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Indiana University

Series Practica, 79

HENRY JAMES'S
PSYCHOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

*Innocence, Responsibility, and Renunciation
in the Fiction of Henry James*

by

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1975
MOUTON
THE HAGUE • PARIS

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Mouton & Co. N.V., Publishers, The Hague

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Printed in the Netherlands

The dialectic of innocence and experience – usually, but not always, dramatized as the American and Europe – was so obsessive and constant a theme for Henry James that one is tempted to say it was not, finally, a theme at all: but rather the special and extraordinarily sensitive instrument by which James gauged the moral weather of the life he was imitating. It was part of his technique as well as his content. An account of “innocence” in the fiction of Henry James, therefore, would be much the same as a book about James’s fiction in general.

R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks to the friends and colleagues who have read all or part of my manuscript and believed in it. Their suggestions and encouragement helped sustain my own energies: Professors Charles Crow, George Fahey, and Thomas Philbrick of the University of Pittsburgh; the late Oscar Cargill; Ruth Corrigan, Mary Scarlott, Robert Morgan, Fred Sochatoff, Austin Wright, and Ann Hayes of Carnegie-Mellon University; and my special friends Mildred Myers and Beekman Cottrell. Above all, my gratitude belongs to Professor Robert Gale for sharing his friendship and his knowledge of Henry James with me.

PREFACE

The massiveness and the richness of Henry James's house of fiction entice the critic to investigate the structure and describe the characters living there, what they see and do, the relationships between them, and the results of their involvements in order to discover the master plan of the architect-artist who created the house and peopled it with the figures and possibilities of his own consciousness.

Having noticed Innocence as a prominent concept in occasional and haphazard wanderings in James's fictional world, I was lured deeper into it by the chance reading of a letter in which Henry's older brother William describes him in middle age as "dear old, good, innocent and at bottom very powerless-feeling Harry".¹ What, I wondered, does *innocent* mean if it applies equally to a writer as observant, perceptive, and productive as Henry James and to the characters he conceived as well? My curiosity led me to read James's works systematically, the criticism of them, his published letters, and several biographies and recollections about James himself; it took me away from the abstraction *innocence* to James's manifold uses of it and its intrinsic significance to his vision of human existence and human experience. The result is this book.

The house of Henry James's fiction is haunted by innocence. It is an elusive and complex concept pervading the atmosphere, the scenes, the descriptions of the characters, their motives, activities, and effects. It is the mortar supporting the construction, the cohesive element in the disconnected views into the human scene. "Most of the greater James novels", writes Peter Coveney in *The Image of Childhood*, "are in fact an inquiry into the fate of innocence, an investigation of the dramatic and moral possibilities of innocence confronted with life."² Innocence is represented in the images of sleeping beauties, unexposed negatives, unlaunched ships, thirsting youths, and the blank page of the physically inexperienced, intellectually ignorant, psychologically unaware, socially naïve, morally pure, or obsessively

1 Henry James II, ed., *The Letters of William James* (Boston, 1920), I, 288.

2 Peter Coveney, "Innocence in Henry James", in *The Image of Childhood* (Baltimore, 1967), 194.

narrow-minded characters inhabiting his world. Whether they are spontaneous, open and vulnerable or egocentric, closed and impervious, they are innocent. R.W.B. Lewis, in discussing *The Golden Bowl*, comments on James's recognition of the ambiguous nature of innocence: "For James saw very deeply — and he was the first American writer to do so — that innocence could be cruel as well as vulnerable; that the condition prior to conscience might have insidious undertones of the amoral as well as the beguiling naiveté of the premoral."³ Young people are innocent and so are adults; the aura of innocence surrounds even the machinations of the purely selfish in James's fiction; and it permeates the account of his own youth in his autobiography.

Although innocence is the given condition of existence, it is not a static state. It is only the *not yet* before initiation. Since no one in James's world exists in a vacuum, the people interact with and affect each other. Through experience, therefore — if experience registers, as it does on all but the fanatically single- or close-minded — innocence is either cultivated or corrupted, and it may well bring moral illumination, confusion, or harm to others. As J.A. Ward says of involvement in James's fiction, "To become involved is to become either sinned-against or sinner."⁴

When James's figures come together the problem always to be resolved is the reciprocal responsibility everyone has for the effects of his actions on those he is involved with and for himself as well. This predicament is presented metaphorically in a variety of situations: the adult with the child, the confidante with his friend, the patron with his protege, the American in Europe, the search for love, and the conflicting demands between civilization and individuality, art and life, and the past and the present. James's works are thus dramas of consciousness and conscience in which innocence is exposed to experience and involvement exacts responsible behavior. The implicit question is, how *does* one fulfill his sense of responsibility?

The answer in James's moral universe is renunciation of further complications in order neither to corrupt or cause pain to others nor to be corrupted or suffer oneself. For the sensitive person renunciation is the compassionate, "innocent" response to involvement: the more one renounces, the less likely he is to violate the innocence of others or to betray his own integrity. This discovery is the end of experience and the completion of James's perfect circle of negation.

In each of James's novels and tales there is a core of innocence upon which he focuses. Around this central figure others hang as satellites or reflectors; or else they assume, by choice or by chance, a measure of responsibility for

³ R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam* (Chicago, 1955), 154.

⁴ J.A. Ward, *The Imagination of Disaster* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961), 74.

enlightening or sheltering the innocent. In examining all of James's fiction and his autobiography, my method is, first, to describe the innocence on which he concentrates; second, to delineate the responsibilities in the relationships between the characters; and third, to interpret the situations culminating in renunciation. The form of my study registers James's representation of human beings developing organically *through* life, not simply living *in* life. Thus, the arrangement — depending always on the character whose innocence seems to me to be at the center of James's attention — is from childhood and adolescence through young adulthood to middle and old age, for that is the chronology of life. Psychologically, the order is from innocence through involvement and responsibility to renunciation, for that is the pattern of Henry James's psychology of experience. When he concentrates on children and adolescents, innocence is his main concern (Chapter 1); when he focuses on young adults moving from their families toward independence, responsibility dominates (Chapter 2); when he looks closely at the thwarted lives of older characters, renunciation becomes the ultimate form of innocence (Chapter 3). Both the method and the form of my examination are, I believe, unique among studies of Henry James.

Because of the sheer bulk of James's fictional creation and the need to treat all of it in the light of my thesis, some intriguing considerations have had to be sacrificed. There are many undeveloped, tantalizing tangents — what I see as subtheses or motifs — linking characters, situations, and works together; many of these are illustrated in the subdivisions of the three chapters of my study. Subordinated too is the customary emphasis on James's development as an artist. My argument is that, although his later works show the intensification of his interest in renunciation as achieved or regained innocence, there is no essential difference between his early and his late vision of innocence, responsibility, and renunciation as the psychological order of life. His values and his expectations from experience remain constant; only the form for embodying his vision alters.

The third omission from my study is most of James's criticism, his travel sketches, and his plays (except *Guy Domville*); and I have related the specific details of his life to his art only when looking at his autobiography. For that connection, Leon Edel's recently completed five-volume biography of James is an invaluable chronological and interpretative work. Missing, finally, is an inclusive consideration of the commentaries on almost every piece of James's fiction. To have marshaled all of the critical remarks that would support my thesis, or to have tried to contend with all of those proposing other, sometimes contradictory theses, would have required a book at least twice as long as this already long one is. For more comprehensive recognition of the criticism of James's works, I refer the reader to Oscar Cargill's *The Novels of Henry James* (New York: The Macmillan

Company, 1961) and S. Gorley Putt's *Henry James: A Reader's Guide* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966).

My goal throughout is to clarify the position of innocence in the structure, form, style, and substance of James's fiction. As he subordinates physical realism to psychological realism and images of romance, renders the hermetic, imaginative fabrications of obsessed consciousnesses, and equates renunciation metaphysically with innocence, Henry James embodies his credo of abstention in his works. Because innocence is inherent in James's own consciousness, it is, as R.W.B. Lewis has said, "the special and extraordinarily sensitive instrument by which [he] gauged the moral weather of the life he was imitating".⁵ His conception of it informs the ethics and the aesthetics of his house of fiction.

⁵ *The American Adam*, 153.

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CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

In the beginning is the child – perhaps pure, perhaps corrupt, but definitely limited in experience. Childhood is thus an appropriate starting point for examining innocence; and yet, if one recalls the conscious deceptions and cruelties of his own childhood or thinks of *The Bad Seed*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Lolita*, or any of J.D. Salinger's children, it is not surprising to find the world of Henry James's children corresponding to none of the sentimental stereotypes of youthful frolics, unstinted happiness, and untainted innocence.

Certainly there is nothing conventionally innocent about the most famous James children, Flora and Miles in "The Turn of the Screw", and none of his children or adolescents live in a carefree atmosphere. At times they are too precocious to do so; at times, too sickly, too spoiled, or too conspicuously subjugated by their parents or guardians. Daisy Miller's brother Randolph, Miles and Flora, and Morgan Moreen in "The Pupil" are characterized by perceptions that disconcert the adults around them. Whether accidentally acute or actually intelligent, they are not average children. Randolph and Morgan – and possibly Flora and Miles as well – are in bad health; Colonel Gifford's daughter in "Professor Fargo" is blind; Mark Ambient's seven-year-old son Dolcino in "The Author of Beltraffio" is first merely delicate, then ill, and finally dead by the end of the tale. Both Eustace Garnier in "Master Eustace" and Randolph Miller are spoiled, selfish, and inconsiderate; perhaps Miles and Flora are, too. The catalogue of dominated children is even longer, and the results of such control vary. Eugene Pickering (in "Eugene Pickering") and Nora Lambert in *Watch and Ward* end up happily, while the future of Maisie Farange, over-exposed before her time, is left to conjecture at the end of *What Maisie Knew*. There is little doubt of the unhappy or disordered fate of Dolcino, Miss Gifford, Pansy Osmond in *The Portrait of a Lady* or Little Aggie and Nanda Brookenham in *The Awkward Age*. Such unusual young people – so specifically wise, impudent, infirm, or obedient – may be the result, symbolically and actually, of their family situations; but the fact remains that they are exceptional children. As such, as types, they embody aspects

of Henry James's conception of innocence.¹

Certain distinctions need to be clarified at this point. Since it is impossible, both in criticism and in life, to separate precisely the late adolescent from the young adult, the criteria I have used are two: first, whether James's attention is on the character's childhood or on events later in his life. Since Dolcino, Randolph, Maisie, Miles and Flora, and Morgan are seen only as children, there is no question about them. One could, however, insist that all subsequent actions or reactions in a person's life are determined by his rearing. Christina Light in *Roderick Hudson* and *The Princess Casamassima*, Catherine Sloper in *Washington Square*, and Miriam Rooth in *The Tragic Muse*, for example, are powerfully influenced by their parents. But James's interest, it seems to me, is in them more as distinct people than as products. The same is not true of Eugene Pickering, Nora Lambert, Colonel Gifford's daughter, Pansy Osmond, Eustace Garnyer, and Little Aggie. The second criterion is whether romantic involvement, marriage, or a self-motivated personal thrust distracts one's concentration to an appreciable degree from the facts of childhood. They do with Christina, Catherine, and Miriam; they do not with Eugene, Nora, Pansy, and Aggie. Hyacinth Robinson in *The Princess Casamassima* is the most difficult case in James's fiction to label. Portraying Hyacinth from his birth to his early suicide, James symbolizes in his warring nature the two strains of society from which his parents come, the aristocracy and the revolutionary outsiders; further, the particular environment of Hyacinth's childhood affects him markedly throughout his life. I have placed him in Chapter II, nonetheless, because James's focus is on Hyacinth's struggle for self-actualization in the face of the consequences of his background. Nanda Brookenham, on the other hand, is a perfect transitional figure: she is the awkward age personified, the age, whatever the number of years, at which family and romantic concerns merge to bring forth a young woman. As presented by

¹ Chapter 1 treats only those children of whom either the facts of their childhood or the fact of being a child is essential to the dynamics of the work in which they appear. There are other children in James's fiction, as well as other characters whose childhood is itself significant to his characterization. Where relevant, both will be discussed in subsequent analyses. The children and adolescents omitted from this chapter are

the infant daughter of David and Emma ("A Problem"),

Effie Bream (*The Other House*),

Effie and Tishy Temperly ("Mrs. Temperly"),

the Chevalier de Bergerac ("Gabrielle de Bergerac"),

Maud-Evelyn ("Maud-Evelyn"),

the son of Lucy Hicks ("My Friend Bingham"),

the Principino (*The Golden Bowl*),

Lancelot Mallow ("The Tree of Knowledge"),

Amy Capadose ("The Liar"),

Jeanne de Vionnet (*The Ambassadors*).

James, Nanda is the tentative half-step between the *jeune fille* and the adult, between a sheltered, submissive Pansy Osmond and a free, independent Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady*.

A TOUCHSTONE TALE: "THE AUTHOR OF BELTRAFFIO":
OVER-PROTECTION AND ART

"The Author of Beltraffio" (1884) illustrates the irreconcilability of life and art, more specifically, a conflict between puritanical morality and art, with life as the victim. The symbols are all there: Mark Ambient's novels so offend his wife that in order to protect their son from them permanently she lets him die. The tale is also, therefore, a fable about innocence.

When he first sees Dolcino, the narrator is struck by his extraordinary beauty:

He had the face of an angel — the eyes, the hair, the smile of innocence, the more than mortal bloom. There was something that deeply touched, that almost alarmed, in his beauty, composed, one would have said, of elements too fine and pure for the breath of this world.²

The initial, unaccountable pity he feels for the boy grows when he perceives the struggle taking place between Mark and his wife for the boy's soul, and sees, too, their almost overt, brutal physical battle for his body. It is as if, to Mrs. Ambient, Mark's very presence is a danger to her son; for being with him might lead to affection, affection to emulation, and emulation to corruption. So determined is she to shelter Dolcino from Mark's influence that she clings to him, cajoles him, even forbids him to go to his father. Possessive, aggressive, and cold, Beatrice Ambient snubs the narrator, an admirer of Mark's works and a would-be writer himself, shuns Mark, and takes the disappointed child away. Mark's sister later explains to the narrator, "He's very precocious and very sensitive, and his mother thinks she can't begin to guard him too early" (XVI, 33).

What frightens and incenses Mrs. Ambient, what makes her call her husband a pagan or a Greek and herself a Christian, is his absolute dedication to art, his pursuit of aesthetic perfection, his belief that art is beauty and beauty is truth and both are free and eternal. Explaining the basic disagreement with his wife to the narrator, Ambient says, "It's the difference between making the most of life and making the least, so that you'll get another better one in some other time and place" (XVI, 45). Mrs. Ambient hates beauty and truth; she hates and fears life.

² Henry James, "The Author of Beltraffio", in *The Novels and Tales of Henry James* (New York, 1909), XVI, 12. All subsequent volume and page references from The New York Edition of James's works are in parentheses in the text.

Because he is sympathetic to Mark's beliefs, the narrator is surprised and embarrassed to discover the great artist unappreciated and misunderstood in his own home, with a frigid wife who detests his ideas and renders him personally ineffectual, and a quaint Rossetti-like sister whose rococo pose is a travesty of his aesthetic creed. The narrator even doubts Mark's own faith in art. Intending to compliment the proud artist-father by saying that Dolcino is "like some perfect little work of art", the narrator is shocked when Ambient pleads, "Oh don't call him that . . . You'll make his little future very difficult" (XVI, 21-22). Although Mark's distress derives from his fear of what his wife will do to their son, to the narrator it seems to be an apologetic shilly-shally about the durability of art.

In spite of these disappointments, however, or perhaps because of them, the narrator determines to act in Ambient's behalf. He will reassert the truth of his master; he will reconcile Beatrice Ambient to Mark's work. Seeing her and Dolcino together, and feeling as if he were replying to the boy's mute appeal for help in harmonizing the two parts of his sensibility — his mother's devotion to goodness, his father's devotion to beauty — the narrator praises Mark's art and urges Beatrice to read the manuscript of his new book. For the narrator it is a moment of exhilaration; he feels like a faithful disciple, a peacemaker, and a physician as well. He is sure that she will give up her opposition to Mark and his art and thereby effectively settle Dolcino's distemper.

The result of his meddling, however, is the opposite. Mrs. Ambient is horrified by what she reads; and as Dolcino's illness grows worse, she refuses to let the doctor see him, gives him no medicine herself, and watches him die. She sacrifices his innocence, as Leon Edel has said, "to her own cruel destructive vision".³ Miss Ambient's account of Dolcino's last night gives a vivid picture of the cornered tigress's grotesque vigil beside her dying but still threatened cub: "She held him in her arms, she pressed him to her breast, not to see him; but she gave him no remedies, she did nothing the Doctor ordered" (XVI, 71).

After accusing the narrator of complicity in the boy's death, Miss Ambient pledges not to tell Mark how his wife got the manuscript. Her silence protects the narrator's position, but he must, like his idol Mark Ambient before him, qualify his faith in art: Ambient's concern is for the viability of the work itself; the narrator's concern is for the effect. His retreat from acknowledging his responsibility for exposing the work to Mrs. Ambient's prejudice does little to ease his guilt; and Miss Ambient's painful secret "rankled in her conscience like a guilty participation", the

³ Leon Edel, ed., *The Complete Tales of Henry James* (Philadelphia, 1962), V, "Introduction: 1883-1884", 11. All subsequent volume and page references from this edition are in parentheses in the text prefaced by the shortened title *Tales*.

narrator admits, "and . . . had something to do with her ultimately retiring from the world" (XVI, 73). Both Mark and Beatrice are distraught by the loss of their child. As if in penance before her early death, however, she reads the completed new novel and even Mark's most famous work, *Beltraffio*. In death as in life, Dolcino has affected them all.

Although precociously alert and responsive, Dolcino is James's purest portrait of a traditionally innocent child. He is, therefore, symbolic of many things: a work of art sacrificed to bigoted morality, a beautiful work of nature destroyed by society, a life snuffed out by those forces afraid of experience — or perhaps he is only a child smothered by a doting parent whose sheltering love is deadly. Dolcino offends no one; he is only a victim. His vulnerable quality is his perfect beauty, and he dies before it is either pandered to and misshapen by the fawners or abused by the envious. Hence, in a typical Jamesian twist, Mrs. Ambient does after all succeed in preserving his innocence from corruption.

THE PERCEPTIVE AND NEGLECTED

Maisie Farange's experiences are almost the opposite of Dolcino's. She is exposed rather fantastically, and at the end of *What Maisie Knew* (1897) she has a long life ahead of her. Maisie is shunted about, talked about, and talked to as if, inconsistently, she knew nothing and everything about what is happening around her and to her. Similarly, as she is a prize to be won and possessed, so is she a weapon to wield against a foe and a bait to attract a friend. At best her value is always that of an affectionate, entertaining little distraction or project.

Neither of Maisie's parents, Beale and Ida Farange, is a "happy example to youth and innocence", James says (XI, 4). But when they divorce, each wants Maisie selfishly: first, to keep the other from having her and, second, to appear to be a loving parent, hence guiltless of the sordid charges flung back and forth. So they halve her time between them, releasing her reluctantly and filling her with insults for the one to whom she is bound. At first the obedient, unwitting messenger of this abuse, Maisie soon learns in an almost Pavlovian manner to keep peace by keeping quiet, by seeming to hear nothing, understand nothing, or remember nothing, and certainly by repeating nothing. With the child's immediate usefulness to them gone, her presence or expected arrival an inconvenience, and the game of recriminations growing dull, Beale and Ida begin to pass her on before the proper time. To them, she is a bore and a bother, and they accuse her of being completely stupid.

But Maisie is not stupid. What has developed, as James describes it, is "the small strange pathos on the child's part of an innocence so saturated

with knowledge and so directed to diplomacy" (XI, 183). In her final meeting with her father, Maisie realizes that his offer to take her to America with him and the Countess is a sham, that he wants her, he tacitly begs her, to say no, to repudiate him, so that "she should let him off with all the honours – with all the appearance of virtue and sacrifice on his side" (XI, 187). He is not even above tricking her into defending her mother, her stepfather, and Beale's own displaced second wife so that he can pretend to be jealous, as any normal father would be, and have an excuse to assure Maisie that her mother loathes her and will abandon her and that Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale are only using her as a pretext for their own carrying-on. Beale Farange is a master at putting Maisie out to sea, at making her seem impudent, ungrateful, and foolish; but Maisie has herself become masterfully adept at understanding impressions and innuendoes. She knows what he is doing and why. He needs the remote brown Countess who adores him and he does not need Maisie. Although she knows that the Countess would also be kind to her – after all, she has already captivated her other stepparents – Maisie cannot tolerate her ugliness; she feels guilty about it, but there is nothing she can do. So she lets her father off and soon faces an equally ultimate moment with her impulsive, self-justifying mother.

As with Beale, Maisie follows the twists and somersaults of Ida's logically illogical rationalizations. Ida pleads weariness to explain her impatience and illness to account for her plans to go away and abandon Maisie to Sir Claude. When Ida haughtily denies that she will be with the handsome Captain whom Maisie met and liked – liked positively because he said with conviction that her mother was good and vowed that if they lived together he would want Maisie with them – Maisie fully perceives Ida's sorry state:

There rose in her a fear, a pain, a vision ominous, precocious, of what it might mean for her mother's fate to have forfeited such loyalty as that. There was literally an instant in which Maisie fully saw – saw madness and desolation, saw ruin and darkness and death. (XI, 225)

Almost as soon as Maisie has this vision and admits having hoped for the Captain to be her mother's new friend, Ida bitterly snaps off her final words to Maisie: "You're a dreadful dismal deplorable little thing" (XI, 225). In her charity, Maisie has provided her mother with an excuse as good as her father's for deserting her: for him it is Maisie's frightened displeasure with his last lady; for her it is Maisie's astonishing and embarrassing praise of a discarded paramour, "the biggest cad in London", Ida calls him (XI, 224).

Although Maisie is more fully explored, more alive, and less a symbol than Dolcino, there are pertinent similarities. Their parents see them both as objects, not as perceiving, responsible human beings. In Maisie's case, this accounts for her being summarily "placed" and disposed of; it accounts also for her being in on so much, "in" as a table or a window or a light is in on a

conversation. For Dolcino it means being possessed to exclusion, that is, dispossessed of the freedom to experience. Even more than Dolcino, Maisie is aware of her position as a pawn in the parental conflict. Whereas his uncomfortable situation has at least a philosophical basis, hers is a continuous involvement in flippant, bitter, adulterous affairs. Like him, she is precocious and charming, and she too provokes pity from outsiders for her lonely, awkward, superfluous existence. Unlike Dolcino, Maisie attempts no real reconciliation between her mother and father — Beale and Ida are too impossible and she too powerless — but she does hold on to her stepparents, Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale, brings them together, and eventually, in spite of appearances, seems to me to insure their union by renouncing her own affiliation with them.

Writing of Maisie in his notes, Henry James says that the “essence” of the piece is “the strange, fatal, complicating action of the child’s lovability”.⁴ Her self-centered parents never recognize this; they are so busy setting up “sides” for arguments or intrigues or imaginary offenses, and accusing Maisie of being on one or the other — but always against whoever is speaking then — that they are as suspicious of her motives as they are of each other’s. Lovability, as far as they are concerned, always means from her to them; they do not love anyone. As Maisie says simply to Sir Claude, “Mamma doesn’t care for me Not really” (XI, 83). The child is, however, like an ever-present conscience to whom they try to justify their behavior, but for whom they do not alter it. She is a scapegoat whom Ida blames for her turmoil and suffering, an obligation that Beale resents as a hindrance to his mobility. Maisie, on the other hand, wants to believe that they are good and that they are loved, and she wants them to be with those who feel this way about them. Hence, seeing through them, she obediently cries that she will do whatever they ask her, but is happy when they interpret this to mean that she does not care to do anything at all. Her agreeable defection to her stepparents and Mrs. Wix is but a final proof of her concern for Ida and Beale.

It is these other three who pity Maisie and recognize the depths of her lovability. Miss Overmore, who becomes Mrs. Beale, is Maisie’s first governess and first love. She is cool and young and pretty. Mrs. Wix, Maisie’s governess at Ida’s, is old, unattractive, ignorant, and obsessed by the memory of her dead daughter, of whom Maisie reminds her, and the moral sense, with which she wants to inculcate Maisie. Like many of James’s lower-class characters, Mrs. Wix is a much sterner advocate of propriety than are the aristocrats, in this case, Sir Claude. From the beginning, Mrs. Beale finds Mrs. Wix personally offensive and repulsive as a representative of Maisie’s

4 F.O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock, eds., *The Notebooks of Henry James* (New York, 1947), 237.

mother, while Mrs. Wix, prejudiced against Mrs. Beale and Mr. Farange by Ida, finds her pretentious and vulgar. And both are jealously interested in winning Maisie's favor. It is between the two of them, actually, more than between her father and mother, that Maisie is torn; for she recognizes their genuine affection for her: "Parents had come to seem vague", Maisie thinks, "but governesses were evidently to be trusted" (XI, 41).

Then Sir Claude enters the picture, first only as Ida's dominated, agreeable second husband, then more seriously as Mrs. Wix's and Maisie's supporter, and finally as Mrs. Beale's lover. All three females — Mrs. Wix, Mrs. Beale, and even little Maisie — adore him. Like Maisie, Mrs. Wix is flattered by Sir Claude's attention. Whereas Ida sees the one as a cheaply bought, inferior servant and the other as a nuisance of a child, he treats them as equals, as equals to him, as ladies. Consequently, they are always more sympathetic to him than to his wife when these two are at odds. For Mrs. Wix, his respect is, above all, a social compliment; she is likewise buoyed up when Ida and Mrs. Beale confide in her as if their levels were the same. For Maisie, however, the social favor is negligible: affection is simply affection to the child deprived of it from her parents, and Maisie's personal delight is in Sir Claude's being open with her as if she were an adult. Too long and too often have too many doors been shut to her inquiring mind. Sir Claude's frank, easy manner brings back her childlike good faith. She is in love with him as only a child can love, whole-heartedly and unquestioningly.

Mrs. Wix's infatuation with Sir Claude is, indeed, every bit as childish as Maisie's. She glows as she flirts with him, asks Ida for a photograph of him, and hallucinates an impossible dreamworld of herself, Maisie, and Sir Claude living together in perpetual harmony. To what degree her designs on him are either consciously or unconsciously sexual has been a great post-Freudian concern.⁵ She seems to me to be, from the other end of the scale — looking backward, that is, instead of forward — exactly as sexually driven as Maisie. Talking about Sir Claude, they are like a pair of teen-agers with a mutually unobtainable dream-man. It is an important moment for Mrs. Wix, a moral act, when she lets Maisie keep the photograph of Sir Claude; it is another when she stubbornly determines not to give Maisie up to him and Mrs. Beale. Her interest in his welfare, however, is as strong as her desire that he please her. When it is clear that indifferent Ida plans to desert Sir Claude and Maisie, Mrs. Wix not only sees him as her and Maisie's savior but also feels that they can save him. His virtuous attachment to the child, she says, will protect him from base temptations.

⁵ See, for example, Sister M. Corona Sharp's discussion of Mrs. Wix in *The "Confidante" in Henry James* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1963), 127-149; and Marius Bewley, *The Complex Fate* (London, 1952), 100ff. My own view of Mrs. Wix agrees substantially with F.R. Leavis's "Disagreement", quoted by Bewley, 126ff.

Almost simultaneously, however, Beale Farange leaves Mrs. Beale. With Ida surrendering her share of Maisie to Sir Claude, Beale handing his share to Mrs. Beale, and Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale themselves ready to take her and each other, only Mrs. Wix and her moral sense prevent the "happy" ending — only these, that is, and Maisie herself. Mrs. Wix will not condone the adulterous pair. She would obviously go with Sir Claude and Maisie alone — this arrangement was her own suggestion — and Mrs. Beale woos her to agree to join her and Maisie if Sir Claude renounces them all. She will not, however, surrender Maisie to them, nor will she join Maisie with them.

For Maisie the situation is alternately easy and desperate: at first she vows that she will never give up Sir Claude. But when he asks her directly to drop Mrs. Wix and accept him and Mrs. Beale as her family, Maisie hedges. She will not say no, she cannot say yes. Her loyalty to both her governesses prevents her from choosing one over the other. It is, both Maisie and Sir Claude recognize, their crucial moment. They wander through Boulogne in the mist of moral suspension. For an ecstatic moment at the railroad station they are tempted to flee together to Paris and abandon the two women; but the train goes and they stay. The decision weighs heavily on them again when this last escape from responsibility has passed. Finally Maisie sees her way: her pity for Mrs. Wix, who would have nothing if Maisie defected, overshadows her liking for Mrs. Beale, who would still have Sir Claude. What she proposes, knowing he will not agree, is for Sir Claude to match her: she will drop Mrs. Wix if he drops Mrs. Beale. Sir Claude is astonished and impressed by Maisie's subtle logic. It is the culmination of his civilizing effect on her. Having given her extraordinary freedom of choice, he revels in the proof of her intelligence, her tact, and her moral beauty. Maisie's education is remarkably, successfully complete: from Sir Claude has come the sense of honor, from Mrs. Wix the sense of goodness, from Mrs. Beale the sense of beauty. He of course cannot accept Maisie's proposal: for them both it would mean not only a sacrifice of themselves, but more importantly, more damningly, it would be a betrayal of Mrs. Wix, who has staked all on Maisie, and Mrs. Beale, who has committed herself totally to Sir Claude. For the first time, because Maisie has pressed him to the wall, he realizes that he does love Mrs. Beale fully. Maisie first brought them together, and she has now secured their staying that way.

So Maisie gives up Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale, and he gives up Maisie and Mrs. Wix. Mrs. Wix loses only Sir Claude. Mrs. Beale loses only Maisie. Although they seemingly lose more, Maisie and Sir Claude have learned more and are far more satisfied at the end than Mrs. Wix and Mrs. Beale are. For Maisie and Sir Claude are sure of each other and of their own integrity. And they both understand what unselfish love is: it is renunciation of a particular, personal gain for something better. He has led Maisie to it and she has led him. With all he now realizes because of Maisie's decision, it is as

if Sir Claude has regained his innocence: he must soothe Mrs. Beale, he must find money for Maisie and Mrs. Wix, he must try with Mrs. Beale to become good enough to merit their return. And Maisie has lost her innocence because of all that she knows.

What Maisie Knew is a brilliant novel of contrasts. Mrs. Wix's fervid sense of responsibility for Maisie is all but mocked by the quietly responsible way Maisie takes care of her; and her impassioned concern for Maisie's moral sense seems wasted energy as Maisie almost instinctively chooses the moral act. This is not to say, however, that Maisie is a child of nature who is unaffected by experience. On the contrary, she learns omnivorously from every act or word or look, from every sigh or shrug or intonation. She watches and remembers and puts things together. As Peter Coveney puts it, Maisie is "enriched by [her] 'innocent' acceptance of the squalid, developing an awareness of love and respect through their very absence and negation".⁶ Through observing cruelty she comes to the recognition of kindness, through betrayal to loyalty, through selfishness to sacrifice, through hate to love, through depravity to morality, through desperation to peace.

One wonders, nevertheless, where Maisie will go. If Nanda Brookenham in *The Awkward Age* is tainted by one French novel and the risqué conversation in her mother's salon, what chance has Maisie had to escape more damaging corruption? Since Maisie "greatly preferred gentlemen as inmates" to ladies — "The ladies . . . addressed her as 'You poor pet' and scarcely touched her even to kiss her. But it was of the ladies she was most afraid" (XI, 37) — her future may be as distracted as Julia Bride's life (in "Julia Bride" [1908]): Julia Bride, whose mother has had three husbands (Ida is well on the way to matching that figure already) and who has herself been engaged six times. But such speculations are vain. In his provoking portrait of Maisie, Henry James traces the growth of perception from blank innocence to the recognition of connections, complications, and responsibility and the final realization of morality and renunciation.

Comparing "The Pupil" (1891) with *What Maisie Knew*, Charles G. Hoffmann writes, "Morgan like Maisie is an 'old' youth, made old before his time by his contact with and insight into the evil of the adult world."⁷ Although the Moreens are not divorced, they are as undeniably inept parents as the Faranges, just as unreliable, just as self-pitying and selfish. Like Maisie, Morgan is, in spite of his erratic environment, lovably bright; and this distinctive combination of circumstances and results incites his tutor Pemberton to pity him as Mrs. Beale, Mrs. Wix, and Sir Claude pity Maisie.

⁶ "Innocence in James", 200.

⁷ Charles G. Hoffmann, *The Short Novels of Henry James* (New York, 1957), 52.

From their first meeting, Pemberton recognizes Morgan's dual nature, his childish satirical face, his "intelligent innocent eyes" (XI, 514). The sick boy is perceptive beyond his years. His own family he sees through clearly — they lie and cheat and compromise their reputation — but he never accuses them or gives them trouble, except as his poor health may distract them. He is too considerate to do so, and he is likewise aware of both his helpless inadequacy to change them and their hopeless inability to change themselves. His embarrassment and his sadness he shares only with Pemberton:

"They're so beastly worldly. That's what I hate most — oh I've *seen* it! All they care about is to make an appearance and to pass for something or other." (XI, 549)

Under Morgan's unflinching moral eye, his parents are always uncomfortable. They push him forward as a prodigy, then shrink, self-consciously but defensively, behind their veneer of sophistication. To them he is a conscience — far more specifically so than Maisie is to the Faranges — a judge, a guilt-provoking memory, a rare flower they too often neglect but must provide for. And in spite of their gypsy-like life, general insensitivity, and vulgarity, the Moreens provide for Morgan better by entrusting him to Pemberton than they would have had they incorporated him as they do their other children into their superficial social whirl. Eagerly and anxiously they put all the personal responsibility for Morgan on Pemberton; they connive against the tutor, browbeat him, trick him, and use his affection for the boy as a string to tie him to them. They are determined that Morgan will not be their charge. Like a remote, long-denied, finer part of their nature, meanwhile, Morgan is always there to keep them sane. His wisdom the boy attributes to nature and experience, intuition and fact — the very things his parents are trying to ignore in their mad, shallow gallop across Europe from drawing-room to drawing-room. In this sense, then, Morgan's death is symbolically the end of the Moreens' better self. By offering him permanently to Pemberton, deciding thereby finally to banish their conscience, they slay their own innocence once and for all.

On a literal level, Morgan wants to escape his family's pestiferous life and the shame it accrues. He *is* far finer than the others and recognizes Pemberton as a sympathetic soul. When Pemberton casually suggests that they should go away together, the boy responds so quickly that the tutor has second thoughts. No matter how fond he is of Morgan, Pemberton is not sure he wants the unqualified responsibility for a sickly adolescent. Nor is he confident that he is capable of giving Morgan all that the amazing boy needs. It is impossible to surprise him or shelter him from any unseemly information about his parents' conduct: Morgan has always perceived it and suffered for it. His unaffected, charming brilliance causes Pemberton to ponder the mysterious world of children:

When he tried to figure to himself the morning twilight of childhood, so as to deal with it safely, he saw it was never fixed, never arrested, that ignorance, at the instant he touched it, was already flushing faintly into knowledge, that there was nothing that at a given moment you could say an intelligent child didn't know. It seemed to him that he himself knew too much to imagine Morgan's simplicity and too little to disembroil his tangle. (XI, 547)

When suddenly his fawning, desperate parents do thrust Morgan at Pemberton, it is too much of a shock for the boy, too much the finale of a bad work of art.

Time and again Pemberton exclaims to Morgan, "You're too clever to live", and he is right: Morgan is not only too clever for his family, but also too clever — and like Dolcino, too perfect as well — for life as it is. Unlike the narrator of "The Author of Beltraffio", however, Pemberton does not intrude into Morgan's situation to cause his death. True, they have just returned hastily from a long walk, but they have had many exerting walks before. True also, it is Pemberton who first mentions the possibility of their leaving his parents; however, it is not the frustration but the realization of the fairy tale that brings on the boy's heart failure. And true, Pemberton does not have time to react to Morgan's "boyish joy" or to respond to his "My dear fellow, what do you say to *that*?" But James leaves no doubt that the sincere, considerate tutor, no matter how stunned or dubious he might be, would have found "something enthusiastic" to say to the excited boy (XI, 576-577). Pemberton's guilt, if guilt it be, is his reluctance to force the issue, his lack of real enthusiasm for the responsibility inherent in taking Morgan. Yet perhaps he is wise to forbear; for he realizes his inadequacy with the rare, marvelous boy whose soul is such a perfect blend of wisdom and innocence.

Morgan's innocence, like Dolcino's, remains intact. He no more uses his cleverness for cruel or selfish ends than Dolcino does his beauty. Although their deaths show the impossibility of life to accommodate such perfect innocence, their illnesses are not symbolic of sin. Morgan's sickness is mortal not moral, and his death comes in the ecstatic fulfillment of his life: he has been freed from the evil he has seen.

Flora and Miles are a special case because "The Turn of the Screw" (1898) is a special story. In it, as Edmund Wilson suggests, "everything from beginning to end can be taken equally well in either of two senses".⁸ "The Turn of the Screw" has thus received much attention from critics attempting to decode James's message and decipher his symbols. This fascination with the tale, however, is due as much to its implications as to

⁸ Edmund Wilson, "The Ambiguity of Henry James", *Hound & Horn* VII: 3 (April-June, 1934), 389.

its ambiguities; for, as Eric Voegelin has said, "*The Turn* is not a 'ghost story' but a presentation of very human problems in a peculiar disguise."⁹

Innocence is patently involved in the situation James presents, but the question is, *whose* innocence? Robert Heilman and Voegelin see it as mankind's lost innocence, symbolized respectively in Miles and Flora as Adam and Eve and the governess as the human soul in the world (the fallen Garden) cut off from communication with God.¹⁰ Other, less allegorical readers line up on both sides of the controversy about innocence: some see the children as corrupt when the tale begins, as James describes them in his notebooks;¹¹ some follow Wilson's lead, in whose Freudian reading the children are corrupted by the hysterical, sex-starved governess — who, nonetheless, is herself "innocent" in the sense of being a parson's frustrated, possibly insane, daughter overpowered by her fantasies and her sense of sin. As Cranfill and Clark express this position in their comprehensive survey of the various problems in the tale and the numerous solutions offered by the critics, "The children suffer prolonged, helpless, lethally dangerous exposure to the mad governess."¹²

Concomitant with the question of innocence is the dispute about the ghosts, whether they do exist or are merely hallucinations of the governess, who alone admits seeing them. Perhaps the apparitions are projections of her sexual frustration, as Wilson feels; perhaps they are manifestations of the already corrupted children, visible to the governess because of her con-

9 Eric Voegelin, "Postscript: On Paradise and Revolution", *The Southern Review* VII: 1 (Winter, 1971), 37.

10 In Voegelin's analysis the children's uncle, the governess's employer, represents God and Mrs. Grose common sense; symbolizing mankind, the governess has as her charge saving the children (who *are* children) from the evil of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, and her failure is the result of both the impossibility of the mission and her own inadequacy, i.e., her sin of pride. Spanning twenty-three years, Voegelin's two extended comments on "The Turn of the Screw" ("A Letter to Robert B. Heilman [November 13, 1947]", *The Southern Review* VII: 1 [Winter, 1971], 9-24, and "Postscript: On Paradise and Revolution [January, 1970]", *ibid.*, 25-48) probe deeply into the core of James's existential vision. Describing the atmosphere in the tale as a "mode of closure", a "vacuum", Voegelin emphasizes two significant tendencies throughout James's works: the interplay between consciousness and conscience in the delineations of (lost) innocence and responsibility; and the repeated representation of single-minded expressions of the "deformation of personal and social reality" (27). See also Heilman's two articles, "*The Turn of the Screw* as Poem", *University of Kansas City Review* XIV (1948), 277-289, and "The Freudian Reading of *The Turn of the Screw*", *Modern Language Notes* LXII (November, 1947), 433-445.

11 James writes about the tale, "The servants, wicked and depraved, corrupt and deprave the children; the children are bad, full of evil, to a sinister degree" (*Notebooks*, 178).

12 Thomas Mabry Cranfill and Robert Lanier Clark, Jr., *An Anatomy of "The Turn of the Screw"* (Austin, Texas, 1965), 169.

cern for Flora and Miles; perhaps they are a combination of her fears for the children, her insecurity about herself, and the children's subconscious, morbid thoughts. It is interesting to note that she immediately assumes the man Peter Quint to be seeking the boy Miles and Miss Jessel to be summoning Flora. Although she had heard about Miss Jessel before taking the position at Bly, there is no evidence that the governess knew in advance about Quint or the importance of either of these former servants to the children. Whether her assumption that Flora and Miles are paragons of innocence and goodness causes them to dissemble or whether they are using their good manners to set her up for subsequent deceit is also unclearly defined. Similarly indefinite is the meaning of the children's fate: does Flora become hysterical and Miles die of shock because the governess has tormented them too painfully or because they are thoroughly exposed as precocious, guilt-ridden frauds?

Regardless of one's interpretation of the ghosts and the actions of the governess and the children, it seems clear to me that there is little innocence in any of them. If the hallucinations are the governess's alone — even if they are prefigurations of the sordid maturity to which Flora and Miles are, in her terms, "blameless and foredoomed" (XII, 217) — then she certainly sees life as ghastly and damning. Ignorant she may be, totally wrong, and psychologically twisted as well; or maybe she is unduly acute and perceptive beyond reason. In either case, such a vision of reality, such a prejudgment on experience which even she recognizes as "cynicism", is incongruous with purity of soul.

The children, on the other hand, are so captivating that the governess wants to protect them from both their past and their future. They are charming, polite, beautiful, and bright; but they are also subtly impertinent, calculating, half-truthful, and ingratiating — they are, in a word, enchanting and perhaps enchanted, prepossessing and perhaps prepossessed. Even in her final conversation with Miles, when she is trying to get him to confess what terrible things he has done and said — so late, just before Peter Quint confronts her for the last time and Miles calls his devilish name for the first and only time in her hearing — even then, the governess is not sure what everything has meant:

I seemed to float not into clearness, but into a darker obscure, and within a minute there had come to me out of my very pity the appalling alarm of his being perhaps innocent. It was for the instant confounding and bottomless, for if he *were* innocent, what then on earth was I? (XII, 307)

Has she, in exorcising the evil from Miles's soul, discovered sadly that evil is all there was in it? Or has she, by forcing the boy to look into himself, so terrified him that he is unable to live another moment? The story ends, but the questions and the horror do not. Of the relationship between the

governess and Miles, Peter Coveney offers this explanation: "The boy is at once vicious and corrupt and yet pathetic, the victim of the Governess's cruel pursuit. The Governess herself is at once the virtuous agent of the child's salvation, and at the same time an executioner, a clumsy and deranged pursuer."¹³

In her determination to fulfill her sense of responsibility for the children – at first merely to tend to them and teach them, then to shelter them from the evil effluences she feels threatening them, finally to induce them to help her save themselves by acknowledging the preternatural influences on them and to demand, in Miles's case, a confession baring his motives as well as his deeds – the governess is utterly ineffective. As in *What Maisie Knew*, there is a reciprocal effect – her on them, them on her – and the governess even assumes that the children are showing as much delicacy as deceit by not mentioning their past or the visitations she believes them to be having in the present. It is they who enable her to experience "space and air and freedom" for the first time. With their amusing, inventive games they create a "cloud of music and love and success and private theatricals" for her pleasure and illumination. Never has the sheltered minister's daughter seen such aristocratic charm or been more stimulated. The contrast between these images of romance and the gothic horror of restless ghosts – both of which reflect the narrator-governess's consciousness and imagination – is harmonized by the religious imagery accentuating her conscience. Her "duty" is to be a "screen" for the "beatific", "angelic" children, to "serve as an expiatory victim and guard [their] tranquillity", to "save" them from the "white face of damnation" stalking them and, she feels finally after accepting that they are already "lost", the evil in them. When she fails – when, that is, she witnesses Flora's "incomparable childish beauty" transformed into something "common and almost ugly" and hears Miles utter "the cry of a creature hurled over an abyss" – the governess is left to ponder her judgments and rue the results of her adventure.

One could continue to go around and around in the ambiguities of "The Turn of the Screw". Two questions about the governess's final confrontation with Miles are particularly intriguing: (1) For whom is the boy's "you devil" intended? Does it refer to the governess or to Peter Quint? To Peter Quint, it seems to me, for the governess is not a devil and Miles knows it; and he is far too polished and polite to call her one even if he thought it. Nor does it seem likely that he is changing his tactics from flattery to insult in order to disconcert her and throw her off the track. What has probably happened is that Miles's corrupted *alter ego* and the governess's perception of it conjoin for an instant. His determined resistance to her prying insight has finally been broken down. Exclaiming "Peter Quint – you devil!" to

¹³ "Innocence in James", 211.

the air, Miles looks frantically for the tattle-tale presence that has given the governess the clue to his guilt. He finds nothing, but now he is totally exposed; he can counterfeit no more. Deprived of his individuality and his independence, he can only expire. (2) Is he therefore destroyed by her goodness or her badness? It is a combination of her obsession with her concept of virtue and her hyper-sensitive analytical faculty which takes from him his past and with it his future. Like Beatrice Ambient in "The Author of Beltraffio", the dogmatic, resolute governess denies "her" child the right to freedom and experience and life. She who would protect innocence at all costs finds herself at the end with no innocence to protect — and maybe corruption is all there was from the start. At least Mrs. Ambient in her guilt does not have to wonder about that.

But if this is so — if the children are really simply bad — then the governess has been duped. Her struggle to endure "another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue" has shown nothing and signified nothing. In spite of its being a convenient out for her, even she does not want to believe this; and no reader puts down "The Turn of the Screw" without wondering what it all means, few without feeling somehow that the governess is guilty of something. However well-intentioned she is, however fanatical in her dedication to performing her duty as she conceives it, the governess is so absorbed in herself and her own vision of reality that she causes more pain than she alleviates. With her designated responsibility for Flora and Miles as the context, what James has done in "The Turn of the Screw" is to invert the moral and social order to explore the relationship between children and adults. It is the latter — the governess and Mrs. Grose specifically — who are the outsiders, inquisitive, emotionally erratic, socially inferior, and morally confused. Flora and Miles are sophisticated, self-sufficient, and calm until hounded by a conscience such as they do not have to confess a guilt they have not felt; and as they deny it, they recognize it and are consumed by the realization that their innocence, their privacy, and their individuality have already been lost. Lost too are the governess's and Mrs. Grose's innocence: they have seen and heard and done too much to maintain their childlike naiveté.

As James tightens the threads of the analysis of the evils of narrow-mindedness, encroachment, and insensitivity, no one escapes unsullied. J.A. Ward says of James's works, "Evil comes about through the imperception of those who either do not recognize or ignore the effects of their activity on others."¹⁴ In these terms, everyone in the story contributes to evil. Peter Quint, Miss Jessel, the children's mysteriously remote uncle, the distraught governess, and the two children as well — everyone

¹⁴ *The Imagination of Disaster*, 10.

puts someone else on the rack. Only Mrs. Grose emerges free of fault – free, ironically, because she long before abnegated responsibility to intervene in the children's behalf. And maybe even Mrs. Grose, as Eric Solomon claims, is deceptive and interfering.¹⁵ After all, her sternness and self-deprecation remind one of Maisie's Mrs. Wix, who is certainly an active force in bringing about the denouement in *What Maisie Knew*.

However agreeable and civilized and fine Flora and Miles appear, they are also conniving and cruel. They bait the governess with sugared words and politeness so studied as to lead *her* to be gross. Perhaps the fault with them is that, pitiable as they are because they are alone, they have been given too much attention rather than too little, as the governess believes. Realizing how interesting she and Mrs. Grose find them, how easily impressed and fawning these two women are, Flora and Miles proceed to strike bizarre poses and say intriguing things to entrap their woozy servants still further. The fun and profit in playing games with adults' credulity, or incredulity, is one of the first things any child learns. Maisie Farange is a perfect example. She too perceives who cares and who does not, what the effect of certain things is on certain people; quite sensibly she uses her insight for her own salvation, but not to the discomfort of others as Flora and Miles do. In the fallen world at Bly, however, who could expect anything else?

THE PAMPERED AND SPOILED

Randolph Miller, Eustace Garnyer, and Ethel and Leolin Stormer in "Greville Fane" are other James children who exploit adults, and all four end up far more spoiled than Miles, Flora, or Maisie. Perhaps the reason is that it is their own parents, their mothers, whom they twist. There are at least two ways to spoil children: giving them *carte blanche* by neglecting them – it is simply easier to avoid the trouble of disciplining them – and giving them *carte blanche* by pampering them. Flora and Miles can obviously be seen as victims of neglect, and Maisie and Morgan Moreen were thrust aside by their parents but not by their other adult companions. Randolph Miller, however, Daisy's incorrigible younger brother, is James's one brief portrait of a child given completely free rein without some proffered concept of love to rationalize it (unless perhaps Harold Brookenham of *The Awkward Age* was so treated by his mother when he was a boy).

Saucy, his teeth decayed from too much candy, his conversation filled with the desire to return to America, Randolph gives his bewildered,

¹⁵ Eric Solomon, "The Return of the Screw", *The University Review – Kansas City* XXX (March, 1964), 205-211.

inadequate mother a merry run. He will not stop talking, he will not go to bed, he will not study his lessons — and Mrs. Miller shrugs off apathetically her inability to govern him or Daisy either. Whereas for Daisy freedom means independence of action, for Randolph it is time on his hands, and he is bored. Because he is neglected and unhappy, therefore, Randolph is mischievous and ill-mannered in order to get attention. Really, he is more a type than an individual, but not so consistently or pointedly one as, say, Dolcino or Morgan Moreen. He is a caricature of the rude, undisciplined American child with rich parents. His blaming his rotten teeth on the climate of Europe is not only a child's rationalization; it serves to foreshadow Daisy's illness from Roman fever, which itself is symbolic of her being destroyed by challenging the restrictive standards of the society she offends.

Randolph, however, is not the center of attention in "Daisy Miller" (1878): it is Daisy's story, a study of the "extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity" (XVIII, 43), the "inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence" (XVIII, 59), which Winterbourne describes in her. Nine-year-old Randolph merely reflects similar characteristics, although his innocence is determined by a circumscribed vision and an unresponsive mind. What his future might be is anyone's guess. Active and uncontemplative as he is at nine, he very likely will go back to America, become a successful businessman, and, someday, finance a trip to Europe for *his* wife and children as his own absent father is now doing. He is, certainly, at his present age, unpleasant and unresponsive enough to become that figure in the Jamesian world.

"Master Eustace" (1871) and "Greville Fane" (1892) trace three spoiled children into what is chronologically adulthood. As children they are catered to and given liberties and advantages by their indulgent mothers. As adults they remain wilful and innocent — innocent, that is, if one applies Cleanth Brooks's definition of the innocent to them: "a man who has not yet found out what reality is like and who has not yet transcended the child's self-centered world".¹⁶ This is a convenient definition to keep in mind, for with it one can account for the sense of innocence that accompanies many of the utterly selfish characters in James's fiction. Eustace Garnyer is such a one. As his story begins, his mother is a gentle, naïve widow, Eustace an intelligent, impertinent five-year-old. He is her whole life and comes to be the cause of her death. Mrs. Garnyer wants to spoil him, and this is her error as much as maniacally protecting Dolcino is Mrs. Ambrient's. The two mothers are equally consistent. Mrs. Garnyer's "passionate theory" for rearing her child is "that love, love, pure love, is the

¹⁶ Cleanth Brooks, "The American 'Innocence': In James, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner", *Shenandoah* XVI (Autumn, 1964), 34.

sum and substance of maternal duty, and that the love which reasons and requires and refuses is cruel and wicked" (*Tales*, II, 344). Eustace consequently is and remains egocentric and demanding. He has "no sense of justice — he had the extra virtues, but not the regular ones" (*Tales*, II, 345). Although he can love, he is possessive and jealous; although he can be well-mannered, he cannot endure having his opinions questioned. Arrogant and brutally frank — without pity, temperance, or a desire to know that others have feelings, much less to care or understand or sympathize with them — Eustace destroys his mother by opposing her second marriage. Not even the discovery that Mr. Cope is his real father makes Eustace relent, nor do the two of them become reconciled after Mrs. Garnyer's early death. So totally self-centered is Eustace that he is, in fact, innocent of everything and everyone else.

Ethel and Leolin Stormer are not quite so blatantly cruel as Eustace, but they are equally heartless where their mother, whose pen name is Greville Fane, is concerned. The conventional innocence in "Greville Fane" is really all hers. As the narrator describes Mrs. Stormer, "She was very brave and healthy and cheerful, very abundant and innocent and wicked" (XVI, 115). Her innocence is, primarily, her naïve muddle-headedness. Ethel and Leolin, however, are extremely acute about their mother and how to manipulate her. For them both it becomes almost a genuine devotion, an occupation: how to gull mama into doing something else for us. Mrs. Stormer's conception of the world is fairy-tale from the start; she determines that Ethel will be a proper lady, something she herself has never been, and Leolin an at-his-ease gentleman author, another accomplishment denied to Greville Fane. To create these romantic figures, Mrs. Stormer gives Ethel all the "advantages" of the right schools, the right clothes, the right spas, the right people. For Leolin the project is both easier and more comprehensive: he must see life fully to have subjects for the great novels he will write. And for seeing life he must also have the right people, the right spas, the right clothes, the right clubs. Through it all, Greville Fane works herself almost to death, and Ethel and Leolin sit back and enjoy their perpetual holiday — or they travel, more likely, and complain about accommodations or their mama's intolerable and inescapable vulgarity. The children, with their superficial cultivation, become ashamed of both Greville Fane, the popular novelist, and Mrs. Stormer, their hard-working mother. She is obviously unacceptable at the home of Lady Luard, whom Ethel has become. Leolin continues to talk of writing but does not write, as he bleeds his mother to exhaustion. As the narrator says of Mrs. Stormer's theory about Leolin:

Whenever I met her, accordingly, I found her still under the impression that she was carrying this system out and that the sacrifices made him were bearing heavy fruit. She was giving him experience, she was giving him