

# The Hawthorne Tradition in Henry James

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T. S. Eliot, writing of Henry James, commented that "the soil of his origin contributed a flavor discriminable after transplantation in his latest fruit" and that "James is positively a continuator of the New England genius."<sup>1</sup> By "the New England genius" Eliot meant such writers as Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and Lowell. However, it is Hawthorne in particular and his influence on Henry James that I would like to consider in this paper. The argument of this paper is to define a dominant moral preoccupation in Hawthorne and to see how the similar or relevant idea is inherited and continued in the works of Henry James.

Both Hawthorne and James were fascinated by dark and monstrous forces lurking behind "the closed doors." For all the transcendental "Good is positive" and "Everything good is on the highway" idealism, to Hawthorne and James, who were concerned with inward moral journey into "the dusky, overshadowed conscience," the sense of evil was an undeniable and the most important fact of life. This sense of evil and its relation to man was a recurring theme treated in Hawthorne's short stories and his "romances." However, unlike Mark Twain who dealt the problem in a satiric vein as observed in *The Mysterious Stranger* or in "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," Hawthorne contrived to transmute his vision of evil in such a way as best suited to him, making it evaporate "in the light and charming fumes of artistic production."<sup>2</sup> If James was interested in what he defined "deeper psychology" of Hawthorne, he was also interested in the way Hawthorne executed his subject matter, though it is evident that his way of execution was different from that of his predecessor as we shall see later in the discussion.

In "Ethan Brand," Hawthorne dramatized the greatest sin of all — allegorically called as "the unpardonable sin" — the sin against the human soul. Ethan Brand, the protagonist of the story, sets out on his quest for "the unpardonable sin," only to find it in his heart. In his empiric search for it, Ethan Brand loses his hold of "the magnetic chain of humanity," and becomes "a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment,"<sup>3</sup> and at length converts man and woman to be his puppets, pulling the wires that move them to such degrees of crime as are demanded for his study. This Hawthorne deemed as the greatest offence one could commit against one's fellowmen. Likewise, Rappaccini, proud of his scientific knowledge, commits the same sin of treating his daughter and Giovanni, another victim, as instruments of his "infernal experiment" to create the garden of Eden on this earth, which cannot and should not be allowed, as Hawthorne testifies, and Beatrice dies a victim of his experiment and due to lack of undoubting love on Giovanni's part. Rappaccini's sin, however, remains exclusively a sin against Beatrice's body; he fails to possess her soul.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, we again encounter the demonic puppet-player in Roger Chillingworth. With a devilish fervor he examines Arthur Dimmesdale as "a rare case" and intrudes into the interior of his heart. He is "a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil, if he will only, for a reasonable space of time, undertake a devil's office."<sup>4</sup> Betrayed and disillusioned in his love and life with his young blooming wife, Chillingworth is transformed into a devil and finds the sole object (and joy) of his life in pursuing his experiment, as the minister helplessly lays himself at the mercy of the ruthless doctor. However, Dimmesdale escapes from Chillingworth, bringing himself at last up to the scaffold, where he confesses the sin he has concealed from the community which upholds him as the holiest of men. He dies in triumphant ignominy, praising God for delivering him from the hands of the Satan. It is curious

how much James misread *The Scarlet Letter*; he saw it primarily as Chillingworth-Dimmesdale relationship! Hawthorne condemns these fiends with human face, which examples are numerous in his stories. They manipulate their victims for want of love and of reverence of the human soul and so doing alienate themselves from mankind.

Now, how is this vision of evil continued or developed in Henry James? The similar idea of deadly sin of manipulating another human being for one's "omnivorous egotism" — often as an *objet d'art* — is exploited in many of his novels.

"Madame de Mauves," one of James's earliest short stories yet to my knowledge a perfectly articulated masterpiece, is a story of "an American girl, born to be neither a slave nor a toy, marrying a profligate French man, who believes that a woman must be one or the other."<sup>5</sup> Euphemia, innocent and idealistic, if ignorantly romantic, falls a victim of the corrupted Old World represented by Marie — whom she meets in the convent — and by her brother, the Baron. The difference between Hawthorne and James, it seems to me, is that in James the problem involves a more complicated pattern. Rapacity lurks behind and the sin of personal violation becomes twofold, being associated by betrayal. For James's malefactors gain the confidence of their victims; they are "magnificent" and "prodigious" people like Kate Croy in *The Wings of the Dove*, who wins an unfaltering love from Milly. Osmond captivates Isabel's aesthetic sensibility. Moreover, they are ignorant and imperceptive of their guilt. The problem, therefore, assumes a hideous and monstrous color in a modern sense, whereas in Hawthorne it is simple and almost always an allegory, beautiful and edifying as it is.

The captive theme of one's dominance over another recurs in *Washington Square*; the ruthless exploiter of the human soul, which example is observed in Hawthorne's doctor in *The Scarlet Letter*, is represented in Dr. Sloper who manipulates his daughter's psychology. *Washington Square* is a story of Catherine

Sloper, a dull and unattractive heiress, who is played upon by Morris Townsend, a worthless fortune hunter, by her foolishly romantic aunt, and by her father. Here I would like to concentrate the discussion on the relationship between Catherine and her father to see how James presents the violation of human integrity in his novel of entirely American setting.

Dr. Sloper is a successful practitioner. Despite his success and his brilliant wit, however, he is a disillusioned man, who can never be reconciled to his daughter because his much adored wife dies in giving birth to Catherine. He is doubly disappointed; in spite of his ardent wish to make Catherine a clever woman she turns out to be a dull, plain, and inept girl. Ironically she is named after his wife who possessed everything she lacks: intelligence, charm and grace. The Doctor thinks that Catherine owes him a boundless debt, and is unable to love her as he should. Instead he only knows to treat her sarcastically; and his sarcasm sounds all the more cruel on its victim for she is so innocently foolish. Nothing gives her more satisfaction than to know that she has pleased him.

The Doctor forbids Catherine to marry Morris because of his perverse conviction that "he is right" in the objection. He was right as far as Morris was concerned. But was he really right in his judgement of his daughter's character, feeling and happiness? We wonder if she might not have been less unhappy if she had married Morris and found out the mistake herself? "Very possibly you are right. *But the thing is for Catherine to see,*"<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Almond does Catherine more justice.

However, with his pre-established hypothesis that she is dull and irresponsible, the Doctor never tries to see beyond the surface and fails to understand the sufferings going on in Catherine's heart, which is the violation of the finest sensibility of human heart. There is no excuse that he is her father in treating Catherine as he does. Just as he fails to understand the true motive behind her frank expression in her dress, so he fails to

see beyond her calm and forced affectation after the break-up with Morris. As Catherine sought to be eloquent in her dress because of her painfully helpless diffidence—the result of her father's over-powering dominance—she expressed her inner struggle and renunciation in her piece of embroidery. Her interest in domestic art thus represents her self-control and acceptance of her fate. Hawthorne makes a similar comment in *The Scarlet Letter* that “women derive a pleasure, incomprehensible to the other sex, from the delicate toil of the needle. To Hester Prynne, it might have been a mode of expressing and therefore soothing, the passion of her life.”<sup>7</sup>

Against the Doctor's prospect, however, Catherine does grow and begins to see. When Dr. Sloper demands her to promise him not to marry Morris after his death, she is able to see that “he [is] trying to treat her as he [has] treated her years before.”<sup>8</sup>

And now all her experience, all her acquired tranquility and rigidity protested. She had been so humble in her youth that she could now afford to have a little pride and there was something in this request, and her father's thinking himself so free to make it, that seemed an injury to her dignity.<sup>9</sup>

If her father does not yield an inch, she won't give him her promise, either. The Doctor dies in spiritual poverty; for “he would have given a good deal to discover the exact truth.”<sup>10</sup>

The drama of *Washington Square* revolves round this highly intensified relation between Catherine and her father, which is constantly disturbed by Morris Townsend and by the meddlesome Mrs. Penniman. Henry James arranges these interrelations in short chapter divisions so as to make “scenes.” Catherine's début at Marian's party in her “red satin gown with gold fringes,” the interview scene between Dr. Sloper and Morris, Mrs. Penniman's *rendezvous* with Morris in an oyster saloon kept by a Negro, and the dialogue between the Doctor and Mrs. Penniman

about the wine diminished during his absence: these are only a few of memorable "scenes" in the novel.

The end of the novel brings us back to the first scene, where Catherine re-encounters Morris who shamelessly comes back to ask for her hand. Catherine has acquired a spiritual independence and a calm dignity which are the reward of her long and silent suffering. The novel ends with the pathetic picture of Catherine "picking up her morsel of fancy-work again for life, as it were."<sup>11</sup>

As we understand Henry James, it is this Catherine that we can most naturally accept and not the Catherine in *The Heiress* who takes revenge on Morris, playing him the same trick as he did her years ago. "Bolt the door," she cries to her maid in the play.<sup>12</sup> She has gone through a process of coming into her own self through her love for Morris, attaining a sense of identity through moments of awareness and acts of renunciation, which is the constant theme in James's novel — a journey of consciousness toward its maturity. And such is life, the process of maturity presupposes an encounter with evil and subsequent sufferings.

So far I have tried to discuss how Hawthorne's sense of evil is continued in "Madame de Mauves" and *Washington Square*; how innocence and happy ignorance embodied in Euphemia and Catherine come into contact with evil and the incongruities of life. What will become of the victims then? Both heroines accept their fate with fortitude, renouncing the other alternative, a freer and more involved life. Ironically both Euphemia and Catherine, in their turn, become hard-shelled, tough women: the former drives her husband to suicide and the latter becomes a rigid, if dignified, old maid with her sense of "unlived life," which she puts forth in her piece of fancy-work.

Before going further with the discussion of this problem in *The Portrait of a Lady*, I would like to go back to Hawthorne again and briefly consider the problem of *felix culpa* — the paradox of moral gain through loss of innocence — dramatized in

*The Marble Faun*. For Henry James seems to be dealing with a modification of "the fortunate fall" in *The Portrait of a Lady*, that is Isabel's awakening to the reality of life and *her transformation* into a higher plane of moral consciousness.

*The Marble Faun* is a story of Donatello, a modern faun, and of his fall or his rise as James alludes to it in his essay on Hawthorne. Hawthorne deliberately describes Donatello's state of being in his Arcadia (Tuscany) before his fall: how he could communicate with nature itself. He comes to Rome, where he meets Miriam, a beautiful and mysterious woman, for whose sake he eventually commits murder. But a greater emphasis is given to Donatello's intolerable suffering after his "fall" and to his awakening to a sense of responsibility for his crime. Through his fall Donatello becomes a human being with a stricken conscience. Kenyon poses the question: "Is sin, like sorrow, merely an element of human education through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained?"<sup>13</sup> There is another transformation, though not as radical nor as complete as Donatello's. Hilda is incorruptibly pure, insensible to Kenyon's love, living up in her Dovecote. With her too exacting perfectionism, she rejects Miriam who comes to her for help. Her innocence, which is like "a sharp steel sword," cannot save others or even herself. Her loss of perfect innocence comes through her awareness of sin committed by her closest friends. Her experience of evil and the subsequent suffering transform her into a woman with flesh and blood. The novel ends in quite a hopeful tone: "But Hilda had a hopeful soul, and saw sunlight on the mountain-tops."<sup>14</sup> Hawthorne saw hope for history, if he could not ignore the presence of evil, in the attitude of the transformed Hilda who accepts the law of love, which is fundamentally the Christian view of life.

The question raised by Kenyon and Miriam in *The Marble Faun* remains unanswered by Hawthorne. But the answer James gives in *The Portrait of a Lady* is a positive "yes."

Among the Hawthornian fiends, Gilbert Osmond may be the vilest — because the subtlest — whose egotism is hidden “like a serpent in a bank of flowers.”<sup>15</sup> Perception of evil is totally absent from his consciousness. He marries Isabel because she qualifies herself “to figure in his collection of choice objects by declining so noble a hand.”<sup>16</sup> To him Isabel is no more than a curiosity of exceptional interest. The value of Isabel as his “choice object” has thus to be gauged by the world. Despite his feigned indifference to anything but his collection, which has so much appealed to Isabel’s sensibility, Osmond does care for the opinion of the world. Madame Merle, who seduces Isabel into the evil and corrupted world, is herself another victim of his omnivorous egotism. Likewise Osmond pulls the wire which takes Pansy in and out of the convent as his demands call, and feels no sense of guilt in selling her to the highest bidder, as it were. Therefore when Isabel refuses to take any part in arranging marriage between Lord Warburton and Pansy, (thus she escapes from participating in the manipulation of Pansy’s soul), Osmond reveals his true nature. Before the dying fire far into the night, Isabel meditates and looks into the fathomless abyss of evil. For all his aesthetic idealism Osmond lacks a finer sensibility of moral integrity, without which one is a complete failure as a human being. Aestheticism is a fine thing; but when it exploits another person it becomes morally evil.

*The Portrait of a Lady* is a story of a charming girl “affronting her destiny.” “What will she do?” “How does she develop?” are the sole concern of the people surrounding Isabel and of the novel. Isabel, intelligent, highly imaginative, but inexperienced and untouched by the hard and coarse realities of life, comes to Europe for education, as it is always the case with James’s heroes and heroines. “She had an immense curiosity about life . . . and her deepest enjoyment was to feel the continuity between the movements of her own soul and the agitations of the world.”<sup>17</sup> But at the same time she reveals her limitation,



contradicting herself that "I don't wish to touch the cup of experience. It's a poisoned drink. I only want to see for myself."<sup>18</sup> In James's world, there is always something lurking behind "the closed doors," — rapacity, illicit sexual relations and betrayals — a sense of hideous evil which is manifest in its effects but not in its causes. Isabel instinctively shrinks from knocking at these "closed doors". She may have heard much of the evil of the world and seems to know it but only as an impalpable theory. This is the limitation common to James's transcendental idealists. So it is with Hilda who lives in her Dovecote, "above all the evil scents of Rome,"<sup>19</sup> until she is compelled to learn that sin *exists* in the world.

Believing that "to judge wrong is more honorable than not to judge at all,"<sup>20</sup> yet so confident of herself, Isabel marries Osmond and defeats Ralph's expectation that she is the last person to be *caught*. The implication is that Isabel forfeits her freedom, exercising "free choice." She finds the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be "a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end."<sup>21</sup> The transcendental world of Whitman's — "a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action"<sup>22</sup> — does not work here. As Euphemia is betrayed by her romantic dream that a gentleman with fine manners is necessarily a superb person in character as well, Isabel discovers that Osmond is only an idle dilettante with neither discipline nor character, whose perfect manners, like the Baron's, no longer functions in the society in which he lives. Isabel errs in good faith, as Euphemia "staked her whole soul on [her choice]." Isabel had to pay a tremendous price for the cup of experience. But was it not worth the price? She was eager to know the world; she traveled in Rome, Paris, even as far as to Egypt. Rome satisfied and refined the aesthetic sensibility of a girl awe-stricken by its glory and grandeur, redolent of romantic aspiration for "the glory that was Greece/ And the grandeur that was Rome."<sup>23</sup> But only after she had known the truth — "the full face of the

moon" — could Isabel experience her sense of Rome as "the place where people suffered."<sup>24</sup> Rome as "the place where people suffered" also has a poignant meaning in *The Marble Faun*; historically it is the place of Christian martyrdom and it is where Donatello falls.

Such as she was, her marriage to Osmond was the only means by which Isabel could awaken to the reality of life, to its absurdity and to evil. For suffering is nothing but experiencing life to the full. "In order to enter the ranks of manhood the individual (however fair) had to fall, had to pass beyond childhood in an encounter with 'Evil,' had to mature by virtue of the destruction of his own egotism."<sup>25</sup>

Emerson has often been criticized for his lack of tragic sense.<sup>26</sup> Henry James Sr., the novelist's distinguished father, was among the many who were baffled by Emerson's lack of tragic sense. However, Emerson seems to be more sceptical in his poems. In his poem entitled "Days," the "hypocritic days" come and offer us gifts after our will, "Bread, kingdom, stars, and the sky that hold them all." We hastily make our choice for sooner or later we have to make our decision. And there are more chances that we make a wrong choice than we make the right one. The "Day" departs in silence and too late we detect its "scorn." This is quite a different world from the one we know in his essays, where every one is entrusted to make the right choice because he has inner light within himself. But who can judge if it is a wrong choice? Or does it matter if it is a wrong choice and not the right one? As Hawthorne and James (and Emerson in this poem) saw human nature, the inevitable coexistence of good and evil must be acknowledged as premise of life. "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."<sup>27</sup> The knowledge, however, in no way annihilates the ugliness or the presence of evil which has helped bring it about. What matters is how one behaves after one's consciousness, ironically through one's mistake, is expanded.

Isabel returns to her detestable husband because she wants to remain true and consistent in her behavior, a sheer act of a stoic endowed with a highly refined sense of moral consciousness which James valued most in his characters. "It was wrong to be mean, to be jealous, to be false, to be cruel; she had seen very little of the evil of the world, but she had seen women who lied to hurt each other. Seeing such thing had quickened her high spirit..."<sup>28</sup> Here, in such a simple way as it is, is summarized the notion of "code of life" or what Marius Bewley calls "an expression of a beautiful consciousness."<sup>29</sup> F. O. Matthiessen defines good and bad characters in Henry James as follows:

They always fell into their position on his scale according to their degree of awareness; the good character was the one who was most sensitive, who saw the greatest variety of moral possibilities; and who wanted to give them free play in others. The bad character was obtuse or willfully blind to such possibilities; he was dead in himself, and at his self-centered worst, tried to cause the spiritual death of others.<sup>30</sup>

Thus intervention in the life of another (even father's in his daughter's life as exemplified in Dr. Sloper-Catherine relationship) is virtually the only sin that interested Henry James.

Unlike *The Marble Faun*, *The Portrait of a Lady* is not a direct adaptation of "the fortunate fall." But it seems to me that James interpreted it in his own terms, asking the question "Is it fruitful to know the evil, to know the truth?" and giving answer in the conduct of a young girl with the knowledge of "the music of Gounod, the poetry of Browning and the prose of George Eliot,"<sup>31</sup> and not Donatello with "furry ears." Paradoxically, Isabel's unhappy marriage turns out to be the very means by which she is elevated to a higher plane of moral consciousness; it was necessary for her maturity and for the full recognition of herself. So was Donatello's fall for his transformation into a human being with a stricken conscience. Hilda undergoes

the same suffering and learns that it is living among people, not up in the tower, that brings happiness to others and to herself.

This is a further development of the problem raised in "Madame de Mauves" and *Washington Square*. Isabel is neither Euphemia nor Catherine Sloper, though they start from the same line as idealistic and transcendental heroines. Catherine may be an exception; but allowances should be made that in her case the manipulator operates in the negative direction, and that she does try to immerse herself in life when she meets Morris. They, too, suffer and attain a certain degree of spiritual dignity — renunciation — which is unselfish yet passive, whereas Isabel's sense of responsibility for what she has done is not "passive" but a positive attitude toward life. She realizes that she has to drink her cup to the lees; and that she has "miles to go" yet. It is this sense of responsibility that brings Donatello back to Rome to receive the sentence of justice. So Hester comes back to the New England community, for there is no other place for her to expiate her sin and establish her true life. Hilda is tempted to seek shelter in the Catholic convention of confessional at St. Peter's, but being an American and of Puritan heritage she shudders at her conduct and realizes that the solution must be sought somewhere else. None of these characters seek the solution in an escape. Both Hawthorne and James possessed the mature understanding of the individual's relation to society that neither self-indulgence nor seclusion from society solves the problem. Once one reaches maturity one is no longer in the abyss of evil and one must face evil even if it meant one's death. This is a typically Protestant view of life, which both Hawthorne and James shared and dramatized in their respective works.

The action is the transformation of the soul in its journey from innocence to consciousness; the soul's realization of itself under the impact of and by engagement with

evil—the tragic rise born of the fortunate fall—it is a New World action...<sup>32</sup>

Thus defined, the major moral preoccupation dramatized in the works of Henry James discussed in this paper can be described as this central “New World action,” which precursor James found in Hawthorne. The validity of Eliot’s comment that “James was a continuator of the New England genius” is here verified.

In the introductory passage of this paper I have indicated that James was interested in the way Hawthorne transmuted his moral preoccupation in “the light and charming fumes of artistic production.” It must not be misunderstood, however, that James learned his technique from Hawthorne. The difference in their methods of execution was by far greater than the similarity in their moral preoccupation. As his numerous notebooks and criticisms indicate, James sought it in such foreign writers as Turgenev, Balzac, Zola, Maupassant, and Flaubert. If James was disgusted by “the dryness of [Zola’s] execution which gives us all the bad taste of disagreeable dish,”<sup>33</sup> he turned to Daudet’s “inveterate poetic touch” which modified the hardness of consistent realism, and to Maupassant’s “illusionism” proposed in “le Roman” (Preface to *Pierre et Jean*.) In his essay on Hawthorne, James points out that Hawthorne lacked realistic details and that “the element of the unreal was pushed too far,” in *The Marble Faun*. But is this not the very reason Hawthorne preferred his novel to be called “a romance”? If it had the faults James points out, Hawthorne could write his story no other way, to which fact James does full justice in the essay.

Both Hawthorne and James deemed it their supreme duty, as a writer, to *represent* life and tried to impart “the illusion of life” in the way best suited to them. Hawthorne was interested in allegory, which with his exquisite execution is raised to the level of symbolism in such works as “The Young Goodman Brown” or *The Scarlet Letter*. Hawthorne claimed, as long as

he was writing "a romance" and not a novel, he could arrange "his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the light and deepen and enrich the shadow of the picture."<sup>84</sup> What Hawthorne requires is our imaginative acceptance of the certain situations which he purposely leaves hovering on the border between the real and the unreal and the explained and the unexplained. In 1879 or thereabouts at least, James believed "solidity of specification" was the best virtue of the novel; realism or realistic expressionism was the sole concern in experimenting his art of fiction. He was not satisfied with Hawthorne's ambiguous treatment of the modern faun, which seemed to him too allegorical. At the same time James valued Hawthorne's effort to find images which would bear a "picturesque correspondence" to the spiritual facts with which he was concerned.<sup>85</sup> Curiously enough, in his later novels in which fantasy is increasingly mixed with realism James approaches Hawthorne more than he himself would have liked to acknowledge.

Without any contradiction, some similar technical devices can also be traced in the works of both writers discussed in this paper. It is generally acknowledged James found a special interest in the choice of right names for characters and places in his novels. Pansy, the flower of the convent, gives the reader an impression of purity and freshness, but not of a dazzling beauty. *Lockleigh*, Lord Warburton's castle, suggests a place of security and peace but also of seclusion from the world, which is the very reason for Isabel's refusal of his hand. Euphemia and Longmore by the very sound of their names echo their character. Longmore suggests with its long and sonorous "o" something not yet accomplished or fulfilled. Is this not some kind of allegorical device as Hawthorne's use of Ethan *Brand* or *Chillingworth*?

In both *The Marble Faun* and *The Portrait of a Lady*, Rome has a geographical significance: it is the symbol of grandeur and civilization but also of corruption and evil, as contrasted to

Tuscany in the former and to Gardencourt in the latter novel. It has a poignant meaning that Osmond and Madame Merle are Europeanized Americans, Miriam of European origin, and Marie and the Baron pure French. Juxtaposed against this group are the Americans: Isabel, Hilda and Kenyon, Euphemia and Longmore. The association of a certain picture or sculpture to the characters is the common convention both in *The Marble Faun* and *The Portrait of a Lady*. Hilda recognizes a striking resemblance between Guido's Beatrice Cenci and Miriam, which fact suggests the nature of Miriam's mystery Hawthorne leaves in obscurity. The Marble Faun of Praxiteles is likened to Donatello; Ralph associates Isabel with "a Titian, an Greek bas-relief." Pansy reminds Mr. Rosier of "a Dresden-china shepherdess."

If these elements are important, symbolically, the difference in their technique is obviously great. To James, the novel must be designed and worked out with a consistency of part with part that amounts almost to the consistency of a mathematical equation.<sup>36</sup> So there are small patterns within the large pattern of the story. In "Madame de Mauves" the episode of Marie and her husband's suicide ironically anticipates the Baron's suicide at the end of the story reported by Marie via Mrs. Draper. The episode of the Bohemian artist and his lover with the landlady of the inn playing the role of go-between is introduced as a vulgar version of Euphemia-the Baron relationship. Mrs. Draper figures as another pander in the story who introduces Longmore to Euphemia. She covertly hints to Longmore that he should comfort Madame de Mauves and "make her smile with a good conscience." James plans and works out the pattern of his story as a piece of embroidery intricately designed. The central concern of *The Portrait of a Lady* is the process of Isabel's maturity, which James illustrates in her relationships to her four suitors. This pattern of four suitors crossing one another occurs several times in the novel; Isabel receives Lord Warburton's visit with Casper Goodwood's letter in her hand;

Isabel encounters Lord Warburton after her refusal of his proposal in Rome, where she is joined by Osmond who follows her there. At the end of the novel the pattern recurs, Lord Warburton and then Casper Goodwood comes to see her at Garden-court after Ralph's death.

The method of symmetrical sequences and the reflector method are characteristic of James's technique to obtain realistic objectivity of his characters and situations. He also employs so-called "point-of-view" characters to get as varied views of situations as possible. Sometimes this "point-of-view" character happens to be the central figure of the novel, but often the same effect is gained by the "points-of-view" of the minor characters. Along with Isabel's interpretation of herself (through what she says), she is filtered through Ralph, Mrs. Touchett and Madame Merle. We receive the detailed report of Euphemia through Longmore, who is reflected by Euphemia and also in Marie's hard-shelled receptacle. The purpose of this paper, however, is not to discuss James's technique, which requires an independent study. I have only attempted to point out James's interest in Hawthorne's "artistic production" and the difference in their methods of embodying their moral preoccupation which they shared to a great extent.

In this essay, I have traced back to the great American predecessor of Henry James to see the similar moral preoccupation continued and developed in some of the works by Henry James—exclusively in his earlier works. Both Hawthorne and James were concerned with the same American drama: the sense of evil (synonymous with the Puritan concern with evil) and moral journey toward maturity through contamination with evil and subsequent sufferings, learning to renounce one's self, thereby attaining a higher moral consciousness. To repeat, if evil is a latent and importunate reality, the next best thing for us to do is to attain a tight-rope balance of our moral consciousness, not flinching away from evil, but facing it with fortitude and strength,



which is fundamentally the Protestant view of life.

To eliminate Hawthorne from the history of his artistic development is simply to eliminate the best part of James — the part toward which his most serious moral interest gravitated.<sup>37</sup> By birth and temperament James was a continuator of the American tradition represented by Hawthorne; his life-long pre-occupation with the sense of evil and its effects upon human beings is dramatized throughout his numerous works. Hawthorne's sense of evil and the process of maturity — a drama of innocence and its fall — becomes in James increasingly interwoven into the theme of America versus Europe. The question raised but not fully developed in *The Marble Faun* saw its fulfillment with different stresses and variations in James's so called "international novels." As early as "Madame de Mauves," James seems to have grasped the essence of the idea. The Old Madame de Mauves warns Euphemia that "the sweetest I could take against life as a whole would be to have your blessed innocence profit by my experience." This seems to me to explain James's whole career as a writer (and as a man) for the sweetest thing is to keep an exquisite equilibrium between the American innocence and the Old World experience. This exquisite combination is to be incarnated in Maggie Verver in James's last completed novel, *The Golden Bowl*, who with strategy and sacrificial love creates beauty in personal relationship.

## Footnotes

1. T. S. Eliot, "On Henry James," *The Question of Henry James* ed. F. W. Dupee (New York: Henry Holt Co., 1945), p. 112.
2. Henry James, *Hawthorne* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), p. 88.
3. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Portable Hawthorne*, ed. Malcolm Cowley (New York: Viking, 1955), p. 257.
4. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Rinehart, 1965), p. 163.
5. Henry James, "Madame de Mauves", *The American Tradition in Literature* (Norton Revised Edition, 1962), Vol. 2. p. 574.
6. Henry James, *Washington Square* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1963), p. 52. Italics are mine.
7. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, p. 79.
8. Henry James, *Washington Square*, p. 193.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
12. Ruth and Augustus Goetz, *The Heiress* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1948), Act II, scene iv.
13. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun* (New York: Signet Classics, 1961), p. 329.
14. *Idid.*, p. 330.
15. Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (New York: Modern Library, 1951), Vol. 2. p. 196.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
17. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 45.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

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