The Golden Bowl

HENRY JAMES

THE GOLDEN BOWL

Henry James

Introduction and Notes by
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Wordsworth Classics are inexpensive editions designed to appeal to the general reader and students. We commissioned teachers and specialists to write wide ranging, jargon-free introductions and to provide notes that would assist the understanding of our readers rather than interpret the stories for them. In the same spirit, because the pleasures of reading are inseparable from the surprises, secrets and revelations that all narratives contain, we strongly advise you to enjoy this book before turning to the Introduction.

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INTRODUCTION

The Golden Bowl tells an old story, the adult romance of adultery, set amongst the rich and glamorous, in a novel built around a symbolic work of art. Its dazzling opulence disguises 'abysmal' desire. What the novel deals with is not the thing itself, the precious object or the human situation, but with what it means, and how to read the meaning; with seeing through appearances; and finally, with recognising the absolute otherness of what stands outside the self. This is a novel dominated by solid materialism, but directed towards a different reality, an inner world of feeling and imagination. It is a work of exploration, of analysis. It is also an emotional drama, exciting and draining to read, where spectators are drawn in to the dangers they help to create.

The title resonates with beauty, luxury, antiquity; with the splendid formality of state banquets, perhaps. It bespeaks a whole civilisation.

But such an image belongs irretrievably to the past. Such feasts, such empires, whether from Classical or Renaissance Europe, the Ottoman Turks, the Near or Far East (all obliquely invoked in this text through metaphor and simile), have fallen, fractured by internal flaws, like the bowl: as the British Empire itself was about to do at the turn of the last century when this novel was written and set. 'If it was a question of an *Imperium*' (p. 3), Henry James's country, the USA, was growing towards international economic domination, but already scarred by civil war.

James himself, already an acknowledged master if not a financial superstar in the world of fiction, was at that stage of his career where empire-building requires consolidation. He wanted an assurance of the value of what he had done. He had been writing for forty years, moving from America to Europe, and then settling in Britain, taking as his subject the 'International Theme' through which these interconnected but distinct cultures can be explored, as they are in this novel. Besides criticism and travel writings, short stories and fiction, he had made a serious if unsuccessful attempt at drama, and studied the visual arts. All these disciplines contribute to his work, which is both eager to observe the decorum of form and drawn towards transgression, as subject and in treatment. In 1907–9 James was to produce his collected New York edition: an act of summation and self-presentation designed as both an artistic statement and a commercial enterprise. *The Golden Bowl* is the last novel James wrote before turning his attention to the collected works, and in fact the last he finished. His New York edition turned out to be a financial failure, but has remained the high-water mark of James's conception of fiction: that ideal of which *The Golden Bowl* forms the most remarkable achievement.

Like its title image, the novel is rich, massive, highly-wrought. It is also seductive and deceptive. Throughout the work (both works: fiction and object) things are not what they seem. Surface and substance are distinct, gold on crystal, and the crystal is fatally flawed. The shattering of the great bowl, however, in a scene of high melodrama (Chapter 33), is not a matter of devastation, but rather of confirmation, demonstrating that true values inhere at some level beneath the superficial, and require creative recognition. It becomes an opportunity for reconstruction, a critical turning point, where Maggie, the betrayed heroine (or one of two contenders for that role: the other is her childhood friend Charlotte, who becomes first her stepmother and then her husband's mistress), can take on her full powers in adversity. Like Shakespeare's Queen Cleopatra, Maggie

refutes fate and deploys the full gamut of female wiles, from deceptive silence to demonstrative splendour, to take control of her own drama.

Construction and reconstruction are key concepts in *The Golden Bowl*. Both terms are intrinsically ambiguous, linking two distinct aspects of the text: how it is made, and how it can be understood. Paired together, they might seem to be alternatives; but actually they work in sequence, and in cooperation with each other. The same 'double bind' operates throughout the work: pairs at first distinguished carefully from each other are then found to be inextricably linked. They range from the blatant (but misleading) structural division of the novel into two Books, entitled 'The Prince' and 'The Princess', to the patterning of the plot in shifting alliances: a sequence of couples dissolving into 'eternal triangles'.

Maggie Verver and her father Adam, Prince Amerigo and his lover, Maggie's friend, Charlotte Stant, Fanny Assingham and the Colonel constitute the principals 'before' the story; but when Adam acquires the Prince for Maggie's husband, she arranges for *him* to marry Charlotte; then the former liaison between the Prince and Charlotte is renewed, until at last the contracted marriages are reinstated, but on separate continents. Fanny Assingham, meanwhile, moves desperately between allegiances, wanting if possible to justify herself both through and to her friends. Where, properly, does the story begin and end? What, or who, determines its focus? It all depends on your point of view. The fundamental material is familiar: romance, fairytale love or dangerous liaison. But the insistent plot patterning is bewildering: testing every partnership and questioning the loyalties that support and integrity that challenges them all.

Henry James began his Preface to *The Golden Bowl* (written for the New York edition) by commenting on 'the still marked inveteracy of a certain indirect and oblique view of my presented action', and defiantly redefining this treatment as 'the very straightest and closest possible.'

How can his technique be at once oblique and direct? And why? What is the effect? These questions are the critical counterpart to a reader's experience of the text, wondering what is going on and what it implies. They also reflect the preoccupations and the processes of perception and consciousness of the fictional characters. Indeed, James creates a close relationship between reading and analysis which brings us closer both to the narrator and the protagonists of his work while also allowing us a privileged critical poise that could be compared with the author's own control. His 'oblique' yet 'straight' approach, like all the other 'paired' concepts in *The Golden Bowl*, has

the double effect of clarifying distinctions and yet deepening the sense of complexity in the work.

'Show not tell' used to be the narrative formula for dramatic immediacy; but James goes much further. Besides third-person narration, the old storytelling technique, and direct presentation of set-piece scenes, like the one at the Ambassador's party (Chapter 14) where we first see Charlotte (unaccompanied by her husband) after her marriage, James gives us dramatic action at a figurative level conceived entirely within the imagination of his characters, most notably in the sequence of visions attributed to Maggie of Charlotte as a 'splendid shining supple creature' (p. 369) breaking out of a cage, or as a sacrificial beast with 'the end of a long silken halter looped round her beautiful neck' (pp. 397), to be 'removed, transported, doomed' (p. 388). Such hypothetical extravagance allows the text to indicate qualities that might be unacceptable in direct narrative: savage, grotesque, erotic dimensions to character. More disconcerting still, however, is a technique especially developed by James here in his late work, which is an uncanny and incalculable use of the negative.

What is not seen and not said form a kind of parallel text to the narrative of *The Golden Bowl*, articulating through suppression and hesitation an unspeakable story of betrayal and pain and of cruel repercussions. Maggie's supposed speculation about her husband's unspoken thoughts, 'Some such words as those were what *didn't* ring out, yet it was as if even the unuttered sound had been quenched here in its own quaver. It was where utterance would have broken down by its very weight if he had let it go so far' (p. 242), gives a fair example of this kind of negation. The statement of refusal is flagrantly, and paradoxically, insistent. Against 'the horror of the thing hideously *behind*' (p. 368), however, the novel deploys its social occasions, conversations, its London, Brighton, Paris, country-house locations, its fine costumes like elaborate camouflage disguising a deeper, dangerous fascination with the hidden and unknown. So both surfaces and depths, both significant hints and silences contribute to what James called 'the process and the effect of representation': fiction which moves away from telling, from repetition, to probing, and away from pointing to implication, so that readers are caught up like characters, and share responsibility for what they imagine.

Fanny Assingham, a friend and close observer, acts as a guide and an example in this; but she is not the only one. She introduced the Prince to the Ververs, and Amerigo claims she 'had the conception' (p. 18) of his marriage. If conception entails responsibility, then

Maggie, encouraging her father to invite Charlotte, must also take her share. But Fanny's response to Amerigo is, '"Ah, Prince, so had *you*!"' So, presumably, did Adam Verver think of his own marriage. And, by extension, Charlotte, like Adam, or like the Prince, or Maggie, or even like Fanny Assingham, had her conception too. In both marriages, manipulation is met by reciprocal manoeuvring.

In the conversations of Fanny and Amerigo before the arrival of Charlotte, or Maggie with her father, or Fanny and her husband, and in their private speculation, the text disguises the most dreadful excesses of exploitation by the device of exaggerating the danger. '"Machiavelli!"' (p. 20) Fanny calls the Prince, referring to his Italian heritage of scheming to advantage. 'Capture had crowned the pursuit' (p. 4) is his predatory account of his courtship. Fanny points out that he too is collectable: '"You're what they call a *morceau de musée*"' (p. 8). He imagines Mr Verver, like some latter-day conqueror, 'had pitched a tent suggesting that of Alexander furnished with the spoils of Darius' (p. 13). But this blatant embroidery is mingled with inadvertent excess: giveaway expressions, that show the dangers are not dispersed. Thus Amerigo's intimacy with Charlotte is implied through an image of commercial as well as tactile value that brings into question the nature of his admiration:

> He knew above all the extraordinary fineness of her flexible waist, the stem of an expanded flower, which gave her a likeness also to some long, loose silk purse, well filled with gold pieces, but having been passed, empty, through a finger-ring that held it together. It was as if, before she turned to him, he had weighed the whole thing in his open palm and even heard a little the chink of the metal. [p. 29]

The fact that this is qualified by invoking the hypothesis, 'It was as if,' is comprehensively outweighed by the precision and elaboration of the purse simile. The alliteration flowing between 'flower', 'likeness', 'long', 'loose', 'silk', and 'filled' creates a poetry of eroticism around the implications of 'loose'; while 'purse', 'passed', 'open' and 'palm' tell a less exalted tale. There is not only a story behind the story here as the former lovers meet, but a story behind that, of why their romance failed in the past, and must still conceal its hidden flaws.

It is the reader's part not only to infer this unspoken story, but also to place it in relation to what is being shown and said. If the text proceeds obliquely yet in the very straightest way possible, the reader is expected to keep the balance; and this turns out to be a strenuous exercise, which scarcely leaves us any time or energy to devote to

simple judgement. The aim is rather to keep things going: to follow some inordinately long sentences, absorbing and adjusting for any hesitations or important parentheses; to respond fully to figurative language of astonishing variety, whilst assessing whether it seems appropriate or exaggerated, and what that might imply; to act not only as observer but as witness to the way roles are performed, reading body language and rhythms of delivery; seeking out 'the small intellectual fillip of a discerned relation between a given appearance and a taken meaning' (p. 205).

This discernment is called into play from the start of the novel, first in tracing the implications of Charlotte's return on the eve of the Prince's wedding, then the shifting relationships that follow that marriage, and all the measures taken to deal with them, leading to Charlotte's match with Adam Verver and culminating in Charlotte's expedition with the Prince from a country-house weekend to an illicit extension (rather improbably, to Gloucester!). But throughout this process a series of witnesses offer interpretations within the text. Amerigo, Fanny Assingham, her husband, Maggie, Adam Verver, all contribute. True, all are guessing, fumbling, and the text reflects this. So when Fanny Assingham wonders, 'Wasn't it simply what had been written in the Prince's own face *beneath* what he was saying?' (p. 165), the narrative continues with a kind of contortionism both of rhythm and imagery that actually enacts her patterns of thought: 'Her husband's tone somehow fitted Amerigo's look – the one that had, for her, so strangely, peeped, from behind, over the shoulder of the one in front. She had not then read it – but wasn't she reading it when she now saw in it his surmise that she was perhaps to be squared?' (p. 165) If the reader, like Fanny, 'felt a little sick' (p. 165), the process and the effect of representation could be held responsible: no need to set it down to moral judgement.

Speculation begins for Fanny in her 'favourite game' (p. 39), indulged by the Colonel in late-night discussions where 'He could deal with things perfectly, for all his needs, without getting near them', like a mere spectator. Initially he assists narrator and reader: 'He edited, for their general economy, the play of her mind, just as he edited, savingly, with the stump of a pencil, her redundant telegrams' (p. 41). But Bob Assingham, for all his sound sense, develops 'an odd little taste' for hearing more about Maggie, whom he comes to admire; for 'hearing, so to speak, what *could* be said about her' (p. 113).

Perhaps the Colonel's mellowing offers a much simplified, analogy for Adam Verver's emergence from the 'iridescent cloud' (p. 75) of

'his native envelope' of privacy, to welcome Charlotte Stant, first as his guest and then his wife; but the text also proffers a far different explanation. His 'years of light' (p. 84) have given him *aesthetic* illumination, 'planted where it could burn with a cold, still flame' (p. 115), and what he has perfected is the art of collecting. His great ambition is to create a museum in American City, 'a palace of art' (p. 85). The text trails the idea that Charlotte might be no more than a trophy for his collection: 'Nothing perhaps might affect us as queerer, had we time to look into it, than this application of the same measure of value to such different pieces of property as old Persian carpets, say, and new human acquisitions' (p. 115). Adam's proposal to Charlotte (Chapter 12) comes during an expedition to purchase rare antiques, and their dialogue negotiates the delicate and costly transaction between them like a business deal. They fence words, read the strengths and weaknesses of each other's position, and diagnose both motives and impediments. The last word is Charlotte's, and it speaks of calculation, not rapture: '"'Right'?" She echoed it as if the word went far. And "O–oh!" she still critically murmured as they moved together away' (p. 132).

Afterwards, the growing intimacy between Amerigo and Charlotte is covertly marked by distance and silence, separation from their spouses when they appear at social functions together, a cooling of relations with Fanny, and even withdrawal from discussion about her, or anyone else: 'The quality of these passages, in truth, made the spoken word, and especially the spoken word about other people, fall below them' (p. 196). In their snatched moments, abstention from expression is eroticised: '. . . the intensity both of the union and the caution became a workable substitute for contact'. We do not see them alone together: only the response, which hides from the truth. Fanny Assingham instructs the Colonel, '"Nothing – in spite of everything – *will* happen. Nothing *has* happened. Nothing *is* happening"' (p. 231), and he undertakes a declaration of ignorance: '"We know nothing on earth – !"' They resort to negation and denial, both for themselves and the others. Maggie '"has now as never before to keep [her father] unconscious"', while '"Nothing – from him – *has* come"' and '"Nothing *will*."'

This is the situation at the end of 'The Prince'. For 'The Princess' – a title ironically new to Maggie – it constitutes a challenge, 'impenetrable and inscrutable' (p. 234) yet unavoidable. In her perception 'some strange, tall tower of ivory' or 'outlandish pagoda' has been 'occupying, for months and months, the very centre of the garden of her life'. However bizarre, this architectural construction is massive:

big and solid; she can walk round it, stare, and knock for admission, in a way the deceptive family situation denies. More present to the text than the lovers' trysting place at Gloucester, this siege tower signals a shift in the location of reality within the fiction: a substantive move into Maggie's mind.

No loss of energy or shrinkage of range results. 'Moving for the first time in her life as in the darkening shadow of a false position' (p. 235), Maggie takes herself in hand 'only as a silken-coated spaniel who has scrambled out of a pond and who rattles the water from his ears' (p.235) with lively vigour. Reviewing the past, she first sees 'a succession of moments that were *watchable* still' (p. 238), but then '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' (p. 240), to be summarily dealt with: 'What she should never know about Charlotte's thought – she tossed *that* in. It would find itself in company' (p. 240).

There is a remarkable capacity in this thought process to achieve an objective stance: whether it is a young woman's self-conception as a little dog, or the figurative acknowledgment of independent existence both of her own ignorance and of the mind of another being. Maggie's strength lies in this objectivity, this self-regard which does not lose sight of its limitations, rather than in any secret knowledge. It is this independence which allows her 'to improvise, to speak lines not in the text' (p. 251). Consciously projecting into her audience, she can put on a performance, knowing that 'she was something for *their* queer experience, just as they were something for hers' (p. 261).

The danger of this line is entangled with its strength. Maggie's independence, her very integrity, might lead to self-indulgence. Ironically, then, it is through Maggie's imagination that the text projects the depths of Charlotte's eventual suffering, which constitutes the price of her own success. Whether this lineage of fantasy, coming from Maggie to envelop and acknowledge Charlotte, whilst all the time confessing that Charlotte must remain unknown – whether this creative responsibility is enough to absolve and to justify Maggie, is again a question for the reader, in the challenging process of the text.

Certainly, the problem is not simply covered over. Returning to Fawns, where Charlotte was first summoned to Adam Verver, Maggie imagines her rival caged in. The image is elaborated with all the force of personal experience and it is terrible:

> [T]he sight of gilt wires and bruised wings, the spacious but suspended cage, the home of eternal unrest, of pacings, beatings, shakings, all so vain, into which the baffled consciousness helplessly resolved itself. The cage was the deluded condition, and Maggie, as having known delusion – rather! – understood the nature of cages. [p. 364]

Is this the voice of sympathy or of revenge? The question is not sidestepped but it is overtaken by a further development as the cage opens and the helpless bird becomes a different kind of 'splendid shining supple creature' prowling at large.

This is one of the most extraordinary scenes of the novel, set at night, looking in from the dark terrace to a lighted room, 'Spacious and splendid, like a stage [. . .] awaiting a drama' (p. 368). Centre stage sit four people, the Prince with Charlotte and Adam Verver with Fanny Assingham, playing bridge. It is a realistic vignette of evening amusement in the country. But to Maggie this is a symbolic tableau: 'the facts of the situation were upright for her round the green cloth and the silver flambeaux' (p. 365). Though tempted to disrupt 'all this high decorum', Maggie circles round the table, 'silent and discreet', looking at the players rather than their cards, while 'with the secret behind every face, they had alike tried to look at her *through* it and in denial of it' (p. 367).

Moving outside, she considers 'their combined struggle', and the possibility of her 'simplifying' everything, becoming the scapegoat. Under the impulse of submission, the rhythms of the text are soothing: '. . . the summer night was so soft that she scarce needed the light shawl she had picked up'; but the paragraph ends in horror by recalling 'the provocation of opportunity which assaulted her, within, on her sofa, as a beast might have leaped at her throat' (p. 367).

Looking back at the lighted room, now empty, Maggie sees 'a scene she might people [. . .] either with serenities and dignities and decencies, or with terrors and shames and ruins' (p. 368). She even sees 'as in a picture' the complex reasoning that has forestalled her own jealousy and rage. But now a figure appears, 'launched and erect there, in the middle, and looking about her' (p. 369): Charlotte, determined to confront her.

They hover, 'face to face over their interval and exchanging no sign; the intensity of their mutual look might have pierced the night' (p. 371). Yet both hesitate, speak quietly, and look back at the players: Maggie with the sense that 'She was looking [. . .] by Charlotte's leave and under Charlotte's direction' (p. 373). It becomes clear that

Maggie will have to cover for Charlotte if Adam is to be spared, and she is brought to affirm, ' "I accuse you – I accuse you of nothing" ' (p. 376). They kiss on this denial; but to Maggie the 'conscious perjury' is worthwhile: 'They were together thus, [Adam] 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' (p. 376). Throughout this passage, high decorum and savagery struggle for control, papering over and ripping open the emotions at stake. Defeat and victory, darkness and light, the sheltered and exposed are turned inside out. Melodrama and abstraction jostle for supremacy, trespassing on each other's fictional territory. What governs the text, however, is Maggie's point of view, and the rhythms of experience are hers. Here, if Charlotte suffers, it is Maggie who feels the pain, just as she knows her own exhilaration and despair. Yet what is finally revealed, paradoxically, through projection and sympathy as much as ruthless resolve, is that the boundaries of selfhood are not to be transgressed or transposed: the integrity of experience is unassailable. The other is just that.

This philosophical and moral perception is what underwrites the plot ending of *The Golden Bowl*, where Charlotte is decorously but incontrovertibly despatched with Adam Verver to American City, while Maggie buries herself in the arms of the Prince who affirms, '"' See'? I see nothing but *you*" ' (p. 443). There is, however, a sense in which the text refuses closure. For if Maggie's 'rightness' depends on her own integrity, and a ruthless separation from the other for whom she cannot take responsibility, then that sets her too at a distance from any sympathy, and this disturbs the feeling for her cause. The novel which has demanded so much co-operation from its readers in 'the process and the effect of representation' seems now to qualify or disavow the possibility of understanding. A resolution has been reached, but no conclusion.

Henry James wanted 'to see deep difficulty braved' in his work. Reading it is hard, because the experience it tackles is hard. There is a deliberate parallel between 'the process and the effect of representation' in the novel and the drama of the protagonists. It is through the text that the reader is exposed to the challenges of perception and appreciation that seem to defy understanding; and these are our counterpart to the characters' difficulties within the story. This is why James uses such long sentences, keeping us in suspense, and longing for direction and resolution. It explains his habit of shifting surreptitiously between a narrative mode and intimacy with the

character's point of view. It lies behind the unremitting stress which James puts on even the simplest language: exposing even pronouns and prepositions to doubt, so that every inflection of meaning is laid open to question. In this story of switching partners the reference of 'her' and 'him' is crucial. In the mystery of motives, the preposition 'for' conceals an ambiguity: is it 'on behalf of' or 'in place of'; 'for' or 'instead of'; in effect, for or against? Using the first inflection, Adam urges Charlotte that Maggie would support their engagement: '"She'll speak to you *for* me"' (p. 132). But another meaning shadows Maggie's later reflection: '"He did it for me, he did it for me"' (p. 279).

The Golden Bowl strikes a reader like one of James's contemporary John Singer Sargent's society portraits: larger than life, splendid, with some mannerist elongation of the figures, 'launched and erect' (p. 369), in James's phrase, even when they are lounging, perhaps, against a fireplace, surrounded by luxury, and gorgeously dressed in some fanciful costume. These figures, this scenario, holds a pose with style; but beneath the panache is a consciousness of the ephemeral and provisional in their poise. The phrase 'or the golden bowl be broken' comes from Ecclesiastes (12:6) in the Bible, and it follows a verse on the transience of desire, in the knowledge that, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.' James's novel is no religious tract; but its interest in the splendours and the rituals of civilisation is set against an apprehension of some longer perspective, where values work against the test of experience. It creates a moving picture through the drama of discovery.

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FURTHER READING

Michael Anesko, *'Friction with the Market': Henry James and the Profession of Authorship*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford 1986; analysis of interaction between James's creative and professional drive

Millicent Bell, *Meaning in Henry James*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1991; psychological and narrative analysis of late work showing how James creates coexisting conflicting meanings

Chris Greenwood, *Adapting to the Stage: Theatre and the Work of Henry James*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2000; interplay between theatrical and fictional techniques in later works

Philip Horne, *Henry James and Revision*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1990; brilliant close analysis of the developing focus in James

Philip Horne (ed.), *Henry James: A Life in Letters*, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London 1999; subtle commentary on James's development based on his letters

Martha Nussbaum, 'Flawed Crystals: James's *The Golden Bowl* and Literature as Moral Philosophy', in *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford 1990, pp. 125–47; distinguished moral philsopher's view

John H. Pearson, *The Prefaces of Henry James: Framing the Modern Reader*, Penn State University Press 1997; James's Prefaces as an index to his fictional aesthetic

Adrian Poole, *Henry James*, Harvester Press, Hemel Hempstead 1991; good readable writer's critical biography; investigates issue of 'power'

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Among many matters thrown into relief by a refreshed acquaintance with *The Golden Bowl* what perhaps stands out for me is the still marked inveteracy of a certain indirect and oblique view of my presented action; unless indeed I make up my mind to call this mode of treatment, on the contrary, any superficial appearance notwithstanding, the very straightest and closest possible. I have already betrayed, as an accepted habit, and even to extravagance commented on, my preference for dealing with my subject-matter, for 'seeing my story', through the opportunity and the sensibility of some more or less detached, some not strictly involved, though thoroughly interested and intelligent, witness or reporter, some person who contributes to the case mainly a certain amount of criticism and interpretation of it. Again and again, on review, the shorter things in especial that I have gathered into this Series have ranged themselves not as my own impersonal account of the affair in hand, but as my account of somebody's impression of it – the terms of this person's access to it and estimate of it contributing thus by some fine little law to intensification of interest. The somebody is often, among my shorter tales I recognise, but an unnamed, unintroduced and (save by right of intrinsic wit) unwarranted participant, the impersonal author's concrete deputy or delegate, a convenient substitute or apologist for the creative power otherwise so veiled and disembodied. My instinct appears repeatedly to have been that to arrive at the facts retailed and the figures introduced by the given help of some other conscious and confessed agent is essentially to find the whole business – that is, as I say, its effective interest – enriched *by the way*. I have in other words constantly inclined to the idea of the particular attaching case *plus* some near individual view of it; that nearness quite having thus to become an imagined observer's, a projected, charmed painter's or poet's – however avowed the 'minor' quality in the latter – close and sensitive contact with it. Anything, in short, I now reflect, must always have seemed to me better – better for the process and the effect of