for having extricated this one from the rest" ("The Stream of Thought,"73). The sculpting mind may extricate at any given time any element of its past, present, or anticipated future. It may extricate one piece of data to sculpt, as Densher does when he initially decides to focus on Kate, but the mind can also choose to sculpt any other statue
from the eternity of mental experiences composing its past and present. As James explains, "A mind which has become conscious of its own cognitive function; plays what we have called 'the psychologist' upon itself. It not only knows the things that appear before it; it knows that it knows them. This stage of reflective condition, is, more or less explicitly, our habitual adult state of mind ("The Stream of Thought," 60).

In the world of William James, and Henry, the successful individual must inevitably be an artist, taking the responsibility to create his own meaning from what he knows of himself and of the world. Densher, freeing his mind from Kate's rigid dictates and adopting a point of view more in harmony with his own point of view, has become an artist. Since, in William James's system, ideas, actions, and objects have equal significance for the life of the mind, integration of an idea within one's experience is as active a course in the world as marriage to a living woman. Densher's success as an artist is not that he has escaped the world, but that he has learned to control the creativity of his consciousness. Paul B. Armstrong has observed that "For James, the pursuit of the moral life is an often ambiguous, always perilous, never ultimately completed activity because it is a constant epistemological and existential challenge."38 Possibly for the child who
takes all in, that would be true. However, the mature individual takes a great deal of responsibility for the choice of his own meaning and, although always in pursuit of that meaning, his mental activity is often more deliberate than perilous. A rhetorical perspective steadies the existential ground we explore, and Densher controls his response to his environment in a way essentially rhetorical in that the form of the mind lives in constant organic relation with the changing content of experience and in constant harmony with the ruby vault of the heart.
NOTES


2 Note Nicola Bradbury's excellent stylistic analysis of this introductory section on Kate, which emphasizes how James intends this section to alert the reader's suspicions about Kate's ethical credibility. Bradbury decides that James intends Kate to be understood with a sense of ironic distance. Nicola Bradbury, Henry James The Later Novels (Oxford: Clarendon U. Press, 1979), pp. 72-77.

3 Henry James, The Wings of The Dove (New York: Signet Classics, 1964). All future references to this novel will be noted within the text.

4 One might consider, however, that deliberate ethics often involves sacrifice and in James's world this
is often the only successful, inevitable, "good choice."
Oscar Cargill decides that "Though James graphically shows
Kate trapped by her heritage and environment, he equally
makes it patent that she has the resources to triumph over
these limitations." The Novels of Henry James (New York:
Cargill does not consider that Kate feels bound by blood
obligations, just that "Kate wants success in a hurry . . ."

5George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric ed.
Lloyd F. Bitzer (Carbondale, Il: Southern Illinois U.
Press, 1963). All future references to this work will be
made within the text.

Robert E. Spiller (New York: Washington Square Press,
1975), p. 190: "Words are signs of natural facts."

7Paul B. Armstrong, in "How Maisie Knows: The
Phenomenology of James's Moral Vision," in TSLL 20, 523,
oberves the same phenomenon in "What Maisie Knows":
"Maisie often helps her elders more than they help her, in
fact, since she often seems not to want to express the lies
that confound her understanding. Quite the contrary, she
frequently seems to prefer that the hidden sides of her
interpersonal world stay hidden . . . because it is more
pleasant to dwell in fantasies than to face disillusioning reality."

8 As Nicola Bradbury comments, "The charm of the unspoken is too easily converted into confusion, and lack of communication provides an opportunity for the evasion of responsibility," 92.

9 Contrary to Laurence Holland's statement that "Kate alters her scheme so as to do justice not only to the need for deceiving Maud and acquiring money but to the genuine pity and affection she feels for her friend," p. 292, I think Kate is primarily focusing at this time on her own emotional needs. The Expense of Vision (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964).

10 As Nicola Bradbury comments, "Kate exercises intellectual control through the process of making images; an approach whose sophisticated indirection is conveyed through the terms used to describe it . . . " (79-80).

11 Ruth Yeazell cites this passage also as an example of both how easily Milly welcomes Kate's suggested image and how by "calling Milly a dove, Kate has presumably meant to gloss over the sinister facts about that young American and the uses to which her innocence might be put, and in so doing to turn possible pain to the uses of compliment and social harmony." (58).
To claim, as Laurence Holland does, that Milly's chief use of the dove form is to be kind and protect her friends by lying about her health (297) is to ignore Milly's own desire to use the form for its rhetorical persuasiveness.

Yeazell objects to assigning Kate too deliberate a role in deception, claiming that "The sinister motives which in hindsight we might attribute to Kate are nowhere made explicit here; we cannot know if at this point Kate has consciously acknowledged them even to herself." (77). Kate's motivations certainly are purposeful although, I would add, "sinister" would not be a word in Kate's pragmatic vocabulary. The dove metaphor is too deliberately chosen by Kate not to be an anticipatory device intended to convince Milly to assume an innocence which will cover all Kate's future plans.

Yeazell, p. 75.

Yeazell, p. 71.

When she does, Kate becomes a faulty rhetorician, which seems to be the potential evil in James's world. As Frederick Crews observes, "In fact, Kate is evil only in an extremely sensitive view -- which is, nevertheless, the one James seem to be asking us to

17 Bradbury contrasts this passage, analogous to "Lear's stripped vision . . . " to the overly melodramatic perception embodies in "pastoral romance of Susie's mountain scene." (102). She cautions us to avoid judging Milly as weak solely on the basis of Susan's Stringham's histrionic perceptions.

18 Yeazell, in making her case for moral and epistemological uncertainty in the novel, implies that since Densher does fall in love with Milly, Kate can not be condemned as deceptive. Further, she reasons that "Kate Croy's actions may seem those of a cynical realist, but her language creates a romantic universe in which selfish desire and generous impulse are momentarily one." (84). In both illustrations, credit for the ethical action is misplaced. Densher develops feeling for Milly quite apart from Kate's intentions, and Milly, not Kate, struggles to make a metaphor coincide with incompatible possibilities by re-structuring the facts of her world.

19 See also Yeazell's discerning chapter on metaphor in *Language and Knowledge in James*. She discusses at length the monster metaphor in "The Beast in the
Jungle." Through this exploration, she asserts that the metaphor provides both a means to evade a particular dangerous reality through intellectualization and to approach the same new reality timidly through the intellectual distance of indirection. Campbell's discussion of the consciousness would imply that all new knowledge is dangerous because alien and must therefore be approached and integrated cautiously through metaphor.

Yeazell comments on the private metaphorical world of most Jamesian characters, who devise their own private elaboration of metaphor in contrast to an Eliot character such as Dorothea Brooke whose metaphorical thoughts work into a common pattern with other characters in Middlemarch, even the narrator. One is reminded of Wayne Booth's observation in The Rhetoric of Fiction that there is no guiding narrative device in James's later novels which points to a consistent world of meaning. Further, Yeazell notes the disturbing yet fascinating quality of James's metaphors, which "provoke, a feeling of arbitrariness and extravagence, a sense of an uncomfortable break in the organic connection of things, that can be deeply disturbing." (40. On the contrary, when Milly takes up the challenge to make her dove form organic, to create a world where she can be truly innocent, she becomes a
character far from passive and she seeks to create a coherent vision of her world through metaphor.

21 For a phenomenological explanation of how Milly apprehends her dove form, see Paul B. Armstrong, "Knowing in James: A Phenomenological View," *Novel* 12, 5-20, where he mentions of another James character that "she imaginatively envisions all the other aspects implied by the aspect that she has as its continuation and, in this way, explicated the horizons of her impressions to uncover what lies behind . . . ."

22 Note Wayne Booth's discussion of how belief is created through community consent in *Rhetoric and the Dogma of Assent*. Also note Armstrong's comment: "In fact, though, intersubjective validation -- that is, if two or more people find that their worlds agree in or at least harmonize about some aspect of reality -- is one of the few reasonably trustworthy tests of objectivity," (17) since one's sense of the world is then not solely dependent on his own subjectivity. However, Armstrong goes on to say, "James downplays the difficulty of getting agreement about what is objective reality in either perception or art when he claims 'Selecton will be sure to take care of itself. For it has a constant motive behind it. That motive is simply experience. As people feel life, so they
will feel the art that is most closely related to it.' But since he knows so well the significance of subjective selection and creative contribution in perception, this assurance sounds more like a wish or a hope than a guarantee that certainty about the real in either life or art can be achieved without difficulty." (397). Here I think Armstrong overlooks the strong emotional and spiritual orientation of both James brothers in his desire to prove that all perception in James is relative. Note also how closely Henry James's explanation of feeling a closely related art parallels Campbell's definition of the rhetorical perception.

23Oscar Cargill (The Novels of Henry James (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961) also finds the source of the dove image in the character of Hilda in Hawthorne's The Marble Faun. However, Cargill does not agree, nor do I, with Bewley's "servile copying of the characterization of Hildan and of absorption of allegorical intent -- for Bewley accepts Quentin Anderson's argument, without challenge, that The Wings of The Dove is a Swedenborgian allegory . . . (348). Cargill points out that "it is the inventive power of Hawthorne that James admires and not the end result." (349). Obviously, James's metaphors derive from a multitude of origins, each with its own suggestive
resonance. In this case it is the critic's task, as Cargill points out, to "look out for differences as much as resemblances between the two girls." (344) And noting also the former allusion to Hester Prynne suggested in this chapter, it is likely that James is more concerned with the artist of the heart idea that Hawthorne often allegorizes in a character rather than with paralleling the concrete particulars of any specific character.

24This explains why, as Crews observes, "Even when exerting her power, Milly is somehow passive and intangible; her status as a symbol always prevails." (59).

25Bradbury points out that Densher recognizes Milly's charm for him before he sleeps with Kate (112), which strongly suggests to me that Densher presses the sexual issue with Kate because he senses his own loyalties changing and this is his ultimate attempt to feel the rightness of his prior commitment to Kate.

26Yeazell: "Indeed one sometimes feels that Lord Mark in The Wings of the Dove exists less as a character in his own right than as the vehicle by which the lover's clandestine play may similarly reveal itself to Milly Theale . . ." (32). Note also Nicola Bradbury's remark that the narrative focus on Densher allows the
reader to perceive Densher dwelling on Lord Mark as "the evil genius" which discourages us from speculating about Densher's guilt. (115).

Yeazell comments that Milly re-creates herself to affirm the metaphor she has passively accepted from Kate, making her death a supreme act of self-sacrifice to epitomize the grace and love implicit in the dove form. Although passive, she triumphs by re-defining what her life and death meant. This insightful analysis nevertheless overlooks the active way in which Milly tries also to affirm the innocence implicit in the form by transforming the nature of reality while she is still alive. She re-defines her life not at the point of death but from the very moment she accepts the dove form. Paul B. Armstrong draws close to Milly's imaginative powers when he explains how James's "impression" is parallel to the phenomenological definition of knowing. He writes that "... The impression's power depends on the faith of the observer" and that "although limited, partial, and incomplete in itself, every aspect points beyond and ahead of itself toward the fulfillment in more complete knowledge which further aspects would provide" ("Knowing in James"). Milly's impression of the dove form depended on her faith in the potential that the possibility of a
28 It is important to note that Densher does not initially fit all the traits of the stereotyped journalist; as Oscar Cargill notes, "Merton Densher possesses little of the cynicism we have come to associate with a career in journalism, and in particular with other journalists whom James has created, for example, George Flack and Matthias Pardon." (366).

29 This seems reminiscent of some of Hawthorne's earlier short fiction, such as "Feathertop," where Mother Rigby, although a self-acknowledged creation of the author, teases the reader into speculating about how lifeless a fictional "created" life really is. When the author presumably loses control of a fictional creation, that creation presumably has its own autonomous life.

30 Is Frederick Crews thinking of this passage when he observes, "Like Strether, he tries to stand intellectually outside the action of his novel. When he finally realizes that he is very much involved in it he takes positive action of his own, and this action, as we might expect, is out best clue to the author's moral judgment of his principal characters?" (66).

32 The *Writings of William James*, p. 431.

33 Bradbury states that "it is because Milly's is the more comprehensive imagination that she achieves a paradoxical success, while Kate, with all her manipulative vigour, fails utterly." (121).

34 Holland, pp. 306-311, identifies this passage as an allusion to a Veronese painting involving Christ. In the Venice scene including this passage, Milly impresses herself upon Densher's imagination as "the sacrament, the sacred thing . . . its [the novel's] stricken heroine, the treasure, dove, and muse of James's imagination."

35 Crews observes that when Kate challenges Densher, "Your word of honour that you're not in love with her memory," Kate is also testing Densher to see if he will abandon his new perspective and play by her old rules: "If Densher will renounce his faith in the martyred heroine he can be accepted in the old secular terms. If not, Kate knows that he will inwardly despise her own worldliness." (79).
Bradbury: "... Kate and Densher find like Dante's unlawful lovers that they are just beyond limbo, with the post-tragic recognition of irreparable loss." (74)

Note Paul B. Armstrong's phenomenological explication of Henry James's "impression" which, in his opinion, reflects what Heidegger calls the 'ek-stasis' of existence - the fundamental temporality of existence by which we are always outside of the present by projecting ourselves in the future." ("Knowing in James," 78-9). Obviously, since Milly's past has been one of innocence, she can see that as a possibility for her future.

CHAPTER THREE: The Golden Myth:
Rhetoric in The Golden Bowl
The Golden Bowl proposes a cultural experiment almost doomed to failure at the outset. The experiment takes the form of a marriage and, in theory, the marriage sounds promising. Young Maggie Verver's engagement to the subtle Italian Prince Amerigo suggests the auspicious merger of the American and European cultures. ¹ Even though one does not expect a high evaluation of American culture in a James novel, America is never depicted as weak, and Maggie and the Prince embody the most powerful rhetorical forces their respective cultures can offer. They frankly marry to recover from a foreign climate what is deficient in their own. Maggie marries a European pedigree, an impressive one in the Jamesian scale of values. In her relation to Amerigo, she seeks a sense of history uniquely Jamesian; she seeks, in other words, a sense of culture.

The Prince, on the other hand, marries American money, which would seem a dubious basis for culture and a droll commentary on American values and, possibly, on Amerigo's motivations. The ambivalence expressed in The American Scene seems reflected in James's depiction of Amerigo's somewhat positive attitude about his marriage. Further, James's ambivalence about America's moral virtues also seem to be reflected in Amerigo's expectations. Indeed, Amerigo fancies himself on the verge of exploring a
new culture, and one which may provide refreshing contrasts with his own:

He knew his antenatal history . . . . What was his frank judgment of so much of its ugliness, he asked himself, but a part of the cultivation of humility? What was this so important step he had just taken but the desire for some new history that should, so far as possible, contradict, and even if need be flatly dishonour, the old? If what had come to him wouldn't do he must make something different. He perfectly recognised - always in his humility - that the material for the making had to be Mr. Verver's millions . . . Therefore he wasn't mistaken - his future might be scientific. . . . He was allying himself to science, for what was science but the absence of prejudice backed by the presence of money? His life would be full of machinery, which was the antidote to superstition, which was in its turn too much the consequence, or at least the exhalation, of archives. He thought of these things - of his not being
at all events futile, and of his absolute acceptance of the developments of the coming age - to redress the balance of his being so differently considered.²

Amerigo counters his own history with what he calls the drops of Maggie's "American good faith . . . . They were of the colour of her innocence, and yet at the same time of her imagination, with which their relation, his and these people's, was all suffused" (9). In contrast, Amerigo's own ancestors seem ugly to him because they manipulate appearances and people for their own ends. His own moral discomfort with the practice of artful deception should be noted. With naive optimism about America and also about himself, he anticipates replacing the complex god of his artful culture with the sterile god of the machine age.

Unfortunately, Amerigo's well-intentioned assessment of American culture is misguided. In depicting Amerigo's confusion with American values, James seems to be playing off a difference he noted between the type of American innocence he had encountered before he left America and that more corrupted type he noted in The American Scene when he returned to American twenty-five years later. When he associates American science with
American morality, he makes mistaken assumptions about American culture which will later threaten the very basis of his relationship with Maggie. When Amerigo confuses Maggie's innocence with the innocence of science, he fails to understand that perhaps even in America there can be certain subtleties or changes through the decades in its philosophical orientations. American Science disregards human behavior because it does not concern itself with the realm of subjective judgment. Amerigo seems to sense this when he comments about the lack of prejudice and superstition in science. Science is innocent to the establishment of moral values because it does not care about them. Maggie's innocence, on the other hand, is that of the transcendentalist who has a blind faith in ethical human behavior. Indeed, she cares about moral values but her good faith causes her to feel that people are essentially honest in their human interactions and require no judgment from her. By assuming that America can project only one attitude, Amerigo mistakes Maggie's good faith for the discounting of people's actions characteristic of Science and assumes that Maggie's lack of vigilance is really a form of not caring, specifically, for him instead of a response characteristic of the transcendental attitude. On the basis of this assumption about Maggie's initial seeming disregard for his actions, Amerigo feels encouraged to
rationalize and to engage in a relationship with Charlotte, feeling even morally safe so long as he protects what he senses to be Maggie's peculiarly modern form of innocence. Even without this encouragement, one senses the temptation Charlotte would present the Prince. Amerigo's optimistic assessment of America's potential interest for him is well-intentioned but not totally sincere. He is, after all, his father's son and he seems only half-hearted about what he perceives to be the terms of his new culture. The truth is that Amerigo is facing an unknown America and struggling to discover and to accept the terms upon which to understand it.

Maggie is also at a loss to engage in the terms of Amerigo's culture, but, more alarming, she does not even perceive that a struggle is called for. Maggie thinks that she can purchase understanding with hard, cold American money. Literal American as she originally is, she attempts to buy culture as she would an object without sensing that experiences involve a more personal price. She does not realize that "culture" implies her own direct intercourse with the world and that it can only be purchased by her sacrifice of the blind good faith in human nature which distances her from truly understanding another human being.

Satisfied that she has reached her goal, Maggie puts Amerigo on the shelf as proof of her acquisition of
culture while at the same time actively using her father as a shield against the real necessity of engaging in the relationship she has purchased. Ironically, the very inadequacies she is trying to eliminate in her cultural background are those that will get in the way of her doing so. The terms of Amerigo's culture are those of "Culture": they involve the learned forms through which social beings respond to one another, forms learned through interaction with the possible depths contained in other human beings, and the self-consciousness which emerges through human intercourse. Since Maggie "lacks" culture, she cannot "respond" to it. She lacks the self-awareness to know what that response would involve. Thus, although her attempt to purchase culture from Amerigo is genuinely admirable, she simply does not know how to go about it.

Amerigo and Maggie face formidable odds in their attempt to establish a successful relationship. Since their need to transcend barriers inherent to their own dissimilar cultures is such a strain, they are highly vulnerable to extraneous influences which threaten to disintegrate their precarious attempt to establish a new community. Book I is a chronicle of a new civilization and its virtual destruction by past decadent civilizations attempting to make claims on it. From the point of view of Maggie's and Amerigo's emergent culture, Charlotte Stant
and Adam Verver do indeed represent threatening remnants of the old decadent order which Maggie and Amerigo will be tempted to cling to for a sense of safety and out of a nostalgiac yearning for a meaningful existence. Charlotte Stant's persuasive impact on Amerigo and Adam Verver's on his daughter will be shown eminently persuasive because eminently meaningful, meaningful because Charlotte and Adam are, respectively, Amerigo's and Maggie's history. By contrast, Maggie's and the Prince's union threatens to become a mockery of culture, empty of meaning and devoid of a basis for communication because of the dissimilarity between the two.

Given the basis of Amerigo's and Maggie's fairly hapless union, one questions why the author makes Charlotte the scapegoat of this novel's community rather than Maggie, since Charlotte in no way seems to fall short of the finest definition of culture. Is James simply giving up on civilization, commenting upon the ruthlessness of a world where money replaces human feeling as the expedient basis of a relationship? It is initially difficult to see what ingredient Maggie could bring to a relationship that Charlotte could be lacking. Charlotte would seem to be Amerigo's consummate companion. She is subtly beautiful as Amerigo is handsome, with the fine European instincts for creating a charming appearance that belongs to the
Europeans; Charlotte is certainly not an American, despite her origin. Amerigo and Charlotte are similarly charming in their easeful ability to manage social situations for the comfort of those about whom they are interested. At the outset, Amerigo wins over Maggie with the grace of an evanescent act of persuasion. Charlotte's marriage to Adam is also the result of Adam's perception of her value to arrange events, and thus to protect him, events such as her tactful disposal of Adam's unwanted guests at Fawns. Adam even acknowledges that he had thought Charlotte's talent for charming consideration a "balm . . . which Amerigo, owing to some hereditary privilege, alone possessed the secret . . . (I, 182). He assumes thus that perhaps Amerigo has passed on the secret to Charlotte.

Adam's assumption that Amerigo and Charlotte's occult communication will only be employed to promote his own welfare is an ironic commentary on his own selfish blindness. But Adam's comment also suggests the inequity of sundering the relationship of two individuals whose similar understandings create such a perfect communication that it is universally acknowledged. Maggie and Adam would seem to be two selfish intruders in an already well established community. When one discovers that Amerigo has defied this established meaningful relationship with Charlotte, one realizes that a chaos has been created in
the stage wings prior to the opening scene of *The Golden Bowl*.

Charlotte emerges from this chaos still smarting and unmollified by her furtive American trip, arriving on the eve of the Prince's marriage like a refulgent Malevolent to remind Prince Amerigo of her prior claim. Although on the subject of her arrival, as Mrs. Assingham ruefully remarks, "She abounds, poor dear, in reasons," Amerigo and Mrs. Assingham are certain she comes to make her grievance felt, which implies, of course, that she has a grievance to exercise. "Has she come with designs upon me?" Amerigo questions Fanny, prompted by alarm to an uncharacteristic bluntness. He is the first of several to fear Charlotte's pursual, although his fear seems most soundly based. He has most to fear because with Charlotte around he first fears himself. Charlotte makes her beauty felt to him and he feels it:

... he took the relics out one by one, and it was more and more each instant as if she were giving him time. He saw again that her thick hair ... gave her at moments the sylvan head of a huntress. He saw the sleeves of her jacket drawn to her wrists, but he again made out the free arms
within them to be of the completely rounded, the polished slimness that Florentine sculptors in the great time had loved . . . . He knew her narrow hands, he knew her long fingers and the shape and colour of her fingernails, he knew her special beauty of movement and line when she turned her back, and the perfect working of all her main attachments . . . . It was as if . . . he . . . even heard a little the chink of the metal. When she did turn to him it was to recognize with her eyes what he might have been doing" (42-3).

One of the most poignant passages in the novel, this meditation reveals the intensity and justness of Amerigo's felt attraction. Her charming presence is a proffered gift to Amerigo. She is a tempting representative of what Amerigo most highly values. She is a metaphor for "Culture" in the best sense of the term.

The importance of Culture to Amerigo is akin to the importance ascribed to it by Henry James in The American Scene. To both, the ingredients of Culture are the lifeblood of a meaningful existence. According to D.W.
Sterner in his analysis of The American Scene, those qualities which create a culture and that James finds missing in America are variety, privacy, and stability, or form. Those qualities interact, form becoming the principle which provides stability. James feels that "to settle and to order the variety of private motions is the function of form." We can conclude from Sterner's analysis of the function of form that "form" is equivalent to the concept of culture itself since form is the quality of culture which provides culture with a sense of consistency which presides over the change which occurs within it. Culture retains its identity, yet absorbs change. "The rate of change," writes Sterner, "is obviously crucial to the stability of the form, but more than that, the motion of change itself must express an underlying loyalty to some principle other than itself, a principle which gives it its continuity." There must be some constancy in the form (the sense of a culture's continuity) which allows for the acceptance of change within the culture. Sterner's use of "culture" also bears reference to the individual and to what happens when the individual's sense of himself is intruded upon by variety, by a "change" introduced into his life through the self's encounter with experience. This change can be a basically favorable experience, essential to the individual's amusement just as a culture without
internal changes remains stagnant. Yet it can also provoke a sort of existential angst in the individual which can only be soothed if he perceives some stabilizing element (his own sense of continuity with) the change which he confronts. Privacy would seem to be that necessary protective state that the individual desires as a shield against too great an influx of change, since too great a change might threaten his identity. One recalls that James applauds the Southern sequestered gardens for providing such privacy and that it is a lack of privacy which horrifies him about the democratic mobs he despairs of in *The Bostonians*. Finally, according to Sterner, James insists that whatever the stabilizing form might be, it must operate "with a grace of purpose, of connection between past, present and future."

One can see this desire for cultural stability underlying many of the relationships in *The Golden Bowl*. Charlotte functions for Amerigo as an experience capable of gracefully making the connection for Amerigo between his sense of her and his sense of his past. When she first returns to London, for example, practically on the eve of Maggie's and Amerigo's wedding day, she gives Amerigo, for example, the picture of her rounded arms, which remind him of the work of Florentine sculptors and with this one perception she gives him back his own sense of self and of his
historical past. Her beauty resides not so much in any blatant physical trait as in "her special beauty of movement and line," in other words, in her "form," in the way in which she can communicate her different self to Amerigo in a manner which will make him sense their similarity. Amerigo faces Charlotte in this scene at an obviously crucial time in his life when he is most in need of her. He is himself virtually going over a precipice in his marriage to Maggie, a woman of such a dissimilar culture. Charlotte offers a stabilizing influence over the changes which are occurring in Amerigo's life.

Physically, therefore, Charlotte gives Amerigo the impression of sameness in diversity. There is an underlying spiritual and cultural affinity informing her physical charms which Amerigo instinctively responds to and which makes those charms all the more appealing. There are other ways she compels Amerigo's recognition. As Sterner notes in The American Scene, James often found the world acknowledges a world "bewildering and often harsh in its lonely complexity and constant change. The function of culture is to mitigate this condition by providing symbols of order and continuity against whose weave men might find a greater measure of security and repose." A consistent motif throughout The Golden Bowl is that of refined culture providing repose. Repose is created because a highly
developed individual knows best how to arrange himself so that he seems familiar to his audience, thus non-threatening to the audience's sense of stability.

One such cultural symbol which can provide order is language. Language, used as a tool in The Golden Bowl for a variety of purposes, is always ideally used by the individual as a means of exploring the universe and establishing contact with it. Since all who use language assume it can be used, assume a system of consistent meanings underlying it which can be used as a reference point, language is a point of similarity between the individual and others. What charms Amerigo about Charlotte is her "immense difference," the fact that "Nothing in her definitely placed her" (48-9). However, in the midst of this variety that Charlotte represents, the form of language that she is capable of using is uncannily like the Prince's:

It wasn't a question of her strange sense for tongues, with which she juggled as a conjuror . . . he had known people almost as polyglot whom their accomplishments had quite failed to make interesting . . . . The point was that in this young woman it was a beauty in itself, and almost a mystery: so certainly he had more than once
felt in noting on her lips that rarest, among the Barbarians, of all civil graces, a perfect felicity in the use of Italian. He had known strangers - a few, and mostly men - who spoke his own language agreeably; but he had known neither man nor woman who showed for it Charlotte's almost mystifying instinct (I, 49).

What is beautiful to Amerigo is Charlotte's "grace of purpose" in making the connection between them. First, Amerigo overhears Charlotte's Italian "by accident" so the connection between them seems an unplanned inevitability. Second, Charlotte can give no satisfactory account for her skill, so the connection seems drawn by the hand of fate itself. Third, the connection between them is private; their relationship contains a rare bond which insulates them from the outside world, making them "special."

Privacy not only protects the individual ego from the outside world but when thoughts are shared by two, to the exclusion of others, the relationship is enhanced by an aura of elitism. Amerigo fears the way he is drawn in by Charlotte's special affinities with him.

He fears his attraction to Charlotte because, although his system is in a state of flux, he is on the
verge of creating a new stability in a "new" culture with Maggie. One must remember that Amerigo chooses his marriage to Maggie in order to deny an important part of his past and to create his life anew. He has consciously chosen Maggie over Charlotte and if his only motivation for marrying Maggie had been money, he would be depicted in the novel as a crass materialist, which he certainly is not.

In fact, one of the oddest details about The Golden Bowl is the Prince's reticent and practically negligible employment of Maggie's money. His villas remain in an unstable financial state throughout the novel. Amerigo is a highly evolved James hero, more spiritually adventurous than Merton Densher in The Wings of the Dove. That protagonist's creative re-evaluation of his life is a final accomplishment of that novel, emerging out of the cataclysm of Millie's death. Although there seem to be mixed motivations for Amerigo's marriage to Maggie, one strong possibility seems to be that Amerigo begins the pages of The Golden Bowl with this creative re-evaluation.

Nevertheless, his system is soon in chaos because, although he has deliberately chosen to experiment by discarding an old sense of stability found in the European culture, he can not get "hold" of a sense of history in the American culture; his attempt to recognize and to identify with America, specifically with Maggie, has not been
working, a point made from the very beginning of the novel. Ironically, he finds more instinct for morality in the corrupt culture he disparages than in America, even though he expects to find an innocence in America of great moral value. James's discussion of culture in The American Scene clearly indicates a notion of morality not tied narrowly to any particular cultural creed.⁶ He describes a broader type of morality and his characters seem to respond to the world, either consciously or unconsciously, according to this broader sense. James's morality implies a system of ethics which has as its underlying motivating impulse the perpetuation of culture. Stability is a culture's moral pulse. The beliefs upon which an individual acts evolve from certain consistencies he observes in his past cultural experiences: thus, he will strive to preserve his culture. The concept of culture is a basically moral and rhetorical one (the three terms can be used practically interchangeably) because one behaves and communicates on the basis of the consistent cues he receives from his culture. Amerigo, therefore, cannot help but be responsive to the cues that he is receiving from his own background through Charlotte, especially since he receives none from Maggie.

William James calls these cues "face-to-face verifications" in his essay, "Pragmatism's Conception of
Truth." Communication is a sort of joyful and mutual confidence game, a system of consensual validation:

Truth lives, in fact, for the most part on a credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs 'pass,' so long as nobody refuses them. But this all points to direct face-to-face verifications somewhere, without which the fabric of truth collapses like a financial system with no cash-basis whatever. You accept my verification of one thing, I yours of another. We trade in each other's truth. But beliefs verified concretely by somebody are the posts of the whole superstructure.  

Henry James's characters often use the same type of financial metaphor when they assess a relationship and thinking in such terms is not necessarily a scathing indictment of a character's excessive materialism. Just because Maggie, for example, speaks of "purchasing" Amerigo does not mean that she is crass or simply a collector. Amerigo hears the "chink" of Charlotte's metal. A moral system, the process of communication and value establishment, is like a rhetoric of finance; both a moral and
financial system function on the basis of mutual coopera-
tion and derive validity from the duration of their
successful operation. Amerigo's dilemma is that even
though he cannot identify with Maggie, he sees their mar-
riage contract as a financially stable proposition, as a
symbol of mutual cooperation and thus of the future
stability promised from keeping faith with it.

A sense of stability and a sense of moral obliga-
tion are coincident necessities for the individual who
desires to maintain a vital yet sane identity. Amerigo may
realize that to abrogate the contract he has signed with
Maggie would be to do violence to the concept of identity
itself, for one's vitality and growth depends upon the
self's communication with others and one's identity depends
upon not undermining the validity of one's decisions.
Finally, Amerigo simply has that moral awareness and com-
pulsion so highly prized in the Jamesian world. From the
very beginning of the novel, when he goes to seek out Fanny
Assignham's advice about how to best fulfill his contract
with Maggie, his concern with keeping faith with his
obligations is clearly evidenced.

In James's version of culture, the most enduring
obligation is marriage, and the marriage contract is sacred
because of its cultural implications; the married couple is
a microcosm of the larger community that must also base its
actions upon meaning communally affirmed. As rhetorician Richard Weaver predicts in *Language is Sermonic*, "If man could be brought to believe that all feeling about the world is wrong, there would be nothing for him but collapse." When the James character deceives, defies established meanings, he creates chaos, because he destroys the bases upon which people can trust their perceptions and thus interact with others in their community. The character thus undermines the pragmatic truth upon which he acts.

Since Amerigo receives no response from Maggie, however, he is not made to feel an obligation from her and this is a serious deficiency in their contract. In pragmatic terms, this literally means that Amerigo should feel no obligation at all because morality is a pragmatic function: moral values result from verification derived through two-way communication. In William James's essay "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," he challenges the assumption that there is "an abstract moral order in which the objective truth resides . . ." (616). Instead, "the moment we take a steady look at the question, we see not only that without a claim actually made by some concrete person there can be no obligation, but that there is some obligation wherever there is a claim. Claim and obligation are, in fact, coextensive terms; they cover each other exactly" (617). William James continues, "Any desire
is imperative to the extent of its amount; it makes itself valid by the fact that it exists at all." The implications of this are frightening unless the individual realizes that claims do not render him helpless, that placed upon him will be a variety of conflicting claims and that he then has a right to honor the one claim amongst those that he perceives will work most in his own interest. Of course, the marriage contract makes its own silent claim, but there is a presence in Amerigo's life which makes a claim more audibly.

It seems fairly clear by the rather odd way that Amerigo first receives Charlotte in Fanny Assingham's home that he is frightened most not by his own attraction to Charlotte but by her possible "designs" on him. He is afraid that Charlotte will make a claim on him and that the simple act of claiming will force him to recognize it. That he definitely does not want to recognize Charlotte's claim is the startling reality emerging from this scene. Amerigo's immediate wariness already identifies Charlotte as the outsider in the novel, sets Charlotte somehow in opposition to the rhetorical situation of Maggie's and Amerigo's marriage as it is presented at the beginning of the novel. Importantly, Amerigo locates himself mentally in the group which Charlotte threatens and he seems to view her as an element which is aberrant to his own affirmed
reality. At the end of Volume I, Fanny Assingham suggests to her shocked husband that Amerigo does not really care for Charlotte (I, 349). In a sense this is true, in that there is one thing for which Amerigo consistently seems to care more: for the successful voyage of his spiritual soul. His apprehensive response to Charlotte in this first scene can be considered as a result of the perception that Charlotte threatens his spiritual voyage.

Clever Charlotte anticipates this reaction. She realizes that her claim will have to be made subtly or that she will not be allowed to make it at all; at least, it is clear that Amerigo will refuse to recognize it in his present defensive position. Charlotte therefore arrives ostensibly for Maggie's benefit and to bless the marriage, with words of congratulation on her lips. Amerigo responds to this graceful dissimulation with visible relief. This is how Charlotte engages him, by letting him know he is off the hook:

She always dressed her act up . . . she would let it be known for anything, for everything, but the truth of which it was made . . . . She was the twentieth woman, she was possessed by her doom, but her doom was also to arrange appearances . . . . He
would help her, would arrange with her - to any point in reason; the only thing was to know what appearance could best be produced and best be preserved. Produced and preserved on her part of course; since on his own there had been luckily no folly to cover up, nothing but a perfect accord between conduct and obligation (45-6).

Significantly, Amerigo is shown here reasoning with and reassuring himself. He needs to assure himself that there is no precedent for Charlotte's claim that would give it a validity more solemn. He can wilfully choose between two contradictory claims, knowing that he cannot satisfy both, but if Charlotte's claim were to prove the one more morally binding, he would have a hard time trying to refuse it. Since morality is concerned with retaining a sense of history, in a complementary sense, morality also implies honest action, accord between conduct and obligation, as Amerigo puts it. For denial of one's own acts, or one's obligations, is a denial of the reality one has created for himself. It is therefore understandable that in sensing Charlotte's potential claim, he must deny that it has a precedent:
The little crisis was of shorter duration than our account of it; duration would naturally have forced him to take up his hat. He was somehow glad, on finding himself alone with Charlotte, that he hadn't been guilty of that inconsequence. Not to be flurried was the kind of consistency he wanted, just as consistency was the kind of dignity. And why couldn't he have dignity when he had so much of the good conscience, as it were, on which such advantages rested? He had done nothing he oughtn't - he had in fact done nothing at all (44-5).

This is, of course, part of Amerigo's process of rationalization for his actions. Charlotte takes advantage of Amerigo's delusions about safety to request the most innocent of favors: an hour of his time to search for a wedding gift for Maggie. This is a clever request. If Amerigo were to countermand Charlotte's ostensible desire to do something for Maggie, he would admit some uncertainty about Charlotte's real position and bring back into question Charlotte's possible need to make a claim on him. In short, he would have to be honest with himself, which
would require that he recognize Charlotte's claim. Charlotte still manages to obligate him, however, not to honor their attachment, but to help her keep up her appearance for his own safety. This is a tactic which Charlotte will attempt again in her dealings with Maggie.

Charlotte engages Amerigo in an adventure whose spell will only be broken by the smashing of the golden bowl. What Charlotte makes Amerigo see on that voyage into London's intimate little backstreet is the way in which her claim on him is indeed morally binding. She reminds him that he is discarding his own comfortable sense of cultural stability. Amerigo still apprehends the journey because he fears that Charlotte will do this:

But what had briefly checked his assent to any present, to any positive making of mystery - what had made him, while they stood at the top of the stairs, demur just long enough for her to notice it - was the sense of the resemblance of the little plan before him to occasions, of the past, from which he was quite disconnected, from which he could only desire to be. This was like beginning something over, which was the last thing he wanted (85).
It is as if Amerigo senses as they stand on that staircase that Charlotte forces him to face his own ghost, yet this confrontation scene of past and present differs from that of the more positive confrontation scene in a story like "The Jolly Corner." Spencer Brydon's ghost is what he might have been and there is good reason to believe when he regains consciousness at the foot of the staircase that this "might have been" is what at this point he becomes. Amerigo's ghost (his past which included Charlotte) is what he was and he is presently in a state of becoming what he will be in his future with Maggie. When James places Charlotte and Amerigo in this scene at the top of the stairs and has Amerigo demur from assent, there may be a fitting pun on "assent" and "ascent," which underscores the essential static state Amerigo would be in if he returns to his past with Charlotte.

When Spencer Brydon descends the stairs, he makes a movement into his past, but into something where he has not yet been, thus into the potential of his past. When one is, on the other hand, at the top of stairs and required to ascend, this is an impossible position. One is required to move statically. For Amerigo to move into his actual lived past is a request for him to haunt his potential self by regressing into a state which has already been lived and thus has no potential for growth. In a sense,
Charlotte's and Amerigo's relationship resembles that of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel in their after-life, playing out what should be past in the present by preying on the innocence of Flora and Miles and using that innocence to cover themselves. Perhaps the real evil in the relationship between Charlotte and Amerigo, as in The Turn of the Screw, is that time is warped, souls stagnate, growth is not allowed. In the case of Maggie and Amerigo, on the other hand, growth on the part of both is what is required to make the relationship work.

Amerigo agrees to Charlotte's plans as a concession to her and because he can not do much else without admitting there has been something between them in the past. He decides that he must be with Charlotte:

always simple - and with the very last simplicity. That would cover everything. It had covered then and there certainly his immediate submission to the sight of what was clearest. This was really that what she asked was little compared to what she gave. What she gave touched him, as she faced him, for it was the full tune of her renouncing. She really renounced - renounced everything, and without even
insisting now on what it had all been for her. Her only insistence was her insistence on the small matter of their keeping their appointment to themselves. That, in exchange for everything, everything she gave up, was verily but a trifle (I, 86).

As it turns out, Charlotte renounces nothing. That "trifle" proves the basis for a possible reconstitution of Amerigo's sense of community, for drawing him back into Charlotte's circle. Charlotte remarks, "If I couldn't have come now I probably shouldn't have come at all - perhaps even ever" (87). And no wonder. She must drive a wedge into Maggie's and Amerigo's relationship before his final commitment to Maggie. She tells Amerigo: "What I want is that it [her coming to Amerigo to be with him before his wedding] shall always be with you - so that you'll never be able quite to get rid of it - that I did" (87).

Charlotte wants not simply to remind Amerigo of their past together, but to resurrect Amerigo's sense of connection with that past so that he will be encouraged to re-live that past once again. She tries to do this by excluding Maggie both from Charlotte's experience of the present with Amerigo -- through not visiting any shops
where Amerigo had been with Maggie — and by excluding Maggie from knowledge of their journey. Charlotte's condition that Maggie not know about the journey achieves two objectives vital to her re-establishment of a community. First, Charlotte destroys Amerigo's potential sense of community with his future wife by demanding that he keep something from Maggie, since knowledge is essential for successful communication. Even though Amerigo had not told Maggie about his past with Charlotte, he was not then a part of Maggie's life and there is no evidence that he has kept secret any detail of his life since he has been before this encounter with Charlotte. Charlotte also strengthens her own community with Amerigo because they share something unknown to the outside world. Incidentally, Charlotte deliberately cuts off Mrs. Assingham from knowledge of the developing relation for the same reason, not from compunction, but because Charlotte realizes the power of having a greater knowledge.

Amerigo feels the pressure of Charlotte's tactics. His apprehension is revealed in his expectation that "Movement and progress, after this, with more impersonal talk, were naturally a relief." He tries to reassure himself that Charlotte's responses to him will be guileless: "He clutched, however, at what he could best clutch at -- the fact that she let him off, definitely let him
off" (88). He clutches at the impersonal tone as a drowning man feeling himself pulled into the undertow.

Charlotte's scene does manage to accentuate for Amerigo how little his future wife will know about him. It reminds him of the many affinities he has with Charlotte. It encourages him to indulge in moral laxity; if he can convince himself that this secret journey is safely bathed in innocence, he can stretch that line of reasoning to cover his more clandestine activities with Charlotte. Once the concept of innocence becomes engaged with contrivance, "innocence" becomes a useful but fairly irrelevant term. Amerigo begins by doubting the innocence of his proposed journey with Charlotte because his wife will not know and ends convincing himself that a clandestine sexual relation with Charlotte is innocent for the same reason, that his wife will not know. Amerigo's actions are, of course, his own responsibility, but it is important to note how Charlotte takes advantage of everyone's moral weaknesses.

When he first agrees to Charlotte's "trifle" of keeping their adventure from Maggie, Amerigo deviates from his own standard that conduct match exactly obligation. This is a high standard to live up to. Unfortunately, Amerigo adopts dishonesty rather than relinquish the feeling that he is living up to it. He will not admit that he engages in deception, instead devising an elaborate
rationalization process to convince himself he is innocent: if the deception is simple, it is negligible. This rationalization produces such statements as, "Apparent scruples were obviously a fuss" (87). Any subsequent breach can be rationalized in kind, no matter what the degree of deception involved.

Nevertheless, despite his elaborate rationalization process and the duplicities it leads him into, Amerigo is a sympathetic character, attempting to retain moral integrity against impossible odds. As Nicola Bradbury has observed, "Amerigo is not a figure who can eventually be left behind. He must be worthy of Maggie's devotion, yet capable of entering a position so false as to justify her measures to set it right". He enters a false position because he feels an obligation toward Maggie, yet she will not claim him. He receives a claim from Charlotte, who "produced for the man that extraordinary mixture of pity and profit in which his relations with her, when he was not a mere brute, mainly consisted..." (45). Amerigo's ambivalence is thus at least partly caused by his sympathetic nature. "Pity," "Compassion" or an emotion similar is the final major component of the moral impulse. Culture is a religion of humanity, communication its sacred vessel, and respect for the sanctity of the human heart its scripture. Amerigo obviously has the capacity for pity and for
acting out of pity. This ensures that he will not live permanently with a dishonest behavior which might jeopardize the emotional stability of others who respond with a similar code of ethics.

The "pure" artist -- and in this context, "pure" implies excellence -- has the ability to see life clearly and to see it whole. As previously mentioned, knowledge of the condition of the world around one is power because it allows the individual to communicate effectively with his world. Supremely creative communication depends on a vision unflawed. James's notion of such a vision, according to Charles L. Sanford, dictates that "the role of the artist, like that of innocent young girls, is to test society: to test the extent to which it permits and encourages the development of the fullest potentialities of human personality. . . . He must maintain the integrity of his insight even at the risk of obscurity. Therefore, the state of the serious artist is also a state of goodness, even of innocence, except that the artist is already possessed of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil." 12

The telling scene in this crucial segment of intercourse between Charlotte and the Prince is, of course, their sojourn into the little antique shop in Bloomsbury Street where they discover the golden bowl. This scene
reveals Amerigo's inherent artistic capabilities and thus how much more potentially complete is Amerigo's vision than Charlotte's, foreshadowing the fact that Charlotte's flawed vision will be her doom. Amerigo's earlier observation that Charlotte's ability to arrange will be her doom is true in a double sense. Not only is her ultimate fate a vacuous existence whose only solace is her ability to "arrange" things, but it is her total dependence upon the value of appearances to achieve her own ends to the exclusion of the actual facts underlying them which creates her own fate. Characters in a James novel do tend to reap what they sow.

Charlotte is shown in this scene to have a flawed vision, not because she does not perceive the reality lurking behind the shadows she devises to deflect attention from what actually is, but because she does not care. Charlotte is not committed to the sacred ethics of communication; she will break down the network of the more general community she enters in London for the sake of her own personal gratification, not realizing that her own identity is inevitably threatened if human bonds are broken by distrust and deceptive behavior. This is shown concretely in her desire to purchase the flawed golden bowl for the horrified prince. Charlotte knows that the golden bowl may be flawed, but she does not care because the bowl
at least appears beautiful to her and, for Charlotte, that will serve.

The inscrutable shopkeeper has a sixth sense that Charlotte will respond thus to the bowl. This clever little man goes out of his way to correct Maggie's failed vision, but with Charlotte, he is deviously agreeable about the bowl's value. The shopkeeper calls it "his" golden bowl and the question arises whether there is some maliciousness in his inflated presentation of the bowl to Charlotte. Has he made some judgment on Charlotte's worth, and, if he has, what right does he have to make such a judgement? And why does James relegate to the shopkeeper such prominence in the judgment he apparently renders about Kate?

This shopkeeper is an uncanny character. His "suddenest sharpest Italian" dispels the illusion of intimacy between a startled Charlotte and Amerigo, but when Amerigo tries to verify his origin, the shopkeeper eludes penetration. His conversation with Charlotte contains the same element of mischievous mystery:

Charlotte set down the bowl; She was evidently taken. 'Do you mean it's cut out of a single crystal?'

'If it isn't I think I can promise you that
you'll never find any joint or any piecing.'
She wondered. 'Even if I were to scrape off the gold?'
He showed, though with due respect, that she amused him. 'You couldn't scrape it off -- it has been too well put on; put on I don't know when and I don't know how. But by some very fine old worker and by some beautiful old process.'
Charlotte, frankly charmed with the cup, smiled back at him now. 'A lost art?' 'Call it a lost art'(I, 101).

The shopkeeper cleverly makes no comment, simply indulging Charlotte in her own perception of the bowl's value. He seems to sense some ironic justice in leaving Charlotte to "see" the bowl according to her own perceptive faculties, which have already been perhaps mistakenly employed in assessing the shopkeeper's impression of Amerigo and Charlotte's merits: "... given his taste, since he has taste, he was pleased with us, he was struck -- he had ideas about us. Well, I should think people might; we're beautiful -- aren't we? -- and he knows" (95). Apparently the shopkeeper is not so impressed that he feels compelled to be honest with Charlotte. At best he
judges from Charlotte's obsession with appearances that he need not define the actual quality of his bowl very carefully.

Significant here is the discrepancy between Amerigo's and Charlotte's reaction to the bowl, which reveals the crucial difference in their ethical make-up. Amerigo immediately recognizes the flaw in the bowl and this causes him to reject it, unquestioningly, which is an ominous foreboding for Charlotte of how quickly he might dismiss any future relationship with Charlotte if he should be lead to see it as flawed. He leaves the antique shop to wait outside, impatient, ready to dismiss the bowl's value to Charlotte:

'Then,' she asked, 'what is the matter?'
'Why it has a crack.'
It sounded, on his lips, so sharp, it had such an authority, that she almost started, while her colour rose at the word. It was as if he had been right, though his assurance was wonderful. 'You answer for it without having looked?'
'I did look. I saw the object itself. It told its story. No wonder it's cheap.'
'But it's exquisite,' Charlotte, as if with
an interest in it now made even tenderer
and stranger, found herself moved to insist.'
'Of course it's exquisite. That's the
danger' (106).

Clearly, Charlotte is abashed by the Prince's estimate of the bowl; sensing Amerigo's contempt, she even quotes to the Prince a lower price for the bowl than that set by the shopkeeper. Charlotte defers here to the disdain she senses in Amerigo because she has not yet succeeded in subordinating Amerigo's vision to her own. Later, Charlotte will lose her timidity with Amerigo because she will have him, so to speak, under her wing. Nevertheless, Amerigo's judgment here shows a significant contrast from Charlotte's. Charlotte's vision is flawed by her exclusive attention to appearances since it is her satisfaction with the bowl's appearance regardless of its inherent flaws which causes her to want to buy it; by rejecting the bowl, Amerigo rejects Charlotte's flawed vision and distinguishes himself as a different type of person, one with a moral alertness which will eventually alienate him from Charlotte.13

The shopkeeper seems to know the cast of mind of each of his customers. He does not attempt to peddle his
wares to the Prince; he concentrates upon Charlotte and proceeds to inquire of her, if there is a problem with the bowl, "if it's something you can't find out isn't that as good as if it were nothing?" He gives her her own line of reasoning to persuade her. This little shopkeeper with the obscure origin seems to reflect both Charlotte's doom and Maggie's triumph. His participation with both seems ephemeral but is nevertheless intrusive; his relationship with both seems like that of an author with his characters, introducing himself as a character in the novel.

In the figure of the shopkeeper, James seems to wield a deus ex machina who shows us what the eventual fate of the characters will be. The shopkeeper will be responsible for the smashing of "the perfect crystal" of Charlotte and Amerigo's relationship, which his words ominously foreshadow when Charlotte asks him to suppose what might happen if the recipient of the bowl knew the bowl to be flawed. The shopkeeper replies that the flaw will not be discovered. Charlotte pursues this:

She kept her eyes on him as if, though unsatisfied, mystified, she yet had a fancy for the bowl. 'Not even if the thing should come to pieces?' And then as he was silent: 'Not even if he should have to say
to me, 'The Golden Bowl is broken'?
He was still silent; after which he had his strangest smile. 'Ah if any one should want to smash it - - !'
She laughed; she almost admired the little man's expression. 'You mean one could smash it with a hammer?'
'Yes, if nothing else would do. Or perhaps even by dashing it with violence -- say upon a marble floor."
'Oh marble floors - !' But she might have been thinking -- for they were a connexion, marble floors; a connexion with many things: with her old Rome, and with his; with the palaces of his past and, a little of hers; with the possibilities of his future, with the sumptuosiies of his marriage, with the wealth of the Ververs.
All the same, however, there were other things; and they all together held for a moment her fancy (104).

Charlotte considers the marble floor a metaphor for her connection with Amerigo's past, the connection she has been
attempting to remind Amerigo of. The golden bowl represents that relationship resurrected. Supposition of a golden bowl dashed against a marble floor is a foreshadowing of how Amerigo and Charlotte's imperfect relationship will be broken by something in Amerigo's constitution, some quality which Charlotte shows lacking as her conversation with the shopkeeper continues:

And she looked down again at the bowl.
'There is a split, eh? Crystal does split, eh?
'On lines and by laws of its own.'
'You mean if there's a weak place?'
'For all answer, after an hesitation, he took the bowl up again, holding it aloft and tapping it with a key. It rang with the finest sweetest sound. 'Where's the weak place?'
She then did the question justice. 'Well, for me only the price" (104).

The bowl's flaw does not matter to Charlotte as long as the bowl appears beautiful. Charlotte unfortunately does not perceive that money, in the world of human relations, is not the only criterion for success.
That Charlotte's behavior is indeed ruthless becomes apparent in her treatment of Mrs. Assingham. Charlotte seems like a spirit who has come back to haunt the novel, achieving her status through a type of spiritual blackmail. We have already mentioned how she blackmails Amerigo. Certainly also she blackmails Fanny Assingham, who is similar to Amerigo in her sense of moral compunction, which causes her to resort hypocritically to self-deception to ensure a false sense of moral stability. As Nicola Bradbury observes in her recent critique of the later novels, "Charlotte's intrepidity, as she oversteps the social boundaries, has a certain hardness. Amerigo stares at her tone in dismissing Fanny Assingham, protesting that 'she would do anything for us'; . . . but Charlotte's response is incisive, if elliptical: 'We're beyond her!'" (152). The reader may overlook or even sympathize with Charlotte's dismissal of Mrs. Assingham's feelings because she seems like such a silly and inconsequent character, playing fast and loose with moral scruples and arranging the lives of others irresponsibly, with a minimum of data. However, if we accept Charlotte's dismissal of Mrs. Assingham by so easily discounting Fanny, we must also discount Charlotte herself because Fanny's ability to arrange things to her benefit without considering others is very much like Charlotte's. Her significant
point of deviation from Charlotte is her moral apprehension, which Charlotte preys upon to render Fanny helpless to intervene in her morally dubious activities, and, as Charles Sanford observes, "The one unpardonable sin in James, as in Hawthorne, is to exploit people for selfish ends."  

Ruth Yeazell, in *Language and Knowledge in the Late Novels of Henry James*, makes the point that the narrative of the text gives the reader no firm ground upon which to judge Charlotte. She quotes a particular passage where Charlotte comes to explain to Mrs. Assingham why she is alone at a party with Amerigo. The most convincing part of the cited passage for her argument reads: "if only that she might have the bad moment over, if only that she might prove to herself, let alone to Mrs. Assingham also, that she could convert it to good; if only in short to be 'square,' as they said, with her question; but something in her bones told her that Fanny would treat it as one, and there was truly nothing that from this friend she wasn't bound in decency to take." Yeazell remarks that, "Unless we arbitrarily take these thoughts as self-conscious irony on her part -- and there are no grounds for us to do so -- we must assume that, for the moment at least, her own anticipated decency has for Charlotte the force of psychic truth" (10). Yet, Yeazell
continues, "even her 'decency' is itself characteristically ambiguous -- a matter of 'tender precaution,' of 'acknowledgements and assurances,' not necessarily of genuine deeds. Yet it is through Charlotte's construction of things that we experience this scene, and the dizzying shifts of feeling here allow for no clear distinctions between self-deception and objective truth -- grant us no fixed sense of a reality against which we are to measure and judge Charlotte's own" (10).

Contrary to what Yeazell suggests, there is a fixed sense of reality and it is the accumulated text absorbed by the reader prior to this statement -- especially in the golden bowl scene where Charlotte reveals that the bowl's appearance, along with whether the bowl might reveal its flaw, is her sole concern -- and in the text which follows this party scene, where, in her discussions about Fanny, Charlotte becomes increasingly blunt about what meaning and priority she gives "decency." There is a consistency in the way that Charlotte exploits the sense of moral integrity in both Amerigo and Fanny for her own expediency. Charlotte is very aware that her own appearances and arrangements cover a far different reality; she is not, as Yeazell suggests, finding "a way of imagining, indeed of creating the terms of her world" (12). By converting something to good, Charlotte is
concerned not with the essence of an experience, but with its appearance. She knows that her appearances cover rather than create a reality; she is not like Milly Theale imaginatively transforming herself and those around her into a new form of life into which they will all "fit." She is in a stagnant world of unchangeable terms — she and Amerigo are both married "for life" and she is simply throwing a false art over those "real" facts. Put succinctly by Elizabeth Owen, "To the last Charlotte is clever, dangerous and brilliantly evil. Without a clear realization of this, the image of her being led about on a cord is intolerably painful; with it, we can only be glad she is tamed, and Maggie's compassionate tears really have the quality of mercy." ¹⁷

Charlotte cleverly distorts the principles of pragmatism to her advantage. Pragmatism is creative, in that the consciousness defines its own reality by selectively absorbing the data it experiences on the basis of what the consciousness already knows. Charlotte uses this philosophy to suggest that by consciously willing it, she can change the nature of reality at any time. Her method for doing this is to arrange appearances so that her relationship with Amerigo will seem innocent. She attempts to convince Fanny and Amerigo that by saying that the simple appearance will replace the fact of innocence itself and
the conversation which she has with Fanny as the Embassy party and her subsequent conversations with Maggie are clever attempts to re-shuffle facts and re-name reality.

Pragmatic realities, however, are based upon what the individual knows to be true from experience: past experience confirms that Amerigo's relationship with Charlotte is a betrayal of his wife. To manipulate language to cover such a reality is to wrench language from its secure base grounded in accumulated experience and, thus, to render language meaningless. Honest communication then becomes the undercurrent, silently acknowledged beneath the surface of language as the individuals engaged in a mutual confidence game verbally and desperately affirm what they refuse to believe is false. If Charlotte is "Evil" with a capital "E" as Fanny Assingham would put it, it is evil in the Jamesian sense that she perverts the community based upon trust, trust being the religious entity which must not be perverted, and that incidentally she has undermined her own self-growth in the process. Frederick J. Hoffman states that "Transcendentalism acknowledged evil as a consequence of a thwarted self-development."18

A passage closely following the section quoted by Yeazell shows that Charlotte eagerly embraced the confrontation scene with Fanny as a test case, to see how far
she could appeal to Fanny to mutually confirm Charlotte's relationship with Amerigo as "good," obviously innocent. The problem is that both Charlotte and Fanny obviously know it is not innocent, and to assume from mutual assent that an untruth actually "is" is to pervert the laws of rhetoric to a dangerous degree, to topple the secure base upon which rhetoric is founded. Denying an actual existent fact is a destructive, not a creative, act. Yet, just as with Amerigo, Charlotte abuses another individual for her own benefit -- and even more so with Fanny because Amerigo often seems such a willing partner -- by taking advantage of his/her vulnerability:

Charlotte had for a moment a pause: it had continued to come to her that really to have her case 'out,' as they said, with the person in the world to whom her most intimate difficulties had oftenest referred themselves, would help her on the whole more than hinder; and under that feeling all her opportunity, with nothing kept back, with a thing or two perhaps even thrust forward, seemed temptingly to open. Besides, didn't Fanny at bottom half-expect, absolutely at the bottom
half-want things? . . . something to put between the teeth of her so restless rumination, that cultivation of the fear, of which our young woman had already had glimpses, that she might have gone too far in her irrepressible interest in other lives (226-27).

However, the ensuing conversation between Fanny and Charlotte proves Fanny not so easily wooed. Although immensely careful not to say bluntly what she really thinks, "conscious above all that she was in presence of still deeper things than she had yet dared to fear" (I,234), she pursues Charlotte with obvious disapproval which forces Charlotte into a haughty rejection of her: "You forsake me at the hour of my life when it seems to me I most deserve a friend's loyalty? If you do you're not just, Fanny; you're even, I think," she went on, 'rather cruel; and it's least of all worthy of you to seem to wish to quarrel with me in order to cover your desertion" (235).

It is Charlotte who wishes to quarrel with Fanny to cover her desertion of ethical conduct. Just as Kate Croy once suggests to Milly Theale that Milly might reject her as a warning that if Milly does not cooperate, Kate will reject her, Charlotte assumes the wounded posture of
the rejected so that she can reject Fanny, who is proving to be a little troublesome. Both Charlotte and Kate feel that they are being pursued and that they have something to hide, but they also know that the best defense is a good offense, and that they can maintain a stable position if they intimidate their opponent.

Charlotte perceives her triumph by noting how the faces of the approaching Prince and Ambassador register her own radiance. This is an appropriate accolade to her successful manipulation of appearances. She has managed to subdue Fanny by threatening Fanny's sense of moral safety. It is not Fanny's good opinion, but simply her lack of open objection, which Charlotte desires, as she reveals in one conversation with Amerigo:

It was clear however that neither the limits nor the extent of Mrs. Assingham's vision were now a real concern to her, and she gave expression to this as she hadn't even yet done. 'What in the world can she do against us? There's not a word that she can breathe. She's helpless; she can't speak; she'd be herself the first to be dished by it.' And then as she seemed slow to follow: 'It all comes back to her. It
all began with her. Everything from the first. She introduced you to Maggie. She made your marriage' (304-5).

Importantly, Amerigo and Charlotte seem to be at odds throughout this conversation about Fanny. Amerigo is concerned about how Fanny can provide his own moral vindication, while Charlotte speaks only of keeping her out of the way:

But he worked it out, for the deeper satisfaction, even to superfluous lucidity. 'We're happy -- and they're happy. What more does the position admit of? What more need Fanny Assingham want?' 'Ah my dear,' said Charlotte, 'it's not I who say that she need want anything. I only say that she's fixed, that she must stand exactly where everything has, by her own act, placed her. It's you who have seemed haunted with the possibility for her of some injurious alternative, something or other we must be prepared for (305-306).

Amerigo is like Fanny in his need to feel morally sound. Charlotte's hold over them both in their mutual
confidence game is her ability to insinuate moral irresponsibilities which Fanny and the Prince indeed are guilty of, but which she would have the power to force them to face. It is indeed Charlotte who haunts others with their own deeds as a means of extortion, not Fanny. The only moral stability Charlotte offers is a perverted one, where historical consistency resides in maintaining appearances which directly contradict the empirical facts of experience as Amerigo, Fanny, and Charlotte know them. Charlotte reveals to Amerigo her plans for Mrs. Assingham:

"We are prepared — for anything, for everything; and as we are, practically, so she must take us. She's condemned to consistency; she's doomed, poor thing, to a genial optimism. That, luckily for her however, is very much the law of her nature. She was born to soothe and to smooth. Now then therefore,' Mrs. Verver gently laughed, 'she has the chance of her life!' (I, 306).

Charlotte's words are so unwittingly like an ironic comment on her own fate that one can almost sense the authorial glee behind them. It is unlikely that the way James chose to frame Charlotte's thoughts would not
indicate his own planned judgment for this character. James's narrative description of Charlotte's thoughts sets her up in much the same way as the shopkeeper's comments about the bowl, which lead her into practically predicting her own fate in the novel. Eventually, Charlotte's observation about Mrs. Assingham is thrown back on Charlotte herself, justifiably, because even though Charlotte has been wronged, disregarded by Fanny when she meddled in Amerigo's affairs, Charlotte should feel the need for mercy as well as justice, some sense of pity for the pain of another. Such sympathy is clearly lacking in Charlotte's perception of Fanny's dilemma. Although this scene is not to be considered one of the major dramatic episodes in the novel, it does tend to be a focal point for the critical controversy over the question of Charlotte's rhetorical intentions in the novel. Charlotte's lack of compassion for those in the community around her is evidenced by this scene. Pity, or the capacity to understand another human being's sorrow, is often in The Golden Bowl the catalyst for successful communication. Compassion draws people together and creates bonds between them and, without the capacity for sympathetic understanding, the capacity to project oneself imaginatively into another's dilemma, the character is indeed doomed to eventual isolation, to the
arranging of surfaces which have very little to do with the depths of human emotion.

The subtle development of the subplot of the Assinghams' hapless relationship demonstrates this thesis. The Assignhams constitute a struggling rhetorical community which finds resolution in a rhetorical bond inspired by compassion. It is a sub-plot which anticipates and complements the novel's more profound rhetorical resolution found in Maggie's and Amerigo's reconciliation, and which clarifies the distinction between Charlotte and Fanny which allows Fanny to be drawn in to the community of the novel while Charlotte remains without. Uncanny as it may seem, Fanny's personality is a composite of the single traits of each of the novel's most important characters which most alienate those individuals from forming or belonging to a successful, or stable, community.

As well pointed out by Ruth Yeazell, Bob Assingham and his wife Fanny do not seem rhetorically well matched:

... with his propensity for 'edit [ing] for their general economy the play of her mind, just as he edited, savingly, with the stump of a pencil, her redundant telegrams'... the Colonel begins to sound like some common-sense critic of the late style who
has mistakenly stumbled into a Jamesian world. It is as if William James, that blunt and often literal-minded reader of his brother's novels, had suddenly found himself trapped in marriage with one of Henry's characters (90).

Indeed, there seems something deliberately obdurate, even perverse in Bob Assingham's exasperated dismissals or misapprehensions of his wife's frequent soliloquies. It is fairly clear that Assingham distrusts his wife's use of him in the rhetorical process, and that he has good reason to do so. Assingham perceives that language for his wife is an egocentric process, used for self-delusion and cold intellectualization which emotionally distances Fanny completely from her husband. As a matter of fact, Fanny shares with Maggie one piece of history which may suggest a real basis for hypothesizing Fanny's negligence in her marriage. In speaking with her husband of Maggie's sense of duty to her father, she philosophizes:

'that a person can mostly feel but one passion -- one tender passion, that is -- at a time. Only that doesn't hold good for our primary and instinctive attachments, the 'voice of blood,' such as one's feeling
for a parent or a brother. Those may be intense and yet not prevent other intensities — as you'll recognize, my dear, when you remember how I continued, tout betement, to adore my mother, whom you didn't adore, for years after I had begun to adore you (353).

This remark, with its mention of the Colonel's estrangement from Fanny's mother, sounds a lot like a jibe; we have not seen much evidence that Fanny adores her husband, and this remark may suggest that her affinities have always been elsewhere. Fanny may neglect her husband, diverting her interests to other areas, just as Maggie in the beginning of her marriage persistently neglects her husband. Assingham's contempt for Fanny's elaborate verbal machinations seems directly tied to his sense that Fanny dismisses him; both her language use and oblique dismissals of her husband imply an insincerity counter to effective communication.

Fanny's verbal insincerity, however, is not a product of her feelings for her husband; it is just one more way in which she excludes him. Her constant speculations, what Yeazell calls "her obsessive and seemingly endless analysis of character and motive" are obsessive
exercises in moral rationalization. As Yeazell states, "it is Fanny's anguished sense of responsibility for the circumstances of the novel which motivates her elaborate explanations . . . . Like Kate Croy, Charlotte Stant, and finally Maggie herself, Fanny must thus construct an acceptable interpretation of events -- one which avoids any hint of danger or discord" (92).

Although Yeazell's reading of The Golden Bowl is undeniably perceptive, I disagree with her major conclusions that there is no basis for a sound judgment of Charlotte and that such disparate characters as Charlotte and Maggie have the same character motivations, literally, the same type of character. Kate Croy and Charlotte Stant belong in a category separate from Maggie and Fanny, and even Fanny and Maggie are actually distinct from one another in their use of language to construct or interpret events. Fanny, in her use of language to secure a sense of moral safety, is most like Amerigo. Both respond instinctively to the necessity of being morally straight, but neither is willing to assume responsibility for either maintaining or breaking those laws. Fanny's and Amerigo's vulnerability is not their respect for moral stability but the self-deceptions they will endure to retain the illusion of it once they have broken, somehow, from their own moral
sense. Such a break, if openly admitted, would represent for them a plunge into chaos.

Kate and Charlotte do not manipulate language out of this moral concern. Their art does not engage itself with the philosophical question of a person's "rightness": it is simply pragmatically constructed to achieve a desired end. As Elizabeth Owen notes, Charlotte uses 'straightness' as a weapon: it is not a natural, unconscious virtue but a conscious effect."20 At the point in the novel when Fanny's faulty rhetoric gives way to her honest emotional expression of her own guilt, Bob Assingham becomes reconciled to his wife's rhetoric. From the well-springs of pity stirred up by Assingham's observation of his wife's helpless outburst of emotion, Assingham achieves with his wife a rhetoric of identification which foreshadows Amerigo's ultimate reconciliation with Maggie because the successful rhetorical community is one bred from compassion, honest acknowledgement between two individuals of the true facts of any given situation, and one bred from the assumption of moral responsibility.

Fanny's guilty hysteria finally surfaces because Maggie hints to her, upon Amerigo and Charlotte's delay at Matcham, that she knows something is amiss and that Fanny is her natural source to turn to. Relating her recent
ordeal with Maggie to her husband, Fanny is incapable of moral evasion:

She went on suddenly with more emotion — which, at the pressure of some spring of her inner vision, broke out in a wail of distress imperfectly smothered. 'Whatever they've done I shall never know. Never, never — because I don't want to and because nothing will induce me. So they may do as they like. But I've worked for them all!' She uttered this last with another irrepressible quaver, and the next moment her tears had come, though she had, with the explosion, quitted her husband as if to hide it from him. She passed into the dusky drawing-room where during his own prowl shortly previous he had drawn up a blind, so that the light of the street-lamps came in a little at the window. She made for this window, against which she leaned her head, while the Colonel, with his lengthened face, looked after her for a minute and hesitated (338).
The texture of Bob Assingham's response to his wife's emotion is Hawthornian. Her tears are the necessary penitence to re-establish contact with the community. The manner of response, however, is uniquely Jamesian: successful communication between the two will be mediated, in Assingham's perception, on the level of language:

He might have been trying to guess what she had really done . . . But to hear her cry and yet do her best not to was quickly enough too much for him . . . . Yet the effect of this small crisis, oddly enough, was not to close their colloquy . . . what was between them had opened out further, had somehow, through the sharp show of her feeling, taken a positive stride, had entered, as it were, without more words, the region of the understood, shutting the door after it and bringing them so still more nearly face to face . . . . And the beauty of what thus passed between them, passed with her cry of pain, with her burst of tears, with his wonderment and his kindness and his comfort, with the moments of their
silence, above all, which might have represented their sinking together, hand in hand for a time, into the mystic lake where he had begun, as we have hinted, by seeing her paddle alone -- the beauty of it was that they now could really talk better than before, because the basis had at last once for all defined itself (338-9).

Significantly, James describes this scene of reconciliation in terms evocative of sexual intercourse, but when we realize that what is being reconciled is the sense of community and communication between two people, it strikes one that, for James, the rhetorical communion of one soul with another is the highest passion. Although this basis constitutes a continuance of bathing Amerigo and Charlotte in a language of innocence, this interchange between Fanny and her husband acknowledges the underlying reality beneath the deceptive language and the impossibility of maintaining a deception so false. Although Ruth Yeazell asserts that 'the Colonel comes to the rescue by helping to articulate a theory which denies the existence of any threat,' and that "in the end Fanny struggles to create for herself and the others a sustaining fiction," (95 & 97), neither Fanny nor her husband really believes
that simply an articulated theory can change the reality of the facts as they exist. The Colonel agrees to a rhetoric which will save the Prince and Charlotte, "so far as consistently speaking of them as still safe might save them" (339). [italics mine]. There is a sense implied in this of the limitations of deceptive language. Future change can indeed be initiated through language, but the reality of concrete actual past events can not be dissolved through any magical unsaying. Therefore, although the sub-plot of the Assinghams may anticipate Maggie's final reconciliation with Amerigo, it does not have the courage of that final reconciliation because the Assinghams may acknowledge moral responsibility but they do not act out the consequences of that moral responsibility by reverting to honest actions and language in the human community.

When Yeazell, therefore, suggests that "in their serio-comic fashion, then, the Assinghams anticipate the final movement of the novel — Maggie Verver's own effort to save her world by speaking of it as safe," (97) Ms. Yeazell eludes the essential distinction between Fanny's and Maggie's imaginative projections, the distinction which explains why in her dealings with Charlotte, Maggie emerges victorious while Fanny remains so helpless. While Fanny's fictions try to cover past events which cannot be changed, Maggie's course of action is to confront the ghost of the
past which haunts her and to exorcise it by obdurately presenting the Prince with the proofs of his moral irresponsibility. Her only hope is to insist that the Prince face the reality of his immoral actions through direct perception of Maggie's knowledge and to insist that he transform himself into the person who conforms exactly to the language of moral safety that the community has heretofore been deceptively using; that he, indeed, become innocent. With everyone but the Prince, Maggie uses the language of moral safety out of pity and to throw them, especially Charlotte, off the track of her gradual and persistent line of argument with the Prince. That line of argument is to be direct with him, and honest, and, in the language of pragmatics, thus to make her claim.

The need for moral safety is also the motivating factor behind Maggie's hyperbolic and extravagant use of metaphor, according to Yeazell, who claims that, "if James's people dwell in a radically metaphoric world, it is at least in part because they find the reality of fact and feeling so terrifying" (59). It is indeed true that Maggie's metaphors arise out of a need for security, but not necessarily in the sense that Yeazell suggests, that some of the truths James's characters have to confront seem just too painful to be borne. Moral security in the Jamesian world bears a significance more existential. It
is bound up with one's sense of culture and the way that individual identity, as a microcosm of culture, absorbs the shock of change which threatens its equilibrium. Metaphorizing, the mental process of absorbing new information by sensing its reference to something familiar, is the method through which the mind gropes toward new horizons. A violent proliferation of various metaphors which seem in some sense discordant, might signal a consciousness undergoing a radical change which is struggling to absorb the new information it is receiving in any way that it can.

Quentin Anderson provides a valuable segment of a lecture James delivered in the United States right after the publication of The Golden Bowl. The segment confirms the respect James accorded language and its role in the establishment of healthy human intercourse:

'All life therefore comes back to the question of our speech, the medium through which we communicate with each other; for all life comes back to the question of our relations with each other. These relations are made possible, are registered, are verily constituted by our speech, and are successful. . . in proportion as our speech is worthy of its great human and social
function; is developed, delicate, flexible, rich -- an adequate accomplished fact. The more it suggests and expresses the more we live by it -- the more it promotes and enhances life. Its quality, its authenticity, its security, are hence supremely important for the general multifold opportunity, for the dignity and integrity, of our existence.'

One can quickly see how important it was to James that language be worthy of its function of sponsoring profound human relations.

In light of this evaluation, Charlotte could be considered the novel's consummate structuralist. She treats language as a dead system with no meaning outside itself. She treats reality also as a surface with no outside reference point which can be altered by a re-shuffling of meaningless terms used to label it. Her absence of value-attached words is of course contradicted by the fact that she uses words deliberately to achieve her own ends, knowing the value that others assign to them. Though the word "innocent" may be meaningless to her, she knows its value to others. Charlotte comes to the novel, apparently, rigidly formed. The life of her mind remains
independent from, and superior to, language. If Charlotte is the structuralist in *The Golden Bowl*, Maggie plays out the other possible route which pragmatism can take and becomes the novel's phenomenologist. Maggie comes to know language with all of its possible uses, but in her use of metaphor to discover her new world with Amerigo, she uses language vitally, as the medium through which the mind absorbs new data, which, in its discordance from what is known, sometimes verges on the chaotic.

At the beginning of Volume II, the narrator seems to enter into an exquisite sympathy with Maggie. This is not surprising, if what Gabriel Pearson observes about the late James style is accurate. According to Pearson, in James's late narrative:

James is there in all his bulky, breathing, punctilious selfhood. Never for one moment does style lapse into the dim unconsciousness of mere prose. The efforts of his heroes are one with his own -- they live out an epic of attentiveness analogous to that of his composition of them. . . . The climax of a late James novel occurs when one of the characters' consciousnesses -- Strether's, Merton Densher's, Maggie's --
fuses, as it were, with James's own: this gives James's consciousness a kind of social endorsement and extension, suggesting the possibility -- which it is most difficult for a novelist, of all kinds of writers, to do without -- of some spiritual community with others, even if those others are his own fictitious characters.

This community with Maggie James seems to avow openly since he clarifies the fact that he is literally creating her metaphors and those metaphors seem to go in and out of Maggie's consciousness and the narrator's as if Maggie's process of metaphorizing is so new to her that it requires aid from some outside source to be on the level of the articulate. The narrator explains that Maggie's "ingenuity was thus a private and absorbing exercise, in the light of which, might I so far multiply my metaphors, I should compare her to the frightened but clinging young mother of an unlawful child" (6-7). The narrator calls this analogy "his," and continues to extend it, suggesting that Maggie's child is her new idea and that that idea, "more to her than anything on earth," is "the force of the feeling that bound her to her husband" (7). When the new
unlawful idea is passion for one's husband, one might question why Maggie does not feel she has that right.

Maggie does not feel she has that right because to enter into full relation with her husband, she would have to enter into imaginative sympathy with him and that new identification would threaten the equilibrium of her community with her father, thus threatening Maggie's old sense of identity. Maggie is not only concerned about her own equilibrium, but also about her father's. She dreads "the possibility of some consequence disagreeable or inconvenient to others -- especially to such others as had never incommoded her by the egotism of their passions . . ." (7). Since Maggie perceives her father as a selfless man -- regardless of how much the reader might wonder whether he is not lazy, weak, or, in actual fact, quite a bit selfish -- Maggie feels a responsibility to preserve her father's moral equilibrium when he makes no efforts to do so himself. She can only do this by not following through on the action she initiates when she marries Amerigo. In retrospect, she considers that she has constructed a symbolic pagoda when she marries Amerigo which she has not entered:

The pagoda in her blooming garden figured the arrangement -- how otherwise was it to
be named? - by which, so strikingly, she
had been able to marry without breaking, as
she liked to put it, with her past. She
had surrendered herself to her husband
without the shadow of a reserve or a condi­
tion and yet hadn't all the while given up
her father by the least little inch
(II,4-5).

This unwavering attachment to her father is
precisely Maggie's problem because, in the case of a
husband and a father making claims, she cannot satisfy two
contradictory claims at the same time. Without breaking
with her past, Maggie perceives the pagoda as simply a
monument which does not directly enter her experience:
"She had walked round and round it . . . never quite making
out as yet where she might have entered had she wished.
She hadn't wished till now. . ." (II,3). The desire to
enter Amerigo's life and to enter into relation with him is
the new idea Maggie responds to as she would to an unlawful
child because "she hadn't certainly arrived at the con­
ception of paying with her life for anything she might
do." The very consciousness that something might be
lacking in her life is one purchased at the price of her
own moral stability and that of her father. Maggie had
succeeded, she thought, in purchasing the experience of marriage without having to suffer any change in herself and "what had moreover all the while enriched the whole aspect of success was that the latter's marriage [her father's] had been no more measurably paid for than her own" (II,5).

What Maggie fears is the existential threat to her own stable identity that interaction with any divergent culture would threaten. Any identity facing a new experience is, in a sense, innocent to that experience because the individual inevitably faces any unknown experience with a certain amount of naivety, although the degree of innocence lessens with experience as the possibility of encountering the unknown recedes. However, Maggie's American background can foster a grosser innocence, one which willfully blocks the experience by nurturing ignorance, a mentality which encourages almost a wilful disregard for complications, a sort of transcendental retreat into the abstract where foreign thoughts do not threaten one's sense of equilibrium because they are virtually ignored:

They were there, these accumulations; they were like a roomful of confused objects, never as yet 'sorted,' which for some time now she had been passing and re-passing,
along the corridor of her life. She passed it when she could without opening the door; then, on occasion, she turned the key to throw in a fresh contribution. So it was that she had been getting things out of the way. They rejoined the rest of the confusion; it was as if they found their place, by some instinct of affinity, in the heap. They knew in short where to go, and when she at present by a mental act once more pushed the door open she had practically a sense of method and experience (II, 13).

The "method and experience" is a particularly American one; I think that Maggie describes here what James might suggest to be the composition of the American mind, that mind which does not refine itself through experience, since experience is never really absorbed. Maggie's response appears to correspond to the definition Frederick J. Hoffman offers of the American of Henry James's time: "He is defined in the negative of his own choosing: having rejected the forms of his past, he is momentarily without any forms; remembering tradition only vaguely, he puts almost all of his energy
into a present and a future that are seen rather than comprehended; he is impulsively optimistic because his free circumstance apparently is infinitely renewable, though he has not time to define it."  

Maggie's American mind warns her against even questioning "the ivory tower, visible and admirable doubtless from any point of the social field" (6). Nevertheless, Maggie does begin to question the complacency of the social arrangement and her own role in it, beginning to feel that her own sense of moral stability is indeed threatened:

Maggie's actual reluctance to ask herself with proportionate sharpness why she had ceased to take comfort in the sight of it represented accordingly a lapse from that ideal consistency on which her moral comfort almost at any time depended. To remain consistent she had always been capable of cutting down more or less her prior term (II,6).

Maggie's system, at the beginning of Volume II, is in a state of transition and instability because she is no longer cutting down her prior term; she is now beginning to face experiences honestly: "Moving for the first time in
her life as in the darkening shadow of a false position, she reflected that she should either not have ceased to be right — that is to be confident — or have recognized that she was wrong. . . " (II,6). The false position represents Maggie's consciousness in flux. Even as Maggie expresses apprehension, however, her verbalization demonstrates her imaginative powers, her respect for knowledge and her openness to receive it, a receptivity which would encourage the very change she fears. Nicola Bradbury points to the dramatization inherent in Maggie's selection of the closed door image to describe her unformed mind; Maggie's images — her own and those ascribed to her by the narrator — are not used arbitrarily to "cover" truths but are mined repetitiously for the truth they will render. Although Yeazell points out the way that Maggie uses metaphors to probe herself and guide herself into new self-discoveries, giving as an example the spaniel metaphor which engages Maggie in thoughts about the spaniel that she then indirectly applies to herself, Yeazell makes no distinction between this form of thought and the way that metaphors are used by the other characters. Indeed, as Bradbury points out, Fanny's metaphors involve a "structuralist obliteration of personality . . . wishing 'to leave well behind her both her question and the couple in whom it had, abruptly, taken such vivid form . . . . What
Adam and Fanny, in their different ways, take as the 'answer' to uncomfortable questions, remains for Maggie an approach, the issue from a 'repeated challenge' into a 'first opportunity'" (165). In other words, Maggie assigns language an integrity by her creative use of it, that is absent in the other characters who are not engaged with it epistemologically but simply use it to label or mis-label things already known.

One might argue that Maggie's dependency on language is only a result of her lack of experience, and that, by the end of the novel, Maggie is just as much a conscious manipulator as Charlotte. Since, in her management of appearances, Charlotte seems so much more charming, we leave the novel bemused at best, with the image of Maggie, a pallid trembling novice standing victoriously by the side of the resigned Prince while her skillful predecessor is consigned to banishment. Or worse, we perceive that the victor in the battle for the Prince is the one far more morally reprehensible. That, at least, is the feeling of Yeazell, who believes that "For the moral comfort of its readers at least, there is a sense in which The Golden Bowl thus gives us a heroine who knows not too little but too much" (113). According to Yeazell, Maggie is presented as consciously aware and triumphant about the deceptions she engages in while our lack of knowledge about Charlotte's
thoughts makes us uncertain about her level of awareness concerning the deceptions she practices. Possibly, as Yeazell suggests, Charlotte deludes herself as well as others about her own innocence and, thus, Maggie's obvious "consciousness of self" and "the possibility of the others' pain" make her actions seem much more troubling. Far more morally satisfying are those prior Jamesian characters like Milly Theale, whose awareness runs the natural course of self-sacrifice.  

Such an argument proceeds from several mistaken assumptions; first, that Charlotte deludes herself into thinking she is innocent rather than being simply unconcerned and morally lax; and, second, that Maggie has, in her later involvements with deception, at all departed from her own sense of innocence and respect for the fundamental integrity of language. In actual fact, Maggie accounts almost obsessively for her own role in conscious deceptions because she feels so uncomfortable in this role; Maggie does indeed know what the truth is and within her inherently resides the norm for what is honest behavior. Outward departure from that norm, from her sense of "ideal moral consistency" is perceived by Maggie to be a sacrifice, a response offered to the world prompted by love for her husband and father, and out of pity for Charlotte.
The compromise of her innocence was the price Maggie had not intended to pay when she married Amerigo. What Maggie tries to purchase when she marries Amerigo is experience, the accumulated experience which his cultural background provides, but she actually hopes to possess experience vicariously, while retaining her cultural innocence. Her acceptance of the Principino as a further link between herself and her father, virtually ignoring the link between herself and the father of her child, shows her perhaps subconscious determination to remain disengaged with Amerigo. What she discovers instead when she does become aware of Amerigo's distance is that innocence and experience are incompatible, although the residual effects of American innocence, the desire to trust others and the desire to engage oneself in honest discourse, are fundamental to the successful rhetorical community.

Maggie's American innocence consists of unquestioning faith in the literal, of a fundamental reliance on appearances to provide accurate representations of reality. As Frederick J. Hoffman states, this reliance of the consciousness receptive to experience on the literal level means for James first a solid recognition of the physical world. For James, according to Hoffman, "Buildings and patterns - the external, architectural evidences of realized forms - - help to identify the success or failure
of conscious life. One is almost always aware in his novels of the intimate and revealing correspondence of mind and things seen, handled, lived in and with. Not coincidentally, Maggie first accepts Charlotte's and Amerigo's duplicity unquestioningly, unswervingly, when she handles the golden bowl. The rhetoric exchanged between Maggie and the shopkeeper is a perfect American transaction. Maggie's apparent faith in him prompts the shopkeeper to confirm it by telling her that the golden bowl is faulty. He tells her this metaphorically also when he links two things in the physical world, Amerigo's picture and the golden bowl's past. The literal appearances mirror the underlying reality and Maggie knows this to be true because, first, the shopkeeper has no reason to lie and, second, he has already validated Maggie's trust in him. It is fitting that American Maggie's certain epiphany is an immediate response to the tangible reality of the golden bowl.

Such an assumption of innocence, although impossible to uphold in the sphere of human relationships where other individuals will not necessarily comply with one's good faith, still endows the individual with some fundamental sense of obligation to what one knows to be true: the historical facts of his own existence in relation
with others so far as he can literally observe those relationships as they have actually unfolded in the past, and the power and authority which language has to identify the status of those relationships accurately. These assumptions, bred from an innocent faith in the world, are the stabilizing influence in any rhetorical endeavor, successful communication, and establishment of community.

Maggie's innocence, when she "breaks away" from it in order to engage with others in relationships more subtle, will still function in terms of providing her with a norm from which she will deviate, but only consciously and for good purpose, and which will always remain with her, as the desire which informs her life and endows her, in her dealings with other human beings, with all the qualities of the humanist. The emphasis in Volume II on Maggie's awareness of every deceptive act signals her moral alertness and the times that she does engage in deception are clearly deviations from her own need for honesty. She clearly approaches the manipulation of appearances with a strong sense of being morally obliged to do as little damage as possible to the integrity of other human beings while making possible for her and her husband the honest rhetorical relationship they need to establish. Maggie's deviations, although exhilarating to her as a new mode of experience, do not overwhelm her own need to engage in
honest rhetoric nor her own need to respect the emotional needs of others. The emphasis in Volume II on Maggie's sense of pity for others and on her acknowledgement of their pain contrasts sharply with Charlotte's lack of concern for Fanny's agony, or, really, for Amerigo's moral dilemma, which Charlotte ruthlessly exploits for her own ends. Charlotte puts no faith in any ideal larger than herself and threatens the whole sense of community with her iconoclasm. Again, as Sterner paraphrases James's description in The American Scene of how culture is perpetuated, "the motion of change itself must express an underlying loyalty to some principle other than itself, a principle which gives it its continuity."

The companion scenes where Charlotte and Maggie engage in conscious deception illustrate well the contrast between their fundamental motivations for engaging in it. In the card game and gazebo scenes the situation of pursued and pursuer are reversed and one would expect, since Charlotte feels victorious in soliciting a false note of confidence in the first instance, that Maggie's second scene would elicit from her a similar note of triumph. Oddly enough, in both scenes Maggie's avowed sense is of her own sacrifice and, while in the first scene full of sinister undertones Charlotte approaches Maggie by literally stalking her and forcing her will, this is
followed up by the sombre tone of the second scene, where Maggie approaches Charlotte out of pity, with the intention of alleviating Charlotte's pain as best she can by at least leaving her with the sense of her own dignity.

What is important to remember is that Maggie is the heroine who suffers in both scenes, not because of what Charlotte says but because of what Charlotte forces Maggie to do, experience "the coldness of their conscious perjury." The value of the spoken word and its role in naming reality is for Maggie a thing sacred. When Charlotte abandons the card game to seek out Maggie, in her immense prowling dignity a "splendid shining supple creature," Maggie discovers "She had literally caught herself in the act of dodging and ducking, and it told her there vividly, in a single word, what she had all along been most afraid of" (II, 211). This is a great temptation scene, where the sacred ideal of rhetoric is betrayed with a kiss, for the sake of an actual community which has been discovered by Maggie to be perverse, a sham. Yet Charlotte again succeeds in spiritually blackmailing an individual by appealing to their fear of losing moral stability, although the threatened victim is not Maggie but her father. Charlotte's ruthless ability to exploit the emotional weaknesses of others is evident here also, because while Fanny and Amerigo have a need for self-delusion to protect
their own moral consciences, Maggie's blind spot is her father. Maggie is not deluded about the community's underlying chaos but she thinks that her father is.

One might say that Amerigo, Fanny, and Maggie pragmatically adopt an ideal larger than themselves to invest their life with meaning and that Charlotte, iconoclast that she is, threatens the spiritual element in each by exploiting it as a vulnerable area. For Fanny and Amerigo, the pragmatic ideal is moral "straightness" and for Maggie, that ideal is the innocence of her father. In each case, the individual is not willing to take responsibility for the way that ideal will be inevitably compromised when translated into action and for the way that their own very human desires might confute the ideal. Fanny's desire to play matchmaking games, Amerigo's passion for Charlotte, and Maggie's marriage to Amerigo all confute their ideals to some extent. And Charlotte cleverly identifies the weakness in each and capitalizes on their need for self-delusion.

Charlotte takes Maggie to the window where the Prince, Adam, and the Assinghams are playing cards and shows Maggie, compellingly, that if Maggie is to protect her father's innocence, it is Charlotte's falsified interpretation of the scene which Maggie must accept:
They presently went back the way she had come, but she stopped Maggie again within range of the smoking-room window and made her stand where the party at cards could be before her . . . . As she herself had hovered in sight of it a quarter of an hour before, it would have been a thing for her to show Charlotte -- to show in righteous irony, in reproach too stern for anything but silence. But now it was she who was being shown it, and shown it by Charlotte, and she saw quickly enough that as Charlotte showed it so she must at present submissively seem to take it.

The others were absorbed and unconscious and it was to her father's quiet face, discernibly expressive of nothing that was in his daughter's mind, that our young woman's attention was most directly given. His wife and his daughter were both closely watching him, and to which of them, could he have been notified of this, would his raised eyes first, all impulsively, have responded? in which of them would he have felt it most important
to destroy -- for his clutch at the
equilibrium -- any germ of uneasiness?
Not yet since his marriage had Maggie so
sharply and formidably known her old
possession of him as a thing divided and
contested . . . . It came home to her too
that the challenge wasn't, as might be
said, in his interest and for his
protection, but pressingly, insistently in
Charlotte's, for that of her security at
any price . . . . She was to remain safe and
Maggie must pay -- what she was to pay
with being her own affair (215-16).

Besides temporarily capitulating to Charlotte to
save her father's innocence, Maggie emerges from this scene
with the crucial realizations that will ultimately estrange
her from her sterile ideal community with her father and
cause her to transfer her loyalties to a more vital
rhetorical community with her husband. First, Maggie's
sense of discrepancy between what Charlotte forces her to
say and what Maggie knows to be true amounts for Maggie to
an act of violence. Her indirect questioning of her father
deals with the possibility that he has possibly even
consciously abandoned her to this fate and this doubting of
her father is counterbalanced by her corresponding sense of closer community with Amerigo, who "had to think how he on his side had had to go through with his lie to her [Charlotte]" (II, 221). Maggie's desire for truthful intercourse, which has been inspired and then betrayed by her own wilfully innocent American cultural background, has been transferred to a more realistic and sophisticated ground in terms of human experience -- to a sense of union with her husband, where deception can be a pragmatic factor, a useful tool, but one used strictly in light of protecting a community whose fundamental unity lies in shared truths:

He [Amerigo] had given her something to conform to, and she hadn't unintelligently turned on him, 'gone back on' him, as he would have said, by not conforming. They were together thus, he and she, close, close together -- whereas Charlotte, though rising there radiantly before her, was really off in some darkness of space that would steep her in solitude and harass her with care. The heart of the Princess swelled accordingly even in her abasement; she had kept in tune with the right, and
With this affirmation, Maggie not all consciously prepares to give back to her father responsibility for protecting himself, thus sacrificing her loyalty to the obscure transcendental deity of American culture, and still retaining the desire for innocence, she affirms a more private community with Amerigo based on a clear vision of the world's possible evils.

To understand why Maggie's private community with Amerigo is more valid than Charlotte's, one need only recall the initial claims each had upon him, and the relative worthiness of those claims. In light of these, Charlotte's and Amerigo's is a sham community, a perverted deviation from the real community, from its very beginning. Charlotte's re-claiming of a community with Amerigo is based on dishonest rhetoric between the two. As
noted, their liaison at novel's outset is initiated under false pretenses and its perpetuation depends on Charlotte's and Amerigo's dishonest reassurances to each other than their actions are innocent if no-one detects their guilt.

Once she discovers the truth, however, about her husband's deception, Amerigo is the one person with whom Maggie insists upon being honest. It is through her insistence to Amerigo that he face the certain fact of her knowledge that she wins back her husband, because the self-image reflected in Amerigo's eyes will not be one he can endure. She literally exorcises Amerigo of his well-ingrained adherence to a perverse morality, an exorcism which he understandably fights because his sense of an identity linked with Charlotte has been stabilized into habit through his time with her and reinforced by his passionate relationship with her. Amerigo tries to seduce Maggie into silence, using his sexual power over her as a means of overwhelming her emerging ego so that he can remain safe within the old moral system. Courageous and desperately unhappy, Maggie resists her own need for Amerigo in order to remain before him a symbol of his own dishonesty. Maggie is the only character in the novel who manages to insist on maintaining a relationship based on honesty with someone who is trying to seduce her through
passion to do otherwise. Amerigo's rhetorical persuasion, according to Maggie, is not that of words, but derives from what Olive Chancellor fears from Basil for her Verena: from sexual magic, which Maggie has to fight with all her will:

She gave up, let her idea go, let everything go; her one consciousness was that he was taking her again into his arms. It was not till afterwards that she discriminated as to this; felt how the act operated with him instead of the words he hadn't uttered -- operated in his view as probably better than any words, as always better in fact at any time than anything. Her acceptance of it, her response to it, inevitable, foredoomed, came back to her later on as a virtual assent... that there was really nothing such a demonstration didn't anticipate and didn't dispose of, and also that the spring acting within herself might well have been beyond any other the impulse legitimately to provoke it. It made, for any issue, the third time since his return that he had drawn her to his breast; and at
present, holding her to his side as they left the room, he kept her close for their moving into the hall and across it. He had been right, overwhelmingly right, as to the felicity of his tenderness and the degree of her sensibility, but even while she felt these things sweep all others away she tasted of a sort of terror of the weakness they produced in her. It was still for her that she had positively something to do, and that she mustn't be weak for this, must much rather be strong (II, 26).

After this first scene when Amerigo, returning from Matcham, has his wife's suspicions somewhat quelled, on subsequent occasions, forewarned, Maggie absolutely refuses this threatening temptation:

She had, in her compressed state, another pause, and it made her feel as if she were immensely resisting. Strange enough was this sense for her, and altogether new, the sense of possessing, by miraculous help, some advantage that, absolutely then and there, in the carriage, as they rolled, she might either give up or keep. Strange,
inexpressibly strange -- so distinctly she saw that if she did give it up she should somehow give up everything for ever. And what her husband's grasp really meant, as her very bones registered, was that she should give it up: it was exactly to this that he had resorted to unfailing magic. He knew how to resort to it -- he could be on occasion, as she had lately more than ever learned, so munificent a lover. . . . She should have but to lay her head back on his shoulder with a certain movement to make it definite for him that she didn't resist. To this as they went every throb of her consciousness prompted her -- every throb, that is, but one, the throb of her deeper need to know where she 'really' was (50).

One might say that the throb of Maggie's deeper need to pursue honestly her real situation in relation to others is an evolutionary consequence of her own American cultural background. Through his characterization of Maggie, James seems to suggest that although the clearest result of American innocence is a willed defensiveness
against the knowledge gained through experience, a young American lady might be prompted instead to apply that moral innocence toward a true understanding of experience, toward "picking small shining diamonds out of the sweepings of her ordered house" (II, 57) instead of storing away vague perceptions in a cluttered room: "She bent, in this pursuit, over her dust-bin; she challenged to the last grain the refuse of her innocent economy" (37).

The effects of the earlier type of American innocence which James seems to be describing in the portrait of Maggie is a receptivity to and desire to believe in the fundamental good faith of individuals involved in the communication process. This desire and willingness to believe in other human beings seems to be a residual effect of the transcendental lack of experience with duplicity, long after experience has been gained. This desire to believe in the ability to communicate is the essential assumption for successful rhetoric, at least, for successful rhetoric as defined historically by moral rhetoricians such as George Campbell. In his characterization of Maggie, James suggests that there might be something in American innocence which, weaned from American soil, might prove to be more beneficial to Europeans than American money. Maggie's background merged with Amerigo's could provide an element invigorating and essential to
European culture. It would be the sort of contribution modern rhetorican Richard Weaver envisioned as America offering to the world when he recently wrote that "Europe has produced much that gratifies the aesthetic and intellectual sensibility; yet something has been left lacking. There has not been that affinity [that America has] between man and man which religious thought places even above the claims of beauty."\(^2\) When Amerigo first meets Maggie, he tells her, "it's you who are not of this age. You're a creature of a braver and finer one, and the cinquecento, at its most golden hour, wouldn't have been ashamed of you . . . . It would of me . . . ." (I, 12-13). This is not an unusual statement for Amerigo to make, because Maggie's faith is like that of the golden age of a culture; indeed, such faith provides the creative impulse for any thriving culture. Whereas Amerigo subscribes to moral straightness, to the accord between conduct and obligation, he adopts this moral attitude as a pragmatic function, as the way of living which he best believes will perpetuate cultural cohesion and the perpetuation of a thriving yet stable self-identity. A belief adopted pragmatically can easily be countered by the argument of another pragmatist, such as Charlotte, who proposes an alternate scheme that might seem to work better.
Maggie's moral conviction, however, is "Faith" or "Belief," and, as such, it has a stronger pull than pragmatic realities. A moral rhetorician, one whose rhetoric will always be directed toward the self or others with a certainty about the sacred nature of human trust, will always uphold the integrity of the community. He may pragmatically adopt a deceptive line, but always with a sense of sacrifice and in constant reference to what he knows to be true. It seems that James wants to consider the moral rhetorician as one possible alternative for the evolving American woman, and that, in doing so, he does not want to challenge so much the source of that innocence as to point out the positive effects such innocence can produce. That is why, I think, Adam Verver remains in the novel such a disturbing enigma, as impenetrable to the reader as to Prince Amerigo, who views him containing that special transcendental quality, "a dazzling curtain of light, concealing as darkness conceals, yet of the colour of milk or of snow. . . . The state of mind of his new friends . . . had resemblances to a great white curtain. He had never known curtains but as purple even to blackness -- but as producing where they hung a darkness intended and ominous" (20). As Yeazell states, "Adam Verver is at once a moral and an intellectual mystery: the Princess's arbitrary faith is a magnificent affirmation, but the
grounds on which it rests remain for us both suspect and obscure" (123). In Adam Verver, James appears to create a character deliberately ambiguous in terms of whether his involvement with others is innocent or subtly manipulative. The Freudian implications of his relationship with Maggie suggest that his wilfull innocence is a device to keep her in thrall, yet his willingness to marry Charlotte implies his desire to free Maggie at the same time. Verver is a "little" man, both physically, and, one might assume, mentally, although Fanny and Maggie, in his silence, see depths. And his deliberate possession of Charlotte at the end of the novel seems ruthless, indeed. One can attribute to Adam all the kind non-interference, or all the malevolence, of a Supreme Being.

It is possible that James's portrayal of Adam as the one ambiguous character in the novel is a reflection of his own consternation about the constitution of American innocence, which is so bound up with American money, and with a naievete' which seems almost wilfull. Yet Maggie's innocence differs from that of her father. Although she may purchase Amerigo initially as a possession, she comes to participate fully in the relationship and has always been able to respond to him sexually, while Adam gives Charlotte the sole status of possession and, in his relationship with her, he is apparently sexually sterile.
Yet Maggie's unswerving faith in her father need not cause her to become suspect, because, although she retains her moral integrity, she notably breaks away from its source. Regardless of Adam's moral status, and, therefore, regardless of the status of American innocence, America can seemingly parent offspring capable of enormous faith, which, if used judiciously, can be an invigorating influence in the world.

Maggie takes her faith and makes it a compelling force in her relationship with Amerigo, convincing him to return to his own sense of moral integrity and to restore "the golden bowl - as it was to have been. . . . The bowl with all our happiness in it. The bowl without the crack"; (II, 191) The Golden Bowl, as its initial rhetorical situation set up a cultural experiment, before Charlotte's intervention. Amerigo's and Charlotte's relationship had been "a community of passion" (II, 309). Maggie's claim on Amerigo is passionate commitment to a nobler relationship where passion is not wed to dishonesty, where there is "the still hoop of an intimacy compared with which artless passion would have been but a beating of the air" (125).

The possibility that Maggie has always offered Amerigo is a relationship based on honesty, but before Maggie gains knowledge of the real world and of her husband, she offers her husband no real basis for a relationship. One might say both metaphorically and literally that
without Charlotte's intervention, *The Golden Bowl* would not have been written; however, any jolt to Maggie's vague complacency would have accomplished the same end. With the knowledge gained about the golden bowl from the mysterious little shopkeeper, Maggie now offers her husband a basis for the relationship: "'Yes, look, look,'" she seemed to see him hear her say . . . "'look, look, both at the truth that still survives in that smashed evidence and at the even more remarkable appearance that I'm not a fool as you supposed" (166). Incidentally, it is Maggie's faith in the reality of the literal and in human nature which allows her to accept the shopkeeper's knowledge so unquestioningly and which thus eventually leads her to an acceptance of the world beyond that literal reality.

Upon acceptance of it, Maggie enters "his [Amerigo's] labyrinth with him. . . " so that she can "securely guide him out of it . . . " Significantly, the Prince's history which she had contemplated studying at greater length at the beginning of their marriage and then neglected, Maggie now returns to once again, paying "a visit to one of the ampler shrines charged with the gold-and-brown, gold-and-ivory, of old Italian bindings and consecrated to the records of the Prince's race" (II, 130). The obligation Maggie had at the beginning of the novel to get to know the Prince, so as to establish a
successful basis for their communication, has finally been fulfilled.

Maggie muses:

It was strange, if one had gone into it, but such a place as Amerigo's was like something made for him beforehand by innumerable facts, facts largely of the sort known as historical, made by ancestors, examples, traditions, habits; while Maggie's own had come to show simply as that improvised 'post' -- a post of the kind spoken of as advanced -- with which she was to have found herself connected in the fashion of a settler or a trader in a new country . . . (295).

Maggie's attempt to understand Amerigo's culture may still be in its primitive stages, yet it signals the start of a process which was very nearly aborted at the beginning of the novel, the process of the creation of a new cultural understanding. In speaking of James's technique in The American Scene, Gordon O. Taylor writes that on many occasions, "thinking more in a novelist's than in a landscape painter's terms, seeking to unfold a story rather than to present a completed picture, James emphasizes the
effort, even the violent struggle of the imagination to penetrate resistant, unarticulated material, rather than its noiseless drift across the perfectly composed surface of the previous scene" (92). It seems to me that James portrays Amerigo initially as an artist who, upon entrance into his relationship with Maggie is eager to penetrate the American mind, and thus, to conclude with Amerigo's and Maggie's tentative communicative overtures toward each other is to avoid the evasive harmony of The Bostonians and to brave the possibility that rhetoric involves struggle as well as faith, potential alienation as well as identification. Cultural growth can only occur through change, but as long as there is adherence to the fundamental ideal of the culture, the culture can absorb the change and maintain its stability.

Some critics suggest that Maggie's rhetorical achievement, however astounding, is won heartlessly at Charlotte's expense, especially since Maggie's intellectual evolution is a result of Charlotte's deception. Yet those critics do not consider that, given the initial assumptions at the beginning of the novel that an auspicious cultural merger is about to occur, from the novel's very inception to its conclusion, Charlotte has been the novel's perverse haunt. Charlotte's structural presence in The Golden Bowl is a threat to the novel's community network, which might
cause the reader to ask, as Maggie does, why "a creature who could be in some connexions so earnestly right could be in others so perversely wrong" (255). Maggie wonders, upon first consideration of the necessary division of Charlotte and Amerigo, "would no sombre ghosts of the smothered past on either side show across the widening strait pale unappeased faces, or raise in the very passage deprecating denouncing hands?" (II, 66). This is indeed what Charlotte does at the beginning of The Golden Bowl and those readers who, like Amerigo, are wooed to her devious rhetoric which attempts to reverse through superficial means the natural laws of the universe in motion, will be violently disturbed by her eventual exorcism from that universe because they will have been convinced of the superiority of a community which is actually perverse.

The significance of the second companion scene when Maggie approaches Charlotte in the gazebo is to show the sharp contrast between two types of rhetoric, that which is moral and that sophistic. Whereas Charlotte's pursual of Maggie to engage her in mutual deception is simple pragmatic application of any means to achieve a selfish end, Maggie comes to Charlotte bearing her handkerchief as a white flag after Charlotte's confidence game has been destroyed and she still, despite her repossession of Amerigo, returns to Charlotte in some sense
victimized by her own need to resort to deception which will allow Charlotte her sense of dignity.

Maggie is full of "the sacrifice . . . [she] had come to make" and that which Maggie perceives to be a sacrifice is her departure from honest rhetoric for the sake of making Charlotte a gift, the gift of her pride and, literally, the affirmation of her existence. It is important to remember that Maggie did not first remove from Charlotte the source of her passion; Amerigo chose, and at least partly for existential reasons, to remove himself from Charlotte. Charlotte's resumption of the affair was based on the dishonest premise that appearances can transform reality. Maggie can not be expected to sacrifice her own relationship with Amerigo for the sake of one with such inauspicious beginnings, nor should she, as a passionate woman herself, be expected to fight any less than Charlotte for Amerigo. Yet in this culminating scene between Maggie and Charlotte, she demonstrates how differently a rhetorician with compassion and nobility in her heart can deceive: for, rather than using her deception to gain her own ends, she uses it to save Charlotte, save Charlotte so far as the limitations of Charlotte's religion of appearances will allow, by helping Charlotte to preserve her sense that she "appears" guiltless: "'You recognize then that you've failed?" asked Charlotte from the threshold. Maggie
waited. . . . "I've failed!" she sounded out before
Charlotte, having given her time, walked away. She watched
her, splendid and erect, float down the long vista; then
she sank upon a seat. Yes, she had done all" (II, 280).

In his creation of Maggie, James has also indeed
done all, all that he could to create the fictional
ideology that had begun to crystalize in his creation of
Verena in The Bostonians: To create through implementation
of the innocence of his young American women, the moral
rhetorician who would, when transplanted to a culture more
profound, blossom on that soil, helping to bring about the
best of two cultures in a new culture, one where the
intensive need for honesty and compassion might temper
one's own solipsistic needs so that the community,
generated from human warmth and intellectual vision, might
not falter.
NOTES

where love madness promotes amorous confusions which are eventually resolved into a good social end. Quentin Anderson's deprecating study, "The Golden Bowl as a Cultural Artifact," in The Imperial Self: An Essay in American Literature and Cultural History New York: Knopf, 1971, pp. 201-44, asserts that James's oral and anal fixations compel him to create a merged consciousness which is androgynous and in its evasions of life's real stuff, such as sexual love and passion, is horrible. Gabriel Pearson's study follows the same lines but identifies the myth on a more rational level, suggesting that Maggie lives out life's tragedies vicariously, on an imaginative level, rather than through actual experience. He sees in The Golden Bowl "the tight, hysterically over-organized systems of Racine's drama . . ." ("The novel to end all novels," in The Air of Reality, ed. John Goode, (London: Methuen & Co., 1972). Finally there is F. O. Matthiessen's examination of the novel in The Major Phase (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1944), which suggests that The Golden Bowl is a decadent novel because the imperfectly innocent American consciousness is simply not an adequate objective correlative for James's myth of the merging of innocence and experience. I ran across no study which comfortably resolved the question of how Maggie's American traits aid her admirably in the acquisition of knowledge and the
establishing of a new culture. I think that the study of Maggie as an evolving moral rhetorician explains how James perceived American potential to be the stuff from which successful rhetoric, thus a successful culture, is nurtured.


3 Ronald Wallace observes that in the comic situation of The Golden Bowl, Adam and Charlotte "remain faithful to the same person throughout." This might lead to the suggestion that Adam and Charlotte are static emblems of the American and European cultures respectively; in their strict adherence to rigidified code and their resistance to change from an "other" cultural viewpoint, they leave no room for growth. They inevitably become corrupted and meaningless, inchoate systems within a structuralist universe. Communication prompted by narcissm inhibits intellectual and emotional expansion.

4 Most critics do not pick up on Charlotte's immediately manipulative behavior, preferring to see Charlotte's affair as thrust upon her by the easeful matrimonial circumstances invented by Maggie. Elizabeth Owen, however, takes as firm a stand as mine on the subject of
Charlotte's immediate and consistent predatory guilefulness: "In the pages in which Charlotte is introduced, all James's stress is on her preparedness, calculation and deliberate use of her opportunities. There is no softening excuse of blindness or lack of intention . . . " "The 'Given Appearance' of Charlotte Verver," *Essays in Criticism*, 13 (Oct., 1963), 364-74.


6 Interestingly, Frederick J. Hoffman ("Freedom and Conscious Form Henry James and the American Self," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 37 (1961), 169-185) points out that in an 1867 letter to his friend Thomas Sergeant Perry, Henry James points to this tendency to respond dynamically to cultural differences as one particularly American: "'We have exquisite qualities as a race, and it seems to me that we are ahead of the European races in the fact that more than either of them we can deal freely with forms of civilization not our own, can pick and choose and assimilate and in short (aesthetically etc.) claim our property wherever we find it . . . . I think it not unlikely that American writers may yet indicate that a vast intellectual fusion and synthesis of the various National
tendencies of the world is the condition of more important achievements than any we have seen" (275).


8There seems to be good reason to believe that marriage is the primary rhetorical relationship in many of James's novels. According to Munro Beattie, the figure in James's carpet is marriage, a respect for "the communion of lovers and the sharing of sacred secrets within the bonds of marriage" which translates specifically in The Golden Bowl into Maggie's ability "to re-order a sorry situation into a pattern of justice and love." ("The Many Marriages of Henry James," in Patterns of Commitment in American Literature, ed. Marston LaFrance Canada: U. of Toronto Press, 1967, 93-112.


10Elizabeth Owen concurs in the reading of this passage, inferring from it that Charlotte "has come back expressly to exact an intimate reunion with her lover on the eve of his marriage" (369).


13. In the words of Christof Wegelin, "... what distinguishes Charlotte essentially from Amerigo is that, in order to achieve her will, she can violate a conscience in her already weakened by corruption, in him not yet fully awake" ("The 'Internationalism' of 'The Golden Bowl,'" p. 171).

14. In fact, many critics have noted that the second volume of The Golden Bowl seems to be a re-write of the first which the shopkeeper's intercession at this point in the novel might seem to foreshadow. Nicola Bradbury, for example, quotes Leo Bersani as saying that "'Reality in The Golden Bowl consists in the novelistic arrangements of the first half; the second half gives us the correction, the unashamed radical revision which Maggie then makes of her own work'"(127). I would add that James often intercedes to aid Maggie's revision, creating, for example, a deux ex machina such as the shopkeeper.

15. Sanford, p. 215
Sallie Sears uses Maggie's phrase "cutting down more or less her prior terms" as the case upon which to build an indictment of all Maggie's subsequent actions in the novel, depicting Maggie as imposing a very narrow, simplified view of the world upon all the other characters, the principle rule of the universe Maggie authors being "that appearances, though they may be manipulated, must be preserved." Sears mistakenly applies this phrase to Maggie's future, not realizing this is the phrase Maggie uses to describe her now-discarded past. (Sallie Sears, The Negative Imagination Form and Perspective in
25 There is a long critical tradition of pro-Maggie, anti-Maggie arguments, which depends primarily on whether or not the critic can differentiate between the behavior of the later Maggie and Charlotte in a way positive to Maggie. Several antecedents for Ruth Yeazell's arguments against Maggie are Ferner Nuhn's *The Wind Blew from the East: A Study in The Orientation of American Culture* (New York and London: Harper & Row, 1940), pp. 144-54, Marius Bewley's, "Appearance and Reality in Henry James, *Scrutiny*, 17 (Summer, 1950), 90-127, and Sallie Sears's *The Negative Imagination Form and Perspective in the Novels of Henry James* (already cited.) Maggie's defenders, myself included, attempt to define the texture of Maggie's innocence which allows her to retain it once she gains knowledge of the world's duplicity and so evidently engages in it herself. Christof Wegelin, ("The 'Internationalism' of 'The Golden Bowl'") evades this issue entirely, simply outlining Maggie's maturing process and the suffering she undergoes. Mildred Hartsock defends Maggie against Charlotte as having the more legitimate claim, since she is married to Amerigo ("Unintentional Fallacy: Critics and The Golden Bowl," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 35 (Sept., 1974), 272-88. Most of these critics, and I think rightly, feel that James intends the reader...

26Hoffman, p. 276.

27Both Gabriel Pearson ("The novel to end all novels") and Philip Sicker, Love and the Quest for Identity in the Fiction of Henry James (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), allude to Maggie's desirable ability to remain aloof from her own passion. Sicker feels that the individual must remain forever in this state, living at least several people, so as not to lose sense of oneself by becoming immersed in one other person. Pearson feels that Maggie's ability to detach herself from her emotions is her greatest source of superior power.


29Critical interpretations of Adam abound; some suggesting that James intended Adam to seem innocent but that to the reader this intention seems absurd (Pearson, Matthiessen) or deliberately ambiguous (Yeazell) and some that James's portrait
of Adam as innocent is successful (Hartsock, "Unintentional Fallacy. . . "). Frederick Crews's analysis (The Tragedy of Manners, Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1957) and F. O. Matthiessen's, leave open the possibility, without quite overtly suggesting it, that Maggie's innocence is to be distinguished from that of her father. Crew's finds Maggie's faith produced by her trust in her father's competence more important than the question of Adam's actual status, and Matthiessen suggests that the American innocence James is trying to dramatize is more successfully portrayed in a woman than in a man. Incidentally, in this light, one might remember James's depiction in The American Scene of Innocent Nature as a woman.


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