

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL
NOVELLAS OF HENRY JAMES

A Thesis

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INTRODUCTION
THE JAMES GHOSTS

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate, through the medium of criticism of some eighteen short stories and novellas, the extraordinary relationship between James the man, and James the author. To this end, a study has been made on the three appropriate levels, the biographical, the critical, and the psychological.

James was a haunted man. He moved in a world of images largely peopled by the impressions and projections of his own experience. His tendency was toward compression in the fundamental, expansion in the superficial areas. This initial observation might lead to the erroneous conclusion that a sort of literary split-personality was the foundation stone of his work, much as it was with, for instance, Rousseau. But the more profound the investigation, the more obvious the conclusion that James' writings were inextricably involved with the astonishing reactions of the man himself. The ghost stories, some of them apparently crude, furnish the logical index to the personality of a man who, in

writing his longer works, often submerged himself at such a depth, and with a multitude of such deliberate disguises, that he is not so easily recognizable, though just as surely present. So it is that in the eighteen works which this thesis treats, a gradual dissecting process occurs in the author himself. His self-conscious devices fall gradually away; in the fantastic medium of the supernatural, he feels more at home, more free to express his exact motive, less timid of the social consequences of revealing a nature more complex than could be supposed, perhaps, even by its possessor. The barriers are down, the walls between James and society all swept away, when he treats of things for which his audience can be sure there is no experiential basis --for after all, who is there among us who believes in ghosts?

That Henry James so believed is obvious; his family history is a succession of mystical experiences, each somehow related to the other. In each of the stories and novellas which form the subject of this study there is at least one, and in most of them, many, distinct references to James' own experience. The last story to

be considered forms, indeed, the very summation of James' confused life.

Several of these stories and novellas have been critically ignored. Critics have given many reasons for refusing to analyze them. Some of them are entirely unknown, others almost cliches among the

literati. All of them, however, possess the same interest to the reader who looks only just beneath the surface, only slightly behind the dark glass, to find a man who wrote his life into eighteen supernatural episodes, and his dreams into a series of apparently formal novellas.

James was a haunted man--haunted, tortured, pursued to his tomb by that most fierce beast in that most forbidding jungle--himself.

CHAPTER I

The Romance of Certain Old Clothes

To formulate a theorem, to proceed from the statement to the analysis; to axiomize and categorize is often the most simple, the most practical way of disposing of a problem whose immediacy presses to sudden, hurried, activity. The critic, however novitiate his efforts, often feels impelled to find the quick, brilliant word --that penultimate syllable which at once and forever epitomizes his theory, push his subject between a set of parentheses from which he can expand gradually his tale, and construct his piece like an architectural elevation, each step going its few inches upward, until the top. Every now and then, however, an erstwhile critic encounters something which cannot be so neatly filed in mental cubbyholes. And so it is with the ghost stories of Henry James.

The Neo-Freudians (Jung, Adler, Edmund Wilson) have had much to say about the matter at hand. Beginning usually with an over-simplification, and proceeding through a series of palpably attenuated machinations, they have

reached at length their basic designs, ignoring the while the important fact in any work--the fact of its authorship. In search of the psyche, they have sometimes lost the man; in search of the shadow, murdered the substance.

James lived his life surrounded by the external images of the dream-play which was his mind. Therefore to label--to attach a complex here, an aberration there, is to abstract verbally, to overlook the vital factor that James was a writer. Essentially, James' world was a world of inexperience; superficially, his experience was more wide than perhaps any writer of his generation. At some point between these two poles the interesting area of the ghostly novellas and stories intervened to merge the two into a combination more strange. The subtlety and method with which James collected data--unconsciously, perhaps--indicates a persistent interest in the implications of every situation. The early years of sitting quietly and listening to the collective conversational brilliance of the James family and their friends no doubt led to the moments of quite wonderful dialogue which later reappear in Wings of the Dove and Daisy

Miller. This same subtlety, this same method, was the product of a mind which perfected one of the most elaborate systems of literature which America has ever produced, a system based on the perilously long sentence, the attenuated meaning, the perverse understatement. It was this same mind which was sufficiently compulsive, in the writing of the ghost stories, to prepare a trap for the reader¹, and then to catch itself.

Henry James was actually dominated by the very form which his critics hail as his interesting creation. He appears to have been genuinely fascinated by evil--evil as an amorphous, unspecified energy, a malignancy at first apparently without direction, and in the later stories, as will appear, more and more tending to the final smashing paragraphs of pure self-analysis in the last novella written in this genre.

This same evil, James painted into such canvasses as suited his fancy (or his need) in the particular

mise-en-scene; the image of a man tortured by an intellectual Damoclean sword--a fear which hangs over his life until its very end--only to discover that it was, at last, only this awful dread which he feared, and

would fear always²; two solemn persons at an altar, each lighting a candle for some absent, yet terribly present one³; an hysterical woman in the dark corridors of an old castle with two perverted children⁴; a mother whose daughter is constantly chaperoned by the ghost of a lover whose suicide the mother had caused⁵; a man who returns to an empty mansion to roam its marble recesses night after night alone, under some terrible compulsion to find the spectre of what he might have been⁶; the intimate romance of two persons who never met at all, but in the conversations of friends, and friends of friends⁷--the confusion of a young playwright confounded by his principal actress, whose misinterpretation of his creation is destroying both play and author; these are the threads which weave their way through the intricate corridors of the James stories. These and more are the images whose repetition becomes more and more clearly a sort of slide rule for the analysis of James himself. The exact nature of the significant repetition of characterization and incident will become more obvious as we analyze the stories and novels one by one.

At first cursory glance, the early stories appear trivial. Indeed, the plots and devices frequently

verge on the puerile. James himself regretted the publication of several. Nevertheless, even here, a certain insight, a more than occasional projection, make the early stories fascinating studies in the shape of things to come.

In February, 1868, James' seventh published story, The Romance of Certain Old Clothes, appeared in the Atlantic Monthly. This, to the knowledge of the author, is the first of the Ghost Stories which Mr. James permitted to be published, though his correspondence indicates the presence of other and earlier stories, probably destroyed, which had they been published, might have proved, like Conan Doyle's Giant Rat of Sumatra, the most awfully awful of all. Our study, however, will fix as its nether pole the date 1868--the correspondent pole of which indicates almost sixty years of writing in the genre which is the subject of our interest.

The Romance of Certain Old Clothes was written during an uncommonly quiet and pedestrian period of James' creative effort. This perhaps serves to explain partially

the pedestrian tone of the story, a tone which is not improved by the attempt at an electrifying climax. James seems to have been frankly bored when he wrote The Romance of Certain Old Clothes⁸. Even his brother William wrote from Germany, in a letter dated 4 March, 1868, that the story was "Pleasantly enough Done, but trifling, for you."⁹ William the alienist may, indeed, have expected greater things from his brother at the outset of his writing career--indeed, William remained to his deathbed the severest and most acid critic of his own brother's writings.¹⁰ The James family as a whole was a sort of intellectual chandelier, each facet of which burned with a clear and separate light, illumining, in the process, its brother facets. It is unfortunate, however, that in his slight disappointment, William appears to have overlooked several interesting things.

The Romance of Certain Old Clothes is in every way the logical beginning to a career of persistent images. Dimly cloaked in its inartistic paragraphs are presentiments of most of the traditional James devices. Its very structure is built around the ambiguous, half-finished stylistic deceit which was to become the

trade-mark of the master.

To over-analyze the first story would be a serious error. There is place for intense analysis in the later stories. However, on the psychological level, this story is interestingly constructed around three analytical possibilities. There is first the biographical possibility that the two sisters whose enmity outlives the grave are projections--the more interesting for the change of sex--of James and his brother, between whom artistic disagreement persisted with a fierceness which belies the studied affection of their correspondence.¹¹ There is, secondly, the fact that the characterization of the two ladies involved, shallow as it is, creates an initial impression of at least one definite type of James woman. Her prototype is to be found in a much finer short story dealing with the same theme, written thirty years later, *THE OTHER HOUSE*. And her repetition, in many shapes and hair colors, with many names, furnishes one of the basic points of departure of the analysis of the author through his works. Involved in the technique of this story, albeit awkwardly built, and but dimly seen, is the interchangeability of image and idea, the recapitulation of detail and decor

which is the most striking quality of all James ghost stories.

The literary progenitors of this story are, largely, those of James himself. The plot, the atmosphere, the use of adjective and the palpable moralizing (a thing soon to diminish in James' stories) are, of course, certain indications of the influence of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who in many ways was the immediate ancestor of James¹². In the characterization of the women, there appears a sort of rusticity which is at once characteristic of both Hawthorne and Fenimore-Cooper. And this system of influence is surely a logical one. The widespread misconception that James was a literary expatriate, a prey to influences more continental than indigenous, is simply and surely incorrect. He was American to the last adjective--though American in a way which was, perhaps, not clear even to him, until he had written the last story of this series, The Jolly Corner.

As a starting point, the story is, then, crude, and owing in its origins to many. It is even more fascinating, therefore, to discover in this most immature work, the germ of the very machinery which became so much a part of

James' writings as to be almost a reflex--the technique peculiarly his, among all American authors. The story is stilted, simple, and almost unbearably self-conscious. This self-consciousness, so soon to become profound introspection, is the very touchstone of the James technique. Its overtones have already developed that perverse and subdued violence which seems to have been James' peculiar genius for the many years during which he devoted himself, and not so incidentally as is often supposed, to the composition of quiet little horrors.

The quality of The Romance of Certain Old Clothes which appears unique in the James story pattern is its almost total lack of essential depth. The characterization is superficial almost to the point of caricature. The psychological validity of the characters is rather more accidental than coefficient in this original effort. But there are sounds and portents which, when disinvolved, become arrows pointing sixty literary years into the future.

The story attempts the essence of the Hawthornian romance--that admixture of the actual and the "marvelous" which Hawthorne used so successfully in, for instance, Rappaccinni's Daughter. Taking as a central situation two

lovely sisters, both in love, at first in a quite conventional sense, with one man, the author introduces the element of a perverse jealousy, a force of destruction which remains a central pillar of argument in the later James stories and novellas.

Superficially, all the trappings and suits of the eighteenth century Hawthorne Massachusetts family are to be found in the setting into which the author places his situation. The comfortably widowed mother (the dim beginning of yet another type which we shall encounter again and again in James), the handsome, unclever son, abroad on the grand tour, and finally the two daughters are the uncomplicated *dramatis personae*. The two daughters represent an attempt at placing in opposition two antithetical personalities; the antithesis, however, is not complete. Insofar as the two characterizations are essentially hollow, they are essentially similar. The very opposition appears to be a tactical, rather than an actual one; through the progressive stages of aggression pass the sisters as through the steps of a pavane, each awaiting the measured cadence and courtly bow of the other before making her next move.

It is with the moment of complete separation that James falls at incisive characterization. His situation, though contrived and melodramatic, is potentially a powerful one. The young man is won by the younger, less aggressive sister. This climaxes the bitter resentment of the older sister; her envy and vicious jealousy are at once concentrated into fierce energy. Hard upon the wedding--indeed, while the bride and groom are changing, she dresses herself in the veil so recently worn by her sister. As she stands before the dressing table mirror, she is trapped in the bridal clothes by her sister. Little conversation passes between them, but the schism is complete at this point. The die of enmity is cast.

During the ensuing year, the married sister gradually acquires all of the material symbols which her sister has worshipped--beautiful clothes, and many, a gracious home, and (a factor which James seems to consider of a weight with the wardrobe) the increasing love and tenderness of the young man. The older sister, meanwhile, has become the center of a rather superficial social existence, largely a system of week-ends and teas. But she lives a hope--a constant, abiding wish, that one day she may supplant the

sister.

The unfortunate wife dies in childbirth--while her husband is away on business, and, by ironic happenstance, in the company of the sister. Dying, the wife foresees that there will be another wedding one day soon, and exacts of her husband a deathbed promise that the vast wardrobe will be preserved for the little daughter who has come. This device appears contrived and artificial, it is at least as much the product of influences from Irving as from Maupassant and Poe. Coincidence, sometimes a potent factor in James, thus makes its initial appearance here; the accidental meeting of the older sister and the husband, the death, the promise, have set the scene for what is, now, inevitable.

The promise demands that the wardrobe be kept in a locked trunk in the attic--a Pandora's box image which is to haunt James in form either actual or metaphorical, through all of the other stories¹³. The especial, the unspoken emphasis of this promise is, of course, that they never be worn by the surviving sister.

The closed door, the sealed room, the forbidden path, the Sanctum Sanctorum, are ever fascinating to the

outsider¹⁴ and, of course, the more intensely personal the prohibition, the stronger the fascination. Thus it is that the inevitable day comes when the sister--she whose victory is now so complete, forces the lock of the trunk--impelled by a possessive instinct which even she appears not entirely to understand. As she kneels in wonder over the pink satins and marquisesettes, she is strangled by a pair of ghostly hands, dying with a look of most awful and concentrated fear on her beautiful face. Written in his maturity, this story could have been strong medicine. Indeed, the essential elements of the situation were used, again, to better advantage as the author matured¹⁵. The story lacks truth largely because it lacks the self-reference which is the soul of, for instance, Nona Vincent, the disciplined horror of The Jolly Corner. As the story stands, its interest is largely precursory.

Plot-wise, it foreshadows THE OTHER HOUSE; its atmosphere is that of the following three stories, The Ghostly Rental, The Last of The Valerii, and Sir Edmund Orme, the effect of all of which centers around such scenes of peaceful country as open the mood of The Romance of Certain Old Clothes. It is at once obvious that the most effective,

the most subtle quality of the story lies in its title, which is certainly sinister in the Hawthornian sense--and ambiguous in the sense which James was to make so peculiarly his own.

Standing then as an isolated example, the story is nothing. It could have been written by Mrs. Radclyffe, or even that less celebrated James, Montague Rhodes¹⁶. It is as the first circle in the water--the first step on the dark stair, that the story is vital to our study. It is as the very first turn of the screw, a turn apparently almost ineffective, but vitally necessary to the very last turn, that our story must be considered. It is the very small ghost which hung like persistent smoke about the later years of Washington Square and Wings of The Dove to remind James that everything has a beginning, that after all, even a master must remember his youth.

CHAPTER II
THE PURE, ELEGANT VISION

With the second ghostly tale, De Grey, A Romance, James took further steps in the construction of his system of effects. This tale differs in two essential respects from its predecessor. Stylistically, it represents a change distinctly for the better in that the author detaches himself from the scene, to create his effects with omniscient objectivity. The story fixes its focus on a problem which is in one way the precursor of all the other stories--the concept of woman's love in its destructive aspects¹.

The basic theme of the second story is really a sort of thinly veiled vampire theme. And this impression of the acid potential of love, of the insistent devitalization inherent in the love of a strong woman for a weak man, persists. Plainly visible behind the somewhat medieval structure of the plot of this story is the patent projection of a woman so often to be found in James as to be a definite "type"².

Again, an episode in James' own life furnishes

interesting biographical data on the subject of this interchange--this weakness which thrives on strength--this strength which can survive only so long as it is surrounded by weakness.

The only genuine affaire d'amour--the sole moment of passion, in anything like the limited, conventional sense, which James ever experienced, was with a cousin² of his, one Minny Temple. She was his "sweetheart"³--a girl with the seal of death upon her from the moment they met. Beautiful, vital with the strange vitality of the soon-to-die, she dominated his life so completely that when she died he wrote:

"...she represented, in a manner, in my life several of the elements or phases of life at large--her own sex, to begin with, but even more Youth, with which owing to my invalidism, I always felt in rather indirect relation... her image will preside in my intellect, in fact, as a sort of measure and standard of brightness and repose...Poor little Minny! It's the living ones that die; the writing ones that survive...She was...the very heroine of our common scene...Twenty years from now what a pure elegant vision will she be."⁴

James' prophecy was more accurate than he could have known--except that the vision had its initiation not twenty years later, but immediately. By a simple (and customary!) device of reversing the sexes involved,

James wrote the essential facts of her death into De Grey, A Romance, and in a contemporary letter to his brother, Willian, described the exact counterpart of a singular balance which forms the plot basis of that story--a deadly proportion which seems to subsist between the gradual return of his strength, and the gradual disintegration of Minny's.

"...I slowly crawling from weakness and inactivity and suffering into strength and health and hope: she sinking out of brightness and health into decline and death..."

This same process was repeated in the death of James' sister, Alice, many years later--an incident which almost as profoundly moved James as the death of Minny. That death, the patent inspiration of the story we now consider, was, of course, even more directly that of the novella--Wings of The Dove, to be written so many years later. Milly Theale, the central character of that novella, is Minny--even the pseudonym is hardly more than a gesture of respect.

The idea of one human being draining the vitality of another appears with hideous persistence in other James stories, not so immediately obvious, but just as surely. Longstaff's Marriage, 1878, The Sacred Fount, 1900, and

in more subtle guise still, The Beast in The Jungle and THE TURN OF THE SCREW.

Interesting, too, is the extraordinary priest, Father Herbert, who is, in his own strange way, the protagonist of the tale--and in a way even more strange, the literary projection of James. That the author was fascinated by Catholicism is apparent in The Last of The Valerii; that the interest extended to the other members of his family--perhaps, indeed, emanated from them, is also clear⁵.

The approach of the author to his priest, however, is subtly distorted--in the best James manner of subtlety and distortion. The Cassandra-like prognostications of Father Herbert are almost villainous in their accuracies and repetitions. When tragedy comes, he is in some inexplicable way, almost responsible. It is his memory, his Bible, his tongue, which retain and articulate the De Grey Curse.

That curse, simply stated, carries the implication of the immediate, violent death of all De Grey wives, dating back to the fifteenth century. The young lady presently espoused is the ex-companion of the elder Mrs. De Grey, the sole survivor of the curse--and for a reason both strange and psychologically revealing--because she was not

loved. She has changed the companion from a drab into a lovely, powerful woman. The two love symbols of the story --that of the wife for De Grey, and that of the mother for her son, both indicate that James conceived of love (and here there seems little difference between the romantic and the maternal)--as a force at once creative and destructive: at the same moment capable of erecting and razing a tower of security. This early concept of love, love then scene as it were, soon gave way to a more sinister one--the idea of "safe" love. The love, the only love capable of creation, renewal, revitalization, is the love of a woman mature, possibly even married--an unattainable mentor, sweetly remote whose social consequences are not apt to prove embarrassing, nor whose sensual ambitions to fix upon the loved one. The penultimate example of such a woman, the most articulate expression of such a love is to be found in the character of Mrs. Alsager, in Nona Vincent, of which we shall say more later.

When he wrote this story, James had not yet entirely reconciled himself to the undisguised analytical, as opposed to the symbolic gothic; for this reason, the story is a weird mixture of incisive characterization and

contrived situation--of unfolding and attenuation. The more interesting for its crudity, however, is a style which is changing so rapidly that it shifts its effects often in mid-sentence. The forces of growth and change have wrought some strange results in this transitional story--so that we encounter;

"...she blindly, senselessly, remorselessly drained the life from his being. As she bloomed and prospered, he drooped and languished. While she was living for him, he was dying of her."

The concise impact of the first and third sentences, notwithstanding the careful juxtapositions and measured adverbs, has nothing at all in common with the florid

cliche which is the second. The second sentence is a strange brooch between its two brothers; it is like an actor, his characterization profoundly conceived, the product of intelligence and emotion, who pauses at the moment of his great scene and assumes a DelSarte position. These occasional lapses from literary grace were to plague James through the rest of his writing career, though they became ever less frequent.

Certain essential characteristics of the younger Mrs. De Grey strongly resemble those of the governess

in THE TURN OF THE SCREW. She envisions herself as a strong woman, a woman with a mission--to cut the centuries of tradition--to invalidate the curse which threatens her. As Miss Giddens sets about her strange battle with Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, Mrs. De Grey sets about the destruction of the curse. These dedicated women exert an almost sinister fascination on James--they are women consigned to a purpose of some sort, women whose essential masculinity is the counterpart of the ambiguous young men who people his pages. The impassioned young lady at the altar of the dead⁶, dedicated to the memory of an unknown, the young widow, dedicated to the reputation of her out-of-wedlock father⁷, an ancient lady, dedicated to the preservation of her husband's memory⁸--these are the unself-conscious symbols of the ghostly novellas--complex projections of the same fears, the same enigmas which puzzle the ladies of Wings of The Dove and Washington Square--those ladies respectively dedicated to death and spinsterhood. The symbols are the same; the treatment is curiously different. For all the resignation of the ghostly novels is the resignation of strength--all the dedication that of almost pathological will power. The volition with which the

governess throws her pitifully twisted mind into the struggle with the two spectres, the fierce anxiety with which the ancient Madame Aspern guards her husband's papers, is the same strength with which Mrs. De Grey says of the curse:

"I revoke it. I curse it!"

But her revocation is more complete than she imagines. For it is the husband, not the wife, who perishes this time--senseless victim of the stronger woman, she whose will destroys him utterly, she whose strength eventually drives even itself to madness. The story closes on the priest and the elder Mrs. De Grey--a sort of weird romance, which leaves the reader to sudden, shocking speculation on what has gone before.

This is the first step on the ladder of dichotomy which James was to build again and again--the real opposed to the unreal, the suggestion to the fact. Whatever type of celibate passion or incestuous depravation is to be imagined at the close of this story is just that--to be imagined. We now have a series of important symbols with which to deal: The destructive woman, the force of jealousy, the strong woman and the weak man, the elder

beneficent, the malignant coincidence, the curse. It takes but little imagination to translate these into their anxious, menacing psychological counterparts. Henry James, with De Grey had planted his feet in the space beyond the high wall, and shut the gate behind him.

CHAPTER III
THREE PASTORAL INTERLUDES

I. The Last of The Valerii

In 1873 Henry James accomplished with this story several interesting things. In the first place it is the only story of his that does oblique homage to a theory long an integral part of American Folklore, and, indeed, of the Folklore of the entire world. This is the theory of the "elder Gods", those antediluvian beings so beloved of de La Mare, Le Fanu, Machen, Blackwood, and more recently, the extraordinary American, H. P. Lovecraft, whose works are belatedly being recognized as lineal descendants of Edgar Allan Poe. The story in which James indicates his obeisance to this theory is the third in his series of ghostly novels, The Last of The Valerii, one of the few ghost stories to which James affixed one of his dubiously happy endings.

The situation in the story is that of a young American girl married to a fabulously wealthy and strikingly handsome Italian Count, a thoroughgoing elemental who becomes perversely enamoured of an excavated statue of Juno. In

certain passages of the story Henry James approaches heresy, an interesting experiment for his time; in others, he loses himself utterly in thought-provoking verbal ecstasies centering about the personal beauty of the Latin youth. This was, of course, a period of adjectival extravagance for James and it may be that in the stylistic rather than in the psychological lies the simple explanation of these highly sensual passages. Another even more interesting theory, in direct opposition to the recent and different theory of Phillip Rahv¹ is that perhaps Henry James in his own way was the same sort of man basically as Walt Whitman, since Mr. Whitman in his hyper-masculinity seems, at the end, to have lived the same celibate life as Mr. James, and to have written in such works as Song of Myself the same sort of sensual projections². The characters of the Count in juxtaposition with Guy in Guy Domville, with the beautiful and desirable Mr. Lloyd of Romance of Certain Old Clothes and the really extraordinary insight into the minds of tortured women which Henry James evinces so clearly in THE TURN OF THE SCREW and Wings of The Dove, all indicate a mind, if not wholly feminine in outlook, at least perilously

inclined in that direction. This then, adds a further and more complex factor to the system of symbols which we must construe our consideration of the remaining novellas.

The Last of The Valerii is notable because it is the first ghost novella to be written in the first person. Opposed to the omnipotent vista of the last story, the author here is in the literary position of a careful God-parent. To be noted again is the carefully maintained vantage point, the safe distance, which James always seems to keep from his character, a doting spiritual relative who at once fears, and is attracted by, this Italian

revenant. Again the prosy pessimism which we first encountered in the case of Father Herbert in De Grey appears in the middle-aged guardian, though more pleasantly and logically. James has already learned through the brief experience in the Ghostly Rental that people, even earth-bound people, are not patterns on a marbled floor.

The device by which a frantic wife and a helpful God-parent dispose of the unholy influence of a pagan statue, that of simply re-interring it in the earth, is thin, both from the angle of drama and credulity, but they are saved

from the ludicrous by a fine touch of dialogue when the wife, throwing a handful of earth over the body of the statue, remarks:

"May you rest lightly, but forever."

Here again the character of the dominant woman battling against the malevolent influence from another world makes its appearance, and like the vengeful sister of The Romance of Certain Old Clothes, like the old woman who sees through the ages in the Ghostly Rental, like the wife of De Grey, she who pits her strength against the creatures, like the governess of THE TURN OF THE SCREW, whose purpose it is to save her two charges from the depraved influence of two wandering spirits, this woman is the epitomized symbol of all the strong women James had known. A gesture here, a reaction there, an extraordinary mixture of Alice, of Milly and of such other mysterious ladies as James may have encountered during the stay in Italy are all part of this novella.

The influence of the Roman trip of 1873 on this story and the succeeding ones cannot be overlooked; indeed, such a Juno as appears in this tale formed a conversation piece one afternoon in April, 1873, when James visited the Villa Ludvosi, that castle which had once been the retreat of

Nathaniel Hawthorne. It was here that James saw an ancient and neglected statue of Juno behind the shutters of an old summerhouse. This experience must have initiated the creative impulse which found expression in The Last of The Valerii. The disparate minutiae which appear in the tale were gathered memories and impressions woven into the loose shantung of a pure romance, a story whose utter falsity renders it nonetheless charming, in fact a sort of Gilbert and Sullivan version of a Henry James ghost story. It was partially composed during one of the more happy oases of security from one to another of which James wrote his way through the medium of the story, the novella, and finally the novel proper. There is, in the staid sensuality of his diction a mere suspicion which might seem to indicate a possible Roman love affair. This experience, however, remains a mystery. James revealed himself only incidentally, and always by another name.

The Last of The Valerii, however, remains to the critic as the first bridge between the undisguised romantic and the psychological. It is that mixture of flesh and fantasy, a composition dealing in counterpoint. Once again we have a combination of characters essentially

identical to those we have encountered thus far; there is the God-parent, he whose eternal philosophizing is very like that of Father Herbert of the last story; there is the beautiful and determined young lady possessed of a strength which is almost a tangible quality and finally there is the young man of appealing physical beauty and equally appealing intellectual ambiguity, that symbol which was to develop into the particularly indecisive young man of the later story³.

1875 was a year of surging efficiency for James; during its span he wrote a major portion of the novel, The American, his three short stories, a series of reviews and Belles Lettres for the Tribune and The Nation. This was the year of the sojourn in France. This was the year of his acquaintanceship with Flaubert, Zola, Daudet and Turgenev. During this year James was exposed to the collective literary genius of Europe. It was during the latter months of this year that he wrote a quite wonderful story which is so, not because of its ridiculous plot, but because of the many small snatches of Jamesiana of which

it apprises the careful reader. For distilled into this story are the cumulate memories of James' brief stay at Harvard Law School; that period of emotional starvation which seems to come to all first year law students came to James and he sought consolation and friendship among the young theological students at Harvard. His solitary walks, bits of conversation scattered across his memory like thistledown on an expanse of water to reappear twelve years later at a room at 29 Rue de Luxembourg in Paris and pose the delightful *Mise-en-scene*, The Ghostly Rental. Critics have noted the influence of Poe and have drawn inexact parallels between The Ghostly Rental and The Fall of The House of Usher⁴, but despite James' contemporary preoccupation with Baudelaire, Poe's French translator, and the sophistry from which such theories are constructed, The Ghostly Rental seems, if anything, diametrically opposed to the single-impression imagery of Poe. James does mention Hoffman, the German romancer, in The Ghostly Rental, which indicates a familiarity with Hoffman's massive book of short stories, or more possibly with the opera constructed from four of them, but again little more than the most superficial comparison seems

possible.⁵

The Ghostly Rental is predicated on a situation which must have seemed ridiculous even to one of James' sometimes suddenly romantic frame of mind: an old soldier who feels that he is responsible for his daughter's death from a broken heart has rented his home to her ghost. Through this singular tenancy he derives his sole income, and on the final day of each quarter he makes a pilgrimage to the house, now long empty except for the shade of the vengeful daughter who manages the family fortune from the grave. The old man is observed by the author, thinly disguised as a theological student at Harvard, sitting in a country churchyard, totally given up to speculation on the empty house. It is with the image of this unknown house that James was first to evoke his nameless dread, the studied ambiguity for which he was to be long remembered. Here is a sensation entirely new in James, something that seems akin to Bulwer Lytton's "...subtle creep of horror..." in The House and The Brain⁶, although in James the "subtle creep" is distinctly a more intellectual, a more erudite integration of responses. Beginning as it does with the gentle remark:

"I had always had an eye to play the back scene in the human drama . . . in that detached and tranquil home of mild casuistry."

and concluding with a really delightful table-turning, in which the ghostly daughter is herself haunted by the now dead father, the story is extraordinary, a perfect pastoral, only slightly complicated by an entirely superfluous, almost unconsciously comic plot. The mood is rather more ruminative than sinister, and the only legitimate comparison with Poe probably lies in the distinct resemblance between the descriptive passages in The Ghostly Rental and those in Poe's descriptive fantasy in The Island of The Fay and here the comparison is admittedly quite as contrived as the one more usually made with The Fall of The House of Usher.

The story is biographically important for three reasons; - because of the Harvard interlude, because of the candid first person narrative and because of the appearance of yet another of James' "safe" women, a crippled woman who sits in perfect seclusion embroidering and absorbing village gossip, a sort of Massachusetts chorus; she it is whom James visits and consults about his wonderful house, she it is who stands at the threshold of

information, coyly admitting him to her secret, the secret of her old soldier, at mock-tragic risk of incurring the curse herself.

The Ghostly Rental, then, is essentially charming, as opposed to the characteristic "cauld grue" of Poe and his disciples. The grotesquerie of argument is far overshadowed by the lush and verdant descriptive passages. In many ways a transition piece, The Ghostly Rental represents the literary deep breath, the resting place between the contrived effect of the earlier tales and the cumulative and slow technique which James was to bring under his absolute mastery in the later stories and novellas.

At this point it were well to consider in just what pivotal position James found himself in 1875. Since after the intervening years, the production of James' next ghostly tale was to be a deliberate, a matured process, and since the die was formed from the time of that publication, firmly cast in at least this one stamp, the choice of medium, idea and source becomes important. James' growth seems to have been in its singularity largely an original process. The influence of Hawthorne, however, which has been mentioned, should perhaps be noted again

to amplify the first comparison. The first four ghostly tales; that is, The Romance of Certain Old Clothes, De Grey, The Last of The Valeris and The Ghostly Rental are all essentially romances in the Hawthornian sense; that is they include that remote element, that severance of character and situation which typifies the rarified atmosphere of the better Hawthorne stories. The one incomparable element is, of course, the "sin" fixation which pursued Hawthorne. James may perhaps have believed at some period of his life that the wages of sin were indubitably death, but that belief is not belabored in his prose. It certainly does not approach the *idée fixe* which compelled Hawthorne literarily to destroy and re-destroy the dark ladies of The Marble Faun, Blythedale Romance, Rappicini's Daughter and, of course, the Scarlet Letter.⁶

To this writer the most successful item in the quartet above was Rappicini's Daughter, one of the few undisciplined expressions of the purely exotic which Hawthorne ever uttered. Significantly the style of this story so much resembles that, for example, of De Grey and The Last of The Valeris that the comparison is more than possible; it is inevitable. Indeed, William James referred to

"a real mental American quality" in his brother, the existence of which he predicated on a distinct, though involuntary, resemblance to Hawthorne.

Already separate from his predecessors, however, the James of even these early romances was inclined to the social, the quasi-moral crisis as opposed to the pure moral problems of the New Englander. The question, for example, between the two sisters of the first story is one of propriety; the reaction of the more recent Mrs. De Grey seems to be one of outraged privacy, a bourgeois reaction, perhaps; the doting God-parent of the Valerii wife is quite as perturbed by his spiritual daughter's contemplation of Catholicism as he is by the son's paganism; and, the theological student of The Ghostly Rental is amused and somewhat startled by the social implications of a fantastic tenant who regularly pays her rent, though she casts no shadow.

Clearly the young James, the James whose first story was "...trifling for you..." and who characterized his own work (The Point of View, 1880, contains this interesting self-reference.) as follows:

"C'est proprement écrit, but it is terribly pale",

was consistently developing the structure of the single set in which were to be played out all of his dramas; the drawing room, the perspective of the country home, the dim ambiguity, the at first apparently expatriate continentalism which are the material of the fabric; these are neatly arranged, subtly exploited for the first time with the effect which James entirely anticipated, and carefully contrived in his first really fine ghost story, the last of this trilogy, Sir Edmund Orme.

Sir Edmund Orme represents the first effective use of the slow concentration of symbols which is the familiar and elusive signature of James. Again the strange concept of the destructive woman appears, but this time she wears her rue with a difference, for her sin visits itself on her daughter; and her rejected suitor, the ghost of an unhappy suicide, with ghostly propriety and ghostly calm pursues the daughter, who, all unaware, is in danger of repeating the tragedy with her present suitor, the author of this story.

Extraordinary, even for James, is the relationship

between the spectre of the past suitor and the eternally proper present one. The basis of this strange relationship is, of course, love; the one for the mother, the other for the daughter; and interestingly enough until the appearance of the suitor none but the mother has been able to see Sir Edmund in his quiet vigil. It is, therefore, love which enables the suitor to see, and that same love which imperils him, and lays him open on the one hand to the coy cruelty of a woman, on the other to the vengeance of a ghost.

This, of course, poses a most interesting psychological study; it is the first full-blown example of James' concept of woman as a force at once inspirational and stultifying; at once Alpha and Omega; at once the impulse and the barrier to creative effort. This negation with which James infected his ladies is the one persistent theme in the long melody of the ghostly tales. In De Grey the slow sapping of a man's strength; in The Romance of Certain Old Clothes murder between sisters; in The Last of The Valerii a cloying, persistent stupidity, ending in belated iconoclasy; in The Ghostly Rental the slow destruction of an old man by his daughter,

who is dead.

In Sir Edmund Orme, the second generation of a rather hideous coquetry, and the enormity of a mother-daughter relationship undreamed of by any but the two lovers, the one spurned and living, the other spurned and dead, but nonetheless vigilant and omnipresent, furnishes a striking example of the three interesting points from which these early stories may have been attained; - the psychological; the romantic and the biographical - and of this trilogy it is obvious that the first comprises and includes the second and third.

The device of the juxtaposition of man and woman as forces essentially opposed, essentially remote and essentially irreconcilable, even in the very small social problems to which James later confined himself, furnishes written argument that James was indeed a complex system of reactions which cannot overcome us, without our special wonder.

James had dedicated himself in quite the same way as his dedicated ladies to a system of reactions which were to grow and be strengthened, leading to the ultimate tale of our study, in which he experiences a shock

more important than could have been supposed at this point, even by such a prophet as James himself.

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIMENTS IN APOSTASY

1891 was an interesting year in the life of Henry James as a creative mind. It was in this year that he experienced a mild success with his play The American. It was also in this year that he wrote a projection - or perhaps a collection of memories, involved with the theatre, which had been for James ever the goal of his highest creative zeal. On June 7, 1891, he wrote to his friend, Mrs. John R. Gardner of Boston, to describe a performance which he had recently seen of Hedda Gabler. Speaking at first in a soft voice he describes the actress Elizabeth Robins whom he had seen in the Ibsen drama. She it was, perhaps, who interested him in the leading lady as a type. It is entirely possible, in fact, that the symbols of Elizabeth Robins and Hedda Gabler became confused in his mind to such an extent that in his later works he seems to have found the resolute strength of the Ibsen heroine to be an almost inseparable counterpart of the James Woman. James' letter was not so immediately revealing as the later

observation which follows. At first of Miss Robins, he said:

"...a young American actress who never made a mark, I believe, chez vous, has lately revealed herself as Hedda Gabler and has quite leaped into fame. She is slightly uncanny, but distinguished and individual, and she is to do my heroine, a short part, but a very pretty one."

The slightly uncanny young lady, together with the slightly uncanny reaction which London audiences were to have to the later James plays was grist for the intellectual mill. The same young lady who appears to have been in real life uncanny was described in the story, Nona Vincent, as "pretty, distinguished and interesting". She it was whose performance of Hedda Gabler was described by James in the following words:

"...just her passions ... she is unfortunately perverse ... one isn't so sure she is wicked and by no means sure ... that she is disagreeable. She is various and sensuous ...; She suffers, she struggles; she is woman and by that fact exposed to a dozen interpretations."

It was during this period + during this exact period - that James conceived in dramatic form the first draft of what was later to become one of his really shocking novels, THE OTHER HOUSE, (that novel to which previous reference

has been made in connection with The Romance of Certain Old Clothes) and the influence of the literary and the actual lady, the extraordinary combination of Hedda Gabler and Elizabeth Robins seems to have produced a series of reactions which are at once optimistic and painful.

The story of Nona Vincent is a distillation of James' combined responses to the stimuli of his life in the theatre; thus it is that certain passages of the dialogue appear to be almost direct quotations from himself; thus it is that the actress Violet appears to be a thinly veiled representation of Elizabeth Robins; thus it is that the story moves through its mysterious little pattern with much more of a semblance of reality than usually surrounds the James scene. Unfortunately, however, the living counterpart of this story was not to have so contrived and so happy a conclusion.

Once again the disturbing symbol of the destructive woman shows itself, this time in a new guise - in Nona Vincent, James has conceived of a young, vital, beautiful actress as a force sapping the vitality from the author's play in quite the same way as, for example, Lady De Grey extracted the energy of her husband, with ignorant

fervency and perverted benevolence.

There is no doubt that the actress who later wrecked James' play was at one and the same time the model for Violet; this is patent in the repeated application of the same adjectives, "interesting", "disturbing", "unusual" to the actual and to the fictitious actress. Once again, it is the triumphant tranquility of a middle-aged lady which intervenes to reorganize the false concepts of the actress and save the play. Unfortunately no such guardian angel interceded for James.

The story, Nona Vincent, is peculiarly interesting in that it is, among the other early self-revelations of James, most candid and least disguised; the appearance, the situations, the reactions and the apprehensions of the fictitious author were exactly those of James; even the false note of a happy ending corresponds to the very falsity and precarious balance of James' emotional state at that time, the emotional state of an emotionally lonely man who seems to have for a brief period believed himself a contented artist on the threshold of the adulation of a vast waiting public.

Nona Vincent, for James, in much the same way Hamlet

and Richard II for Shakespeare, served as a medium of expression of his dramatic theories; those of Shakespeare Hamlet discussed; Richard put into action; those of James are minutely described in Nona Vincent; - in some cases with startling parallels in James' life. In the story the young author rushes back stage at the close of the first act of his play and inquires hopefully:

"Is it going?"

to receive the reply:

"Rather",¹

and in James' own experience during that year, the almost exact counterpart of this scene took place, the reply "Rather", in that case being more optimistic than accurate.

The candor of his story is rather pathetic, the more so because James so obviously saw himself, or wanted to see himself, as a conquering author of a great play, an honor which never came to him in his life. The responses of his audiences, in fact, extended to physical demonstrations and protestations in the case of Guy Dorrville. James never entirely recovered from what he must have considered a deliberate persecution of his supreme effort. That James was permanently enamoured of the stage, is obvious--even if

there were no more direct evidence² - in the very lines of Nona Vincent. It is bitterly ironic that this attempt to write for the stage was so frustrated, so often. Like other and later American authors eminently successful in other fields of literature, Ludwig Bemelmans, Thomas Wolfe, T. S. Eliot, to mention only three, James seems to have attempted the ultimate for him, the impossible translation, that adaptation from the silent manuscript to the living theatre which so often proves the stumbling block even of a great mind.³

Thus far we have acquired a menage of characters whose unmistakable resemblance each to the other brings them into sharp focus as a workable system of characters, a sort of mental filing cabinet from which James was to derive many, many future characters. There is first the proper young woman with terrible overtones. She is Rosalind, the murderous sister of the first story; Mrs. De Grey the resourceful wife of the second; the ghostly land-lady of the third; she was to become Rose in THE OTHER HOUSE and in a more complex person, Kate in The Wings of The Dove; in her strange force she was to become that most memorable of characters, the lady

governess to two children in THE TURN OF THE SCREW. Singularly, there is the lady of middle years, she to whom we have referred as the "safe" lady; she whose omniscience is tempered with benevolence, whose ready wit, with compassion; she appears indeed to have been the sole feminine symbol in whose company James, even as an author, could comfortably function. There is the almost desperately undecided young man; the coward of Owen; the invalid with whom James felt such great affinity; the ambiguously reverent young man, Wingrave, of The Altar of The Dead; the tormented man of The Beast in The Jungle; the groping frustrated man on The Jolly Corner.

This system of characters after a second look, appears to resolve itself almost shockingly into the complicated reality of its creator - that most complex mind, at times tenderly feminine and at times violently masculine; at times compassionate, at times uncontrollably vicious. The perplexing ambiguity of the problems which are posed by James is not lessened by the fact that these problems are symbols; enigmas compressed into small social questions. This allegory is easily understood in one placed hereditarily in the extreme of social propriety.

It is indeed this very quality of always being utterly correct, in the very limited sense in which James always was, which lends to the stories which have gone before and with more particular relevance to those which are to follow, a sort of compressed terror in which relaxation gradually becomes rigidity under the slow persuasion of the slight but inevitable perversion of perspective which James perfected in his novels, rather like some unholy mirror which reflects a beautiful room, and over whose surface a single drop of some obscene liquid slowly falls.

Between the optimism of Nona Vincent and the calculated horror of the later stories, there intervened a reactionary period even more interesting for its apparent proximity to truth; this was the period during which James, inspired, made to feel perhaps complete by his friendship with another man of very different personality, wrote one story which, like anomalous cloth in an otherwise dark pattern, indicates a period of false security.

In his one happy tale, The Private Life, James reveals for the first time two wonderfully interesting things

which to this point his reader has had no reason to suspect; the first is his deep and interesting friendship with Robert Browning, certainly an inexplicable and unimaginable combination of personalities. Browning for all of his smallness, was a bluff, robust, beef-eating man, but occasionally and superficially given over to the sort of drawing room tete-a-tete which so fascinated James; and yet in this most extroverted personality, (itself so interestingly divided into extremes of unblushing sentimentality and devastating cynicism) James seems to have found the sort of masculine symbol for which he had so long searched; first in his father, then in his brother William. In this story a completely unexpected point of view emerges for the first, though fortunately, not for the last time. James in The Private Life appears secure; he is the critic, the reporter of a ghostly little situation in which he has put two opposite psychological extremes, both rare examples of which would nowadays be called schizophrenia.⁴

The first of these figures, one palpably based on Browning himself, James fancies as a man admirably divided into two complimentary personalities; one whose function it is to be gregarious, the other creative and solitary.

That the symbol was intended to be a slightly disguised Browning is perfectly clear from James' own reported reaction to this apparently simple man; James pictured him as a "loud, sound, normal hearty presence, all so assertive and all so whole, bristling with prompt responses and expected opinions and usual views", and James asked himself how the "same, illustrious and undistinguished" Browning could have "written the immortal things".⁵

From this primary amazement, James progressed into further and more intricate speculation. He began to think that Browning had perhaps "literally mastered the secret of dividing the personal consciousness into a pair of independent compartments." James further described these two compartments as he who "walked abroad, talked right resonantly, abounded, multiplied his contacts and did his duty", while the other, he who had written "In the Laboratory" and "The Ring and the Book", "sat at a table all alone, silent and unseen, and wrote admirably deep and brave and intricate things. . . ." They had nothing to do, the so dissimilar twins, with each other; the diner could exist, but by the cessation of the writer, whose emergence, on his side depended upon his- and our.- ignoring the

diner.

The most fascinating thing about James' entire theory was that in strict psychological terms, it was actually a wonderfully accurate projection of James' own experience at precisely that moment. For James himself was more distinctly divided at that time into two separate compartments than at any period which we can ascertain with such ease. He was solitary and industrious during the day and by night the gregarious figure of the London theatre; the personal symbol so soon and so pitifully to crash around the feet of the lonely man who aspired to the continuous magnificence of a series of opening nights, and was eventually driven as surely as if at sword's point from the stage which he so loved.

But in fastastic juxtaposition, James conceived a further character for his works; one who even more completely reflects an aspect of James' personality. He was the antithesis of the Browning symbol; a man whose public character exhausted his intellect utterly.

Certain it is that by the time of the writing of The Private Life, which seems chronologically to have antedated the writing of Nona Vincent, James had acquired deep

insight into certain fundamental psychological truths. He had at this point insight enough to write with perfect accuracy of the problems which he conceived to be those of others; perhaps even enough to realize that he wrote largely of problems which were his own. This remains the great question, the critical assertion and contraversion of which has been argued for more than forty years.

The personal, the exterior experience of James had an interesting effect on his next published ghost novel, Sir Dominick Ferrand. The image of James' recently dead sister, Alice, whose death had occurred on March 6, 1892, remained strongly in his mind. Like the death of his youthful sweetheart, Minny Temple, she who was to reappear in The Wings of The Dove as Milly Theale, Alice's death had been a slow and tortuous process and during that process the awful pain had been eased, after the narcotic tolerance point had been reached, by a process suggested by William James. Hypnotism, still largely associated with the strange life of Franz Mesmer, was a phenomenon fancied to occur only in darkened drawing rooms. The

James family, however, since their father's early alliance with the philosophies of Swedenborg, had never been strict conformists in the socio-religious sense, and at this time any avenue to anodyne was an avenue which beckoned to them.

In any event, the idea of hypnotism became in James' mind a consuming impression; a thought requiring translation into some literary formula, and thus it was that by a simple transitional process, another of the recurrent symbols of the James' story came into being. So began the idea of the hypnotic effect of objects; that idea which was to take so many forms in so many stories; that idea which was to become consummated in the wonderful novel, The Aspern Papers. In this case the symbol is a set of ancient documents; the idea of documents was to become in The Aspern Papers the single pivot of a novel whose focal impressions (those of great age, and great mystery, and great darkness) were all but combinations of the single fascination of the undisclosed.

CHAPTER V
THE SERPENT BENEATH

In the years which intervened between the early efforts and the closing episodes of James' ghostly inspirations, the period in which the production of the story Nona Vincent followed hard upon the theatrical experience, gave impetus to a novel which is inextricably related to, though not entirely parcel of, the subject which we treat. The novel THE OTHER HOUSE¹ is tangential to the ghost novellas in that it involves the central impression with which James was so long and so strangely fascinated. THE OTHER HOUSE is a novel completely evil in concept. It is, practically speaking, the expansion of a three-act play which James had written for production during the tragic years of his London theatrical venture. For this reason, perhaps, or perhaps because of an increasing facility with dialogue, the novel appears in many ways the most organized work to appear in this series to this point. The concision of idea, the impact of the episodic sections of the book, are increased by the unfortunate fact that James wrote THE OTHER HOUSE for serial

publication. This fact he bitterly resented--but it lends to the novel a breathless air not customarily associated with James. It was necessary, realistically, for the author to arrive at a shocking climax periodically in order to maintain the interest of his serial audience.

The importance of *THE OTHER HOUSE* to this study hinges on the psychological relaxation with which it is written. The ghost novels, I have said, represent the logical projection of a series of James' most intimate experiences in a medium which immunized him from the inevitable connection which would have been made (and has been made) between the author and the work. He felt that in the never-never environment which he had created, he could move with relative ease and security through a maze of intellectualized horrors, without incurring the speculative wrath of the late Victorian critics, or the more deadly interest of the new school of psychoanalysts. This reaction was probably unconscious, of course, but so strongly did it persist that only in the ghost novels does the formalized James, the drawing room author, divorce himself from his systems of manners and plunge to the profoundest depths of his character.

THE OTHER HOUSE remains unique, sole among the other novels, as the only non-supernatural work in which this same relaxation, this same off-guard accuracy appears. It deals in two varieties of concentrated evil--juxtaposed against each other, and against the lesser evils of its fellows. Its situation is fully as shocking as that of THE TURN OF THE SCREW--perhaps more so for the fact that here is a situation not involving either hallucination or ghosts, but naked reality. THE OTHER HOUSE is a novel steeped in utter viciousness--emphasized by its perfect understanding of the opposite qualities of gentleness and generosity.

THE OTHER HOUSE is perhaps the most forthright expression of James' most bitter and typical creation, the destructive woman. But it is more than this. Considered as a fictional work, it is perhaps melodramatic, more inclined to the superficial plane of action than to the more usual James area of slow, intellectual machination; considered as analysis of character, however, it emerges as a penetrating dissection of five types of viciousness. The overwhelming impression of this novel is one of dissection; it is as if James had applied his scalpel to the

body of the social entity with which he deals, and with one long, slow stroke, revealed the putrescence within that body mercilessly, and coldly, like the crucial incision in Candide.

We have again the dedicated woman--dedicated this time to the idea of conquest of a man--again, the typically ambitious, rather stupid, successful gentleman--the last example of this precise type which we shall encounter. Again we have the naive, saccharine character of another young lady, placed against her clever opponent in a battle at once apparently and actually without hope. We have again the older woman--the sage, the mother of her quiet, putty-like son; and this time, she wears her rue with a difference. We have finally, the melodramatic device of the deathbed promise, which furnished at once motive and barrier to the plot development.

Rose Armiter, the scheming, resolute murderess of THE OTHER HOUSE, is fascinating and unique among James heroines. For there is something heroic in the very frankness with which she disposes of the lesser social enigmas, those with which James was usually so obsessed, and proceeds to the fundamentals of sex, murder, and the

transfer of her guilt to another. It is apparent from the moment of her entry into the story that she loves her half-sister's husband, and equally apparent almost as soon that no barrier is too forbidding to be assailed by this woman, sufficiently possessed to do murder, sufficiently controlled to function in the involved machinery of an elaborate social situation all the while.¹ Her antithesis, tragic little Jean, is hardly so interesting in her useless, pathetic attempts to forestall the inevitable. And there is something sickening in her fascination with the child victim of the murder. If one were to look for the immediate ancestor of the governess in *THE TURN OF THE SCREW*, one would find her to be the admixture of these two women, the one bitterly paranoid, impelled by sexuality and pride, calculating, unswervable in her purpose, the other vapid, fluttering, hyper-feminine, useless to stay the juggernaut which is her enemy. And about these two juxtaposed heads crash the thunders and lightnings of incest, infanticide, a whole catalogue of monstrous crimes, hiding just behind the velvet skirts and trimmed hedges of a party at lawn-croquet.

At the conclusion of this book there is nothing left.

The two women have destroyed themselves in their dedication--the one to the spoiled, hideous little child, the other to the image of her father; the man, hitherto useless and charming, ingenuous, is now a bitter cynic, the more bitter for his essential inability to comprehend what has happened. The matriarch of the house next door is left in Oedipal splendor with her son, now dedicated to the company of his mother until her death--and to God knows what petty months and years after that. Even Rose, triumphant and destroyed by her own triumph, now exists like some perilous gyroscope, momentarily upright and spinning--soon to crash in its own ruins.

THE OTHER HOUSE is a declaration--an admission. It is not simply a wild melodrama, or the expansion of a piece du theatre--it is the bull's-eye at which the convergent arrows of years have been relentlessly pointed. Like its own episodes, it says to the reader of Henry James:

"You have seen a climax; you have beheld what we can do. You are familiar with our characters, through long introduction. Now they are ready. Let us mix them a little--change their faces a little. Come back, and see what new horrors our small animals can conjure; you are invited to dinner at eight, at which time my little scorpions

will sting themselves to death--with their own tails."

And from this point, James plunged back into the supernatural with no holds barred. The novellas to come rush to their climaxes like doomed expresses, roaring on twisted tracks, speeding to nowhere.

CHAPTER VI
THE LADY OF BLY

The tempo has changed; James has now dedicated himself, like his many dedicated ladies, to the production of what he called his little traps.¹ Ironically--as is almost always the way with traps, to ensnare not his readers, nor yet his critics, but himself.

The year 1894 was for James perhaps the vital year--that year of all his life during which his emotions, always so complex, organized themselves into terms expressible in many different directions. Chief among those tendencies was a fascination with death--always present in James, now growing to the limits of an obsession, and beyond.

The Altar of The Lead was composed during this year, as was The Death of The Lion. The significant appearance of the very word, death, in the title of both these stories continues the preoccupation with this subject which had first made its strong reappearance in Owen Wingrave,² in 1892. Third among the stories James finished in 1894 was The Coxon Fund, the story of the living death of a

writer (again, the patent self-reference which was so notable in the epoch of Mona Vincent) who destroys himself in conversation, extenuates himself, day by day in a series of contrapositive talkings. This quasi-obsession with the tomb did not, of course, manifest itself for the first time here...nor was this to be the last time. Mr. T. S. Eliot has said that James had a viewpoint "untouched by the parasite idea".³ That is, that though James' mind teemed with thoughts, it had no ideas. This paradoxical criticism is an interesting word play. It is, perhaps, essentially correct for one half of its value. That is, that, other things considered, during this period of his creative effort, for the spaces of time each year when James divorced himself from reality and wrote of his ultra-experiential world, it is possible, indeed, even probable, that he was compelled more by emotion than by either of the other two. For the thoughts found in the James ghost novellas are half-formed, ambiguous shadows and whether this be the accident of a mind obsessed, or the result of a technique advanced to the point of confounding an entire critical society, it remains essentially impossible to say with absolute truth.

Even Mr. Edmund Wilson remains in a state of almost classical equipoise on the question of the James ambiguity.⁴ As to ideas, certain it is that this presupposes a somewhat esoteric definition. However, if we conceive of an idea as a plan, suddenly given impetus in the mind as the result of an organized thought process, then we can say that according to his own testimony, James had none at the beginning of any single one of these novellas. As a matter of record⁵, these novellas found their initiate force in impressions--reactions either almost totally metaphysical, or totally sensual, or some combination of these two. The recurrent terms "image", "vision", "glance", "intimation", "suggestion", "fantasy", "reverie" with which the notebooks describe the initial inspirations of the stories furnishes cogent evidence that James proceeded first from the total impression to the particular instant--from the Gestalt to the footnote. But, taking, for example, the incandescent fantasy of The Jolly Corner, the last of the novellas considered here, and placing it next to its strangely related brother The Ivory Tower⁶, it may be observed that James' impressions form slowly--sometimes over periods of years and years. THE OTHER HOUSE, the subject of the last

chapter, is the direct lineal descendant of the very first story of this type that James wrote, The Romance of Certain Old Clothes, which is, in itself, a sort of syllabus of the technique of Hawthorne and Irving. The metaphysical connection between, for example, Daisy Miller and The Wings of The Dove is unmistakable. And the death of Minny Temple (not an idea, per se) precipitated both--many years after the fact. The possessed governess of THE TURN OF THE SCREW is certainly an extraordinary combination of Rose Armiter, of Jean Martle, of Maisie, Milly Theale, Miriam Rooth; the governess is the epitome of the skimmed characters of the murderess, the frightened Victorian servant girl, the desperately gay adventuress, the tragic muse...Cassandra and Pandora in one, she is the apex, the focal point of the heroine, the actress, the strumpet, the doomed girl. She is nothing new under the Jamesian sun. She is merely the first person expression of a woman whom James knew well--having lived with her growing character for so many years rooted in his mind--as an impression, not as an idea.

And the impression of death, in its most simple and most involved aspects, appears as a permanent addendum to the series of things we have come to expect of the James

ghost novel.

Owen Wingrave involves again the old fixture of the curse--this time an unspoken one. And James projects into this strange novella all of his ambidextrous reactions to the Civil War. "He was all the young soldier on the gained field" says James of Owen after he has been sent down to his death by the militant ghost of his ancient ancestor. Goaded, goaded by a woman--Owen has succumbed to the dare to return to the haunted room and brave the awful thing within. Forced to look into himself as James was perhaps forced to look, Owen finds his reactions mixed; he dies in the attempt to dispel the ambiguity of his courage. And he dies at the instigation of a woman dedicated--this time --to the probation of the valor of her lover. The essential plot is unchanged. The woman destroys, always. Inevitably the perversion, the hypnosis, the fascination, the rumor, revolves around a woman. These cursed, obsessed, dedicated murderesses of James are beginning to be more bold. In THE OTHER HOUSE Rose opened her garment to reveal the serpent very early. In THE TURN OF THE SCREW Miss Giddens knows nothing more than that she is obsessed--as she thinks, by ghosts. But even she admits the possibility of

mental unbalance. The awful fear of self-distrust blazes from her recorded words to the very penultimate moment in which she is pushed beyond the pale of sanity by the reappearance of whatever symbol Peter Quint may have been to her--pushed to the point of communicating such deadly fear, such pathological hatred into the body of her small charge that his little heart becomes, in fact, "quite dispossessed". But of what? Of Peter Quint, or of his governess? Of death, the nameless and inevitable quantity which comes as an expression, as a drop of rain, the flight of a dove, the embrace of a woman?

The Altar of The Dead is an even more hideous image in its way--the lingering dead, just across the borders of sanity, who are supported by the solitary man and his solitary companion in the lonely little church are once again symbols--not of animated corpses, not of any of the traditional concepts and trappings of haunting, but of impressions. Memories too furious to die consume the air about the heads of the worshipping two. Images too awful to remember are framed in the red and gold altar cloths. The contrived elements of the story are negligible against the power of the impression. The romance is dead. Hawthorne

and Poe are dead. James, James at last, revealed beyond the possibility of the conventional novellas, lives. And dictating in his summer house, to his secretary, builds an intellectual maze into the novellas--never realizing the ultimate irony of his trap--that most calculated of all traps, THE TURN OF THE SCREW. That trap woven of scattered leaves and grey skies, of piercing towers and dark gardens, of the hysteria of a woman, the visitation of an image--the balanced against the unbalanced, the pure against the corrupt, the French windows--opening into a drawing room on one side, an inferno on the other; this is the snare in which James enmeshed himself. This is the enigma he posted on the wall of the future. These are the questions he has asked--perhaps of himself.

This novel has been considered from every conceivable viewpoint. The sexual theories are oversimplified and commonplace, for the most part. The pink lenses of the fundamentalists see hardly more. What there is in this story--the fundamental, vital quantity so strangely ignored, is that it is not unique. The governess is not sui generis among James women. Nor are Miles and Flora. THE TURN OF THE SCREW is, because of its calculation, disturbing. It

is frightening from whatever viewpoint. As a ghost story, it is sufficiently fraught with corridors and silences; as a sex metaphor, it is accurate in the Freudian sense. The phallic symbol for which psychologists look is there, on cue. There is the fascination with the unknown uncle in London⁷; there is the more dangerous fascination with Miles. The hatred for Quint is a palpable sexual hatred. The sex-symbol of the garden with the piercing cypresses and winding lanes appears, as in The Wings of The Dove, as in Portrait of A Lady, as in The American, as in Washington Square. No single symbol of THE TURN OF THE SCREW is a new one. The governess is at once all of James' heroines. She is doomed, tortured, desperate, resolute; she is vicious in the very masculinity of her opposition of Quint, jealous in the femininity of her silent stalking of Miss Jessel. She is all emotions, all sexes, all impressions, combined into the luminescent insanity of one shattered woman. And she is, to the very instant of her last vainglorious victory, involved not only in death, but in courtesy, social propriety, sexual frustration, zealous maternalism, cowardice and the courage of the damned. She is, in this dark house, an exile--shut off

from the world of the actual, forced into the world of
the marvelous. She is a mind severed, expatriated...
she is Henry James.

CHAPTER VII
THE CHAMBERED BEAST

James now faced the last years of his effort in the ghost novella. Behind him lay the gradual process of exfoliation which had stripped him of one pretense after another. Behind him lay the ventures to Europe, the experiments in style, the bitter years of work on the stage. With Guy Forville still imbedded in his consciousness like some cruel knife, he turned his thoughts to futility, to the emptiness which had been his lot in the important areas the peripheries of which he had so long skirted.

The impression,¹ once again, came to him. The impression which was to form the final smashing chapter of this whole genre for Henry James had revealed itself. Through a long series of disinvolved symbols, he had arrived at the moment in which he could lay aside his last disguise, and write about Henry James. Lambert, in The Ambassadors had been a beginning. But to him had come the final solace of having recovered some vestige of himself in the lonely streets of Paris. The governess had been the projection of hysteria, the intensity of which was not

lessened in the mind of James for all its apparent calculation. Milly and Jean, the death figures, had come and remained through a score of works. Now the time was ripe for these symbols--and for those of The Private Life,² The Altar of The Dead,³ and The Aspern Papers⁴ to come together in two final masterpieces.

The last two novellas deal in these quantities; the separated consciousness, the tense, silent hysteria; the emptiness and futility of non-realization; the extenuation of a man by his own hand; the loss of something which might have been--and finally, the constant symbol of the occult, the hidden. Both of the final novellas treat of a search ...in each case, perhaps, for the same thing.

The Beast in The Jungle, long unpublished, is in many ways the spiritual autobiography of its author. Its central character is a man who has lived in the awful, the constant dread of some great thing, which waits, just around every corner of his life. In mounting, horrible tension, created by the most subtle use of color, tone, movement, the character lives what seems to be scores of years within the pages of this novella. The effect is achieved in two ways: first by the use of seasons, months,

times of day, to point the passage of time; secondly by the repetition and gradual increase of the adjectives of infirmity, futility, negation...

"She looked at him a minute, and there came to him as he met it an inconsequent sense that her eyes, when one got their full clearness, were still as beautiful as they had been in youth, only beautiful with a strange cold light --a light that somehow was a part of the effect, if it wasn't rather a part of the cause, of the pale, hard, sweetness of the season and the hour. 'And yet,' she said at last, 'there are horrors we've mentioned.'"

And, as always, the final ambiguity--not confined this time to a section, concluding line, but smashing at the end of every paragraph. The half-formed suggestions and intimations of this story are woven with a master hand into a tapestry of intermingled emotions and fears such as even James was to achieve only once more in his life. The horror of The Beast in The Jungle lies in the unrealized. We no longer need the felt coldness, the seen phantom. We have now things much more awful to face. We are in the presence of haunting dread, dread untranslated into action; no corridors, no frosted panes, no aerial staircases...only the aging mind of a man who waits, in impatient agony, the doom which crouches at the next

step of his existence--for the beast in his jungle.

But now, the final irony. The woman symbol, the symbol of May, the soft, gentle combination of the remote and the immediate who dedicates herself (again, the final dedication process) to the companionship of her tortured friend, with a love so consuming that it surrounds, without penetrating, the object. Superficially, the theme of the story is one of unrealized opportunity, of lost love. More profoundly, however, one sees the final destruction of Marcher in May's final prostration of the awful reality that this is a man to whom nothing was ever to have happened. Nothing, endless, incessant nothing is the beast which lies so patiently watching the hours expire on the life of its victim. Too late Marcher realizes that the woman loves him. Too late he finds the baselessness of his fear of actuality. Too late he discovers that his life could have been lived from within, rather than seen from without. When the only moment comes in which he has the opportunity to know himself, he is ready to die. To death and the woman go the final, hollow triumph.

We deal here in things more terrifying than spectres, although the ultimate horror of the seen is added to this

system in the final novella, to make fear turn pale, and confound critic and psychologist alike. Here we deal in the typical paranoid symptom of the hovering disaster, the great catastrophe just overhead, waiting to lower itself like some evil tide on the waiter below; like the flying island of Lemuel Gulliver, the beast of Henry James is stationed at the outposts of existence.

But that beast is not done with James. He makes his final, undisguised appearance in the final novella...a work which, standing absolutely alone, marks James for the ages. This is The Jolly Corner.

Returned, at last, the expatriate takes the house next door to the house of his youth, "The Jolly Corner". He is fascinated by the ancient, uninhabited mansion, with its black and white checkerboard floors and its vaulting escalier. And nightly, at first with interest, then with fear, and finally with a horror absolutely inexpressible, he roams the enormous, empty rooms, candle in hand, looking for he knows not what. Some symbol, some remnant of himself is in this house, in form so horrible, he knows, that when he encounters it, his mind will be unable to withstand the avalanche of impressions which will come.

And what ultimate, disciplined rigid awe when they come...

in a poem of perfect words and measured intercadences:

"...wasn't he now in the most immediate presence of some inconceivable occult activity? ...the answer hung fire still and seemed to lose itself in the vague darkness to which the thin admitted dawn, glimmering archwise over the whole outer door, made a semicircular margin, a cold silvery nimbus that seemed to play a little as he looked--to shift and expand and contract.

"It was as if there had been something within it, protected by indistinctness and corresponding in extent with the opaque surface behind, the painted panels of the last barrier to his escape, of which the key was in his pocket. The indistinctness mocked him even while he stared, affected him as somehow shrouding or challenging certitude, so that after faltering an instant on his step, he let himself go with the sense that here was at last something to meet, to touch, to take, to know--which was the condition for him either of liberation or of supreme defeat. The penumbra, dense and dark, was the virtual screen of a figure which stood in it as still as some image erect in a niche, or as some black-vizored sentinel guarding a treasure...He saw, in its great gray glimmering margin, the central vagueness diminish, and he felt it to be taking the very form toward which, for so many days, the passion of his curiosity had yearned. It gloomed, it loomed, it was something, it was somebody, the prodigy of a personal presence."⁵

This monstrous paragraphic duo includes, seen but after a moment's looking, every single, solitary, ultimate symbol of James' life. Examine it again, if we

will, we find the dim ambiguities, the shifting sands, the half-light, the death image, the hypnotic hidden entity, the buried treasure, the acid, corrosive benevolence of an angel unseen, the gradual disinvolvement of something, the hovering fear of something else--and the final, most horrendous discovery, the admission for the ages that the author in his almost endless search for the perverse horror which has haunted his life, has found...himself. For it is the image of Spencer Brydon which waits for Spencer Brydon at the foot of the grand staircase. It is his own face whose horrifying, grizzled expression appalls him. It is his own hand from which he recoils in the rigid fear of futility. It is his own brain which has sent him down a tortuous road to end in a sudden precipice.

The conclusion of the novel is an attempt at reconciliation--a final concession to society on the part of James. His Brydon returns to his woman--now old, old, and to the other house--the spectre is eliminated from their lives. But the story is over, for James, for art, for us, at the moment of meeting. The lifelong split in the mind of the author has been solidified into his last, greatest, ghost novel. James has recognized himself, after many years of

voyaging. And now he, like Marcher, is almost ready to die.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ULTIMATE ENIGMA--FORTY YEARS LATER

James is gone. The all-but-unread testament of his life history remains to us in these at first so simple stories...every experience, every impression, every memory of a long and strange life condensed into a land of never-was. Speculate we must--perhaps because the technique of the man involved the most carefully unstated intimations. But is there need for great speculation here? We have collected our little symbols, one by one, each added, like another coin to the psychological coffer of a man. The woman too dangerous to love--too intimately associated with James to go unexplored; the remote, guarded love of middle-age, the hypnosis of treasures and letters and furniture and houses, empty and locked--the romance of certain old clothes and certain old promises, the torture in a tone of music, or the smile of a woman; doom, doom in many guises, each with a face prepared to meet the faces of the reader, was the central symbol. Death, by means of curses and lung disease and knives and fear--death in the falling of a leaf, in the tearing of a

manuscript, in the burning of a notebook, was its handmaiden. And, attendants in this strange ceremony, were negation, futility, introversion, projection, all manners of darknesses.

Psychologically, we have a man obsessed by paranoia, tortured by the intimate division of his mind into "two compartments" so essentially irreconcilable as to be bitter and eternal enemies. For James, like Brydon and Marcher, was at war with himself. All of the quiet perversions of his organized moral code were as strange to him as faces on towers at dusk. Sex he rejected utterly--except as overtone. Nothing normal or abnormal can be definitely associated with his name. Homosexuality there seems to be in certain of the works¹...irregular relations in many, but always seen through the barrier of propriety which prevented James ever from stating, (or living) one undisguisedly sensual moment.

What James has developed from his little game of traps, is perhaps the most long and intimate self-psychanalysis ever conceived. For from the first romantic sigh of The Romance of Certain Old Clothes to the last heavy breath of The Jolly Corner, he is climbing the

skeleton steps of an edifice built by his own hand--to assume, at last, in his own unassailable ivory tower, at least the dignity of the man to whom nothing has happened ...at least the satisfaction of the man who had nothing to fear but himself.

Of analyses there are many--and there charts are as perceptive and accurate as charts may be. Of criticism there is much, and its words flow as beautifully as quiet seas. Of understanding, there has been little...not so much as one would say, for the scroll of record, this is, this was, Henry James. All of these buried statues and hidden letters and locked doors, all of these obsessed women and tortured men--all of these seekers, each finding his own variety of nothingness, each tumbling to his own decay--all of them, each with a face prepared to meet the face that he meets, Henry James.

And so we have the kindest, most generous of men...a man who gave to his public nothing less than himself, imperfectly revealed to his last ill-cut facet. No pair of ragged claws, scuttling across the floors of seas more silent and sinister than we have known before--rather a colossus, planted, rooted, affixed, in the future.

Here was a man more complex and subtle than we shall meet again, for a time. Here was a man in love with death, with negation, with division, futility--a man but seldom content to give of himself--but who, when he gave, gave utterly. This giving he cloaked in romance; in the mantle of the marvelous he clothed the actual. Never anywhere else did he write of his own mind with such clarity...perhaps because never anywhere else would it have been--safe.

This safety, then, he is left. The ghost novellas are seldom read with great thought--they are but fantasies, reveries, of a busy and practical mind. So may they remain, until the day when the critical future may understand that this sole medium, this one twisting road, gave James his only release. His unique catharsis lay in the telling of ghostly tales--not about ghosts, about himself.

And perhaps it is best that he be left in the sepulchre of his security--perhaps the dignified ashes of the man will lie quietly. Whether we will or no, to some of us, the sparks of his words are revenant as his own ghosts. To some of us, will inevitably come the haunting spectres of this most rational man, who is, after all, long dead... who, perhaps, never lived at all.

**A Note
Concerning the Bibliography**

The term "original source" is used to indicate that the dates and places of original publication have been used. The author wishes to incorporate by reference the entire New York Edition of Henry James' works in this genre, which is collectively published under the anthologized title The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, which is referred to in the bibliography proper. This was the edition used for all quotations, the one read last, and considered most definitive.

In this book is published an excellent bibliography which, though not suited to this thesis, will be of great use to any student of James.

Finally, the author wishes to acknowledge the excellent chronological table which is reproduced, with only slight change, from the work of Mr. Leon Edel, in his appendix to the volume above cited.

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NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1. Perhaps the most famous of these traps, The Turn of The Screw, occasioned this remark from Henry James during a conversation with William Lyon Phelps, "I meant to scare the whole world with that story." Adel Leon, The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 426.
2. James, Henry, "The Beast in The Jungle", The Better Sort, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 1903.
3. James, Henry, "The Altar of The Dead", Terminations, (New York: Harper & Bros.,) 1894.
4. James, Henry, The Turn of The Screw, The Two Magics, (New York: Macmillan Company), 1900.
5. James, Henry, "Sir Edmund Orme", The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 142.
6. James, Henry, "The Jolly Corner", The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 725.
7. James, Henry, "The Friends of The Friends", Embarrassments, (New York: The Macmillan Company), 1897.
8. "...How in Boston when the evening arrives, and I am tired of reading and know it would be better to do something else, can I go to the theatre? I have tried it ad nauseum. Likewise 'calling'. Upon whom?" (The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 3.

9. Letter from William James to Henry James bearing the date 4 March, 1868.
10. This often-overlooked fact leads to interesting speculation on the real nature of the relationship between these two brilliant men. Legend has it that on more than one occasion William spoke cruelly to his brother in the presence of others. Such unsubstantiated evidence remains, however, a poor basis for any real and final decision as to the nature of their amity or lack of it. If amity it was, it was of a variety distinctly intellectual and distinctly strange.
11. The regularly balanced cadences of these letters are probably the result of a literary style rather than a real affection. Their entire correspondence seems to have been an arrangement in salutations and complimentary conclusions.
12. See, for example, "Rappaccinni's Daughter", which is at once the most Jamesian and the most successful of Hawthorne's "marvelous" tales.
13. See final paragraph, page 55.
14. In connection with the use of the term "outsider" an interesting comparison is to be found between Poe's "William Wilson", Lovecraft's "The Outsider", and James' "The Jolly Corner". See also paragraph one, page 27.
15. James, Henry, The Other House, (London: The Macmillan Company--New Directions), 1896, 1924, 1951

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. James was of course not alone in his concept of the destructive woman. She is consistently the subject of the moral excisions of Nathaniel Hawthorne, his ancestor.
2. To define the term most rigidly, not a type in the universal sense but a type within the narrow confines of James' stories in this genre.
3. Again the word "sweetheart", must be used in a very narrow sense meaning in this case only a feminine friend, more intimate than James had had before or was to have again.
4. Dupee, F. W., Henry James, (New York: William Sloane Associates Inc.), 1951, p. 46. (The quotation following and extending into page 21 of the thesis comes from the same source and is like manner an extension of the same quotation.)
5. See, for example:
James, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience, (New York: Columbia University Press), 1938.
6. James, Henry, "The Altar of The Dead", Terminations, (New York: Harper and Bros.), 1894.
7. James, Henry, "Sir Dominick Ferrand", The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 252.
8. James, Henry, The Aspern Papers, (London: Allan Wingate), 1947. See note 13, page 94.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1. Rahv, Phillip, Image and Idea, (New York: New Directions), 1948. This theory is most clearly expounded in Chapter One, entitled "Paleface and Redskin", but is the subject a frequent reference and recapitulation through the entire book.
2. Whitman is at this state generally regarded as an almost classic example of the overcompensated homosexual, which again provides an interesting comparison between these two extremes, so superficially unlike, so actually tending to the same destiny.
3. Excellent examples of this type are "Owen Wingrave", Marcher, in "The Beast in The Jungle", and Brydon in "The Jolly Corner".
4. To this author there seems to be no justification between the sort of pastoral simplicity of "The Ghostly Rental", and the unified horror of "The Fall of The House of Usher".
5. It is regrettable, however, that when encountered by ambiguity, critics often respond with theories all too explicit--theories which they may later find cause to regret, partially at least. Edmund Wilson in his celebrated essay on The Turn of The Screw created exactly this sort of false syllogism, based on a few facts and many appearances.
6. Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, The House and The Brain, Strange Fancies, (London: Oxford University Press), 1904.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1. This, and the foregoing two quotations, in this sequence, appear in:
Edel, Leon, The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 174.
2. See, for example:
James, Henry, The Scenic Art, (ed. Matthiessen,) (New York: New Directions), 1946.
3. This statement is largely one of personal opinion. I have never seen a play in the same form in which it was written by James, produced; I have, however, seen the New York productions of "Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep", and "The Cocktail Party"; in each case transition was for dramatic validity completely unsuccessful.
4. In the sense in which Dr. Freud defines this disease as a total division between two opposite personalities each potentially inimical to the existence of the other, the study involved in this story is one of the more accurate literary studies. This is more astonishing in light of the indecision as to whether or not James had actually read Freud. It is of course chronologically possible that he could have.
5. James, Henry, "The Private Life", Edel, Leon, The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 211.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1. The Other House, is actually the novelized version of a play unproduced at this point, which was to have been produced under the title, "The Promise". It is to be noted that the basic plot structure is essentially identical to that of "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes". It is the degree, and not the kind, of evil which has so startlingly increased in the interim.
2. The typical mechanism of a James ghost story is always to involve his horrors in sufficient trivia so that the contrast becomes really appalling.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

1. See Chapter one, Note one.
2. The concept of death-in-life which appears in this story is again interestingly related to the occasional use of this concept by Poe and Hawthorne.
3. Dupee, F. W., (ed.) The Question of Henry James; Eliot, T. S., "On Henry James", p. 126. (The Question of Henry James, London: Allan Wingate), 1947.
4. Mr. Wilson in his later lectures has reached the state of equipoise by process of gradual self-refutation. He is now at the crossroads between the theory of fantasy and the theory of sex repression.
5. Matthiessen, F. O., (ed.) The Notebooks of Henry James, (New York: Oxford University Press), 1947.
6. In this case the very title, The Ivory Tower, indicates the central impression around which James intended to build his novel--the impression of great distance and great objectivity. The result was a sterility even greater.
7. This fascination with the uncle may be a supreme ingenuousness or of a supreme sexuality. The sex symbols are apparent enough in the remainder of the work.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

1. See Chapter six, Footnote three.
2. The symbol of the split personality.
3. The symbol of the unquiet dead.
4. The symbol of the ancient and guarded secret.
5. James, Henry, "The Beast in The Jungle", The Ghostly Tales of Henry James, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1948, p. 670.

NOTE FOR CHAPTER VIII

1. In spite of the author's distinct break with Mr. Wilson's theory--in spite in fact of the change which Mr. Wilson himself has undergone, there certainly seems to be no explanation of the relationship between Miles and Quint in The Turn of The Screw.