THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF DIALOGUE IN THE SHORT STORIES OF HENRY JAMES

by

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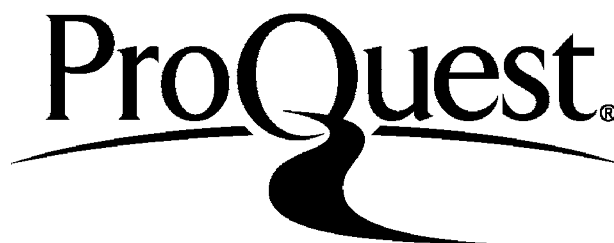

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ABSTRACT

The thesis opens with a short introduction setting forth my aims and reasons in choosing to work on dialogue in the short stories. It continues, in the first chapter, with a description of varieties of speech other than dialogue, of component parts of Jamesian dialogue, and of the two distinct types into which it falls. Chapter two demonstrates James's use of dialogue for purposes of characterisation, with a preliminary examination of his range of characters. In chapter three, the main types of Jamesian themes and 'atmospheres' are outlined and the ways in which these are brought out by means of dialogue. Chapter four describes the two kinds of action to be found in the tales, and an attempt is then made to prove that the most important of these two - psychological action - is often most effectively conveyed through dialogue, with the reasons for this. (The influence of the drama is also discussed.) The next chapter, on form, begins with a brief recapitulation of relevant points in the preceding one, continues with an analysis of the short story form as seen by the first critics and practitioners of it, and ends with a comparison of tales by Prosper Mérimée, Guy de Maupassant

and James himself, in illustration of the advantages of the 'scenic' method for this particular genre. There are yet more comparisons in chapter six, this time of passages from James's 'early', 'middle' and 'late'[1] tales, and one from his plays. Thus, the influence of the drama is examined in more detail, and a distinct change in technique is traced. The last chapter deals with the vexed question of 'realism' and 'stylisation'. James's dialogue is compared and contrasted with that of three 'realistic' writers - Arnold Bennett, Dorothy Richardson and Harold Pinter. Finally, after a brief conclusion, in which it is suggested that James's contribution to English fiction can be seen most clearly in his dialogue, there is a short appendix on the probable influence of Plato, the 'Revue des Deux Mondes', and Gyp on James's concept of the dialogue form.

[1]Edel's definition will be used throughout, i.e. 'early' = 1864-1881; 'middle' = 1881-1901; 'late' = 1901-1910.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AN = The Art of the Novel, Critical Prefaces by Henry James, edited by R.P. Blackmur, London, 1935.

Autob. = Autobiography: A Small Boy and Others, Notes of a Son and Brother, The Middle Years, ed. F.D.Dupee, London, 1956.

CP = The Complete Plays of Henry James, ed. L. Edel, London, 1949

CT = The Complete Tales of Henry James, vols. 1-12, edited by Leon Edel, London, 1962-64.

ELE = Essays in London and Elsewhere, London, 1893.

FPN = French Poets and Novelists, London, 1878.

HF = The House of Fiction, ed. L. Edel, London, 1957.

Letters= The Letters of Henry James, 2 vols., ed. P. Lubbock, New York, 1920.

LRE = Literary Reviews and Essays, ed. A. Mordell, New York, 1957.

NB = The Notebooks of Henry James, edited by F. Matthiessen and D. Murdock, New York, 1941.

NN = Notes on Novelists, London, 1914.

NR = Notes and Reviews, Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1921.

PP = Partial Portraits, London, 1888.

RDM = Revue des Deux Mondes, Paris.

RHD = Rupert Hart-Davis (Publishers)

Sel.Lett = Selected Letters of Henry James, ed. L. Edel, London, 1956.

VR = Views and Reviews, Boston, 1908.

INTRODUCTION

> This odd, literal opposition of description and dialogue, incident and description, has little meaning and light. People often talk of these things as if they had a king of internecine distinctness, instead of melting into each other at every breath, and being intimately associated parts of one general effort of expression. I cannot imagine composition existing in a series of blocks, nor conceive, in any novel worth discussing at all, of a passage of description that is not in its intention narrative, a passage of dialogue that is not in its intention descriptive, a touch of truth of any sort that does not partake of the nature of incident, or an incident that derives its interest from any other source than the general and only source of the success of a work of art - that of being illustrative. A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives, will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts. The critic who over the close texture of a finished work shall pretend to trace a geography of items will mark some frontiers as artificial, I fear, as any that have been known to history. [1]

In spite of James's solemn warning, the examination of dialogue need not necessarily lead to an isolating of the different elements of fiction. Dialogue will be considered here only as it relates to other elements - to characterisation, theme, atmosphere, action and form. Before this can be done, however, an attempt must be made to define its component parts, in order to evolve a terminology with which to describe this relation.

The short stories have been chosen for several reasons. One purely practical consideration is that Leon Edel's edition of 'The Complete Tales of Henry James' has made these readily accessible for the first time, with the added convenience that uniform referencing is now possible. More importantly,

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[1] HF, p. 34.

the short stories are of interest because they show James experimenting in his art.

> ....being 'very artistic' [he writes], I have a constant impulse to try experiments of form, in which I wish to not run the risk of wasting or gratuitously using big situations.[1]

Some kinds of subjects and forms are more suited to the short story than the novel, and each genre has its own function and importance. The fact that the short story is sometimes used as a practising ground does not, as Dorothea Krook implies,[2] make it necessarily inferior to the novel, though it is true that some are better than others. James sees his short stories as a family with its "heads" and also its "poor relations".[3] (The "poor relations" are probably what he otherwise describes as "pot-boilers".) Finally, the short stories span the length of James's writing career, from 'The Tragedy of Errors' (1864) to 'The Round of Visits' (1910), thus making it possible to trace any developments in technique.

Besides the subjects already mentioned for discussion, one short chapter will be devoted to the question of 'stylisation' and 'realism', two highly problematic aspects of dialogue.

Finally, I have chosen to examine dialogue in James because it is of particular interest in one who believes in the efficacy of the dramatic technique, and who has himself experimented in the drama.

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[1] Letters, vol. i, p. 66.

[2] Vid. The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James, Cambridge, 1962, p. 326.

[3] Vid. AN, p. 177-8.

CHAPTER 1

METHOD

(i) Various kinds of speech
(ii) Components of dialogue
(iii) Different types of dialogue

(i) Various kinds of speech

When a writer wishes to report what his characters have said or thought, there are two ways in which he can do this - either by direct, or indirect, speech. Since the predominant concern of this thesis is direct speech, it will not be discussed here. What will be considered briefly are indirect forms of speech. In this way, I hope to define the area for discussion more closely, by mentioning that which approaches but does not come within, its province.

O.Jespersen has identified two main branches of indirect speech - 'dependent' and 'represented'. The first has been a recognised method of reporting speech at least as early as Chaucer, who says of the Pardoner:

> For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
> Which that he seyde was oure Lady veyle:[1]

Dependent speech is generally introduced by a conjunction, following a verb of saying, thinking or feeling. There is also a shift in the pronoun and the tense of the verb, according to certain rules.

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[1] The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. Robinson, 2nd ed., 1957, p. 23.

As M. Lips points out, there are both advantages and disadvantages for the writer in this method:

> L'indirect permet d'exprimer l'attitude du rapporteur, puis de reproduire le discours sous une forme abstraite et différente du discours direct; enfin, il tend à éliminer les éléments expressifs de la langue: gain du côte de la pensée abstraite, perte du côte du sentiments.[1]

The strongest appeal for James in 'dependent' speech appears to lie in its powers of brevity. Thus he often uses it to summarise long conversations in which the facts, or implications of a situation are discussed, but in which no crucial decision is arrived at. The narrator of 'The Aspern Papers', for example, on applying to Miss Tita for rooms in the old Venetian palace, sums up his own speech very briefly:

> I had now struck the note that translated my purpose - I repeated that I had studies to pursue; that I wanted quiet; that I delighted in a garden and had vainly sought one up and down the city; that I would undertake that before another month was over the dear old house would be smothered in flowers.[2]

This sort of conversation is not important enough, structurally, or thematically, to warrant full-scale dialogue treatment within the confined limits of the short story.

James often resorts to 'dependent' speech when he wishes to relate the trivial, everyday comments that people are always making to one another. 'The Story of a Year' (1865) is mainly in dialogue, but when Dr. Cooper, the morning after John Ford has been brought home wounded from the Civil Wars,

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[1] Le Style Indirect Libre, M. Lips, Paris, 1926, p. 69.
[2] CT, vol. 6, p. 288.

asks Lizzie to find him some bandages, his speech is given indirectly:

> As she passed the invalid's door, Doctor Cooper came out and asked her to go and look for a certain roll of bandages, in Mr. John's trunk.[1] . . .

'Dependent' speech is often used to describe either a regular occurrence, or a scene which has taken place in the past. On the morning that Lady Chasemore discovers that her husband intends to have his impression of America published, she recalls his words on the ship back to England:

> Two points were vivid beyond the others in Lady Chasemore's evocation of the scene on the ship; one was her husband's insistence on the fact that he had not the smallest animosity to the American people, but had only his own English brothers in view, wished only to protect and save them, to point a certain moral as it never had been pointed before; the other was his pledge that nothing should be made public without her assent.[2]

In the next chapter an attempt will be made to show that James uses direct speech as a valuable means of characterisation; he also uses 'dependent' speech for this purpose, though to a lesser degree. In the following extract from 'The Madonna of the Future' the narrator is visiting Serafina, the aging Italian model of his American painter friend Theobald. He discovers her with her Italian lover. James conveys certain aspects of both the foreigners by giving a rough summary of the sort of phrases they would be likely to use:

> He [Serafina's lover] declared that the bambino was a masterpiece, a pure Correggio. It was only a pity, he added, with a knowing laugh, that the sketch had not been made on some good bit of honeycombed old panel. The stately Serafina hereupon

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[1] CT, vol. 1, p. 94.

[2] Ibid., vol. 7, p. 72.

> protested that Mr. Theobald was the soul of honor, and that he would never lend himself to deceit.[1]

'Bambino' and 'soul of honor', in particular, seem characteristic of this type of speaker, the former because it is a common Italian idiom, the latter because it is the sort of cliché to be expected from someone of Serafina's class and intellect. In the same way James manages to convey an impression of Saltram's brilliant conversational powers, in 'The Coxon Fund', without ever being so rash as to attempt to reproduce it in direct speech.

Though this method of reporting speech would normally appear to be fairly objective, it is, on the contrary, frequently very subjective in James, owing to the particular way in which he uses it. For he resorts to it most in the tales which are related by a first person narrator. This is probably in order to achieve verisimilitude. For example, it is unlikely that the narrator of 'The Madonna of the Future', in recounting his story, would either remember or even care to record his own conversation in full. He is far more likely to summarise his remarks as indeed he frequently does:

> I assured her [Serafina] that I had no such design, and that I should vastly regret disturbing Mr. Theobald's habits or convictions.[2]

However, this is a highly subjective use of 'dependent' speech and one which is even more apparent in stories related in the form of a diary, such as 'A Landscape Painter' and 'The Impression of a Cousin'. The reader is never quite sure how much faith to put in a report of a person's conversation, given by the person himself. However, James tends to use the first person less and less throughout his career as he desires a greater objectivity than

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[1] CT, vol. 3, p. 40-1.

[2] Ibid., p. 43

this can give.

In the second type of indirect speech, on the other hand, he combines the objectivity of direct speech with the subjectivity of 'dependent' speech. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find him resorting to it more frequently than to the latter. 'Represented' speech, as Jespersen calls it, is a comparatively recent concept in literary criticism (though not in practice, vid. p. 18). It has been discussed at great length, of late, under various different names.[1] In fact, it has received so much attention that it would be superfluous to do more than to mention its main features and functions here, illustrating these with a few examples from the tales.

Of all the definitions which have been offered of 'represented' speech, S. Ullman's is the most comprehensive, embracing as it does the grammatical, historical and aesthetic aspects of it:

> This is a compromise between the two orthodox forms of reported speech, which foreshadows such modern experiments as internal monologue and the 'stream of consciousness' technique. As in indirect speech proper, pronouns and tenses are shifted; at the same time there is no introductory verb and no subordinating conjunction and all the expressive and evocative elements which give direct speech its flavour-questions, exclamations, interjections and the like - are faithfully preserved.[2]

An extract from 'Lady Barberina' will illustrate these points as they appear in James. In the following passage Dexter Freer, in response to Sidney Feeder's inquiry about the identity of Lord Canterville, replies

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[1]'mingling of direct and indirect discourse' (Tobler)
'veiled speech' (Kalepky)
'le style indirect libre' (Bally)
'erlebte Rede' (Lorck)
'vorgestellte or represented speech' (Jespersen)

[2]Language and Style, S. Ullman, Oxford, 1964, p. 134.

first in 'dependent', then in 'represented' speech ('represented' speech is underlined):

> And Dexter accordingly told him that the Marquis of Canterville has been in his day a great sporting nobleman and an ornament to English society, and had held more than once a high post in her Majesty's household... The Marquis was a Tory, but very liberal for a Tory, and very popular in society at large; good-natured, good-looking, knowing how to be genial and yet remain a 'grand seigneur', clever enough to make an occasional speech, and much associated with the fine old English pursuits, as well as with many of the new improvements - ...[1]

It is one of the characteristics of 'represented' speech that it is generally to be found in combination with direct, or 'dependent' speech, or a mixture of both. At times it is difficult to say precisely where the change from one to the other takes place, since 'represented' speech possesses features in common with the other two kinds. It also possesses many of the advantages of both.

Before discussing these advantages, however, I should like to consider one particular form of 'represented' speech, - 'interior monologue'. (Mr. Lees in his article on this "feature of a narrative in the novel" maintains that "James would usually be given the credit...for a maximal elaboration of its use".[2])

Contrary to what is often assumed, the use of 'interior monologue' does not necessarily imply a 'stream-of-conciousness' technique, as James himself demonstrated, though it is generally employed for that area of human experience with which the 'stream-of-consciousness' writers, in particular, deal. A.A. Mendilow believes that these two terms describe similar, though

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[1] CT, vol. 5, p. 208.

[2] British Journal of Aesthetics, April, 1964, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 109.

distinct, processes: "There are two other ways of preserving the directness of dialogue without sacrificing the advantages attendant on the omniscience of the author. These are the mental soliloquy in its developed form - the interior monologue and the stream-of-consciousness...a new turn was given to them by Meredith in 'Rhoda Flemming' and was developed to its furthest limits by Henry James."[1]

In order to prove that 'interior monologue' is a consistent feature of the whole of James's work, not just of the 'late' period, I have chosen to illustrate it from one of the very early tales, 'Osborne's Revenge' (1868). In the following extract, Philip Osborne is ruminating on Miss Congreve, a woman whom he believes to have broken his friend, Graham's heart. The passage begins in 'dependent' speech (as the one from 'Lady Barberina' did); it then switches into 'represented' speech:

> He felt that he had reckoned without his host and that Graham's fickle mistress was not a person to be snubbed and done for. He was utterly at loss as to what to think of her. She broke men's hearts and turned their heads; whatever she put her hand to she marked with her genius. She was a coquette, a musician, an artist, an actress, and author - a prodigy. Of what stuff was she made? What had she done with her heart and her conscience? She painted her face, and frolicked among lamps and flowers to the clapping of a thousand hands, while poor Graham lay imprisoned in eternal silence.[2]

One of the advantages of 'represented' speech, as the above passage demonstrates, is that it retains many of the emotional elements of direct speech, such as questions, interjections, and exclamations, whilst still purporting to be an objective account of thought or speech. This means, as Mr. Lees points out, that there is "a relationship between reader and

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[1] Time and the Novel, London, 1952, p. 112.

[2] CT, vol. 2, p. 28-9.

and what is being read, not between author and what he was writing",[1] or, as he otherwise describes it, an "identification that goes beyond understanding, sympathy or partisanship."[2] The reader enters into Osborne's mind and shares his reactions, swayed by his words; and yet, to all intents and purposes, he has uttered none. It is the author who speaks, giving the illusion of objectivity, whilst retaining the emotional quality of Osborne's thoughts. Spitzer's description of 'represented' speech as 'pseudo objective' is highly appropriate in cases like this. As Derek Oldfield explains, Spitzer "accepts that what it presents us with is the subjective voices of the characters but adds that they are meant to count as pseudo-objective presentation by the author...a balance between the inside and the outside point of view".[3]

There is a greater opportunity for the writer to characterise people by means of 'represented', than by 'dependent', speech, since he offers a closer approximation to their actual words or thoughts. By using colloquialisms, repetitive phrases and other tricks of speech, he can remind the reader of their speech habits. Dexter Freer's character, for example, comes across very clearly, in the passage from 'Lady Barberina', by the inclusion of such phrases as 'fine old English pursuits'. Sometimes James also parodies his character's speech with a delightful irony, by this means. Mrs. Jordan, the 'floral artist' of 'In the Cage', is a case in point:

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[1] Op.cit., p. 109.

[2] Ibid., p. 113.

[3] The Prose Style of Middlemarch, D. Oldfield, M.A. thesis, London, 1964.

*"Represented' speech plays a very important part in James's 'point of view' method.

> [Mrs. Jordan] shuddered at the notion of ever failing of the very gift to which she owed the vogue - the rage she might call it - that had caught her up. Without sympathy - or without imagination, for it came back again to that - how should she get, for big dinners, down the middle and toward the far corners at all? It wasn't the combinations, which were easily managed; the strain was over the ineffable simplicities, those that the bachelors above all, and Lord Rye perhaps most of any, threw off - just blew off, like cigarette-puffs - such sketches of.[1]

Her pretentiousness is revealed in her fondness for phrases such as, 'ineffable simplicities', and 'the rage she might call it', and in rhetorical flourishes, such as 'threw off - just blew off'. Her vocabulary is full of the jargon of the 'floral artist', the table being thought of solely in terms of the accessibility of its 'middle' and 'far corners'. The exaggeration in "the bachelors above all, and Lord Rye perhaps most of any", reflects her desire to impress, to emphasise, at all costs. Not surprisingly, her direct speech is riddled with similar features.

Besides being an economical way of reporting words or thoughts, and besides offering an alternative to direct speech (thus making for variety), 'represented' speech is capable of great flexibility. It can give expression to any experience, from a definite wish to a barely-formed thought or scarcely-definable emotion. It enables the reader to glimpse a character's most passionate feelings or gravest moral conflicts, whilst remaining within the area of the spoken word.

In fact, 'represented' speech often suggests 'moral atmosphere' or social environment far more effectively than straightforward description. The 'atmosphere' of modern New York, for example, comes across most powerfully when seen from Spencer Brydon's 'point of view' in 'The Jolly Corner' (which

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[1] <u>CT</u>, vol. 10, p.164.

is mainly in 'represented' speech).

Another important advantage of this method is that it can be very easily transposed into direct speech; it almost slides into it! 'Dependent' and 'represented' speech have been shown together - the following is an example of all three combined:

> When the counter-clerk, after a mere male glance [at Mrs. Jordan] remarked, with an intention unmistakeably low, "Handsome woman!" she had for him the finest of her chills: "She's the widow of a bishop." She always felt, with the counter-clerk, that it was impossible sufficiently to put it on; for what she wished to express to him was the maximum of her contempt, and that element in her nature was confusedly stored. '<u>A bishop' was putting it on, but the counter-clerk's approaches were vile.</u>[1]

James often arrives at a compromise between two extremes, which consists of scenes of reported speech, with a few characteristic 'direct' comments interspersed. In this way he manages to exploit the advantages of both narrative and dialogue at the same time, whilst avoiding certain problems of economy involved in the use of dialogue alone. R. Liddell describes this process as it is seen in '<u>The Spoils of Poynton</u>':

> There is scene in indirect speech - and since indirect narration is the form used, a great deal more can be said than what passed in dialogue between the characters. Nevertheless, the novelist keeps near enough to scene for the whole passage to have value as 'Representation'....
>
> In the following passage from '<u>The Spoils of Poynton</u>,' [Heinemann, London, 1897, p. 51 ff] far more is conveyed than a dialogue between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth could convey - but without much tiresome 'harking back to make up' - words and phrases of actual speech are reported, to give greater vividness.[2]

The final advantage to be mentioned is one which counts for a good deal with James, and that is the essential ambiguity of 'represented' speech;

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[1] <u>CT</u>, vol. 10, p. 162.

[2] <u>Some Principles of Fiction</u>, London, 1953, p. 68.

the reader is often not sure whether he is listening to the voice of the author or that of the character concerned. Not only is this particularly suitable for overtly 'supernatural' tales, such as 'The Turn of the Screw', 'Sir Edmund Orme', or 'The Third Person', but also for all those stories, and this includes the majority of them, which contain elements of mystery and suspense. The relationship between ambiguity and suspense will be considered in more detail later on, in connection with direct speech (vid. inf. p. 136).

The ironic possibilities of this method, another of its advantages, have already been touched on in connection with characterisation and parody.

There have been numerous interesting theories put forward as to how 'represented' speech originated. Many of them, however, are based on the false assumption that it is a comparatively recent innovation, whereas, in fact, it can be found as early as Chaucer's 'Prologue to the Canterbury Tales'. Chaucer uses it in his description of the monk's philosophy of life:

> What sholde he studie and make hymselven wood,
> Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
> Or swynken with his handes and laboure
> As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?
> Lat Austyn have his swynk to hym reserved![1]

One of the earliest, and most convincing, theories of the origin of what has been called "reported speech masquerading as narrative"[2] comes from the French scholar Charles Bally:

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[1] Op.cit., p. 19.

[2] S. Ullman, op.cit., p. 117.

> Le style indirect dérive d'une tendance toujours plus accentuée de la langue littéraire à se rapprocher des procédés de la langue parlée; dans le cas particulier, cette tendance se manifeste, par le besoin de supprimer autant que possible les signes extérieurs de la subordination et à rendre la pensée avec toute la fidelité possible.[1]

There is yet another type of communication besides the ones mentioned so far, which is described by Barbara Hardy in her analysis of The Wings of the Dove Dove. This "unspoken dialogue", as she calls it, is carried on by instinct or intuition between two speakers. Though neither of them utters aloud the comment which James gives typographically in direct speech, in some mysterious way they communicate with, and even answer, one another.

Barbara Hardy describes the process more precisely, with reference to a scene between Milly Theale and Lord Mark:

> Lord Mark's actual words are sufficiently pointed to encourage her ironical interpretations, since he is endowed with Jamesian extra-sensory perception, but they are not so pointed that they cannot be taken at face-value alone. The gap between his small-talk and her larger obsessed interpretation is bridged by what she imagines. This is Milly reading between his lines:
>
> "Inexpressive, but intensely significant, he met as no-one else could have done the very question she had suddenly put to Mrs. Stringham on the Brünig. Should she have it, whatever she did have, that question had been, for long? 'Ah, so possibly not,' her neighbour appeared to reply; 'therefore, don't you see? I'm the way.' It was vivid that he might be, in spite of his absence of flourish; the way being doubtless just in that absence of flourish (ch. vii)."[2]

Another example of this sort of 'telepathic' communication, this time from a tale, occurs in 'The Altar of the Dead'. Describing Stransom's state of mind after his friend no longer allows him to visit her, James writes:

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[1] Germanische-Romanische Monatsschrift, vol. 4, 1912, p. 604.

[2] The Appropriate Form, London, 1964, p. 18.

> The conditions she never phrased he used to murmur to himself in solitude: 'One more, one more - only just one'.[1]

She has "never phrased" these words, yet Stransom hears them as clearly as if she had. As with 'represented' speech, this type makes for more complete identification and participation on the reader's part, since he is allowed to glimpse things which take place in the most intimate recesses of the mind.

The last sort of communication I wish to mention,briefly here, and in more detail in a later chapter, is what Michael Swan calls "inarticulately eloquent dialogue". This involves such things as facial expressions, gestures and dialogue . An example from 'In the Cage' will illustrate what is meant: The Post Office girl has just caught sight of Captain Everard approaching her counter:

> There were again other persons with whom she was occupied, and again the situation could only be expressed by their silence. It was expressed, in fact, in a larger phrase than ever yet, for her eyes now spoke to him in a kind of supplication. 'Be quiet, be quiet!' they pleaded; and they saw his own reply: 'I'll do whatever you say; I won't even look at you - see, see!' They kept conveying this, with the friendliest liberality, that they wouldn't look, quite positively wouldn't.[2]

George, the narrator of H.G. Wells's 'Tono Bungay', experiences much the same thing with the woman he loves:

> Our eyes met in a conversation very different from the one upon our lips.[3]

In this kind of communication, as in the last, nothing is uttered aloud, but the participants' understanding of the situation and each other is increased immeasurably by it.

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[1] CT, vol. 9, p. 265.

[2] Ibid., vol. 10, p. 210-11.

[3] Tono Bungay, H.G. Wells, London, 1959, p. 331.

Monologue should, finally, be mentioned too. James's practice in this respect differs greatly from the early to the late work. In 'Poor Richard' (1867), Gertrude's long monologue, beginning: "Richard was right...",[1] is used to reveal her most intimate thoughts, rather like the stage 'soliloquy', and also as a means of characterisation. In 'The Jolly Corner' (1909), however, James uses monologue, much more sparingly, to give dramatic effect to particularly tense moments in the action. In section two, which is predominantly narrative, Spencer Brydon exclaims aloud to himself several times as the 'ghost' draws nearer:

> 'He has been dodging, retreating, hiding, but now, worked up to anger, he'll fight![2]'

ii) Components of dialogue

> James employed dialogue to set forth and illumine the facts of his narrative rather than to declare the traits of character. The conversations in his later novels are an elaborate pattern of question, answer, misapprehension, connection, intimation, denial, agreement, repetition, and amplification - not actual speech at all, but with distinctly the uneven flow of actual conversation and a sense of interlocutors not talking for the benefit of the reader.[3]

> It is thus that is developed a special variety of talk peculiar to the characters of James, with a thousand recurring tricks or mannerisms if you please.[4]

The outstanding features of the dialogue will now be looked at under three main headings - figures of speech, diction and syntax.

Herbert Grierson justifies the study of figures of speech in the following manner:

> The ancient writers on rhetoric spoke of them too much as mere ornaments of style to be used or dispensed with at will. In their origin they are just such natural expression of emotion as the shedding

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[1] CT, vol. 1, p. 219. [2] Ibid., vol. 12, p. 214.

[3] The Later Realism, W.L. Myers, Chicago, 1927, p. 127.

[4] The Method of Henry James, J.W. Beach, Yale, 1918, p. 80.

> of tears...Where they differ from this indication of feeling is in a greater distinctness in being extensions of the articulate, not merely the inarticulate, expression of our feeling, variations and extensions of the use of language to communicate that feeling. The connection of the use of figures of speech with the fundamental laws governing the working of the mind was first indicated by Dr. Bain.[1]

What Grierson stresses most of all is the need to "apprehend the motives" which cause a person to use figures of speech. Without this, he thinks, the study of them would be a very dry and profitless affair. R. Sayce says very much the same thing:

> The study of the ancient figures of rhetoric has been criticised by modern philologists as out of date and meaningless, but they may still have much to teach us. We find in them a remarkable classification of the aesthetic possibilities of language, as well as a key to the stylistic conceptions of writers in the classical tradition. It only remains to give them life and to explore their inner meanings.[2]

The basis of all dialogue, it seems to me, is the question-answer formula. There are very few other means of progression in exposition or argument besides this. It is certainly a basic, perhaps <u>the</u> basic, feature, of Jamesian dialogue. He himself must have been aware of the dominance of it in his writing, for he causes Captain Jay, in 'The Chaperon', to accuse Rose Tramore of the following crime: "You ask too many questions." To which she replies: "I know I do."[3]

However, it is not only its frequency, but also its variety of form and function, which makes the question-answer formula of interest in James. There are roughly four main types of question - the direct, the indirect, the rhetorical and the counter-question. Some questions fall into two or more of these categories; a rhetorical one, for example, is often a counter-question also.

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[1] <u>Rhetoric and English Composition</u>, H.J.C.Grierson, London 1945, p. 55.

[2] <u>Style in French Prose</u>, R.A. Sayce, O.U.P., 1958, p. 69.

[3] <u>CT</u>, vol. 8, p. 113.

The most obvious kind of question is the direct question, which is generally asked in a desire to elicit definite information, factual or otherwise. This requires no illustration. A slight variation on the direct question is the 'leading' question, which expects a certain sort of answer. It may be said to influence the answer, to some extent, since the way in which it is phrased prompts either affirmation or negation; (this corresponds to the use of 'nonne' and 'num' in Latin syntax). Its powers of suggestion and implication are greater than those of the simple direct question. When Waterville, in 'The Siege of London', asks his friend Littlemore, concerning Mrs. Headway and Sir Arthur Demesne, "Are you sure she makes him happy?",[1] he is not expecting an affirmative answer. The implication is that he himself is almost sure she does not.

The second type of question, the indirect, also carries a great deal of implication and suggestion; it is generally accompanied by a desire, on the questioner's part, not to commit themselves. They want information of some sort, yet, for various reasons, they are not willing to reveal this desire; they therefore conceal their question under the guise of a statement. Such questions are often prefaced by, "I suppose", or "perhaps". The narrator of 'The Aspern Papers', who wishes to elicit certain facts from Miss Tita, yet at the same time to keep his real motives hidden, questions her, indirectly, with great artfulness. After the death of her aunt, for example, before he knows what has become of the Aspern papers he says to her:

> I know what your poor aunt wanted to say. She wanted to give directions that her papers should be buried with her.[2]

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[1] CT, vol. 5, p. 26.

[2] Ibid., vol. 6, p. 374.

James points out how Miss Tita answers this indirect question:

> Miss Tita appeared to consider this suggestion for a moment; after which she declared, with striking decision, 'Oh no, she wouldn't have thought that safe!'[1]

There are many other examples in this same story of the ability to provoke an answer without ever committing oneself to a direct question. Sometimes an indirect question is concealed beneath a direct one - a further subtlety. James suggests as much in Roderick Hudson when he tells the reader that "Rowland answered only the formal question - not the latent one."[2]

So far it is only questions which require answers which have been considered, but there is another kind, the rhetorical, whose main function is not to elicit information, but, either to reveal strong emotion in the questioner, or to arouse it in others. This well-known oratorical device springs quite naturally to the lips of many Jamesian characters. Mary Gosselin, the heroine of 'Lord Beaupré', has agreed to protect Lord Beaupré from scheming mothers by pretending to be engaged to him. Her brother Hugh, during a conversation with their mother, in which it becomes apparent that Mrs. Gosselin hopes that the engagement will become real, is shocked at the situation:

> "Is that your speculation? Is that Mary's? I never heard of anything so odious!"[3]

He already knows the answer - the questions are merely a sign of his violent reaction to their behaviour. Later on in the conversation, he again betrays his agitation by the use of a rhetorical question, which this time he leaves unfinished: "Then it is your calculation - ?" (Unfinished questions also

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[1] CT, vol. 6, p. 374.

[2] Chiltern ed., p. 112.i.e. Mrs. Light's question: "Are you an artist?" which really means: "Be so good as to assure me without delay that you're really the rather manageable young man of fortune that you appear."

[3] CT, vol. 8, p. 302.

indicate strong emotion, and imply more than they actually state.)

The last type to be considered is the counter-question. Time and again a question is put, only to be evaded by means of an answer which is, in itself, a question. As in the case of the indirect question, the evasion stems from a desire not to commit oneself on a particular point. In the same scene from 'Lord Beaupre' mentioned above, Mrs. Gosselin betrays this wish neither to affirm nor to negate her son's question:

"Do you mean that the engagement will become real?" (Hugh)

Again the good lady said nothing until she broke out:

"My dear boy, can't you trust your poor old mummy?"[1]

She turns the responsibility of answering, and therefore of committal, back onto Hugh, who then replies with the two questions, already examined above.

This probing of one character by another, is very close to the Socratic method of discourse, as revealed in the majority of Plato's dialogues. James himself seems to be aware of the similarities, for he says of Florimond's aunt, the formidable Miss Daintry, in 'A New England Winter':

> Her method was Socratic; she usually entangled her interlocutor in a net of questions.[2]

Like many of his characters, she reveals a great deal of calculation in her questioning, and no slight skill in eliciting what she wants to know without giving away any of her own secrets.

James also thinks of this aspect of his dialogue, as a cross-examination

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[1] _CT_, vol. 8, p. 302.

[2] _Ibid._, vol. 6, p. 99.

or a catechism: "How you do catechize!" exclaims Mrs. Rushbrook to the narrator of 'The Solution', and again: "How you do cross-examine one!"[1] Even Agatha, a relatively ingenuous character, in 'The Modern Warning', foresees "the manner in which she should catechise" her husband, Sir Rufus, about what he intends to put into his book on America.[2] Her motive, of course, is to elicit relevant facts from him.

In fact, elicitation of information is one of the main functions of the question, as James sees it. He says of Fleda, in the notes to The Spoils of Poynton: "Her questions must DRAW OUT what he [Owen] tells her."[3] The situation is constantly in need of clarification, and, as James puts it in the same notes:

> This [Mrs. Gereth's spoliation of Poynton] is made clear as between her and Fleda: the way she proceeded...is made perfectly distinct. Definite questions and answers about this.[4]

Derk Oldfield sums up what seems to be the real value of the question in dialogue in the following way:

> Questions of any kind demand a more active response from the person addressed than most of the other forms we can give our ideas.[5]

It is not nearly so easy to describe the other half of the formula, that is, the answer. For whereas, with the question, there is nearly always the typographical aid of the question mark to help the reader, it is sometimes difficult to decide what constitutes an answer. There are cases, for example,

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[1] CT, vol. 7, p. 399.

[2] Ibid., p. 63.

[3] NB, 19th Feb., 1896, p. 252.

[4] Ibid., p. 253.

[5] Op.cit., p. 140.

where a question is asked to which the next speaker's response bears no apparent relation. Does such a remark constitute an answer? In order to simplify matters, all comments which follow directly on a question will be put into this category. This includes, therefore, besides direct and indirect questions, such things as counter-questions, silences or complete ignorings of the question, and apparent irrelevancies. Finally, there are a few 'gratuitous' answers, which are not provoked by any formulated question.

The direct answer, besides providing information necessary to an understanding of the situation, also reveals a willingness to commit oneself uncommon in James's characters; it is, therefore, comparatively rare.

The indirect answer, on the other hand, is in great evidence. The Post Office girl of 'In the Cage', who has not taken Mrs. Jordan fully into her confidence, and has therefore something to conceal from her "waited a moment to answer her, and then it was indirect."[1] In 'Broken Wings', Straith spends a whole evening with Mrs. Harvey, during which time he "got no answer at all that was direct."[2] This is one of the commonest ways in which people avoid committing themselves.

Some characters, of course, simply ignore the question, responding either with silence, or with a complete disregard of it. Far from disconcerting their partners, this usually conveys, quite adequately, their unwillingness to reply. There is an interesting passage in 'Madame de Mauves', where not only

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[1]CT, vol. 10, p. 231.

[2]Ibid., vol. 11, p. 227, e.g. "What has happened to you?" Straith asked. "How do I keep it up?" she continued, as if she had not heard him. "But I don't keep it up. You do," she declared as she again looked round her. (Ibid., p.231-2)

is a question ignored, but the characters' own attitude towards answers is also revealed. M. de Mauves has come to question his wife about Longmore, an American who is very much in love with her:

> 'May I ask the favor' he said with evident effort, in spite of a forced smile of easy courtesy, 'of having a question answered?'
> 'It's a favor I never refused,' Madame de Mauves replied.
> 'Very true. Do you expect this evening a visit from Mr. Longmore?'
> 'Mr. Longmore', said his wife, 'has left St.-Germain.'
> M. de Mauves started and his smile expired. 'Mr. Longmore', his wife continued, 'has gone to America.'
> M. de Mauves stared a moment, flushed deeply, and turned away. Then recovering himself - 'Had anything happened?' he asked, 'Had he a sudden call?'
> But his question received no answer.[1]

Either his wife feels she has granted him enough 'favors' for one evening, or she wishes to conceal something. She is saved from any awkwardness, however, by the announcement of dinner.

One very characteristic feature of James's dialogue is the number of apparent irrelevancies with which his speakers meet many of the questions. I say 'apparent', because most of these remarks are intimately related to the question, though in an oblique fashion. By forcing the reader to search for all the possible links between question and answer, James is able to extend the implications of the subject matter, whilst at the same time revealing the particular preoccupation or obsession of each of his characters in turn. In the following conversation between Captain Everard and the Post Office girl of 'In the Cage', a great deal is alluded to, though not actually uttered, by this means:

> 'I'll come every day!' he exclaimed.
> '...How can you? How can you?' He had, too, manifestly,

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[1] CT, vol. 3, p. 205.

> only to look at it there, in the vulgarly animated gloom, to see that he couldn't; and at this point, by the mere action of his silence, everything they had so definitely not named, the whole presence round which they had been circling became a part of their reference, settled solidly between them. It was as if then, for a minute, they sat and saw it all in each other's eyes, saw so much that there was no need of a transition for sounding it at last. 'Your danger, your danger - !'[1]

One very common type of answer, which is, at the same time, not an answer, is the counter-question, whose function has been touched on above. The following example, taken from 'Fordham Castle', demonstrates it very well. Abel Taker and Mrs. Magaw, both abandoned in Switzerland by their respective 'guardians', are holding a conversation in which neither of them is as yet quite willing to reveal everything to the other. A certain amount of hedging and evasion is therefore necessary:

> 'Are you going to wait here?' she asked.
> He held her, with some gallantry, in suspense. 'Are you?'
> She postponed her answer, visibly not quite comfortable now.[2]

Finally, there is one kind of answer which, though not common, is nevertheless important, inasmuch as it reveals an unspoken understanding between the characters concerned. The 'gratuitous' answer, as it will be called, is given to a question not articulated, though present in the mind of one of the characters. May Bartram, in 'The Beast in the Jungle', for example, has such a deep understanding of Marcher, that at one point "she answered as if she had heard the words" (which he has not yet uttered).[3]

Answers, like questions, are, in some cases, designed to be what

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[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 198.

[2] Ibid., vol. 12, p. 140.

[3] Ibid., vol. 11, p. 386, i.e. Marcher stops himself from asking the question: "Too ill to tell me?", but May Bartram replies, all the same: "Don't you know - now?"

Sir Arthur, in 'The London Siege', feels Mrs. Headway's to be: "sudden luminous points".[1] But, like hers, they also, on occasions, serve only "to intensify the darkness round their edges."[2] Paradoxically enough, they are used both to clarify and to mystify. Paradoxical, too, is their power to indicate both committal and a refusal to commit oneself. And finally, they are important as a means of conveying certain vital facts or information in the least monotonous way possible. James has a hatred of what he calls 'a seated mass of information', and by imparting information indirectly by means of answers, he avoids it, to a large extent.

Another component part, by no means confined to Jamesian dialogue, is the extensive use of exclamation. This appears both as simple ejaculation and as apostrophe. It seems to have at least four main functions, the most common being that of emphasis. To say that exclamation is a means of adding emphasis is almost a truism and requires no illustration. Another equally obvious statement is that exclamation often reveals strong emotion of some sort. The Post Office girl from 'In the Cage', for example, during one of her encounters with Captain Everard, is unable to articulate her feelings beyond an exclamation:

> 'Oh!' said the girl, knowing at this the deepest thrill she had ever felt.[3]

Sometimes an exclamation contributes to the mystery or suspense of a situation by its very ambiguity. James tells the reader of 'Madame de Mauves', for

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[1] CT, vol. 5, p. 47.

[2] Ibid.

[3] CT, vol. 10, p. 221.

example, that "Longmore's reply was ambiguous; he simply said 'Ah!'"[1] And Raymond, in 'Mrs. Temperly', is equally enigmatic:

> 'Oh, Cousin Maria!' the young man exclaimed ambiguously...[2]

Because of this ambiguity, exclamation is also a means of evasion and non-committal. Of Sir Baldwin Luard, one of the minor characters in 'Greville Fane', the narrator says that he had

> a determination to get on politically that was indicated by his never having been known to commit himself - as regards any proposition whatever - beyond an exclamatory 'Oh!' His wife and he must have conversed mainly in prim ejaculations.[3]

Finally, exclamation is sometimes used to characterise people briefly, but succinctly. (It is not one of the main means of characterisation, and is generally reserved for minor characters.) The following example from The Reverberator shows how James can reveal, not only national 'types', but also subtler shades of character, by means of a single exclamation:

> 'Poor creatures!', [Mr. Probert, the father of Gaston Probert exclaims, concerning the Dosson family (Gaston wishes to marry Francie Dosson, but most of his family disapprove)]
>
> This exclamation gave Gaston much pleasure...It promised well; it denoted a sentiment of tenderness for the dear Dossons, confronted with a row of fierce French critics...Young Probert was reminded freshly by his father's ejaculation of that characteristic kindness which was really what he had built on.[4]

Thus one whole side of Mr. Probert's nature is revealed in a single exclamation. Lady Davenant, in 'A London Life', is similarly characterised by her rich, idiosyncratic exclamations - 'Oh gammon!'[5] and 'Lord, what a donkey'. Almost at the other end of the social scale from this eccentric, outspoken old English

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[1] CT, vol. 3, p. 178.

[2] Ibid., vol. 6, p. 198.

[3] Ibid., vol. 8, p. 440.

[4] Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1949, p. 94-5.

[5] CT, vol. 7, p. 199.

lady, is Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper in 'The Turn of the Screw', with her homely 'Laws!' which she utters more than once. Then there is Miss Frush, an elderly English spinster, who is characterised, briefly but vividly, by the fact that she has an "utterance all vague interjection".[1]

Repetition of words, phrases and clauses is another common feature of Jamesian dialogue. There is no need to go into detail over the various types of repetition, or to give examples of them at this point, since these will emerge anyway in the far more profitable consideration of its main functions.

As with exclamation, the two most obvious functions of repetition are to add emphasis and to reveal strong emotion. In one of the earliest stories, 'Travelling Companions', both these functions are clearly demonstrated on practically every page. The narrator-hero and the heroine are transported by the sights of Europe: "Ah! that beautiful, beautiful, beautiful Christ!", murmurs the heroine, when she first visits St. Mary of the Graces in Milan, and a few pages later on she is crying to the narrator, "This is Italy, Italy, Italy!". Not to be outdone, he tells her, on the roof of Milan Cathedral, "It's the South...the South...It's the South."[2]

Another of the main functions of repetition is to convey a desire for explanation or clarification of a situation, as briefly and as obliquely as possible. His speakers do occasionally commit themselves as far as to demand "What do you mean?", but they are much more likely to repeat a word or phrase, which they do not fully understand, instead. James is clearly describing this kind of repetition when he tells the reader of 'The Reverberator' that

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[1]The Third Person, CT, vol. 11, p.133. Vid. p.147 where five of her eight "utterances" are "ejaculations".

[2]CT, vol. 2, p. 178-81.

"Francis repeated the expression, interrogatively, not understanding it."[1] The best illustration, however, comes from an early novel, The Europeans. In this particular case the lack of understanding is due largely to the difference in nationality between the two speakers, - Gertrude, a young Bostonian, and Felix, a young European. She conveys her need for explanation by repeating certain of his expressions: first of all he calls himself a 'feather-head':

> "A feather-head?" she repeated.
> "I am a species of Bohemian."
> "A Bohemian? ..."
> "I am a sort of adventurer", he said, looking down at her.
> She got up, meeting his smile. "An adventurer?" she repeated.[2]

There is another good example of this use of repetition from the tales. Mrs. Jordan is addressing the Post Office girl:

> "...And then, my love, his debts."
> "His debts?" His young friend was fairly betrayed into helpless innocence. She could struggle a little, but she had to let herself go; and if she had spoken frankly she would have said: "Do tell me, for I don't know so much about him as that!"[3]

This same type of questioning repetition is occasionally used to imply criticism of the previous speaker's meaning. Maisie, the young 'reflector' in What Maisie Knew, for example, is capable, even at her age, of "risking a critical echo."[4]

One very obvious function of repetition is to reveal doubt or uncertainty on the part of a speaker. Theobald, the unproductive artist of 'The Madonna of the Future', in the midst of expounding his views on the pursuit

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[1] op.cit., p. 85.
[2] Chiltern, 1952, p. 75.
[3] CT, vol. 10, p. 238-9.
[4] Chiltern, 1947, p. 183.

of the 'ideal' to the narrator, suddenly hesitates, as though doubting himself and his theories (as indeed he has good cause to do):

> "The result - the result" (here his voice faltered, suddenly, and he fixed his eyes for a moment on the picture;...) - "the result may be less than this,...."[1]

Irony often results from simple repetition. By merely repeating his statement, "It is really very kind of you", Stanmer, the narrator's young friend in 'The Diary of a Man of Fifty', provokes the reply: "Don't repeat it too often, or I shall begin to think you don't mean it."[2] Stanmer, in fact, probably does mean it, but, in view of what the reader knows, or suspects, of the situation, his repetition has an ironical effect. Even the narrator begins to wonder whether he is being truly kind or not. With each repetition a word, phrase or clause can increase in significance, until the final meaning may be completely different from the initial one.

The theme of a story is often stressed by the repetition of key words or phrases, as a later chapter will attempt to prove.[3]

By causing the reader and hearer alike to refer back to previous speeches, repetition also creates a link between speeches and welds the dialogue into an organic whole. This is not the only way in which 'liaison' is brought about but it is one of the most outstanding. James's belief that: "Really, universally, relations stop nowhere...",[4] is reflected in this feature of the dialogue. Dorothea Krook maintains that the "doctrine of internal

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[1]CT, vol. 3, p. 21.
[2]Ibid., vol. 4, p. 407.
[3]Vid. inf. ch. 3, p.124
[4]AN, p. 5.

relations" is a "logical principle" which "directs the method of James's later works."[1]

Three ~~mixoxxbutxvery~~ characteristic features, which ought to be considered together, are the unfinished sentence, the completion of a sentence and the interrupted one. The main function of the unfinished sentence, whether it is in the form of a question or not, is to convey implications which a complete one could not. The suggestiveness, the vagueness of this type of sentence adds to the air of enigma and mystery, where this exists. The narrator of 'The Patagonia', for example, deliberately mystifies Mrs. Nettlepoint by this means:

> "It's true when a woman acts from a sense of honour -."

She attempts to draw him out:

> "'Well, when she does?' said Mrs. Nettlepoint, for I hesitated perceptibly."[2]

A moment later he is teasing her again, with an equally enigmatic remark: "Ah, wait a few days! - "[3]

This same device often suggests a high degree of intimacy between speaker and hearer. There is little need for explicit statement between Godfrey and Adela Chart in 'The Marriages', for example. Godfrey Chart immediately realises that his sister's uncompleted remark, "No; if you had thought of her - !" is a reference to their dead mother. Like repetition, with which it is often combined, the unfinished sentence is frequently used to

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[1] The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James, Cambridge, 1962, p. 410.
[2] CT, vol. 7, p. 313.
[3] Ibid.

indicate doubt or uncertainty. In the following example, from 'Owen Wingrave', strong emotion is also hinted at:

> "He called me - he called me - " here the young man [Owen] faltered, his voice failed him.[1]

The unfinished sentence is yet another means by which James's speakers avoid committing themselves. Marcher, in 'The Beast in the Jungle', for example, deliberately leaves one of his questions incomplete lest, as James puts it, "he should only give himself away."[2] One fairly obvious side effect of this allusive manner of speaking is a greater economy of dialogue, since many things do not need to be stated.

Not all these sentences are completed, but when they are, they generally have one of three effects. Either they clarify the position, or they reveal an understanding of the situation on the part of the second speaker, or, thirdly, a complete lack of understanding of it. In the first case the completion of a sentence is often assigned to the confident, who helps to unravel a puzzling situation. Lady Davenant, Laura Wing's confident, in 'A London Life', is so accurate and ruthless in her analysis of the situation, that Laura is frightened away from her. In the following extract, she has just been telling Lady Davenant of Mr. Wendover's affection for Selina, her married sister:

> "Oh, I have made it seem - " But here Laura stopped; her colour had risen. Lady Davenant stared an instant. "Made it seem that she inclines to him? Mercy, to do that how fond of him you must be!" An observation which had the effect of driving the girl straight out of the house.[3]

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[1] CT, vol. 9, p. 32-33.
[2] Ibid., vol. 11, p.357
[3] Ibid., vol. 7, p. 175.

Two characters who reveal a very close understanding of one another in this way are Miss Amy and Miss Susan, in the supernatural tale, 'The Third Person'. A feeling of great suspense is built up by the repetition of Miss Susan's unfinished sentence, and the mystery is by no means fully solved when it is finally completed:

> "Ah," Miss Susan, still under her breath, portentously exclaimed, "it isn't any one - !"
> "No" - her partner was already able magnificently to take her up. "It isn't any one - !"
> "Who can really hurt us." - Miss Susan completed her thought.[1]

However, the opposite effect is gained when characters complete a sentence incorrectly, since they reveal their lack of understanding in no uncertain manner.

One distinctive type of completed sentence is the interrupted one, which usually conveys a sense of powerful emotions. The speaker wishes either to show his agreement and understanding, or to contradict what has just been said.

Miss Delavoy, in 'John Delavoy', for example, credits Mr. Beston, who is to publish an article on her dead brother, with an opinion which he is most anxious to disown:

> "If my brother's as vile as you say - !"
> "Oh, I don't say he's vile!" he broke in.[2]

One of the features of the dialogue, closely bound up with the unfinished sentence, is pause. The amount of significance attached to pause depends very much on how and when it is used. Its main function, like that of

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[1] CT, vol. 11, p. 142.
[2] Ibid., vol. 9, p. 436.

many of these figures, is to reflect psychological action. The length of a pause is usually meaningful; a short one, on the whole, indicates slight hesitation, whilst a prolonged one shows an unwillingness, or refusal, to answer. Thoughts in parenthesis are generally indicated by a pause before and after them, thus reflecting their subordination to, or separation from, the main trend of the conversation. Parenthesis is one way in which the speakers frequently qualify and elaborate their thoughts. It was a noted feature of James's own conversation, as F. Anstey points out, describing it as he does, as "a sort of Chinese nest of parenthesis".[1]

Most of James's characters, like Linda Pallant in 'Louisa Pallant', realise "the value of intervals".[2] White-Mason, during a conversation with 'Crapey' Cornelia, in the story named after her, frequently "pauses for the large emphasis".[3] Time and again James holds the reader in suspense, whilst he allows his characters either to think out their next remark, or to hold something back, out of a desire to excite curiosity. Pause sometimes reveals genuine indecision in the mind of the speaker. May Bartram, of 'The Beast in the Jungle', for example, has "her last grave pause, as if there might be a choice of ways."[4] But more often than not, pause results from that caution which is so characteristic of these people. Most of them, at some time or another, feel the need to play for time, whilst they contemplate their next move.[5] Mrs. Brookenham, for example, a skilful player of the dialectic

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[1]The Legend of the Master, ed. S. Nowell-Smith, 1947, London, p. 10.

[2]CT, vol. 6, p. 245.

[3]Ibid., vol. 12, p.362. e.g. "My dear Cornelia, she doesn't know - !"

[4]Ibid., vol. 11, p.375.

[5]e.g. the P.O.girl and Mrs.Jordan of 'In the Cage'. "Then you do see them?" the girl asked again. Mrs. Jordan hesitated, and indeed the point had been ambiguous before. "Do you mean the guests?" Her young friend, cautious about an undue exposure of innocence, was not quite sure. "Well - the people who live there." (CT, vol. 10, p.159-60)

game, finding herself facing a particularly complex situation, "puzzled it out with a pause".[1] The real interest, for the reader, lies in the way in which this, and other components of the dialogue, reflect the actual thought processes of those concerned. Vanderbank, for example, another character from the same novel, has what James describes as "contemplative pauses".[2]

Again, pause is often the sign of deepest intimacy, as the narrator of 'The Author of "Beltraffio"' realises in his conversation with Mark Ambient:

> There were longish pauses in our communion, but they only made me feel that we had advanced in intimacy.[3]

James lists the various possible significances of pause, in the following extract from 'A Round of Visits':

> He [Newton Winch] had abruptly a pause, a sensible absence, that might have represented either some odd drop of attention, some turn-off to another thought, or just simply the sudden act of listening.[4]

(The last-mentioned possibility is not the one that springs immediately to mind!)

A very important feature of the dialogue, which is so pervasive and general that it is not always easy to identify, is amplification. Technically speaking, this is a figure of speech, but it is such a wide term that it covers practically every aspect of the dialogue. Its primary role is to elucidate meaning, for speaker, hearer and reader alike. In the process of explanation, the speaker is forced to clarify his own thoughts, whilst attempting also to make the situation intelligible to his listener. At the same time, the reader is given a clearer understanding of things.[5] The other function of amplification is that of emphasis. The following definition of it, which stresses both these

[1] The Awkward Age, Hamish Hamilton, 1948, p. 380.

[2] Ibid., p. 277.

[3] CT, vol. 5, p. 326.

[4] Ibid., vol. 12, p. 453.

[5] e.g. May Bartram to John Marcher in 'The Beast in the Jungle': "It would be the worst," she finally let herself say. "I mean the thing that I've never said." (CT, vol.11, p.383)

aspects, is taken from 'The Oxford Dictionary: amplification, it runs, is "making the most of a thought or circumstance".

It is almost impossible to describe the external form amplification will take, since this can range from a plain list of facts, a straightforward definition or explanation, to the most elaborate metaphor or simile. It is identifiable by its effects rather than by any stylistic features. It is, of course, one of the chief means by which any kind of argument or exposition proceeds, but it is particularly marked in Jamesian dialogue, as almost any passage from his tales will show.[1]

Metaphor, simile and personification are also very distinctive characteristics of the dialogue, their most important function being, as Beach puts it, to "trace the act and process of thought", or as F. O. Matthiessen expresses it, "to give concretion, as well as allusive and beautiful extension to his thought".[2] What one critic has said of Plato could equally well be said of James: "He dramatised the world of thought as Shakespeare dramatised the world of action."[3]

Like amplification, the use of imagery is a means of elucidating and emphasising meaning in a sphere full of concepts difficult to define. The speakers proceed, therefore, by indirection, rather than by explicit statement, and this results in enigma and irony. In the following extract, from 'The Pension Beaurepas', the narrator is talking to Aurora Church, a Europeanised American girl, in the garden of the pension. She asks him why he says it will

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[1] Vid. inf., chapter 6, p.211-2

[2] Henry James: The Major Phase, Oxford, 1944.

[3] The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic, W. Lutoslawski, London, 1897, p. 407.

"do no good" to tell her when she "strikes a false note":

> "Because [he replies] some things - some differences-are felt, not learned. To you liberty is not natural; you are like a person who has brought a repeater, and, in his satisfaction, is constantly making it sound. To a real American girl her liberty is a very vulgarly-ticking old clock." [1]

His explanation is so veiled in imagery that it is little wonder that she prefaces her next remark with the query "Ah, you mean, then..?" The whole of their conversation is carried on in this oblique manner, mainly because of the delicacy and complexity of the subject under discussion. Howard Babb, describing a similar use of imagery in Jane Austen, calls this 'metaphoric indirection'.[2]

Like repetition, imagery is used to link speech to speech, the syntactical liaison thus reflecting a deeper psychological relationship. When a speaker carries on, or concludes, an image initiated by another, he or she reveals a deep understanding of the other's thought processes. (It is generally an occasion for a display of metaphysical wit also.) George Dane, of 'The Great Good Place', for example, is able to complete the 'Brother's' image of the two of them being "babes at the breast" of mother Nature, because he grasps what he is getting at:

> 'And her bosom' - Dane completed the figure - 'the noble eminence of our hill? That will do; anything will do that covers the essential fact'.[3]

Other functions of imagery, which will be discussed in the relevant places are: its relation to theme; its part in characterisation; its power to indicate fine shades of feeling; and its ability to reflect psychological

[1] CT, vol. 4, p. 383.

[2] Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue, Ohio, 1962, p. 78.

[3] CT, vol. 11, p. 38.

action. Some of the imagery used by James's speakers causes one to echo the the surprising admission made by the narrator of The Sacred Fount to the bewildered Mrs. Brissenden:

> I daresay, to do you justice, the interpretation of my tropes and figures isn't ever perfectly simple.[1]

However, the use of imagery in Jamesian dialogue more often clarifies than obscures a situation, for as Brooks and Warren, in their advice to young writers, emphasise, "metaphor is not a mere decoration, an 'extra'. It often represents not only the most compact and vigorous way of saying a thing - it represents sometimes the only way in which the particular thing can be said at all."[2]

Like James's own conversation, his dialogue is full of epigrams, which are one of the many manifestations of his rich sense of humour. They are used to great effect in his mystery tales, as a means of sustaining suspense. Though, as Edel notes, they have "none of the mannered qualities of Oscar Wilde" they "are emphatic in their quiet truths". One of James's own will serve to demonstrate the justness of this remark. Gazing at a loaded breakfast table in a country house one morning, when all the other members of the house party, save Gerard Hopkins and his father, were in bed, he was heard to exclaim dolefully:

> "Oh, what a woeful waste of wonder!"[3]

There are several other components, which, though of frequent occurrence, are not so peculiarly Jamesian as those already mentioned. Hyperbole and litotes, for example, are used to indicate strong emotion and to reveal character. (As with epigrams, the effect is often very humorous.) Generalisation,

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[1] Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959, p. 196.

[2] Op.cit., p. 339.

[3] Recorded on the Third Programme, June 14th, 1956. Another example, from the tales, is Lady Davenant's remark to Laura Wing in 'A London Life': "it isn't the business of little girls to serve as parachutes to fly-away wives!" (CT, vol. 7, p.94)

quotation, literary allusion, circumlocution, euphemism, paradox and oxymoron, all less characteristic of the dialogue, are generally used to characterise the speaker, though they have other minor functions.

Typographical devices, such as inverted commas, italics and capital letters, are prevalent. They are there largely for emphasis, though in the work of the later period, they are handled with a care and skill uncommon in the majority of writers.[1]

Lastly, there remains to be discussed the difficult figure of irony. As a simple trope, it is fairly easy both to discern and to define. R. Poirier calls it "a comic interplay between implication and the initial assertion".[2] As such, it can be used intentionally, in which case it reveals the speaker's sophistication,[3] or unintentionally, when it often indicates the speaker's ingenuousness.[4] Either way, it usually helps to reveal character.

Irony is often humorous in effect, again either intentionally or unintentionally, so. Then there is its power to produce an impression of strong contrast, paradox and oxymoron being the two most obvious means by which this is achieved. Herbert Grierson believes that "irony is a subtler use of contrast [than Antithesis]. You state the opposite of what you mean, leaving something to suggest your real meaning. The effect is an illumination of the speaker's feelings...by the peculiar angle which is presented between the object and the speaker's mind."[5] There are, therefore, at least two

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[1]Vid. inf., chapter 6, p. 193-4

[2]The Comic Sense of Henry James, London, 1960, p. 18.

[3]e.g. Dr. Sloper, in 'Washington Square'.

[4]e.g. Lizzie, in 'The Story of a Year'.

[5]Op.cit., p. 76.

meanings to an ironical statement, the overt and the covert one. The most important is generally the oblique one. When Mrs. Rushbrook in 'The Solution', for example, tells the narrator, in connection with her interview with Wilderming, "I played a bold game", he does not realise the ambiguity of this remark, though the reader is meant to. The narrator has played a rather shabby trick on Wilderming by making him feel it is his duty, as a gentleman, to marry a certain young woman with whom he is not in love. The narrator, scared by his own success in the matter, appeals to Mrs. Rushbrook, with whom he is in love, to help him prevent the marriage. She does - by marrying Wilderming herself!

However, irony is a far more extensive and complex matter than this. It involves such questions as 'tone', 'plot' and form, to mention only the most outstanding, and it will be discussed in further detail under those headings. James's own definition of it explains the strong appeal it has for him:

> The strength of applied irony [is] surely in the sincerities, the lucidities, the utilities that stand behind it,...it implies and projects the possible other case, the case rich and edifying, where the actuality is pretentious and vain.[1]

An examination of diction reveals several interesting characteristics, notably the use of colloquialisms (particularly in the middle and late period). Colloquialisms are useful in many ways. They are put into the mouths of both Americans and English, but with a careful discrimination between the two. If you say 'Jerusalem', for example, you are likely to be American; if you say someone's a 'rotter', English! This is one of the many ways in which James indicates differences of nationality.[2] The use of colloquialism, in itself, is often the sign of a certain sort of person, though this is very general.[3]

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[1] AN, p. 202.

[2] Vid.inf., chapter 2, pp.88,92

[3] e.g. in Murray Brush of 'Julia Bride', for example, it indicates not only his American nationality, but also his brashness. "See here, Julia; I'll do more." "'More' -?" "Everything. I'll take it right in hand. I'll fling over you -" (CT, vol. 12, p. 184)

Emphasis is one of the most obvious results of the use of colloquialisms. It is decidedly more emphatic, for example, to tell a person you believe his ideas are "awful rot"[1] as young Lechmere says of Owen Wingrave's, than to say you consider them 'wrong'. J. Barzun thinks that "James made use of physical images and vulgar colloquialisms for the special purpose of maintaining the intensity of his scenes at the requisite pitch".[2] As far as intensity of emotion is concerned, this is certainly one of the important functions of colloquialisms. It is only when she is greatly agitated, for example, that Miss Ambient, in 'The Author of "Beltraffio"', lets slip a "vulgarism of speech".[3]

Like imagery, colloquialisms are sometimes resorted to in an attempt to explain difficult concepts. (Many of them are, of course, dead metaphors.) James's speakers are constantly vowing to 'make out' a situation, or to 'see it through'. However, since most colloquialisms are highly personal, they are frequently in need of interpretation - another way in which suspense is created.

The use of foreign phrases is also a dominant feature of the diction. The attempt to reproduce prolonged passages of dialect or a foreign accent is rare in James, for reasons which will be given in the next chapter. There are, however, numerous foreign idioms.

In the first published tale, 'The Tragedy of Errors', the French phrases, as Dupée so aptly puts it, "flower on every page". In a later one, such as 'At Isella', Italian ones begin to blossom too. Although some of the tales are set in Germany, there are far fewer German phrases and only a sprinkling of

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[1] CT, vol. 9, p. 26.

[2] 'Henry James: Melodramatist', The Question of Henry James, ed. F. Dupée, London, 1947, p. 269.

[3] CT, vol. 5, p. 350: "such a very odd time to be reading an author whom she never could abide!" she says to the narrator, concerning her sister-in-law.

Latin ones, not surprisingly. In the tales of the middle and late period the foreign phrases are less in evidence; they are also used with more discrimination. Nevertheless, in spite of this pruning down process they are still a noticeable feature of the dialogue (particularly French idioms, of which James had a detailed knowledge).

When used by the natives of the particular country in question, these phrases are one very economical means of characterisation and differentiation. Few readers will forget the Italian Prince's solemn words to Maggie Verver in The Golden Bowl: "Everything's terrible, cara, in the heart of man". By this one small touch of a foreign word, the reader is reminded of the difference in nationality, and therefore in outlook and culture, between the two, in the light of which their eventual understanding is so miraculous. Foreign phrases can be used to characterise people in yet another way. When the speaker is not using his native tongue, the implication is, either that he is very cultured, or rather pretentious. It is usually the former. As James implies in The Europeans, the knowledge of foreign languages is one of the main ways in which American and European civilisation differ. While French comes quite naturally to Eugenia, the representative of European culture, Gertrude, the American representative, is completely ignorant of it, and her family is actively opposed to her learning it. There are "certain shades of meaning", as James puts it, which can only be expressed by a foreign phrase, and he implies in this book that it is mainly a lack of awareness of such shades that accounts for the Wentworth's wilful ignorance of foreign languages.

Like many other features of the dialogue, this device is used for emphasis

also. On occasions it is used to induce a certain atmosphere. In fact, S. Ullman sees this as the chief task of foreign phrases: "The prime function of foreign words as a device of style is to produce local colour."[1] 'The Sweetheart of M. Briseux', which is set in France, is copiously larded with French phrases which convey the appropriate 'atmosphere'. Finally, foreign phrases can be used for purposes of evasion, either to avoid embarrassment or committal. When Mrs. Moreen in'The Pupil', for example, brashly asks the sensitive tutor for a loan, he softens his refusal by expressing it in French: "My dear lady, c'est trop fort!"[2]

Besides this there is a small, and highly specialised, vocabulary of what can only be described as 'Jamesian' terms, all of which are closely connected to an aesthetic attitude towards morality. His characters, particularly in the later tales, are constantly approving of one another's actions, describing them as 'wonderful', 'beautiful','magnificent' or 'lovely'. They also use these adjectives of the people themselves. Miss Anvoy, in 'The Coxon Fund', gives Mrs. Mulville £30 - and when she can least afford it - to help her with Saltram's affairs. Relating this to the narrator, Mrs. Mulville describes the action as a "very beautiful impulse".[3]

Yet another feature of the diction is the amount of witty puns and word-play contained in it. This is more characteristic of the speech of some characters than that of others. The Post Office girl in 'In the Cage', for example, is very quick on the uptake, whereas Mrs. Jordan is rather slow:

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[1] Op.cit., p. 112.

[2] CT, vol. 7, p. 446.

[3] Ibid., vol. 9, p. 152.

> 'Do you think she [Lady Bradeen] looks good?' she [Mrs. Jordan] inquired.
> 'Because that's not always the case with the good-looking?' - the other took it up.[1]

Other minor features are occasional archaisms, euphemisms, and cliches, which are used, in the main, for purposes of characterisation.

There are a few peculiarities of syntax worth mentioning. The first of these concerns the use of the pronoun. As James says of Selina, in 'A London Life', his speakers "never mention a name when a pronoun would do."[2] J.W. Beach describes the subtleties of this device in the following way:

> The reference of pronouns is often misunderstood, or in doubt, and we are then set right and carried further by our very mistake. Or else, the reference being unmistakeable, the other party to the dialogue deliberately changes the pronoun and so throws some new and interesting light on the connection.[3]

In both cases the eventual effect, after an initial suspense, is one of clarification. The brief checks, caused by uncertainty of reference, add to the excitement of the final revelation.[4] In addition, the continual back-reference involved in the use of pronouns, helps to consolidate the link between speeches, giving the work a close texture.

Though both George Meredith and James have a highly idiosyncratic style of writing, there are several striking points of similarity between their dialogue technique, one of them being the predominance of ellipsis. Their characters speak at times with an allusiveness which can prove infuriating to the reader. (Dorothea Krook makes this one of her main arguments as to the

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[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 233. As here, wit is often merely a matter of reversing the word-order.

[2] Ibid., vol. 7, p. 178.

[3] Method, p. 80.

[4] e.g. in the following extract from 'The Turn of the Screw' the governess is referring to her employer, Mrs. Grose, to Peter Quint: "He seems to like us young and pretty." "Oh, he did," Mrs. Grose assented: "It was the way he liked everyone!" She had no sooner spoken indeed than she caught herself up. "I mean that's his way - the master's." (CT, vol. 10, p.31)

'realism' of James's dialogue.)[1] Besides revealing a close degree of intimacy between speakers, ellipsis also contributes to the element of suspense. The reader is left to follow up the 'clues' for himself. In the next passage, from 'In the Cage', the Post Office girl deliberately creates a feeling of suspense in Captain Everard, who is desperately trying to trace a telegram sent weeks before:

> 'But let me see. Wasn't it Dover? [says the girl]
> 'Yes, Miss Dolman - '
> 'Parade Lodge, Parade Terrace?'
> 'Exactly - thank you so awfully much!' [2]

J.W. Beach describes the dialogue of the later work as "allusive talk playing above unsounded depths".[3] Like the unfinished sentence, ellipsis makes for 'economy of expression'. Graham Fielder, in The Ivory Tower, has a vivid phrase for this aspect of the dialogue; he refers to Horton Vint's allusive manner of speech as "telephonic talk".[4]

Syntactically, the speech of James's characters is frequently very balanced, owing to their habit of drawing analogies or contrasts between their own situation and that of others. (Balance is particularly marked in such figures as simile and antithesis.) This kind of speech has a largely rhetorical effect, and its function is to sway the listener to one's own point of view.[5] But, besides revealing a desire to rouse emotion in others, it can also indicate character, in certain cases. Sententiousness, for example, often manifests itself in this way.[6]

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[1] Vid. inf. chap. 7, p. 223

[2] CT, vol. 10, p. 223.

[3] Method, p. 89.

[4] Collins, London, 1917, p. 245.

[5] Vid. inf. chap. 6, p. 194

[6] Vid. inf., chap. 2, p. 104

One final feature of the dialogue, closely related to this question of rhetorical speech, is the delicacy of rhythm which characterises much of it. This was one of the aspects of his dramatic dialogue which received the most praise, when James's play 'Guy Domville' was performed. Many of the critics had grave misgivings about other features of the piece, but they were unanimous in praising the dialogue as "graceful and rhythmic".[1] Bernard Shaw, at that time a music critic, even went so far as to say it was "as grateful to my ear as the music of Mozart's 'Entführung aus dem Serail' would be after a year of 'Ernani' and 'Il Trovatore'."[2] Rhythm has several important functions, besides this obvious, aesthetic one. It can, if abrupt, indicate great agitation, especially if the speech is otherwise smooth and flowing. Again, the pace of a work is controlled, to a certain extent, by rhythm, and the climax of a story is often much more dramatic, if embodied in highly rhythmical speech. By a clever handling of rhythm, James also manages to represent the uneven flow of conversation, the speech rhythms of an actual class. Even balance is dependent to a large extent on the skilful manipulation of rhythm.[3]

This examination of the component parts of Jamesian dialogue has been deliberately limited to the more outstanding features of it and these have been described as briefly as possible, since most of them will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

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[1] Edel's introduction to 'Guy Domville', The Complete Plays, London, 1949, p. 472.

[2] Ibid.

[3] It is very difficult to find examples brief enough to illustrate rhythm here, but vid. inf., chapter 6, p.193-4

iii) Two types of dialogue

> The topic is attacked from without; the speakers circle around it. Like collaborating detectives they piece together their evidence, or like attorneys for the defense and the prosecution they proceed alternatively on rival systems. There are examinations and cross-examinations. There are mutual misunderstandings, fake clues, shifts of position...[and] close, minute, unwearying analysis.[1]

Jamesian dialogue is of such a distinctive nature that it is almost possible to draw up a list of rules by which it is governed.[2] Markow-Totevy speaks of "ses regles strictes d'effets",[3] and both James and his critics, in an attempt to describe its workings, have constantly resorted to metaphors taken from various games, all of which have their own sets of rules. There are many references, for example, to the act of playing a game which is never actually specified. Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, in 'The Birthplace', remain silent on their second visit to Owen Gedge, whilst "he kept the game up".[4] And F. Mathiessen sees Fanny Assingham in The Golden Bowl, as "the champion player of that favourite Jamesian game of scrutinizing the motives of her friends".[5] Beach maintains that James's characters "are likely to be engaged most of the time in a sort of spiritual game, which involves a sharp continuous trial of wits at close range".[6] Finally, H.G. Wells, in his merciless analysis of James's technique in 'Boon', refers to "the game of attainment and overperception", which his speakers play.[7]

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[1] Rage for Order, A. Warren, Chicago, 1948, p. 145.

[2] This makes it very easy to parody, as H.G.Wells rather unkindly demonstrates in 'Boon'.

[3] Henry James, Paris, 1958, p. 104.

[4] CT, vol. 11, p.455.

[5] Henry James: The Major Phase, Oxford, 1944, p. 94.

[6] Twentieth Century Novel, p. 214.

[7] Henry James and H.G.Wells, ed. Edel and Ray, London, 1958, p. 248.

H. Hayes makes a more specific comparison with the game of twenty questions,[1] and James's characters themselves make implicit references to some sort of guessing game, in their constant plea for a 'clue'. As H.G. Wells again puts it: "His people nose out suspicions link by link".[2]

Games requiring intellectual skill, such as cards or chess, also provide frequent analogies. James is particularly fond of describing his characters' next 'move' in terms of a card game: "Before she could check herself", he tells us of Lady Greyswood, in 'The Wheel of Time', "she had played her card".[3] The Duchess, in The Awkward Age, is "perfectly ready", she tells Mr. Longdon, "to put her cards on the table".[4] Beach compares the dialogue to a game of chess.[5] He also suggests that it resembles, at times, the figure of a picture-puzzle.[6]

Besides games requiring mental effort, more purely physical ones have been suggested: "Mrs. Gracedew", the reader of 'Covering End' is informed, "let the ball quite drop", but "Cora pitched it up for another toss".[7]

It is characteristic of James's speakers that, like the narrator of The Sacred Fount, they should regard conversation as "high sport",[8] but this does not mean that James considers his dialogue of no more importance than a mere dialectic game. For one thing, the end in view is generally more serious

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[1] 'Henry James, the Satirist', Hound and Horn, April-July, 1934.

[2] Op.cit., p. 248.

[3] CT, vol. 8, p. 465.

[4] Op.cit., p. 203.

[5] Vid. Method, p. 79.

[6] Vid. ibid., p. 80.

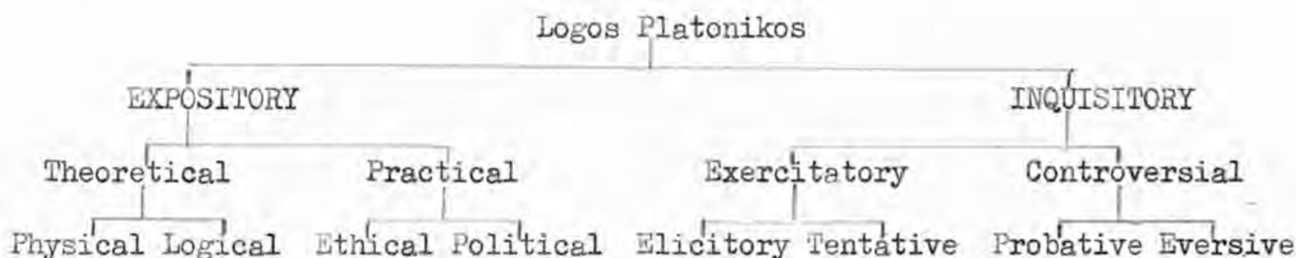
[7] CT, vol. 10, p. 318.

[8] Op.cit., p. 119.

than that involved in games. His characters, like Plato's enquirers after truth, are trying to get at the true significance of a situation in the only way open to them.

In fact, there are a surprising number of similarities between the method of Plato and that of James. A closer examination of the parallels between the two would form a fascinating digression, but there is room here only for an occasional reference to the likenesses as they arise.

However, it would be useful at this point, to examine Plato's ideas about the different types of dialogue. Although these are far too detailed and technical to have precise application to James's work, they do give some indication of the main branches into which dialogue falls. The following diagram is a simplified version of the Greek theory of dialogue as described by Stock in his edition of Plato's 'Meno'.[1]



Beach identifies the same two main branches of dialogue, only instead of using the terms 'expository' and 'inquisitory', he describes them as "the dialogue of confederates" and "the dialogue of antagonists" respectively.[2] However, he does take into account the fact that there are "a large number of scenes in which it is hard to say whether the character of confederacy or antagonism

[1]London, 1935, p. 11.

[2]Op.cit., p. 77.

predominates in the relation".[1] In spite of this qualification, the distinction is a useful one, illuminating to a study of Jamesian dialogue.

The first type, that between confederates, occurs far more frequently than the second and is the main kind in the later period. Its functions are to develop the 'idea' or 'picture', to describe incidents or objective facts and, more importantly, to discuss or interpret these facts. In this way the action, particularly if it is psychological, is advanced by means of the dialogue. It is generally rather slow in pace, although with occasional rapid outbursts. Analogies taken from games of cards and chess seem to be most appropriate here.

The second type possesses very similar characteristics to the first, though it differs radically in aim. Whilst the desire between confederates, is to understand or to clarify an already established position, between antagonists the aim is generally to prove a hypothesis to be true or false. That is to say, there is definite opposition and divergence of opinion in the latter case. This hostility is often disguised, however, and there is, therefore, a great deal of dissimulation. The speakers are far more cautious and evasive, and more unwilling to commit themselves in every way. The conversation between the Post Office girl and Mrs. Jordan in 'In the Cage' is of this sort:

> Each, in the lack of better diversion, carried on with more mystification for the other an intercourse that consisted not a little of peeping out and drawing back. Each waited for the other to commit herself, each profusely curtained for the other the limits of low horizons. Mrs. Jordan was indeed probably the more reckless skirmisher.[2]

[1] _Op.cit._, p. 77.

[2] _CT_, vol. 10, p. 226.

James usually resorts to images of warfare when referring to this kind of dialogue. The two 'skirmishes' mentioned above, for example, carry on in the following manner:

> 'She adores him - but of course that wasn't all there was about it.' [Mrs. Jordan]
> The girl met her eyes a minute, then quite surrendered. 'What was there else about it?'[1]

In both examples the emphasis is on the element of strategy and manoeuvring involved, as it is in most cases. Many critics think of this dialogue as a "verbal sparring-contest", or "breathless intellectual fencing", whilst James himself ranges from similar wrestling and fencing metaphors to ones taken from real war. The governess in 'The Turn of the Screw', for example, has an interview with her pupil, Miles, which is described almost wholly in terms of a grim battle. "We circled," she says, "with terrors and scruples like fighters not daring to close."[2] And when Miles, "in the desolation of his surrender", smiles at her, she is "blind with victory".[3] But when, pushing her advantage too far, she loses him once more, she experiences "a sick swim at the drop of my victory and all the return of my battle".[4]

Within 'psychological' narrative, which is generally to be found in increased proportion to dialogue in this latter sort, there are a great many of these battle metaphors. Maisie's silence, after her argument with Sir Claude, for example, in What Maisie Knew, is described as "the silence that after the battle of talk was the best balm she could offer".[5] And Sir Claude

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[1] CT, vol. 10, p.239.
[2] Ibid., p. 133.
[3] Ibid., p. 136.
[4] Ibid., p. 137.
[5] Op.cit., p. 177.

himself is aware of "the whiz of a bullet" and the "breach of the peace".[1] This second type of dialogue also tends to be far more dramatic than the first, since there is much more conflict between the speakers. The degree of suspense and mystery is, therefore, proportionately higher too.

However, there are far more similarities than dissimilarities between these two types of dialogue, compared with that of other novelists, and the distinction is only useful if this is borne in mind. The fact that it is not always possible to draw a line between the two must also be remembered.

[1] Op.cit., p. 182.

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTER

(i) Range of Character (ii) Characterisation

(i) Range of Character

> James's chosen area of art was completely artificial and fanciful; neither British nor American at base, but only compounded of adolescent, or preadolescent, visions of what such a world should be like, wasn't it composed at least half of a glorified British 'aristocracy', just beneath whom a few proletarian butlers perhaps, like the famous 'Brooksmith'...beneath whom a few, as I say, of the Jamesian 'working class' protagonists simply yearned to ape this spurious nobility....
>
> [Within] this thin and artificial and fanciful literary orbit, the Jamesian range of emotions, of human feelings and reactions was narrowed down even more by temperamental considerations.[1]

> A literary world that was comprised of one-half of the upper one per cent of the human race at best; and one-quarter of their emotions.[2]

In his virulent attack on James, Maxwell Geismar expresses the strong popular misconception that his characters consist of nothing but British aristocrats and American millionaires. James's own aim, however, differs subtly from that commonly attributed to him in this respect:

> Nothing appeals to me more, I confess, as a 'critic of life', in any sense worthy of the name, than the finer - if indeed thereby the less easily formulated - group of the conquests of civilisation, the multiplied symptoms among educated people, from wherever drawn, of a common intelligence and a social fusion tending to abridge old rigours of separation.[3]

Far from desiring to portray one class only, he is interested in creating a

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[1] Henry James and his Cult, M. Geismar, London, 1964, p. 4-6.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

[3] AN, p. 202.

fusion of people from all classes, provided that they are intelligent. He wants to depict "some eventual sublime consensus of the educated".[1]

In view of the fact that almost all the characters in the tales participate in the dialogue, to a greater or lesser extent, it is important that range of character should be established, before characterisation itself is considered.

In the light of Mr. Geismar's charges, range of character, as to age, nationality and class, is remarkably wide. Although this is particularly true of the short stories, it also applies to certain of the novels. In The Princess Casamassima, for example, James attempts to portray nearly all grades of the social scale, especially as these manifest themselves in London life; Christina Light is drawn from the higher reaches, and Hyacinth, too, has aristocratic blood in him, but there is also Hyacinth's dressmaker aunt, his artisan friends, and other less respectable elements, many of whom are revolutionaries. However, on the whole, the novels are more limited in range.

Turning now to the tales, the question of age will be considered first. As early as 1868, in 'Osborne's Revenge', James attempts to portray children, though in this particular instance the child says very little. In 'Gabrielle de Bergerac' (1869) the nine year old Baron is fully articulate and takes part in the dialogue at all crucial points in the action. Master Eustace, too, although a less convincing figure, plays an eloquent part in the tale bearing his name (published 1871). But it is with the publication of 'Daisy Miller' in 1878 that James offers his first full-scale study of a child, in the person of Daisy's precocious little brother, Randolph. (Daisy, herself, of course,

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[1] AN, p. 203.

is hardly more than a child). Every word he utters is completely in character, and the reader sympathises with Winterbourne, who is brought face to face with this terrifying phenomenon, the new American child. The small Italian girl in 'The Diary of a Man of Fifty' (1879) and Dolcino, in 'The Author of "Beltraffio"' (1884), on the other hand, are not fully developed characters, but the young boy in 'The Pupil' (1891) is of more importance, for the reader must find him convincing, in order that the tutor's self-sacrifice should appear credible. Perhaps the most memorable children in the whole of Jamesian fiction, though, are Flora and Miles in 'The Turn of the Screw'. Making allowances for their strange experiences with their former governess and manservant, they are very life-like portrayals of children of that particular age and class. (It is difficult, in dealing with children of a past generation, for the reader to know how closely their speech approximates to that of their times. Many Victorian children, had the vocabulary of a present-day adult. If this is borne in mind, the mistake of calling Miles' speech, for example, stilted and unchildlike will not be made.) Although in real life James's child-acquaintances increased during his later years, there are very few, if any, children in the tales of the corresponding period.

Apart from his representation of fantastic old age in 'Europe' (1899), there are hardly any studies at this end of the scale. As a writer who draws largely on his own experience, it is not surprising that he seldom attempts to describe a state of which he has no first-hand knowledge. (He was only seventy-three when he died in 1916, and his last volume of short stories, The Finer Grain, was published in 1910 at the age of sixty-seven.) His main

characters tend to grow slightly older as he himself advances in years. Whilst there are numerous young heroes in his early tales, the characters in his later ones are generally approaching middle-age. However, since, at the age of thirty-six, he writes 'The Diary of a Man of Fifty' (1879), and, at the age of fifty-four, enters once more into the mind of a child to write What Maisie Knew, it is obviously dangerous to generalise too much here. All that can profitably be said is that, in the matter of age, his range, which is fairly extensive to begin with, widens even more as he grows older.

The same increase in range can be seen in his portrayal of different nationalities. From 1864 to 1875, the years of his travelling in Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland and England, his main characters are predominantly American 'types', such as the young soldier from the Civil Wars, or the ingenuous, yet elegant American girl. There are, it is true, a few attempts to portray other nationalities, especially during the years of European travel, from 1870 onwards. In 'Gabrielle de Bergerac' (1869), for example, all the main characters are French. After this come a number of 'international' stories, such as 'Travelling Companions' (1870), where the three main characters are Americans, as they are also in the next tale, 'A Passionate Pilgrim' (1871). In 'At Isella' (1871), the narrator is American, whilst the heroine is Italian. 'The Madonna of the Future', 'The Sweetheart of Mr. Briseux', 'The Last of the Valerii', 'Madame de Mauves', 'Adina' and 'Eugene Pickering', written between 1873 and 1875, and all set in Europe, include numerous foreigners (though, as yet, the main characters are still American), ranging from the rather foolish Italian 'signora' of the first-mentioned, to the wicked French husband of the virtuous (and American!) Madame de Mauves.

Between the years 1876-1891, there is a positive spate of different nationalities. American, English, French, Italian, German, Swiss and Jewish, they must constitute one of the most varied casts ever presented by a great writer. Whilst, to a native of the countries concerned, they may appear to lack the depth of characterisation found in his Americans, they are, nevertheless, proof of the width of his range.

In the final period of short story writing, from 1892 to 1910, there is an amalgamation of both the above-mentioned tendencies. There is still a variety of different nationalities in the minor roles. 'Collaboration' (1892), 'Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie' (1900), and 'The Two Faces' (1900), for example, all contain a cosmopolitan mixture, and 'The Jolly Corner' has a particularly delightful thumbnail sketch of a New York Irish-woman. However, there are also a great number of stories which are either set in England, or which have English or Anglicised Americans, as their main characters. 'Brooksmith', 'The Marriages', 'The Chaperon', Sir Edmund Orme', 'Nona Vincent', 'The Real Right Thing', 'Lord Beaupre', 'The Visits', 'Sir Dominick Ferrand', 'Greville Fane' and 'The Wheel of Time', for example, to take only those tales written between 1891 and 1892, all take place in England and have a predominantly English or Anglicised 'dramatis personae'. There is a much smaller group of stories which have an American cast and setting, like those of the first period. 'Europe', for example, is set near Boston and contains some penetrating studies of Bostonian femininity. But it is with the publication of <u>The Finer Grain</u> (1910), written after his pilgrimage to America, that James's best American stories appear. The main characters are all Americans, but Americans with a difference. Spencer Brydon,

for example, the hero of 'The Jolly Corner', has lived for many years in Europe, and he finds New York terrifyingly different on his return there. The hero of 'Crapey Cornelia', who has likewise returned from a stay in Europe, records his similar reactions to the many alterations in both the people and buildings of New York. The last story 'A Round of Visits', is yet another account of what the reader strongly suspects to be James's own reactions to the changes he found in New York on his return there. The main character in this tale is American, so too are the numerous 'types' he encounters. It is on this extremely American, or anti-American note, then, that James concludes his short story writing.

To turn now to a consideration of class, it is here, if anywhere, that 'popular' opinion has most misrepresented James. Geismar is not the only one to accuse him of writing about "one-half of the upper one per cent of the human race at best"; even Mordell, who defends James's right to select his material from amongst cultured and wealthy people, does him a disservice by assuming that his range of characters is severely limited.[1] This theory takes no account of the short stories, for, while Geismar's criticisms may apply to some of the novels, especially a late one, such as The Golden Bowl, they are certainly not true of all the tales. In 'A Tragedy of Errors' (1864), for example, the first one to be published, there is a maid, a cook, and a boatman, all of whom participate in the dialogue.[2] Nearly all

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[1] vid. LRE, p. 19.
[2] vid. CT, vol. I, p. 23.

the other early ones have an extremely proletarian cast, whilst many of those from the later period, such as 'In the Cage' (1898), 'The Bench of Desolation' (1909) and 'The Papers' (1903) are almost exclusively concerned with people from the lower classes. Mr. Burgess Noakes, James's personal valet and butler for a number of years, has this to say on James's attitude in matters of class:

> Mr.James, in speaking to or of his household staff, it was always by our christian name, whether Joan the cook, Minnie the parlourmaid and even Gertrude the kitchen maid, and never by our surname, it was the same with all other members of the James family - If any of the staff were sick, needed a Dentist or in any other trouble, you were well taken care of, and he did a deal of good in Rye, but always in a quiet way - He was by no means a "snob" but interested in everything and everybody, even a "tramp" on the road and young children, he'd stop and speak to, and most likely give them something as well -[1]

There are quite a number of xxxxxxxx xx tales which show subtle gradations of class. One of the best-known is 'The Turn of the Screw' which contains a member of the landed gentry, and his two wards, a governess (daughter of a poor country parson), a housekeeper, and the ghosts of two former servants of the household, besides all the other characters who make a brief appearance at the beginning of the story. 'The Birthplace' and 'Covering End' show James's attempt to differentiate between two very different types of caretaker. How successful he is in his effort to characterise these various social levels is a matter which will be dealt with in the latter part of this chapter. What needs to be emphasised at this point is the fact that his range is far greater, in respect to class, than it is generally acknowledged to be.

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[1]Private letter to me, Rye, November 23rd, 1964.

Nevertheless, at the risk of appearing inconsistent, I must agree with E.M. Forster that James has achieved 'pattern' in his works only at the cost of some sacrifice of range, though I think he exaggerates the size of this sacrifice.[1] James himself admits that his range is limited, though for certain/very definite reasons:

> I grant in fact that this demonstration of how consummately my own meagrely conceived sources were to be dispensed with by the more initiated minds would, but for a single circumstance...have thrown me back in absolute dejection on the poverty of my categories.[2]

He then goes on to explain what this "single circumstance" is:

> ...the common sign of the productions 'unconventionally' prompted ...was nothing less than the birthmark of Dialect, general or special...the key to the whole of the treasure of romance independently garnered was the riot of the vulgar tongue.[3]

In other words, he is forced to limit his range of characters, because he does not feel capable of an accurate reproduction of dialect and, with his high standard of perfection, he cannot bring himself to portray something which he knows to be inaccurate. Though he recognises his own limitations, however, there are many writers who refuse to recognise their's:

> The thousands of celebrated productions raised their monument but to the bastard vernacular of communities disinherited of the felt difference between the speech of the soil and the speech of the newspaper, and capable, thereby, accordingly, of taking slang for simplicity, the composite for the quaint and the vulgar for the natural.[4]

"Was one", he concludes, "to regret one's own failure to have contributed a stone? Perish, and all ignobly, the thought!"[5] This curious, but wholly

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[1]Vid. Aspects of the Novel, Pelican book, London, 1962, p. 161-2.

[2]AN, p. 279.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 279-80.

[5]Ibid.

credible explanation of his reasons for imposing certain limits on himself with regard to character, reveals his wisdom in these questions. It also indicates the importance he attaches to dialogue.

E.M. Forster identifies six 'Jamesian types': "the observer who tries to influence the action", "the second-rate outsider", "the sympathetic foil", "the 'wonderful' rare heroine", "the villain", and sometimes "the young artist with generous impulses".[1] Alternatively it is possible to see these 'types' from the point of view of their role or function in the action, thus identifying: the intelligent character, the 'stooge' or 'dupe', the confident or 'ficelle', the 'puppet' and, finally, the chorus. For, as F.O. Matthiessen says, James's characters:

> ....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 dead in himself, and at his self-centred worst, tried to cause the spiritual death of others.[2]

It is also as they help in the elucidation of the total 'meaning' of the work that they are classifiable, as James's own words indicate:

> The figures in any picture, the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations; since the consciousness, on their part, of the complication exhibited forms for us their link of connection with it. But there are degrees of feeling - the muffled, the faint, the just sufficient, the barely intelligent, as we may say, and the acute, the intense, the complete, in a word - the power to be finely aware and richly responsible. It is those moved in this latter fashion who 'get most' out of all that happens to them and who in so doing enable us, as readers of their record, as participators by a fond attention, also to get most. Their being finely aware...<u>makes</u> absolutely the intensity of their adventure, gives the maximum of sense to what befalls them.[3]

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[1] Op.cit., p. 161-6.

[2] Henry James; The Major Phase, Oxford, 1944, p. 146.

[3] AN, p. 62.

It is this latter type that is most well-known among Jamesian characters. He himself variously describes them as 'lucid reflectors', 'full vessels of consciousness' or 'super-subtle fry'. The favourite occupation of these characters is 'making' or 'figuring' things out, either on their own, or with the help of another character. (Gabriel Nash in The Tragic Muse, is even called 'the great explainer' by Miriam Rooth.[1]) They also possess strong powers of analysis, logic, and lucidity, all of which are revealed in their speech habits.

Of equal importance with their intelligence, is their imagination. Mr. Traffle, in 'Mora Montravers' (1901), asks himself:

> What would have been the use, after all, of so much imagination as constantly worked in him. Didn't it let him into more deep holes than it pulled him out of?...Or didn't it at the same time, not less, give him all to himself, a life, exquisite, occult, dangerous and sacred, to which everything ministered and which nothing could take away?[2]

This type of character sensitises the reader. He helps him to enter into the situation, as he attempts to work it out alongside of him. Some readers protest that this is too difficult for them, particularly in the later works,[3] where these 'types' become even more 'super-subtle', if possible. Finally James implies in his review of Dickens's Our Mutual Friend, they provide a 'norm' by which the conduct of others may be measured.

> Where in these pages are the depositaries of that intelligence without which the movement of life would cease. Who represents nature?...where are those exemplars of sound humanity who should afford us the proper measure of their companion's variations?[4]

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[1] RHD, p. 330.

[2] CT, vol. 12, p.331-2.

[3] James anticipated this would happen: "The picture of an intelligence appears for the most part, it is true, a dead weight for the reader of the English novel to carry, this reader having so often the wondrous quality of caring for the displayed tangle of human relations without caring for its intelligibility. (AN, p.63)

[4] HF, p. 255.

Dorothea Krook gives a fairly detailed account of this kind of character, with particular reference to those of the 'late' period:

> They see 'everything', these remarkable consciousnesses of the late novels: 'everything' is a word that frequently recurs, to denote the excess of light, of sheer intelligibility, with which their world is flooded...they are intensely perceptive, incessantly analytical, and marvellously articulate. They are always lucid and ironical, never muddled [but they are, in fact, meant to be bewildered at times, vid. AN, p.63] or tediously portentous. They are all possessed of a limitless curiosity and detachment, which renders their perceptions and analyses intensely enjoyable to themselves.... They are generous and fearless; earnest without being boring; delicate without loss of candour; civil and kind and good-humoured, and never sentimental... They are indeed...superior people, figuring the human intelligence at its furthest reach.[1]

The link between these characters and what James calls "the fools who minister, at a particular crisis to the intensity of the free spirits engaged with them",[2] is indicated in another comment of his from the same preface:

> The tangle, the drama, the tragedy and comedy of those who appreciate, consist[s] so much of their relation to those who don't.[3]

In another place, he calls them his 'comedy-agents'. (Another way of looking at them is as 'stooges', 'dupes' or 'feeds'.) Quite often this 'type' is American, like Mr. Bolton-Brown, for example, in 'Lord Beaupré'. The reason for this is probably that an outstanding characteristic of many of James's Americans is their ingenuousness. Although it is not true to say that all James's 'fools' are American, his Americans, as such, are generally 'fools'. This is not true of 'Europeanised' ones, as they are usually more sophisticated and more aware. However, there are also some first-class English 'fools'.

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[1] The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James, London, 1962, p. 402.

[2] AN, p. 129.

[3] Ibid.

Mortimer Marshall of 'The Papers' is played with, and played upon, mercilessly by Howard Bight, a 'super-subtle' character if ever there was one. Even Maud Blandy, who feels a little sorry for Mortimer, cannot resist being ironic with him. His gullibility invites it.

Yet, in their very obtuseness, fools fulfill an important function in the action. As Richard Blackmur puts it, "Fools are the very agents of action",[1] or, alternatively, they are "the fixed constituents of almost any reproducible action".[2] The reader is often very grateful for their constant demand for explanation and clarification. Their value lies in the way in which they force the intelligent characters to interpret events and facts for them, since the reader also benefits by this explanation. The governess in 'The Turn of the Screw', for example, is forced to explain the implications of every event to the less imaginative housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, and this, in turn, makes the position clearer to herself:

> My companion, with less imagination, kept me up.
> 'To share them - ?' [3]

The role of the fool is, therefore, an important one.

James's tales have often been compared to detective novels.[4] They are, for the most part, more than that, but in the light of this comparison, it is interesting to note the similarity between the function of the fool in James's stories and that of Dr. Watson in those of Conan Doyle, (though the solutions are very rarely 'elementary' in James!)

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[1] AN, p. xxiv.
[2] Ibid., p. 129.
[3] CT, vol. 10, p. 99.
[4] Vid. J.W. Beach, Twentieth Century Novel, p. 210.

Between the 'super-subtle fry' and the 'fool' lies a third, and most interesting 'type' - the person who changes from one class to the other in the course of an action. The most exhaustive study of this process is to be found in The Sacred Fount, where it constitutes one of the main themes, but there are also a few examples of it in the tales, the clearest cases being those of Mrs. Traffle in 'Mora Montravers' and Newton Winch in 'A Round of Visits'. Under the strain of a new and difficult situation both these characters become amazingly perceptive and intelligent. Mr. Traffle is completely mystified by his wife's "consistent command of their position".[1] "It might indeed", he thinks, "have been quite a new Jane who now looked at him out of her conscious eyes."[2] Mark Monteith, too, on his visit to his old friend Newton Winch, once a fool of the first order, is astounded by the change in him. He feels "that the state of his own soul was being, with the lapse of every instant, registered...his companion had sounded him..."[3]. The psychological interest, though strong at all times, is even more pronounced here than anywhere else. Parallels between Plato's dialogues and James's have already been hinted at; Jane Traffle and Newton Winch bear a strong resemblance to those of Socrates' disciples who from being mere 'feeds' for his wit, become, in the course of one dialogue, intelligent and aware. It is as though James is demonstrating, in his own way, his belief in Plato's theory of dialectics, - that "dialectical exercise is the best way of advancing knowledge" and developing the intellect.[4]

The confidant or 'ficelle' is another well-known Jamesian 'type'.

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[1] CT, vol. 12, p. 329.
[2] Ibid., p. 323.
[3] Ibid., p. 448.
[4] The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic, W. Lutoslawski, p. 208.

(It is very likely that James is influenced in this respect by the practice of the French classical drama, in which the confidant plays an important role.) Their function lies somewhere between that of the intelligent character and the 'fool'. Like the first, they are often 'super-subtle'. James himself describes them as "a listening ear and answering heart, an intelligent receptacle".[1] On the other hand, the confidant has characteristics of the 'fool' also. For one thing, he or she is not necessarily over-perceptive; at times they are, like Mrs. Grose, in 'The Turn of the Screw', "a magnificent monument to the blessing of a want of imagination".[2] Another way in which the confidant resembles the fool is in helping the reader to understand the situation. Of Maria Gostrey James writes:

> She is the reader's friend much rather - in consequence of dispositions that make him so eminently require one, and acts in that capacity, and really in that capacity alone with exemplary devotion, from beginning to end of the book. She is an enrolled, a direct, aid to lucidity; she is in fine, to tear off her mask, the most unmitigated and abandoned of 'ficelles'.[3]

However, although an important part of their role lies in eliciting facts (witness Mrs. Prest in 'The Aspern Papers', or Lady Davenant in 'A London Life'), another of their functions is to supply them. In this way, tedious preliminary explanations of the situation are avoided. The story begins 'in medias res', as Horace advises. Mrs. Jordan, for example, the confidant of the Post Office girl in 'In the Cage', supplies both her and the reader with all the missing links in the situation. (She is qualified to do this through her connection with Mr. Drake, butler to one of the main parties involved.) Confidants discuss, not only the facts, but also the significance of them. Mrs. Gosselin, for example, in 'Lord Beaupré', offers Mr. Bolton-Brown her

[1] NB, April 21st, 1894, p. 158.

[2] CT, vol. 10, p. 77.

[3] AN, p. 322.

own interpretation of such incidents as the disappearance of Lord Beaupré and Miss Ashbury together, Lord Beaupré's distraught reappearance and his beseeching glance at her. The narrator of 'The Solution' confides in Mrs. Rushbrook, but since the reader is already in possession of the facts of the situation, the real point of these interviews lies in Mrs. Rushbrook's interpretation of them.

In the last two instances the confidant is intimately concerned in the action, but quite often he or she is an observer, who stands outside events, or is only tenuously linked to them. This gives an air of greater objectivity, an effect which James never ceases to strive for.

Confidants are, in one sense, strictly functional characters; they are often used as a structural device.[1] Considering how best to solve the problems of brevity and economy in one of his short stories, James exclaims:

> Don't I see my solution in my usual third person, the observer, the knower, the confidant of either the two women or the two men. That gives me the notes, the confidences, the reflections, the sharp bright anecdote of some acute and clever person, some elderly woman ...who was in relation with them.[2]

As in this case, the confidant is often the narrator, especially in the tales of the middle and late period. The narrator of 'The Path of Duty', for example, tells the reader:

> It was [Ambrose Tester's] practice to keep me accurately informed of the state of his affections....I suppose he usually found me a woman of good counsel, for certain it is that he has appealed to me for the light of wisdom in very extraordinary predicaments.[3]

The words "a woman of good counsel" are a clue to another aspect of the

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[1]Vid. inf. Chapter 5, p. 171

[2]NB, 21st December, 1895, p. 234.

[3]CT, vol. 6, p. 156.

confidants - that is, their sex. On the whole, the more memorable of James's confidants are women. His male ones, such as the narrators of 'Rose-Agathe', 'The Author of "Beltraffio"','Louisa Pallant', 'The Patagonia' and 'The Next Time' tend to be rather less useful to the main characters, and to the reader. In fact, they often appeal to a second confidant, generally a woman, for help. Such is the case in 'Glasses', where Mrs. Meldrum has to explain certain things to the narrator, or in 'The Next Time', where Mrs. Highmore has a long and enlightening discussion with the narrator, at the crisis of the story. In spite of the fairly numerous examples of male confidants, James's own words on the subject make clear his preferences for female ones. What is it, he asks, that makes May Bartram, in 'The Beast in the Jungle', more suitable than Marcher for the role of confidant? Marcher answers for him:

> She had no source of knowledge that he hadn't equally - except of course that she might have finer nerves. That was what women had where they were interested; they made things out, where people were concerned, that the people often couldn't have made out for themselves. Their nerves, their sensibility, their imagination, were conductors and revealers.[1] . . .

There is another, more practical, reason for this preference - the female confidant, by her very position in society, stands more chance of being 'vraisemblable'. It is more likely that a woman should be in possession of the sort of facts generally involved than a man. They are also more likely to find such facts interesting. (At least half my reaction against the narrator of The Sacred Fount stems from the feeling that such interests and such pursuits as his seem highly unnatural in a man.)

There are a number of minor characters in James's stories, whose role is even more purely functional than that of the confidant. These are often no

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[1]CT, vol. 11, p. 376.

more than lightly sketched. They are important to the 'plot', but generally only inasmuch as they offer 'light relief'. Much has been written about this latter quality, especially in relation to Shakespeare's plays. James, too, has his gravediggers and his clowns, though there is room to mention no more than a few of them here. They are usually treated humorously, often ironically, and range from the rascally boatman of 'The Tragedy of Errors' and the confidential Italian innkeeper of 'At Isella', to the wonderful old caretaker of 'Covering End' and the New York Irishwoman who looks after the empty house in 'The Jolly Corner'. None of these characters are strictly necessary to the action, yet they are significant within the structure of the tale. Sometimes they add a touch of variety and humour, as do the German tourists in 'Covering End', sometimes, like Mrs. Muldoon in 'The Jolly Corner', they provide a touch of normality and comic relief to an otherwise tense and supernatural situation.

Finally, there is the 'chorus'. Readers of Hardy's and George Eliot's novels will be very familiar with this class. In the rustics of Under the Greenwood Tree or those of Adam Bede, they will have encountered a mixed group of people whose chief function is to comment on the main action. Some of these characters, such as Mrs. Dewey and Mrs. Poyser, are shrewd and witty, some, like Thomas Leaf, rather obtuse and others, such as old Martin Poyser, stubborn and dogmatic, but all of them alike congregate, after each important event, to discuss its significance and probable consequences.

There is never such a clear-cut 'chorus' in James, for, in many respects this function is taken over by the confidants. Yet there are a few cases which correspond to the use of the chorus in Hardy and George Eliot. Discussing the business of the chorus in the novels of the latter, Barbara

Hardy observes that:

> The chorus throws the ordinary hero into relief, the relief of the frame, and the relief of contrast. The choric comments build up a kind of tension of curiosity, a perpetual stating of the question "And what was really happening?"[1]

This comment could be used to describe the effect of a conversation between Spencer Coyle and his wife, in 'Owen Wingrave', in which they discuss the hero of the tale, Owen, and the possible ramifications and developments of the highly tense situation. The most fully developed 'chorus' in the tales is the expatriate American couple of 'Lady Barberina', Mr. and Mrs. Freer, who introduce the action, expound certain significant aspects of it in its early stages, and having commented on it at appropriate intervals, withdraw altogether before the end, thus forcing the reader to form his own conclusions. Their connection with the main character is slight, although they do have personal contact with him on occasions. There is, therefore, the likelihood that any conclusions they come to will appear more objective than those offered by persons more intimately caught up in the action.

One function of the chorus strongly reminiscent of Greek tragedy is its occasional attempts at prophecy. Whether or not this prophecy proves true the reader has been made aware of certain possibilities and the element of suspense has therefore been increased. In the opening conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Freer, for example, Mrs. Freer prophesies that Jackson Lemon will be a fool if he marries Lady Barberina, for "she will despise everything".[2] In this way the reader is warned of this possibility and, therefore, prepared for the denouement of the story when it comes. The chorus often sketches in

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[1] The Novels of George Eliot, London, 1963, p. 22.

[2] CT, vol. 5, p. 198.

the background of the story also, and provides the appropriate atmosphere.[1] (Since the confidant often takes over the functions of the 'chorus' in these tales, it is not always easy to draw the line between the two classes. Mrs. Fanny Assingham of The Golden Bowl, for example, is both a confidant in her own right, and also, together with her long-suffering husband, part of the 'chorus').

This completes the list of 'Henry James types'.

ii) Characterisation

> It would be absurdly simple if [the apprentice writer] could be taught that a great deal of 'description' would make [his characters clear in outline], or that on the contrary the absence of description and the cultivation of dialogue, or the absence of dialogue and the multiplication of 'incident', would rescue him from his difficulties.[2]

The second half of this chapter will consist of an examination of the ways in which characterisation is carried out by means of dialogue.

The whole question of the difference in form between the novel and the short story will be gone into in more detail later on. It is sufficient here to recognise the need for economy in the latter; its bearing on characterisation and the role of dialogue in this connection can then be discussed.

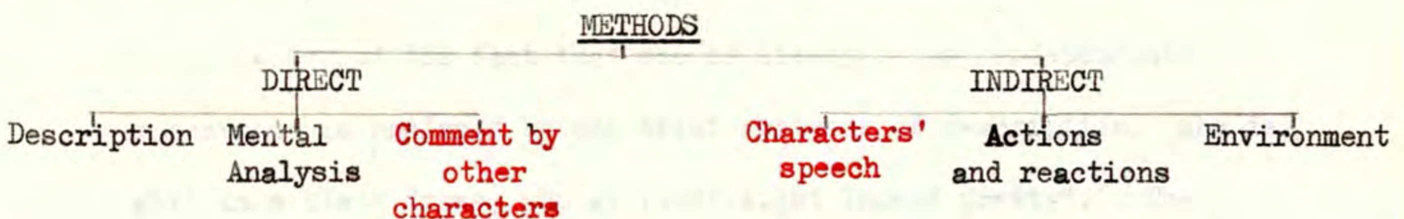
Whatever method of characterisation is chosen must not only be economical, it must also be immediate in impact, since there is very little time for preparations in the short story. James appears to find the dialogue method both these things. Another big advantage of dialogue in respect to

[1] Vid inf. Chapter 3, p. 127 for a definition of 'atmosphere'.

[2] HF, p. 33.

characterisation is that it reveals character without retarding the action; in fact it often advances it, especially in fiction of a psychological nature. Although it is not possible to prove conclusively that dialogue is used for purposes of characterisation more frequently in his short stories than his novels, a comparison of actual examples of character studies from the two genres show that this is highly probable. But before this is carried out, it may be useful to take a brief look at the chief means of characterisation as a whole.

A fairly elaborate, and comprehensive, description of these is given by C. Hamilton in his study of characterisation in fiction.[1] The following diagram is a summary of his main points.



Hamilton stresses the importance of dialogue in both the 'direct' and 'indirect' characterisation, but its relative importance compared with other methods can only be assessed by the analysis of actual examples which is now to be given.

The Portrait of a Lady (1881) and 'Pandora' (1884) offer themselves naturally for comparison, not only because they are written within three years of each other, but also because they both consist largely of character studies of the 'American girl'. Besides the title of the former, which is itself an

[1] Materials and Methods of Fiction, London, 1909, p. 81-96.

indication of his purpose, James tells the reader explicitly, in the preface, added later for the New York edition, that the

> germ of the idea...consisted not at all in any conceit of a plot, nefarious name,...but altogether in the sense of a single character the character and aspect of a particular engaging young woman.[1]

Characterisation is therefore of outstanding importance and interest in this work. 'Pandora', on the other hand, is no less a tale of character, the main interest residing in Count Vogelstein's gradual realisation of what constitues the 'self-made American girl'.

The reader is introduced to Isabel by Mr. Touchett, Ralph Touchett and Lord Warburton, who discuss her before she even makes an appearance. However, since they know hardly anything about her themselves, their remarks establish little beyond the fact that she is likely to be "independent".[2] Her own appearance is prefaced by one brief sentence of description; she is a "tall girl in a black dress, who at first sight looked pretty".[3] The conversation with Ralph, about the dog, constitutes the reader's first direct impression of her. She has a few words with Mr. Touchett and Lord Warburton also. Her speech is characterised by a candour that amounts to outspokenness, by a familiarity, confidence and humour, which are thoroughly, though not offensively or crudely, America. This first scene ends with Lord Warburton calling her "My idea of an interesting woman".[4] Throughout the scene, and alternating with the dialogue, there are narrative comments on Isabel's expressions, gestures and actions. She has, for example, "an eye that denoted

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[1] AN, p. 42.

[2] Macmillan, 1881, vol. I, p. 12.

[3] Ibid., p.15.

[4] Ibid., p. 22.

quick perception", and she sits among the men, "her head erect, her eye brilliant".[1]

The next chapter opens with a restrospective glance at the environment in which Mrs. Touchett first met Isabel. There is a detailed description of the "old house at Albany", and one of her childhood, much of which was spent there. Like the well-known description of Madame de Vionnet's Empire setting, in 'The Ambassadors', this adds a further dimension to Isabel's character. She is now seen both as a product, and a part, of her background. Another aspect of Isabel's character is then revealed, not only through her reactions to Mrs. Touchett, but also through that highly individual lady's reactions to her. Isabel's outspokenness proves more than a match for her aunt's, and she is not in the least cowed by her: "You must be crazy, Aunt Lydia",[2] she says at one point. Her favourite answer to a frank question is: "I haven't the least idea". It is her independence which is again emphasised: "You are fond of your own way", says Mrs. Touchett, with a hint of admiration.

A further attempt to analyse Isabel is made by her sister and brother-in-law, who confess, however, that they "can't make her out". Her reactions to her change of situation are then described, in a long narrative passage. Besides presenting these reactions from Isabel's own point of view,("she felt that...", "she had a desire to ..."[3]), James also offers the reader his judgement of her character, as omniscient author: "the depths of this young lady's nature were a very out-of-the-way place, between which and the surface, communication was interrupted by a dozen capricious forces."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p.19.
[2] Ibid., p.29.
[3] Ibid., p. 37.
[4] Ibid., p. 40.

In the next scene between Mrs. Touchett and her son Ralph there is still more comment on her character, one of their conclusions being something the reader already gathered, that Isabel "is very frank".[1] Her frankness and intelligence receive actual demonstration in yet one more scene, between her and Ralph, which is preceded by a brief description of her appearance, as it strikes Ralph.

Another fairly lengthy mental analysis of Isabel by the author follows, in which he does not hesitate to point out "her meagre knowledge, her inflated ideals", as well as her good points. But, as he warns the reader, this is not an attempt at "scientific criticism". Her attitude to marriage too, which is vital to the main theme and the action, is described in some detail.[2] There is yet more mental analysis to come, but this time it is of Mr. Touchett's reactions to Isabel. They are then shown 'en scene' together, when the very qualities described receive dramatic 'rendering' or 'representation'.

Following this are scenes between Isabel and Ralph, Isabel and Lord Warburton, and one very significant scene where Isabel clashes with Mrs. Touchett, who will not allow her to stay up alone with the two young men. Isabel's final gracious capitulation reveals more about her character than many words. Another of her actions, in refusing Lord Warburton, in spite of his wealth and position, is again very indicative of character, as also is her refusal of Caspar Goodwood, later on.

In an interview with the gentle Misses Molyneux, Isabel's character is brought out in a fresh way, by means of strong contrast. Her companions

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[1] Ibid., p. 50.

[2] Ibid., p. 64-5.

differ from her not only in nationality, but also in temperament, as is manifest in the speech of all concerned. Contrast again results from Isabel's conversations with Henrietta Stackpole, for, in spite of their common nationality, they, too, differ widely in temperament - Isabel's sensitivity and perception thrown into relief by Henrietta's unawareness and lack of imagination. Henrietta also comments directly on a change in Isabel's character.

This change is made perceptible to the reader in various ways. Since she has become more aware of nuances, she is less sure of her own infallibility, and her speech is therefore far less outspoken and dogmatic. Her effect on others is accordingly different. The process of change is very clearly traced in numerous passages of mental analysis. There is no room to go through the whole novel in detail. The first half is fairly representative of the rest, however.

Her character, then, is presented by means of the dialogue, both through her own speech and the comments of others. (James likens these others to "the group of attendants and entertainers who come down by train when people in the country give a party".[1]) Character is also suggested by descriptions of her appearance, expressions and gestures; by certain of her actions; by detailed accounts of her environment and setting; and finally, by an analysis of her thoughts and motives. This last is carried out partly through her own consciousness, as James intended it should be,[2] and partly through direct authorial comment. No one of these methods predominates.

[1] AN, p. 53.
[2] "...placed in the woman's own consciousness" (AN, p. 51)

By contrast, in 'Pandora', where the need for economy is urgent, there is none but the briefest mental analysis, nor is there description of environment. Utica, Pandora's home town, is mentioned often enough, but there is nothing resembling the detailed account of Isabel's "old Albany home".

Most of the brief physical descriptions of Pandora scattered throughout the tale, are given from Vogelstein's 'point of view'. The first time the reader sees her, for example, coincides with his first glimpse of her, on board ship: "She was slim, brightly dressed and rather pretty...a quick, handsome, competent girl."[1] A little later on he notes that her eyes "were brilliant and expressive, and surmounted a delicate aquiline nose, which, though pretty, was perhaps just a trifle too hawk-like".[2] Her appearance, like her character, emerges piecemeal.

Pandora's first remarks reveal a frank, confidential young woman of a humorous turn of mind. Her familiarity, which is not offensive, is an indication of her Americanness, and her "friendly intention". Her eloquence on such a minor affair as a lost deck-chair, is very revealing, suggesting as it does, the 'self-made American' girl, about whom Vogelstein has much to learn. His brief reflections on this speech increase the reader's knowledge of Pandora's character still more:

> This was a long and even confidential speech for a young woman, presumably unmarried, to make to a perfect stranger; but Miss Day acquitted herself of it with perfect simplicity and self-possession.[3]

Pandora's character is further delineated by Vogelstein's habit of contrasting

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[1] CT, vol. 5, p. 362.

[2] Ibid., p. 363.

[3] Ibid., p. 364.

her sharply with the stereotyped idea of the American girl which he finds in the novel he is reading:

> Miss Day had nothing in common with the heroine of that work, save a certain local quality and the fact that the male sex was not terrible to her.[1]

Another source of information concerning Pandora is a certain Mrs. Dangerfield, "a lady from New York", with whom Vogelstein strikes up an acquaintance. During the course of several reported conversations she lets him know that "Miss Day [is] exceedingly provincial".[2] She also keeps him informed of Pandora's action in his absence,- how that "every morning, after breakfast,-the old couple were guided upstairs and installed in their customary corner by Pandora".[3]

Pandora's own remark, on the day following the deck-chair incident, serves to heighten an almost completed impression of her: "It's all right sir. I have found that old chair".[4] (The easy American colloquialism and the desire to reassure him are alike characteristic.) She does not speak to him again, however, for some time and her character is left in the hands of Mrs. Dangerfield, who continues to warn Vogelstein against her.

After much further reflection on Pandora, he finally has "a great deal of talk" with her, part of which is given in direct speech. Some of this, such as "putting my people through", is a powerful reminder of her nationality, as, too, is her laconic wit:

> "Once I'm chalked [in the custom house], I don't care. I feel like a kind of black-board by this time, anyway."[5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 365.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 367.

[4] Ibid., p. 368.

[5] Ibid., p. 373.

Her offhand, though friendly, manner to Vogelstein when the time comes to say goodbye, her familiar but ingenuous remarks to the customs-officer, both are, again, highly indicative of character.

The next light to be thrown on her comes from another of Vogelstein's female American acquaintances, Mrs. Bonnycastle, who has her own theories about 'the American girl': "The American girl isn't any girl; she's a remarkable individual in a remarkable genus".[1] When Pandora is first mentioned to her, she recognises the signs of this "new type", and explains how she fits in with it. Her husband also, at a later stage, offers his opinion: "She is the latest, freshest fruit of our great American evolution. She is the self-made girl".[2] Meantime, however, the reader has heard Pandora in conversation with the President of the United States, with several important ministers of state, and with Vogelstein again. Once more her appearance is described through the latter's eyes:

> She had an air of elation, of success; she looked brilliant in her rose-coloured dress...she was vaguely prettier; he had recognised the arch of her nose, which suggested ambition.[3]

Not only her nose suggests ambition, her speech does so too, charming and ingenuous though it is. She completely disarms any possible criticism, however, by frankly confessing her intentions: "I have got to watch him [the President]. He has promised me something."[4]

The next occasion on which Vogelstein meets Pandora, one of his own contriving, takes place at the Capitol. Though there is hardly any direct speech in this 'scene', there is a fairly detailed description of her

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[1] Ibid., p. 385.
[2] Ibid., p. 396.
[3] Ibid., p. 389.
[4] Ibid., p. 392.

conversational habits:

> She had constantly something to say, but she never insisted too much....She asked questions of the conductor, and, in the chamber of the Senate, requested him to show her the chairs of the gentlemen from New York.[1]

She speaks, the reader is told, "with a bright dryness".[2]

The final meeting between Vogelstein and Pandora takes place at a picnic arranged by the latter's hostess, Mrs. Steuben. To begin with, there is a good deal of reported speech, both 'dependent' and 'represented', with an occasional direct remark. The passage finally breaks out into dialogue proper. Vogelstein is, at first, extremely embarrassed by Pandora's candour, and then mystified by her attitude, which he attempts to explain to himself (though James delberately omits this explanation, on the grounds that "when the German mind attempts to explain things it does not always reduce them to simplicity"![3])

The last glimpse the reader has of Pandora is on the occasion of her reunion with her young man from Utica. Her concluding words are, as always, entirely in character: "Oh, gracious!"

There are many similarities of method between 'Pandora' and _The Portrait of a Lady_, but there are also a number of differences. There is hardly any mental analysis in the tale, nor any description of environment or setting. There is also much less description of Pandora's physical appearance than of Isabel's, and, what there is, is presented subjectively, from Vogelstein's 'point of view'. A slight amount of characterisation is conveyed through an account of her actions. But the three main ways in which

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 400-1.
[2] _Ibid._, p. 404.
[3] _Ibid._, p. 405.

Pandora's character is revealed are, through Vogelstein's reflections about her, other characters' comments on her, and, most important of all, through her own speech. The dialogue method is, definitely, more predominant in 'Pandora' than in The Portrait of a Lady.

Of the two ways in which characterisation can be carried on through dialogue, what others say of a person is not usually as reliable a guide to his character as what he himself says. For, if the reader is to gain any help from such comments, he must first know the character of the speaker also, and this can only be learnt either through that speaker's own words or by means of the other methods mentioned above. A person is likely to reveal far more inadvertently about himself, than the character he is discussing. However, comments of this kind can be helpful on occasions.

Braddle and Chilver's discussion of Mrs. Damerel, in 'The Great Condition', for example, gives the reader a fairly good idea of her character:

> 'A woman may surely be called all right, it seems to me, when she's pretty and clever and good.'
> 'Good?' Braddle echoed. 'How do you know she's good?'
> 'Why, confound you, she's such a lady.'
> 'Isn't she?' - Braddle took it up with equal promptitude and inconsequence...[1].

An extreme example of this method of characterisation is to be found in Mrs. Newsome of The Ambassadors, who is revealed solely through other people's thoughts and remarks on her. As James himself says of her, "she is always out of it, yet always *of* it, always absent, yet always felt".[2]

And yet, dramatic as this method often can be, it fails to equal the vividness of the other, which gives such a powerful sense of actuality to a person through the recording of their own words.

[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 390-1.

[2] NB, p. 375.

An attempt was made, earlier in this chapter, to show that James's range of character is not nearly so limited as it is popularly thought to be. The speech of the characters themselves confirms this, revealing as it does distinct differences of nationality, class and intellect.

An examination of signs of differentiation between nationalities will be limited to the two main ones - English and American. Many other nationalities make their appearance in the tales, of course, but since James rarely makes an attempt to sustain a foreign accent for any length of time,[1] there is little point in giving them more than a brief consideration.

James's main resource in characterising foreign speakers, of which French and Italians predominate, is to lard their speech with idiomatic phrases from their own language. Thus old Monsieur Pigeionneau, in 'The Pension Beaurepas', who "[knows] no English", speaks to the narrator, in a curious Macaronic fashion, of Mrs. Ruck:

> Such a wife as that! - a _femme superbe_. Madame Ruck is preserved in perfection - a miraculous _fraîcheur_. I like those large, fair, quiet women; they are often, _dans l'intimité_, the most agreeable.[2]

(On rare occasions his foreign characters speak with a 'stage' accent; the German tourist in 'Covering End' is a case in point:

> Olt vamily bortraits?
> ...
> A hundred and one - ach _so_!
> ...
> Who' dis?
> ...
> Who's _dat_?[3])

This sprinkling of foreign phrases lends an authentic flavour to the speech, whilst saving James the effort of sustaining an accent. (The same is true of

[1]Contrast A. Bennett's practice in this respect. In _The Old Wives' Tale_ almost all the dialogue in the section on Sophia, which is set in France, is carried out in an English permeated with French constructions.

[2]_CT_, vol. 4, p. 344.

[3]_Ibid._, vol. 10, p. 348-350.

his attempts at dialect. The cockney model in 'The Real Thing', for example, is adequately characterised by her occasional "plice" and "lydy".[1]

Before the main differences between the speech of James's English and American characters are considered, it should be pointed out that in the later works, his express aim is to make his leading characters transcend nationality. Intelligence and imagination are to be their distinguishing features, rather than which side of the Atlantic they come from. Many of the characters, in these later works, are what he calls "Europeanised Americans".[2] National differences remain, to some extent, to the very last, but they are gradually subordinated to other sorts of distinctions.

James's attitude towards American speech is brought out very clearly in the following passage from 'An Animated Conversation', in which Darcy seems closest to James's own point of view:

> [Clifford is English; Darcy and Belinda are American]
>
> CLIFFORD: ...Oswald seems at once to resent the imputation that you have a national tongue and to wish to insist on the fact that you have it. His position is not clear.
>
> DARCY: That is partly because our tongue itself is not clear as yet. We must hope that it will be clearer. Oswald needn't resent anything, for the evolution was inevitable. A body of English people crossed the Atlantic and sat down in a new climate on a new soil, amid new circumstances. It was a new heaven and a new earth. They invented new institutions, they encountered different needs. They developed a particular physique, as people do in a particular medium, and they began to speak in a new voice. They went in for democracy, and that alone would affect - it has affected - the tone immensely. <u>C'est bien le moins</u> (do you follow?) that the tone should have had its range and that the language they brought over with them should have become different to express different things. A language is a very sensitive organism. It must be convenient - it must be handy. It serves, it obeys, it accommodates itself.
>
> CLIFFORD: Language, on your side of the water, has certainly been very accommodating.

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[1] <u>CT</u>, vol. 8, p. 229ff.

[2] <u>NB</u>, p.85.

DARCY: It has struck out different notes.

CLIFFORD: He talks as if it were music!

BELINDA: I like that idea of our voice being new; do you mean it creaks? I listen to Darcy with a certain surprise, however, for I am bound to say I have heard him criticise the American idiom.

DARCY: You have heard me criticise it as neglected, as unstudied; you have never heard me criticise it as American. The fault I find with it is, that it's irresponsible - it isn't American enough.[1]

The use of colloquialisms, such as to "nose around", to be a "well man", or to "lay off and choose", is one very obvious means of conveying American nationality. James also more subtly emphasises certain tones, such as the familiar, or the confidential. On his return to America after a stay in Europe, Graham Fielder is amazed at the difference in tone:

> He had known, of a truth, familiarity greater - much greater, but only with greater occasions and supports for it; whereas on Miss Mumby's part it seemed independent of any or of every motive.[2]

Pandora's use of the confidential tone has already been noted, and she considers it a positive virtue in the guide, who shows her round the Capital, that "he would have been familiar with Washington".

Americans are also characterised, on the whole, by a frankness and candour. Daisy Miller, for example, a "self-made American girl", alarms and puzzles Winterbourne by her openness when they first meet:

> "I suppose there is some society somewhere [i.e. in Europe], but I haven't seen anything of it. I'm very fond of society, and I have always had a great deal of it. I don't mean only in Schenectady, but in New York. I used to go to New York every winter. In New York I had lots of society. Last winter I had seventeen dinners given me; and three of them were by gentlemen," added Daisy Miller. "I have more friends in New York than in Schenectady - more gentlemen friends; and more young lady friends too," she resumed in a moment. ... "I have always had," she said, "a great deal of gentlemen's society."
> Poor Winterbourne was amused, perplexed, and decidedly charmed.[3]

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[1] ELE, p. 279ff.

[2] The Ivory Tower, Collins, 1917, p. 78.

[3] CT, vol. 4, p. 150.

This frankness usually stems from a delightful ingenuousness. Daisy Miller, who is by no means stupid, is frank and candid because, in her ingenuousness, she does not realise the full implications of her dubious position. (This is the reason why people such as Winterbourne and Mrs. Costello, who is English, misjudge her intentions so completely at times.) Naïveté is often revealed by an amusing habit of taking everything in its literal sense. Mrs. Magaw, of 'Fordham Castle', for example, insists on taking everything Abel Taker says literally. In the following extract he is using the verb "to die" metaphorically to describe how his wife has attempted to change her identity:

> "She died at Fordham Castle. So we're both dead."
> His friend, however, with her large, blank face, lagged behind.
> "At Fordham Castle too - died there?"[1]

Paradoxically enough, however, this same naïveté, whilst rendering Americans vulnerable, is also often a means of protection against European sophistication, as it is in the case of Christopher Newman of The American. Jackson Lemon, a far from ingenuous character in 'Lady Barberina', realises this, and deliberately adopts "several little oddities of expression"

> of which he was perfectly conscious, and which he found convenient, for they protected him in a society in which a lonely American was rather exposed ....He had very few natural Americanisms, but the occasional use of one, discreetly chosen, made him appeal simpler than he really was, and he had his reasons for wishing this result. He was not simple; he was subtle, circumspect, shrewd ...[2]

James does recognise, however, that English people can be just as naïve and literal-minded on occasions. Sir Arthur in 'The Siege of London', for example "[takes] everything in the literal sense";[3]

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[1] CT, vol. 12, p.146.

[2] Ibid., vol. 5, p. 217; vid.inf., p.92 for an example of this.

[3] Ibid., p. 48.

In the following extract, Mrs. Headway has just announced that she has "purchased [Voltaire's] works":

> "They are not proper reading for ladies," said the young Englishman, severely, offering his arm to Mrs. Headway.
> "Ah, you might have told me before I had bought them!" she exclaimed, in exaggeratdd dismay.
> "I couldn't imagine you would buy a hundred and fifty volumes."
> "A hundred and fifty? I have only bought two."[1]

But, on the whole, it is the Americans who, like Aunt Lavinia in Washington Square, give "humourless and literal responses".

And yet, paradoxically enough, one of the most distinctive features of this nation is its humour, which pervades the whole of its conversation. A typical case in point is Mr. Ruck, of 'The Pension Beaurepas', with his habit of wry, dry understatement. His philosophic, almost fatalistic, acceptance of the financial ruin, which he knows his wife and daughter to be bringing on him, is reflected in his calm,but ironical, speech. The narrator of the tale meets him one day, sitting on one of the public terraces in Geneva, with his back to the view:

> "That's a beautiful view of the Alps," I observed.
> "Yes," said Mr. Ruck, without moving, "I've examined it. Fine thing, in its way - fine thing. Beauties of nature - that sort of thing. We came up on purpose to look at it."
> "Your ladies, then, have been with you?"
> "Yes; they are just walking around. They're awfully restless. They keep saying I'm restless, but I'm as quiet as a sleeping child to them. It takes," he added in a moment, drily, "the form of shopping!"[2]

It is this very shopping, of which he makes so little, that is threatening to ruin him. The use of litotes, clichés, ellipsis, irony and dryness of tone, all contribute to the humour of his speech. Understatement is more characteristic

[1] CT, vol. 5, p. 22.
[2] Ibid., vol. 4, p. 362.

of American males; American females tend to the opposite extreme of hyperbolic eloquence. Mrs. Mesh, from 'A New England Winter', for example, is

> ...accustomed to express herself in humorous superlatives, in pictorial circumlocutions....It was an accident that on this occasion she had not expressed her wish for her tea by saying that she should like a pint or two of that Chinese fluid.[1]

She does, however, address Florimond Daintry and his mother in true hyperbolic fashion:

> "Don't profane this innocent bower with those fearful words!" Mrs. Mesh rejoined, with a jocose intention. "Dear lady, your son is not everything we could wish!" she added in the same mock-dramatic tone, as the curtain of the door was lifted, and Mrs. Daintry rather timidly advanced.[2]

The humorousness of their speech often takes a rather droll turn. Mrs. Gracedew, the American lady in 'Covering End', for example speaks to Chivers "with one of those droll drops that betrayed the quickness of her wit and the freedom of her fancy":

> "Dear me, I forgot - you get the tips! But, you dear old creature," she went on, "I'll get them too, and I'll simply make them over to you."[3]

Many Americans, of both sexes, are of this droll and fanciful turn of mind.

The use of the fantastic imagery is another way in which American humour often reveals itself. Clement Searle, for example, in 'The Passionate Pilgrim", a middle-aged American who feels himself a complete failure in life, varies his metaphors freely in the following speech to the narrator of the tale:

> "Of what I was to begin with no memory remains. I have been ebbing away, from the start, in a steady current which, at forty, has left this arid sand-bank behind. To begin with, certainly, I was not a fountain of wisdom. All the more reason for a definite channel, - for will and purpose and direction. I walked by chance and sympathy and sentiment. Take a turn through New York and you'll find my tattered sympathies and sentiments dangling on every bush and fluttering in every breeze; the men

[1] CT, vol. 6, p. 131.

[2] Ibid., p.132.

[3] Ibid., vol. 10, p. 278-9.

> to whom I lent money, the women to whom I made love, the friends I trusted, the dreams I cherished, the poisonous fumes of pleasure, amid which nothing was sweet or precious but the manhood they stifled![1]

One very useful function of American humour is its ability to help them avoid committing themselves if they wish to do so. Jackson Lemon, for example, when being questioned by Lady Beauchamin about his intentions concerning her sister, Lady Barberina, evades the issue with a non-committal reply, whilst keeping the conversation on a light note:

> "Do you really love her?" That was the first thing she said.
> "Well, I guess so," Jackson Lemon answered, as if he did not recognise the obligation to be serious.[2]

They carry on in this vein for quite some time, till she finally exclaims:

> "It's too tiresome, your not consenting to be serious!"[3]

Although James's Americans tend to use the more outrageous colloquialisms, his English speakers are differentiated from them by their use of colloquialisms. For they have their own exclusive set of expressions, ranging from the somewhat mundane "Oh, I say!" and "awful rot!" to the more highly spiced and idiosyncratic "dressy" and "dished". Commenting on the English colloquialisms "beggar", "beasts" and "rotters", which he encountered in childhood, James recalls that

> these were expressions absent from our American air, either of fonder discriminations or vaguer estimates, which fairly extended for me the range of intellectual, or at least of social, resource... [giving me] the image of the fine old insular confidence.[4]

They are one of the things that strike him as most obviously differentiating English from Americans.

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[1] _CT_, vol. 2, p. 244.

[2] Lady Barberina, _CT_, vol. 5, p. 217.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 219.

[4] _Autob._, p. 212.

D.W. Jefferson maintains that "James's treatment of English ways is heightened and simplified by a sense of sheer contrast with those of America".[1] And it is true that, although his English people are sometimes characterised by such American traits as frankness and ingenuousness, they more often possess a different, more sophisticated manner. This is closely connected to their belief in the need for social conventions, for tact, and for adherence to a set code of behaviour. As James himself puts it: "They have been smoothed and polished by mutual social attrition. They have manners and a language". Or, as he otherwise phrases it:

> The tone of things is, somehow, heavier than with us; manners and modes are more absolute and positive, they seem to swarm and thicken the atmosphere about you. We seem loosely hung together at home compared with the English, every man of whom is a tight fit in his place.

Looked at from an unsympathetic viewpoint, this aspect of English speech could be regarded as an indication of deceit; they are open to accusations of lies and dissimulation. But the way in which the reader is meant to react to this sophistication differs with the individual case, and depends very much on the motives involved. Some situations warrant evasions and half-truths, the ways in which this attitude normally manifests itself in dialogue, whereas others do not.

Mrs. Rushbrook's position in 'The Solution' causes her to respond in this way to the narrator's questions about her relationship with Henry Wilderming, whom she is secretly planning to marry:

"I thought you and he had become so intimate." [Narrator]
"Intimate - in three or four days? We've had very little communication."
"How then did you know his marriage was off?"
"How you cross-examine one! I knew it from Veronica."
"And is it _your_ work?"
"Ah, mine - call it rather yours; you set me on."
"Is that what you've been so busy with that you couldn't send me a message?" I asked.
"What shall I say? It didn't take long."
"And how did you do it?"
"How shall I tell you - how shall I tell?"
"You said you would tell me. Did you go to Mrs. Goldie?"
"No, I went to the girl herself."
"And what did you say?"
"Don't ask me - it's my secret. Or rather it's hers."
"Ah, but you promised to let me know if you succeeded."
"Who can tell? It's too soon to speak of success."[1]

Mrs. Rushbrook gives only one direct answer to the narrator's six questions. Two of her answers are counter-questions, two are exclamations (like her "Ah mine - call it rather yours" with which she qualifies his question), and one is a plea - "Don't ask me." Her constant qualification of his words such as "intimate", "your" and "succeeded" are another important feature of her evasive speech.

The difference between the American and the European attitude in these things is brought out clearly in _The Europeans_ by means of the contrast between Mr. Wentworth, Charlotte and Mr. Brand, on the one hand and Eugenia and her brother Felix, on the other. R. Poirier places James's sympathies with the latter:

> ...he conceives of manners and deceptions as evidence not of social fixity or personal grotesqueness, but of the desire to protect one's own inner freedom, and to allow others the least difficulty and the least fear in fully expressing themselves.[2]

The difference of speech between the two groups reflects a difference of conception as to what the function of society is, or ought to be. For Eugenia, society means the protection of individual freedom and the preservation of

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[1] _CT_, vol. 7, p. 402.
[2] _Op.cit._, p. 115.

privacy, whereas to Mr. Wentworth's way of thinking the individual has no right to these things in the first place. 'Europeanised' Americans are to be classed with the former in this respect. Like Littlemore in 'The Siege of London', they usually hold that there are "cases in which a man [is] bound in honour to tell an untruth".[1]

Flattery is another matter in which English and American attitudes differ. Since American characters cannot believe that it is not to be taken literally, they generally respond ingenuously towards it. (This ingenuousness has already been identified as a dominant feature of their speech.) Mrs. Headway of 'The Siege of London', for example, takes Littlemore's gallant attempt at flattery very literally and responds with great candour:

> "I attracted a good deal of attention in London - I could easily see that." [Mrs. Headway]
>
> "You'll do that wherever you go," Littlemore said, insufficiently enough, as he felt.
>
> "I don't want to attract so much; I think it's vulgar," Mrs. Headway rejoined, with a certain soft sweetness which seemed to denote the enjoyment of a new idea. She was evidently open to new ideas.
>
> "Everyone was looking at you the other night at the theatre," Littlemore continued. "How can you hope to escape notice?"
>
> "I don't want to escape notice - people have always looked at me, and I suppose they always will ..."[2]

Flattery is not usually excusable on the same grounds as dissimulation and evasiveness often is. In The Reverberator, for example, the hero, Gaston Probert, desires his relatives to be "very civil" to the Dosson family, yet "with such a high standard of compliment ... where, after all, was sincerity?"[3] James seems to imply here that flattery is not entirely compatible with morality. Whether it is sincere or not, it remains an English characteristic,[4] striking

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[1] CT, vol. 5, p. 86.

[2] Ibid., p. 36,

[3] RHD, p. 99.

[4] American flattery, where it exists, normally takes the form of hyperbole, and is rarely meant to be taken seriously. (vid. 'The Passionate Pilgrim', CT, vol. 2, p.264)

in its contrast to American ingenuousness.

The same sophistication is present in English humour, which tends, on the whole, to be far less laconic and easygoing than its American counterpart, and far more bitingly ironical, or consciously witty. The best way of demonstrating the difference between them is to contrast Mr. Ruck's speech[1] with that of the English Mr. Searle in 'The Passionate Pilgrim'. In response to the American Mr. Searle's rather fanciful remark that he "needed to get famished" to "enjoy the feast" England offered him, Mr. Searle replies:

> "Why did you wait for the starving point? To think of these ten years we might have been enjoying you!"[2]

Irony here takes the form of a witty manipulation of the previous speaker's metaphor. It is also fairly savage, which Mr. Ruck's is not. (The British mind may well be "totally unironical in relation to itself", as James wrote in a letter to Miss Norton in 1879, but it can be deeply ironical towards others!) This sort of humour, therefore, is often more accurately described as sarcasm rather than irony, usually less pervasive, more unexpected than its American counterpart. Poirier, in his analysis of The Portrait of a Lady, contrasts American and English humour, emphasising the cleverness and sophistication of the latter:

> Ralph, Mr. Touchett, Warburton and Madame Merle are people of great verbal exactness, so much so that their wit depends on twisting whatever is conventionally phrased into a joke. One consequence created by the maturely intelligent social life in the novel, is that some of Isabel's conversation sounds like that of a young girl imitating what she mistakenly believes to be intellectually sophisticated talk.[3]

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[1]Vid. sup., p. 90

[2]CT, vol. 2, p. 273.

[3]Op.cit., p. 203.

(Though Warburton is the only character in the first group who is English by birth, the other three have become sophisticated by their long stay in Europe.)

Whilst there are certain class differences among the Americans, it is those of the English which are most in evidence. These are conveyed in a variety of ways.

Dialect, for example, is sometimes used, though very occasionally, (for reasons stated). Maud Blandy, of 'The Papers', reveals her lower class origins by an occasional lapse into dialect, pronouncing 'play', for example, 'ply', in the Cockney fashion. The Post Office girl's command of what she calls 'Paddingtonese', in 'In the Cage', likewise indicates a working-class background. But the best example of all comes from 'The Jolly Corner', where the New York Irish charwoman of Spencer Brydon's house protests against him "craping up to thim top storeys in the ayvil hours"![1]

Colloquialisms and exclamations, besides revealing differences of nationality, can also be used to distinguish class. The two young Englishmen in 'An International Episode', with their reiterative "Oh, I say!" and "beastly", are obviously higher up the social scale than Owen Gedge, in 'The Birthplace', who refers to the alleged birthplace of the famous poet as "the Show", and speaks of "squawking" off his lesson like a parrot. But it is not only a difference in phraseology which indicates social levels; it is also a question of the tone of voice used, as the Post Office girl realises, in relation to Mr. Mudge, the grocer, in 'In the Cage':

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[1] __CT__, vol. 12, p. 199

> "....I say!" [Mr. Mudge exclaims]
> This was an ejaculation used also by Captain Everard, but, oh, with what a different sound![1]

'The Birthplace' contains a good example of yet another minor device used to indicate social position. Miss Putchin, whose job as guide Owen is to take over, constantly refers to "they" and "them", meaning either "the millions who shuffled through the house", or "the powers that were".[2] In the latter case her reverence reveals a sense of social inferiority.

A still further way in which lower class origins are occasionally hinted at is in an incorrect use of grammar. Chivers, in 'Covering End', is a case in point. In his opening speech to Mrs. Gracedew he makes several grammatical errors:

> "Oh no, mum, there ain't no one whatever come yet ..., 'Dear little crooked steps?' Yes, mum; please mind 'em, mum; they be cruel in the dark corners![3]

The main way in which class is indicated among English speakers, however, is in their adherence to, or departure from, certain social conventions ruling conversation. Tact and manners, or a lack of them, are one important means of placing a speaker socially. Lord Mellifont in 'The Private Life', for example, the 'type' of the English aristocrat, is placed in this way:

> ...he was the host, the patron, the moderator at every board. If there was a defect in his manner...it was that he had a little more art than any conjunction - even the most complicated - could possibly require.... Lord Mellifont poured forth treasures of tact.[4].

Lady Greyswood of 'The Wheel of Time' is more tactful than honest with Mrs. Knocker about her daughter Fanny:

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[1] CT, vol. 10, p.205.

[2] Ibid., vol. 11, p. 414; vid. also p. 417 for the Gedges' discussion of her incorrect grammar.

[3] Ibid., vol. 10, p. 243.

[4] Ibid., vol. 8, p. 197.

> "Unfortunately [says Mrs. Knocker] she's not good-looking - not a bit."
> "That doesn't matter, when they're not ill-natured," rejoined insincerely, Lady Greyswood, who had the remains of great beauty.[1]

On the whole, though, the amount of distinction between classes is not great, mainly because of the fairly limited range of characters. Although the middle and lower classes are not completely ignored,[2] nearly all the leading characters belong to the upper classes. They are "very little differentiated as to language", Beach says, not because James is incapable of differentiation, but because

> they are all of approximately the same degree of culture and intelligence. They are generally persons of great social expertness. There is nothing formal or pedantic in their language, nor on the other hand any tincture of solecism, dialect or localism, unless it be those of London.[3]

The social system is important in James, but it is by no means the sole standard of evaluation.

The two main characters in 'The Bench of Desolation', for example, show no signs of their lower class origins, not because James is incapable of indicating them in their speech or because they have climbed the social ladder, but because they belong to a group of people drawn from nearly all strata of society, who constitute what James is aiming at from the beginning, - that "eventual sublime consensus of the educated".[4]

The differences in intellect between this group and their opposite extreme also make themselves felt in dialogue.

It is not that the 'fools' are completely lacking in intellect, but

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[1] CT, vol. 8, p. 453.

[2] Brooksmith the butler in the tale of that name, for example, has a manner of speech which is perfectly in keeping with his social position (vid. CT, vol. 8, p. 24) So, too, has the landlady in 'Sir Dominick Ferrand' (Ibid., p. 374-5).

[3] Method, p. 76.

[4] Vid. sup., p. 58

rather that they have a limited awareness. Mrs. Coventry, for example, of 'The Madonna of the Future' is described as both "shrewd" and "clever", but she is nevertheless a 'fool', as her speech habits indicate.[1]

In his excellent analysis of the 'fools', Poirier describes their speech as "melodramatic", "excessive and theatrical", a "stock expression of stylised intensity".[2] These 'fixed' characters "do not endanger their self satisfaction by any 'fine intensification or wider enlargement' of consciousness such as James describes in the Preface to Princess Casamassima".[3]

One feature of the speech of this type, which reflects their general bewilderment, is the way in which they helplessly repeat a word or phrase used by a more intelligent speaker, in an indirect plea for explanation.

Numerous questions also indicate their lack of comprehension. Both these traits are to be found in the speech of Mr. Bolton-Brown of 'Lord Beaupré.'

> "Yes, something will have happened to Miss Ashbury." [Mrs. Gosselin]
> "What do you suppose? Is she ill?" [Mr. Bolton-Brown]
> "I don't know; we shall see. They're capable of anything."
> "Capable of anything?"
> "I've guessed it,- she wants to have a grievance."
> "A grievance?" Mr. Bolton-Brown was mystified.[4]

The literal-mindedness of many of James's American speakers, noted above, is often the sign of a 'fool' too. Mrs. Magaw of 'Fordham Castle' has been cited in this respect.[5]

The 'fools' are generally highly illogical, in contrast to the

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[1]Vid.inf. p. 102

[2]Op.cit., p.11-12.

[3]Ibid., p. 44. (E.M.Forster has much the same observation to make [vid. op.cit., p. 159].)

[4]CT, vol. 8, p. 289.

[5]Vid.sup., p. 89

devastatingly logical 'supersubtle fry'. More often than not they completely misunderstand allusions and veiled references. In the following passage from 'Covering End', for example, Mrs. Gracedew is referring to a picture of the house, whereas Captain Yule thinks she means a picture of him:

> "You see, I had your picture."
> Yule's innocence made a movement. "Mine?"
> Her smile reassured him; she nodded towards the main entrance. "A watercolour I chanced on in Boston."[1]

As this last example shows, the obtuseness, bewilderment and incomprehension which characterise this class, frequently give rise to what James calls "a broad and rich comicality."[2]

All the features mentioned so far can be found in the speech of the 'supersubtle fry' too, but, whereas with them such devices are used deliberately, as part of their 'strategy', the 'fools' use them unknowingly. The former often simulated obtuseness for purposes of evasion, but the latter are not up to manipulating speech in this way. Again, it is a question of awareness. No 'fool', for example, is capable of even Mr. Longdon's relatively simple 'tactics':

> Mr. Longdon's mystification was perhaps partly but the natural effect of a constitutional prudence.
> "A finger?" [he inquires][3]

There is one quality which sharply differentiates these two classes, however, and that is melodramatic speech, which, in the 'middle' and 'late' tales at least, is only ever the utterance of a 'fool' or an American as such. (In the 'early' work it is difficult at times to tell to what degree melodramatic speech is a deliberate attempt at characterisation, and how much it is due to

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[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 292-3.
[2] AN, p. 66.
[3] The Awkward Age, op.cit., p. 104.

a failure, on James's part, to produce 'realistic' dialogue.) The reasons for the similarities of speech between 'fools' and 'Ameicans' have already been touched on above.[1] In the cases where the two are not synonymous, the difference will be found to be one of awareness. Americans who are not 'fools', use their language knowingly, in a deliberate attempt to be funny.

Hyperbole, for example, is characteristic of 'fools' and Americans. Mrs. Coventry of 'The Madonna of the Future', who entertains the narrator to tea in her Florentine apartment, is an example of both. She refers to their fellow countryman's efforts to paint a wonderful madonna, ~~for example,~~ in the following way:

> "The mountain's still in labour; I've not heard that the mouse has been born. I pass him once in a while in the galleries, and he fixes his great dark eyes on me with a sublimity of indifference, as if I were a bad copy of a Sassoferrato!"[2]

In their desire to emphasise and intensify their statements, the 'fools' use every possible rhetorical trick at their disposal. Hyperbole, repetition, exclamation, pause, alliteration, parallelism, antithesis and strongly marked rhythms, are all resorted to in an attempt to achieve the maximum effect with the minimum of intellectual effort. There are at least two distinct varieties of rhetorical speech, the pretentious and the sententious, though they are by no means mutually exclusive.

A pretentious speaker, such as Florimond Daintry in 'A New England Winter', is often shown to be so by his excessive use of French phrases:

> He spoke French very well and it had rubbed off on his English.[3]

Responding to Mrs. Mesh's remark "I don't see what you find so

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[1] Vid. sup., p.67

[2] _CT_, vol. 3, p. 28.

[3] _Ibid._, vol. 6, p. 118.

extraordinary in Boston", Florimond says:

> "Oh, everything! the ways of the people, their ideas, their peculiar cachet. The very expression of their face amuses me."
> ...
> "No, I thank you; no tea. Is it possible," Florimond went on, with the familiarity of pretended irritation, "is it possible that you haven't noticed yet that I never take it? Boisson fade, écoeurante, as Balzac calls it."[1]

Another indication of pretentiousness as this same example illustrates is quotation or literary allusion. Clement Searle's hyperbolic imagery and fanciful speech, in 'The Passionate Pilgrim'[2] are yet other marks of pretentiousness, and his eloquence is one more sign that he belongs with the 'fools'.

> Eloquence of speech [Poirier maintains] is a stylistic symptom... of personal irresponsibility, of showing, through addiction to language too florid for ordinary sensible discourse, that a character has a deficient sense of his obligations to others and to the complexities of a given situation.[3]

Sententiousness resembles pretentiousness in many of its features, such as the use of hyperbole, fantastic imagery, exclamation, repetition, quotation and literary allusion. In addition, the sententious speaker tends to use circumlocutions and euphemisms. Professor Fargo, in the tale bearing his name, combines this trait with another,- the use of jargon or clichés. "Have you got any dear friends in the spirit land?", he asks the narrator. To which the narrator, objecting to the euphemism, replies, "I don't know what you call the spirit land,...Several of my friends have died".[4] Generalisations, besides clichés, often indicate a sententious turn of mind. Mrs. Gedge, in 'The Birthplace', is addicted to them:

> "There's no light " - she had a sententious turn - "like true affection."[5]

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[1]CT, vol. 6, p. 131.

[2]Vid. sup., p.91

[3]Op.cit., p. 22.

[4]CT, vol. 3, p. 263.

[5]CT., vol. 11, p. 411.

Mrs. Jordan, of 'In The Cage', possesses the same tendency:

> "A good servant", said Mrs. Jordan, now thoroughly superior and proportionately sententious, "doesn't need to be told!"[1]

And a few minutes later she comes out with another one: "Men always dislike one when they have done one an injury."[2]

The Colonel, in 'Professor Fargo' (1874) is an early example of a sententious speaker:

> "It would be a satisfaction for me to tell you, sir, ... that my connection with Professor Fargo implies no - no - " and he paused for a moment - "no intellectual approval of his extraordinary pretensions. This, of course, is between ourselves. You're a stranger to me, and it's doubtless the height of indiscretion in me to take you into my confidence. My subsistence depends upon my not quarrelling with my companion. If you were to repeat to him that I went about undermining the faith, the extremely retributive faith, as you see, ... of his audiences, he would of course dissolve our partnership and I should be adrift again, trying to get my heavy boat in tow. I should perhaps feel like an honest man again, but meanwhile, probably, I should starve. Misfortune," he added bitterly, "makes strange bedfellows; and I have been unfortunate."[3]

At the opposite end of the intellectual scale are the 'supersubtle fry'. One of the unmistakeable signs of their intelligence is a lucidity of thought which manifests itself in their speech in various ways. Mrs. Gracedew's speech in 'Covering End', for example, is extremely lucid:

> "...My electors have wanted me - " [says Captain Yule]
> "And you've wanted <u>them</u>," she lucidly put in, "and that has been why you couldn't come down."[4]

The basis of this lucidity lies in a strict sense of logic which, in the hands of these characters, is a powerful weapon in the fight against stupidity and unawareness. This power over words is very important, for words

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[1] <u>CT</u>, vol. 10, p. 241.
[2] <u>Ibid</u>.
[3] <u>Ibid</u>., vol. 3, p. 277.
[4] <u>Ibid</u>., vol. 10, p. 294.

are not only the means by which thought is expressed, but often an aid to the formulation and clarification of that thought too.

Mrs. Gracedew, again, is possessed of a strong sense of logic:

> "You surrender your rights?" [Captain Yule asks her] He was for an instant almost terrible.
> She turned quite pale with it. "Weren't you ready to surrender yours?"
> "I hadn't any, so it was deuced easy. I hadn't paid for them."
> Oh that, she let him see - even though with his continued grasp he might hurt her - had nothing in it! "Your ancestors had paid; it's the same thing." Erect there in the brightness of her triumph and the force of her logic, she must yet, to anticipate his return, take a stride...that put her dignity to the test. "You're just, in a manner, my tenant."[1]

Instead of being cowed by Captain Yule's first question she points out that he too was ready to "surrender [his] rights", with a counter-question, repetition, and emphasis on 'yours'. She likewise refuses to accept his next assumption, that he had not paid for his 'rights', even if he had any; with a repetition of his pay metaphor she proves him wrong again. Her final amplification completes his defeat.

The similarities between Jamesian and Platonic dialogue make themselves felt most particularly in this matter of logic. L.B. Levy, in his analysis of The Spoils of Poynton, suggests that:

> The prolonged colloquies between Mrs. Gereth and Fleda place the drama in the service of intense ethical scrutiny and create the uniquely intellectual aspect of the novel - an approach to dialogue in the Platonic sense.[2]

And W. Lutoslawski, describing the "new power" given to philosophy by Plato, says that this was "acquired by logical exercises undertaken with ethical purposes", words which apply quite closely to Jamesian dialogue.[3]

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[1]CT, vol. 10, p. 345.

[2]Versions of Melodrama, California, 1957, p. 108.

[3]Op.cit., p. 216.

Nevertheless, there are times when these powers of logic appear to break down, and the 'supersubtle fry' make what seem to be irrational or irrelevant remarks. These do, however, usually have a bearing on the situation in hand, though the connection may not be immediately obvious to the reader. In the following passage from 'The Great Condition', James comments on this type of remark:

> [Henry Chilver and Mrs. Damerel] met in the air of a common knowledge, so that when, for instance, almost immediately, without precautions or approaches she said of Bertram Braddle: "He has gone off - heaven knows where! - to find out about me", he was not in the least struck with the length of the jump.[1]

So that, far from revealing a lack of logicality, these apparent irrelevancies usually reflect a profound grasp of the centiguity of things; and also "a common knowledge".

Another feature of the speech of this group is its passion for analysis. These characters take it on themselves to analyse both their own motives and those of others, thus obviating the necessity for a good deal of narrative explanation. The narrator of 'The Patagonia' infuriates Mrs. Nettlepoint by his constant analysis:

> "Won't you let me know whether you think [Grace Mavis] is a flirt?" [he asks her]
> "Find out for yourself, since you pretend to study folks."
> "Oh, your judgement would probably not at all determine mine. It's in regard to yourself that I ask it."
> "In regard to myself?"
> "To see the length of maternal immorality."
> Mrs. Nettlepoint continued to repeat my words. "Maternal immorality?"
> "You desire your son to have every possible distraction on his voyage, and if you can make up your mind in the sense I refer to that will make it all right. He will have no responsibility."
> "Heavens, how you analyse! I haven't in the least your passion for making up my mind."
> "Then if you chance it you'll be more immoral still."[2]

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[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 405.

[2] Ibid., vol. 7, p. 310.

Amplification is a noticeable characteristic of this 'analyst's' speech.

There now arises the problem of where to place the 'confidants', many of whom are also highly analytical. Sharing most of the qualities of the 'free spirits' and fulfilling many of their functions, they are yet 'flat' or 'fixed' characters,[1] as a rule, thus qualifying as 'fools'. In fact, they move between the two groups with a certain amount of freedom, resembling both in turn, but fitting wholly into neither category. Their speech, therefore, has qualities in common with each. Mrs. Nettlepoint, in the above extract, is an example of an unwilling 'confidant'. Although she herself does not analyse, she is capable of following the narrator's frequent attempts to do so, and to draw logical conclusions. She is fairly intelligent, but not very imaginative.

Like the confidants, the narrators often possess characteristics of both groups, but it is possible, and in fact imperative, as it is not in the case of the confidants, to assign each narrator to one or other of these two categories. For, the whole meaning and significance of the story depends on whether they are found to be of the first or second group. If he is found to be a 'fool', like the narrator of 'The Aspern Papers', for example, his assessment of the situation is not to be relied on, whereas if he is sensitive and aware, like the narrator of 'Four Meetings', then his opinions are of great value to the reader.

To return now to the 'free spirits', their language is often marked by a somewhat metaphysical vocabulary, a philosophical tendency towards the

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[1] Vid. R. Poirier, op.cit., p. 11-12.

definition of terms, a few specialised 'Jamesian' phrases, and a sprinkling of foreign idioms.

Of the first characteristic Beach writes: "[James's characters] are often making points so fine that they are obliged to take on some of James's own metaphysical vocabulary of analysis."[1] The narrator of 'The Patagonia', uses the word 'curious' to describe Grace Mavis to Mrs. Nettlepoint, to which she replies, "You have such cold-blooded terms".[2] She repeats this accusation at least twice more in the course of their conversation. The narrator's vocabulary does indeed suggest a certain detached, almost scientific interest in the situation.

Mrs. Nettlepoint also demands, and is readily given, a definition of these, and other, terms, by the narrator. Her repetition of his phrase "maternal immorality", in the extract quoted above, for example, is a plea for definition which he does not ignore.

(There are occasions, however, when these characters refrain from definition, out of tact. Frank Brivet and Alice Dundene, in 'The Special Type', for example: "had the good taste, on either side to handle [the situation] in talk, with gloves, not to expose it to what I should have called the danger of definition".[3])

'The Patagonia' also offers an example of 'Jamesian' terminology. That is to say, when the narrator calls Mrs. Nettlepoint "incomparable", he is using the word in a specialised sense, relating to James's own aesthetic view of morality. The same is true of such terms as 'wonderful', 'lovely', 'magnificent' and 'beautiful', in certain contexts.

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[1] Method, p. 77

[2] CT, vol. 7, p. 306.

[3] CT, vol. 11, p. 181.

Finally, there are the foreign phrases used by these speakers because, like Christina Light in The Princess Casamassima, they are forced to "borrow that convenience for a certain shades of meaning".[1] Although the narrator of the above tale tells Mrs. Nettlepoint: "You don't understand the shades of things",[2] she does, in fact, feel the need to resort to French to describe her "coeur de mère", a phrase which conveys much less in either of its English equivalents, 'mother's heart', or 'heart of a mother'.

Another of Mrs. Nettlepoint's remarks to the narrator, "You don't observe - you imagine",[3] provides a convenient transition from this consideration of the intellectual, to a consideration of the imaginative, side of these characters. It is in respect to imagination that they differ most radically from the 'fixed' types, some of whom, as has been noted, are possessed of a fairly high level of intelligence.

These "large powers of imagination" give them the ability to enter sympathetically into the feelings of others, and their speech is characterised by a tact and delicacy, which reflect a desire to spare those feelings wherever possible. Manners, or a knowledge of social form, is usually equated with tact and understanding, though this is not always so. (As might be expected from what has already been said about Americans and 'fools', there is a tendency for the 'supersubtle fry' to be English or 'Europeanised Americans'. Hence the number of speech characteristics they have in common.) L.B. Levy states the position very clearly:

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[1]Chiltern, 1950, p. 411.
[2]CT, vol.7, p. 308.
[3]Ibid., p. 307.

> James's keen appreciation of social complexity, his belief that an accumulated fund of customs and manners make possible a life of immeasurable superiority is in conflict with his partisan attitude towards native [i.e. American unsophisticated] values.[1]

In a character such as Alice Staverton of 'The Jolly Corner' the reader is left in no doubt as to the implications of her sense of decorum:

> "Well with such a home -." But, quite beautifully, she had too much tact to dot so monstrous an 'i', and it was precisely an illustration of the way she didn't rattle.[2]

There is an implied relation here between a sense of tact, resulting from fine feelings, and an indirect manner of speech, and this relationship is again implied in a description of a conversation between Frank Brivet and Alice Dundene, in 'The Special Type': "They dealt, even with each other, on this same unformulated plane", and no acquaintance "had more the general air of good manners".[3] The main ways in which indirection manifests itself in dialogue, are in the use of imagery, the unfinished sentence, allusion and ambiguity.

Another characteristic of these speakers, closely connected wit he imaginative side of their nature, is intuition, which Markow-Totevy rates above intelligence as a distinguishing feature:

> L'intelligence paraît être la force motrice des livres de James....Néanmoins, l'intuition, beaucoup plus que l'intelligence, est l'élément créateur original dans l'oeuvre...Elle est une des qualités dominantes des héros, surtout des femmes, qui sont le plus souvent les personnages de premier plan...A vrai dire, dans l'analyse, les manifestations de l'intelligence suivent celles de l'intuition... de sort qu'il y a une relation étroite et continue entre elles.[4]

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[1] Op.cit., p. 28.

[2] CT, vol. 12, p.201.

[3] Ibid., vol. 11, p. 181-2.

[4] Op.cit., p. 102.

This intuition makes itself felt in divinations and prophecies. In 'Sir Edmund Orme', for example, which is admittedly concerned with the supernatural, and therefore something of a special case, Mrs. Marden, who is attributed, by the narrator and herself, with "intuitions",[1] prophesies the future with frightening accuracy. So, too, does the narrator of 'The Next Time', who is dealing with a wholly human situation: "I prophesied with an assurance which, as I look back upon it, strikes me as rather remarkable."[2] He realises, from the very start that Ralph Limbert is doomed to failure in the literary world, since "You can't make a sow's ear of a silk purse."[3] This sixth sense enables the 'supersubtle fry' to smell out future events, particularly disasters, with remarkable accuracy. The narrator of 'The Patagonia', for example, has an uneasy feeling that all is not well with Grace Mavis, long before she jumps overboard. "Ah, wait a few days!" he warns Mrs. Nettlepoint.[4] (The structural value of these prophecies and divinations has already been mentioned.[5])

As in the last instance, this sense of foreknowledge tends to make their speech rather portentous and intense, on occasions. (It is often characterised, therefore, by such things as exclamations, italics and inverted commas.) Stephen Coyle, in 'Owen Wingrove', for example, feeling, intuitively, that something terrible is about to befall Owen, appeals to Lechmere: "Then save him!" "The poor boy", says James, "was puzzled, as if it were forced upon him by this intensity that there was more in such an appeal than could appear on the surface."[6] (Lechmere, being a 'fool', is not gifted with the same powers of

[1] CT, vol. 8, p. 131
[2] CT, vol. 9, p. 220.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., vol. 7, p. 313.
[5] Vid. sup., p. 74
[6] CT, vol. 9, p. 18.

divination as Coyle XX.)

The speech of the 'supersubtle fry' is also frequently ironic. For, in order to cope with the limited outlook of the 'fools', and yet still to retain their own sane standards, they are forced to take refuge in what Poirier calls a "satiric and urbane rationality".[1] By "implying the possible other case, the case rich and edifying",[2] irony throws into relief the narrowness of the 'fools'' outlook. Its importance lies in the implied contrast it produces between two differing sets of values. The narrator of 'Eugene Pickering' resorts constantly to irony in the face of Eugene's incredible ingenuousness and, since the reader is in his confidence, the effect is similar to the 'dramatic' irony of the stage. There are two levels of meaning, one for the narrator, and one for Eugene, though the reader accepts the first as his 'norm' or standard of evaluation. The more unaware Eugene is of the irony, the more comical the conversation becomes. Eugene, on this his first trip to Europe, to the German spa of Homburg, has fallen madly in love with a young German woman there. She, supposedly a widow, returns his feelings (though it finally emerges that this is mainly on account of his large fortune). In the following passage the narrator has just informed Eugene that he saw him, the previous night, with the said Madame Blumenthal, whose uncertain reputation is known to all bu Eugene:

> "Ah, you saw then", he cried, "that wonderful lady?"
> "Wonderful she was indeed. I saw her afterwards, too, sitting on the terrace in the starlight. I imagine she was not alone."
> "No, indeed, I was with her - for nearly an hour. Then I walked home with her."
> "Verily! And did you go in?"

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[1] _Op.cit._, p. 30.

[2] _AN_, p. 222.

> "No, she said it was too late to ask me; though, in a general way, she declared she did not stand upon ceremony."
>
> "She did herself injustice. When it came to losing your money for you, she made you insist."
>
> "Ah, you noticed that too?" cried Pickering, still quite unconfused. "I felt as though the whole table was staring at me; but her manner was so gracious and reassuring that I concluded she was doing nothing unusual..."[1]

The narrator's ambiguous repetition of 'wonderful', his exclamation 'verily', expressing mock surprise, and his, again ambiguous, 'she did herself injustice', are just a few of the many examples of irony in his speech. The narrators of both 'The Death of the Lion' and 'The Coxon Fund', waste their irony in a similar fashion on Lady Augusta and Mrs. Mulville respectively.

Other ways in which this kind of irony makes itself felt in speech are in the use of litotes, hyperbole, euphemisms, clichés, metaphor and exclamation.

It is highly unlikely that any development of character would reveal itself in a change in speech habits, even in a full length novel, and this is doubly so in respect to the far more limited short story, where, on the whole, unity of time is of such advantage to the writer. What the reader does find, though, are those few characters who, from being 'fools', have become 'supersubtle fry', generally at some point preceding the opening of the action. This development in awareness normally makes itself felt in a new power over words.

Mr. Traffle, for example, in the following discussion with his wife Jane, about their niece Mora Montravers and Sidney Puddick, marvels at the change that has come over her:

> [Jane has offered Puddick £450 a year if he will marry Mora and make their relationship legal.]
>
> "She found your bribe so glittering that she couldn't resist it?" [Mr. Traffle]
>
> "She couldn't resist it." And Jane sublimely stalked. "She consented to perform the condition attached - as I've mentioned to you - for enjoying it."

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[1] CT, vol. 3, p. 317.

> Traffle artfully considered. "If she has met you on that arrangement where do the difficulties come in?"
> Jane looked at him a moment with wonderful eyes. "For me? They don't come in!" And she again turned her back on him.
> It really tempted him to permit himself a certain impatience - which in fact he might have shown hadn't he by this time felt himself more intimately interested in Jane's own evolution than in Mrs. Puddick's...[1]

As a rule, however, the concise form of the short story forbids all but the slightest suggestion of character development, and that not in the dialogue.

Speech and action being the only two means of characterisation open to the playwright, James is undoubtedly influenced by his experience with the drama in this respect.

J.W. Beach sees a definite increase in the use of dialogue for characterisation in the course of the tales, though he does not attribute this specifically to the influence of the theatre. Whereas in the early ones, "every tale begins with a long account of the characters, or,if, by happier inspiration, we are treated first to a bit of incident or dialogue, we are soon halted for some lengthy explanation about the participants", in the later stories, "whether long or short, we are asked merely to observe people in action ...we are left to draw our inferences from the gesture, physical or mental, with which they greet the words and acts of their companions".[2] 'The Turn of the Screw', 'In the Cage' and 'Covering End', all written almost immediately after his playwriting years, in 1898, show a greater skill in dialogue as a means of characterisation, and a heavier reliance upon it, than any of those written previously to them.

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[1] CT, vol. 12, p. 321.
[2] Op.cit., p. 175.

In dealing with characterisation at such length, I have implied that it has a certain importance in relation to other aspects of James's work. It is an assumption which he himself supports. "What is a picture or a novel", he asks, "that is *not* of character?"[1]

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[1] *AN*, p. 34

CHAPTER 3

THEME AND ATMOSPHERE

(i) Theme

> As to their being but one general 'hard and fast rule of presentation', I protest that I never had with you any difference, consciously, on any such point, and rather resent, frankly, your attributing to me a judgement so imbecile. I hold that there are five million such 'rules' (or as many as there are subjects in the world - I fear the subjects are not 5 million!), only each of them imposed artistically, by the particular case - involved in the writer's responsibility to it; and each then - and then only - 'hard and fast' with an immitigable hardness and fastness. I don't see, without this latter condition, where any work of art, any artistic question is, or any artistic probity.[1]

> Going over the pages here placed together has been for me, at all events, quite to watch the scenic system at play. The treatment by 'scene', regularly, quite rhythmically recurs; the intervals between the massing of the elements to a different effect, and by quite another law, remain, in this fashion, all preparative, just as the scenic occasions in themselves become, at a given moment, illustrative, each of the agents, true to its function, taking up the theme from the other, very much as the fiddles, in an orchestra, may take it up from the cornets and flutes, or the wind-instruments take it up from the violins ...The great advantage for the total effect is that we feel with the definite alternation, how the theme is being treated.[2]

The importance of theme is a thing which James can hardly emphasise enough: "We believe greatly", he says, "for our part, in the importance of subject."[3] And in 'The Art of Fiction', he admits that:

> Nothing, of course, will ever take the place of the good old fashion of 'liking' a work of art or not liking it: the most improved criticism will not abolish that primitive, that ultimate test. I

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[1]Letter from Henry James to Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

[2]AN, p. 158.

[3]LRE, p. 231.

> mention this to guard myself from the accusation of intimating that the idea, the subject of a novel or a picture does not matter. It matters, to my sense, in the highest degree, and if I might put up a prayer it would be that artists should select none but the richest.[1]

Pelham Edgar believes that theme is so important to James that it even dictates his use of dialogue; this is implied in the following comment, where he gives examples of the only two works in which dialogue is not restricted, both qualitively and quantitively, by the nature of the theme:

> 'The Tragic Muse', whose theme is art, and 'The Princess Casamassima', whose theme is socialism, are the only full-length novels in which, thanks to the subject-matter, the conversations are allowed a flexible range.[2]

The fact that James is dealing with the short story form has a definite effect on his choice of theme, as he himself makes plain:

> It's fatal to find oneself in for a subject that one can't possibly treat, or hope, or begin, to treat in the space ....[3]

The short story demands singleness and limitation of subject:

> The very essence of such a job [the five thousand word tale] is - let me with due vividness remember it - that they consist each, substantially, of a <u>single</u> <u>incident</u> definite, limited, sharp.[4]

For a writer of his interests, this restriction is by no means an easy one. "Adumbrations of 'little' subjects flash before me", he says, but "the thing to do is to make them condense".[5] However, although choice of theme is limited, to a certain extent, in the short story, it is still fairly wide:

> [I desire] to leave a large number of perfect <u>short</u> things, <u>nouvelles</u> and tales, illustrative of ever so many things in life...

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[1] <u>HF</u>, p. 37.

[2] <u>Henry James</u>, London, 1927, p. 220.

[3] <u>NB</u>, p. 298.

[4] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 234.

[5] <u>Ibid</u>.

> and of all the deep and delicate - and of London, and of art, and of everything; and that they shall be fine, rare, strong, wise - eventually, perhaps even recognised.[1]

His aims in selecting a theme emerge, negatively, in the following criticism of a play by W.W. Story:[2]

> The subject, especially as Mr. Story presents it, is too complex a monotony of horror. There is little contrast, little complexity, or development...there is no dramatic pivot...on which the story may turn and show its diverse faces.[3]

In other words, James himself desires contrast, drama, and variety. (Complexity and development he has to forego in the short story form, although he looks for these in the novel.) Marius Bewley maintains that conflict, in one way or another, is the seed of most of James's stories.[4] Yvor Winters believes this to be a natural outcome of his environment and upbringing.[5]

It is true that most of James's themes can be seen in terms of conflict: either conflict between American and European civilisation, or - a related problem - between the Past and the Present, or between Appearance and Reality. From the first and second group the 'international' tables emerge, from the second and third, the 'supernatural'. There is an additional group, of some importance, concerned with moral conflict in the artistic conscience. These three groups cover the main themes of the tales. They could be described in general terms, as themes of 'moral decision'[6] though this is a very loose description.

James's comment on Ibsen reveals a good deal about his own attitude

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[1] NB, p. 101.

[2] "It is all one quest", says James, "in the way of subject - the play and the tale" (NB, p. 113), thus justifying the application of the following remark to choice of theme in the short story as well as the play.

[3] LRE, p. 231.

[4] The Complex Fate, London, 1952, p. 81.

[5] Vide 'Maule's Curse, New York, 1938, p.170.

[6] See E.Bowden, The Themes of Henry James, Yale, 1956, p. 79.

towards theme:

> His subject is always, like the subjects of all first-rate men, primarily an idea.[1]

In fact, he explicitly states, elsewhere, that "it's only the idea that can give me the situation".[2] This preoccupation with 'ideas' reflects the largely psychological nature of his themes. He finds this kind of interest sadly lacking in the majority of French writers, who, whilst possessing a "remarkable art of expressing the life of the senses", yet fail to represent "the deeper, subtler, inward life, the wonderful adventure of the soul".[3] In other words, they have "almost nothing to show us in the way of...the part played in the world by the idea."[4] As Markow-Totevy suggests, such themes demand indirect presentation:

> Voulant suggérer ce qui reste impalpable et informe derrière les apparences de la vie et des hommes, il n'expose pas ouvertement son 'idée maîtresse'; elle apparaît dans les caractères des personages et leur réaction vis-à-vis d'une circonstance donnée.[5]

Comparing an early tale, such as 'Master Eustace' (1871), with a later one, such as 'Owen Wingrave' (1892), it becomes clear that James's way of dealing with these psychological themes, if not the actual nature of the themes themselves, changes considerably during the course of his career. The former is handled sensationally and the dialogue, which occupies only a third of the whole, is almost all melodramatic, even ludicrous, whereas in the latter, where twenty-six of the thirty-eight pages are in dialogue, the conversations help to build up a sense of mystery and suspense.

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[1] ESE, p. 192.
[2] NB, p. 299.
[3] ESE, p. 162.
[4] Ibid., p. 192.
[5] Henry James, Paris, 1958, p. 100.

Though most Jamesian themes are psychological ones, requiring 'moral decisions', in the later tales these decisions become increasingly difficult to make. (The technique reflects this in its heavier dependence on dialogue, which is, on the whole, capable of more ambiguity and vagueness than plain narrative.) Whereas the reader has little hesitation in condemning Richard's lie to Captain Severn, in 'Poor Richard' (1867) for example, he finds it much less easy to pass judgement on Mrs. Capadose's lie in 'The Liar' (1888). The moral choice is by no means so clear cut in the later tale. By presenting his subject more or less objectively through dialogue, James often avoids the necessity of passing direct moral judgement on the situation. L.B. Levy maintains that the morality of the later works:

> demands consistently theatrical expression [as] James becomes more completely identified with the negative term of his moral system, displaying towards his evildoers an acceptance missing in his earlier works.[1]

Most of the themes to which James is attracted in the later period reflect the moral ambiguities of life. "It's not my fault", he says, "if I am so put together as often to find more life in situations obscure and subject to interpretation than in the gross rattle of the foreground".[2] The vagueness and ambiguity inherent in dialogue, especially as James conceives of it, constitute an obvious appeal to a man of this bent. One of the best examples of the use of ambiguity of speech to reflect ambiguity of theme, occurs at the end of 'The Altar of the Dead'. ~~Mary Antrim~~ Stransom's fellow-worshipper at his altar for the Dead, has been begging him to add just one more candle for

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[1]Versions of Melodrama, California, 1957, p. 115.

[2]NB, p.

Acton Hague, a man who had injured both of them during his lifetime; "Just one more", she pleads time and again. Stransom's reply to this, as he lies dying, is an ambiguous and ironic echo of her words:

> 'Just one more', he went on softly - 'isn't that what you wanted? Yes, one more, one more!'[1]

The reader never knows whether he has hereby agreed to forgive Acton Hague, by succumbing to her plea for one more candle, or whether he is commenting, ironically, on his own imminent addition to the number of the Dead. His final words, "Yes, one more - just one!", are equally enigmatic.

This technique is particularly effective in the supernatural tales. In 'The Friends of the Friends', for example, where the ghost of a woman he has never met appears to the narrator's fiancé, James links the nature of the theme with the kind of treatment it is to receive:

> The marvel of this, the comparison of notes. The possible doubt and question of whether it was after or before death. The ambiguity - the possibility.[2]

In the following passage, for example, the narrator has just informed her fiancé that her friend, whom she tried to prevent him meeting, is dead:

> 'Dead?'
>
> He was tremendously struck, and I observed that he had no need to ask whom, in this abruptness, I meant.
>
> 'She died last evening - just after leaving me.'
>
> He stared with the strangest expression, his eyes searching mine as if they were looking for a trap. 'Last evening - after leaving you?' He repeated my words in stupefaction. Then he brought out so that it was in stupefaction I heard: 'Impossible! I saw her.'
>
> 'You "saw" her?'
>
> 'On that spot - where you stand.'

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[1] CT, vol. 9, p, 271.

[2] NB, p. 243.

> This called back to me after an instant, as if to help me to take it in, the great wonder of the warning of his youth. 'In the hour of death - I understand: as you so beautifully saw your mother.'
>
> 'Ah! not as I saw my mother - not that way, not that way!' [1]

There is abundant proof of James's belief in the efficacy of the "dialogue (more or less plan) plan"[2] for conveying both psychological and supernatural themes. In 'Fordham Castle', for example, there are to be two characters who:

> exhibit the situation ['situation' = theme or subject in this context] to each other (unconsciously) in a series of confidences, communications, comparing of notes, etc. of the rarest and most characteristic naïveté. They go from one thing to another. They have the four little passages.[3]

The technical ways in which theme is brought out by means of dialogue are fairly numerous, the most obvious being the one mentioned by James in the quotation just given. That is to say, the characters discuss and analyse the situation among themselves.

In 'Europe' (1899) for example, the narrator and his sister-in-law discuss the position of the three spinster sisters in relation to their ancient mother, who will not allow them to go to Europe:

> My interlocutress looked at me with a certain fear. 'She's really ill.' [the mother]
>
> 'Too ill to get better?'
>
> 'Oh, no - we hope not. Because then they'll be able to go.'
>
> 'And will they go, if she should?'
>
> 'Oh, the moment they should be quite satisfied. I mean really,' she added.[4]

Another, less common, way in which theme is embodied in dialogue has

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[1] CT, vol. 9, p. 387. NB particularly the questions, repetitions, pauses, exclamations, italics, and inverted commas.

[2] NB, p. 295.

[3] Ibid., p. 293.

[4] CT, vol. 10, p. 434.

to do with misunderstanding. When the subject involves a misconception on the part of one of the characters, this often reveals itself in a misunderstanding in speech. The conclusion of 'Rose-Agathe', a story based entirely on an initial misconception, is a case in point.[1] (Such misunderstandings arise most frequently between different nationalities, particularly between Americans and English, who think they speak exactly the same language.

> Si vous redoutez les malentendus, [says the reviewer of the French version of 'Lady Barberina'] n'épousez jamais une étrangère. Jackson Lemon et les Courtenay parlent pourtant la même langue, mais avec d'imperceptibles différences qui, montrées au microscope par M. James, prennent les proportions de barrières insurmontables![2])

The initial statement of theme in the tales often occurs in an opening 'scene'. That of 'The Jolly Corner', for example, is sounded straightaway in Spencer Brydon's first remark: "Everyone asks me what I 'think' of everything"[3], for this is a story of an expatriate's return to America, after many years' absence in Europe, and an account of his reactions to what he finds there.

Again, the theme is sometimes summed up in dialogue at the end of a tale, another structurally important point. Thus Alice Staverton's concluding words to Spencer Brydon, in the same story, summarise all that has emerged gradually in the course of events. Referring to the spectre Spencer has encountered, an image of what he might have become had he stayed in America, her final assertion is: "And he isn't - no he isn't - you!"[4]

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[1] vid. inf. ch. 4, p.157

[2] Revue des Deux Mondes, 1st August, 1885, p. 656.

[3] CT, vol. 12, p. 193.

[4] Ibid., p. 232.

Repetition,within the dialogue, of key words or phrases is yet another way in which the subject of a tale is 'represented'. Repeated at intervals throughout the story, these words or phrases serve to remind the reader of the issues involved. In the conversation between the Narrator and Mrs. Highmore, in 'The Next Time', for example, the use of the phrase 'the next time', emphasises the theme (as does the title too, of course). Ray Limbert, an unsuccessful, unworldly author, after every failure to write a 'popular' novel, always resolves to do so 'the next time'. One of the main themes of 'The Coxon Fund',namely whether Saltram's behaviour is acceptable or not, is highlighted in the question, asked by both George Gravener and Miss Anvoy: "Do you call him a gentleman?" The narrator, recalling it four years later, is forced to decide the matter for himself. (Since he is a reliable character, his answer, "A real gentleman? Emphatically not",[2] helps the reader to come to a decision too.)

A similar way in which the theme receives emphasis through the spoken word is exemplified in Strether's intense speech to Little Bilham in The Ambassadors: "Live all you can!" (It is significant that the 'germ' of the novel was conveyed to James in these very words.) Intensity of expression takes sometimes the form of exhortation, as in this case, and sometimes the form of prophecy, as in the following example. Mrs. Doyne sums up the supernatural theme of 'The Real Right Thing' with a portentous reference to the ghost of her dead husband: "He is with us".[1] The narrator is inclined to smile at her words at this point, but he xx eventually comes to believe

[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 477.
[2] Ibid., vol.9, p.132.

in the truth of them.

Finally, images and symbols are used by the speakers themselves to embody theme. An interesting case of the use of an image which echoes theme, whilst also being very much in character with the speaker, is to be found in 'Owen Wingrave'. Owen, who comes of a family renowned for its glory in war, is being forced into a military career against his will. His tutor, Mr. Coyle, who secretly at first, then openly, sympathises with him, uses a military metaphor, ironically enough, to encourage his resistance: "Oh you _are_ a soldier; you must fight it out".[1] The same irony is apparent in Mr. Coyle's description of the situation to his wife, later on: "They've cut off his supplies - they're trying to starve him out".[2] In 'The Middle Years', the story of a dying man who feels that he still has his most important work left to write, the image of a pearl is used, first by the man's doctor, and then by the man himself (in an attempt to explain its significance): "the pearl is the unwritten - the pearl is the unalloyed, the _rest_, the lost!"[3] Towards the end of the tale, this becomes a symbol for all he cannot hope to achieve before death. In another story with a similar theme, the image of a 'figure in a carpet' is used both as a title and as a means of emphasising the theme. (The pearl image occurs here too.)

The chief advantage of the use of dialogue in the ways listed above is its power to give what E. Bowden calls 'organic embodiment' to theme, thus linking up with James's theory of 'representation'. Cornelia Kelley traces a development of technique in this respect; she feels that the long discussions

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[1] _CT_, vol. 9, p. 35.
[2] _Ibid._, p. 31.
[3] _Ibid._, p.74.

about love which occur in 'Poor Richard' (1867), are unsuccessful attempts to embody the subject of the tale organically in the dialogue, but that this is successfully achieved in 'The Romance of Certain Old Clothes' (1868) where "James retained the theme of jealousy, but he treated it pictorially, showing throughout...the effect of jealousy upon an individual".[1] James himself describes his intention to deal 'scenically' with the theme of '<u>The Awkward Age</u>.

> Each of my 'lamps' would be the light of a single 'social occasion' in the history and intercourse of the characters concerned and would bring out to the full the latent colour of the scene in question and cause it to illustrate, to the last drop, its bearing on my theme.[2]

This method has the advantage, not only of immediacy of impact, but also of economy, since it is capable of achieving more than one end at the same time. Themes that are not clear-cut from the start can be allowed to emerge slowly, and often ambiguously, in the course of conversations throughout the story. This is frequently the case in 'supernatural' tales. In the second part of 'The Great Good Place', for example, after George Dane, a weary, though successful, writer, has been magically transported to a place of rest and quiet, his conversations with the 'Brother' are full of general references which excite, but do not satisfy the reader's curiosity. The deliberate vagueness as to the real nature of the situation is intensified, for example, by Dane's remark: "The thing was to find it out!" But to find out what, the reader asks. It is not until the conclusion that the answer, partial as it is, is given. George Dane, he learns, has been seeking peace of mind for a long time,

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[1] 'The Early Development of Henry James', Illinois Studies, 1930, p. 81.
[2] <u>AN</u>, p. 110.

and he has finally found it in 'the great good place'.

Conscious as James is of the importance of every aspect of fiction, he is moved to say, in his late-middle period:

> Plus je vais, the more intensely it comes home to me that the solidity of subject, importance, emotional capacity of subject, is the only thing, on which, henceforth, it is of the slightest use for me to expend myself.[1]

And he makes a solemn vow to take as his themes, in future, "only the fine, the large, the human, the natural, the fundamental, the passionate things".[2]

(ii) Atmosphere

> As I grow up to a kind of technical understanding I begin to understand just what your amazing skill in atmospheres amounts to.[3]

'Atmosphere' is probably one of the vaguest of all critical terms. In this chapter it will be used, very simply, to mean "the surrounding physical, mental or moral element, or environment".[4]

The importance of atmosphere in the short story is pointed out by H.E. Bates:

> Atmosphere and precision, however subtly concealed, are, in fact, two of the cardinal points in the art of the short story writer.[5]

Before the various ways in which atmosphere is created in the short stories are examined, mention ought to be made of something which indicates just how important James considers it to be, and that is his theory of

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[1] NB, October 24th, 1894, p. 166.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Letter from H.G. Wells to Henry James, 9th April, 1913.

[4] O.E.D.

[5] The Modern Short Story, London, 1941, p. 32-3.

'saturation'. (This is expounded most fully in his essay on 'The New Novel' [1914].) It seems more than likely that by 'saturation' he is referring to something closely akin to atmosphere. Whatever its precise significance, he believes it to be an essential part of the writer's equipment.[1] He admires this quality in H.G. Wells and Arnold Bennett in particular, both of whom he says are "ideally immersed" in their "own body of reference".[2] Saturation is also one of the few things he admires in the 'newest' novelists:

> The act of squeezing out to the utmost the plump and more or less juicy orange of a particular acquainted state and letting this affirmation of energy, however directed or undirected, constitute, for them, the 'treatment' of a theme.[3]

He has, however, serious reservations about the kind of saturation to be found in most 'new' fiction, which stem largely from the fact that there appears to be no purpose in the use to which it is put.[4] His own attitude towards saturation emerges clearly in his approval of Edith Wharton, who gives us saturation "not in the crude state but in the extract that makes all the difference for our sense of an artistic economy".[5] As always, economy and, therefore, selection figure largely in his critical theory, and, as this chapter will attempt to show, they are important features of his practice also. The difference between the 'new' novelists' method of creating atmosphere and that of James, can be measured fairly accurately from one of his own remarks on the subject. Saturation manifests itself in the former, he says:

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[1] vid. HF, p. 76.
[2] NN, p. 254.
[3] Ibid., p. 258.
[4] vid. ibid., p. 259.
[5] Ibid., p. 281.

> as an appetite for closer notation, a sharper specification of the signs of life, of consciousness of the human scene and the human subject in general, than three or four generations before us had been at all moved to insist on.[1]

For, although James himself shares a similar belief in the value of details and close observation, his interest lies in the psychological, rather than the physical, world. His method of creating atmosphere, therefore, differs accordingly.

Compared with other masters of the short story form, James relies very little on such means of creating atmosphere as I have mentioned. Edgar Allan Poe, for example, opens many of his Tales of Mystery and Imagination with a detailed description of setting, thus invoking the right atmosphere of apprehension and horror from the start. The Fall of the House of Usher offers a well-known example of this. Balzac, another master of the short story whom James greatly admires, is also renowned for his elaborate passages of description with which he 'sets the scene'.

Parallels to this orthodox use of description in scene-setting can be found in James, however, particularly in the early stories. After one such passage in The Bostonians, in which Basil Ransom's New York lodgings are described at some length, he states his reason for this:

> I mention it not on account of any particular influence it may have had on the life or thoughts of Basil Ransom, but for old acquaintance sake, and that of local colour; besides which, a figure is nothing without a setting.[2]

'The Story of a Year' (1865), the second of the tales to be published, abounds in detailed descriptions of the hills, valleys and changing skies of Virginia,

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[1] Ibid., p. 254.

[2] Macmillan & Co., London, 1886, p. 186.

with briefer glimpses of the cosy interior of Mrs. Ford's house, and Mrs. Littlefield's pretty drawing-room.

James continues to use description of setting, though more sparingly and more dramatically, throughout his writing life. In 'The Lesson of the Master' (1888), for example, there is a fairly detailed account of Miss Fancourt's drawing-room, but one which is severely governed by considerations of economy and dramatic effect (the room is also an indication of her character). Some time after Paul Overt has paid his visit there, he records, as narrator of the story:

> He has still a vision of the room, whenever he likes - the bright, red, sociable, talkative room, with the curtains that, by a stroke of successful audacity, had the note of vivid blue. He remembers where certain things stood, the book that was open on the table, and the particular odour of the flowers that were placed on the left, somewhere behind him. These facts were the fringe, as it were, of a particular consciousness which had its birth in those two hours...[1]

There is a similar description of Lady Davenant's very personal room in 'A London Life' (1888). Here the comfortable setting, besides providing the appropriate atmosphere, is also used to emphasise, by contrast, the unhappiness and insecurity of Laura Wing.[2]

As for the 'late' period, there is an even greater economy in the use of descriptive detail. In 'Julia Bride' (1908), for example, the action and characters are barely localised beyond a brief mention of certain areas of New York, such as the portals of the Metropolitan Museum, or one of the public gardens.[3]

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[1] *CT*, vol. 7, p. 252.

[2] vid. *CT*, vol. 7, pp. 89, 97.

[3] vid. *CT*, vol. 12, pp.151,188

In James's middle and late work, however, the setting is generally conveyed in a more indirect way, by presenting the reader with the reactions of the people in it. Beach attributes this practice to a fondness for strict form:

> The same rule [of strict form] requires the elimination of all descriptions of persons, of scenery and of other 'setting', except as they may be reflected naturally in the consciousness of characters on a particular occasion.[1]

The environment with which the reader is confronted, therefore, tends to be a mental, rather than a physical, one, since external features are coloured by the mind that reflects them. Gordon and Tate describe this process as that of "dramatizing the Enveloping Action" (by 'enveloping action', they explain, they mean 'milieu').[2] There are two main ways in which this can be done, either through 'mental analysis' of the characters concerned, or through their speech.

There is abundant illustration of the first method in a tale entitled, appropriately enough, 'The Point of View' (1882), a story which could be thought of as an exercise in the creation of atmosphere. America is presented through the eyes of a number of people, and their reactions are revealed to the reader in a series of letters written to various friends and relatives. The subjective element in this manner of describing environment will be evident; each character sees America differently, according to taste and temperament. The interest of the tale lies not so much in the factual details it offers about America, as in the insight it gives into character and social problems. This is brought about by showing how each person reacts to an, outwardly, almost uniform situation. The total atmosphere of the tale emerges from a fusion of the

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[1] Method, p. 103.

[2] The House of Fiction, New York, 1960, p. 451-2.

varying 'points of view' of the seven characters concerned. (These characters have been carefully chosen to bring out the greatest possible variety of opinion.) Certain areas of observation are common to each of them; they all say something, however brief, about the landscape, the buildings, the people, and their customs. The men, in particular, describe the economic set-up, the social amenities, the political outlook, and all of them comment on the class system, or rather lack of it, in America. From these numerous observations, certain facts emerge about such things as architecture, railways, hotels, American speech, and the American child. James gradually builds up, out of these various, and often conflicting, points of view, a solid picture of America which exudes its own powerful atmosphere. It is his obvious anxiety to present both favourable and unfavourable impressions with equal impartiality that convinces the reader of of the justness of this picture.

In many of the early travel tales, such as 'The Passionate Pilgrim', 'The Travelling Companions', and 'At Isella', besides relying heavily on descriptions of setting for atmosphere, James also conveys it obliquely in the second way mentioned above, namely through the dialogue. Cornelia Kelley, in her study of his early development, attributes this to the influence of Mérimée:

> Mérimée has no doubt suggested to him the idea of making travel the basis for them [the early travel tales] - of using incident illustrative of the land visited to make the land more vivid to his traveller. The felt atmosphere is given concrete form.[1]

She suggests that this influence is even stronger in the slightly later tales,

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[1] *Op.cit.*, p. 113.

'The Madonna of the Future', 'The Last of the Valerii', 'Adina' and 'The Sweetheart of M. Briseux':

> Following Mérimée's example more closely than before, he made the incident the main thing, let it by itself bring out the atmosphere, making any discussion of this atmosphere an integral part of the story.[1]

Since James's theory is that incident should be 'represented' or 'rendered' in 'scenes'[2], dialogue must, therefore, play an important part in this method of creating atmosphere. James's own comments on dialogue and atmosphere make the relationship quite definite. (Although the following remark is written with particular reference to The Awkward Age, it is equally applicable to any of his 'scenically' treated tales):

> I have been struck by the quantity of meaning and the number of intentions...that I have succeeded in working scenically, yet without loss of sharpness, clearness or 'atmosphere', into each of my illuminating occasions.[3]

The dialogue method is more marked in the 'middle' and 'late' tales than in the early ones. The atmosphere of the Gosselins' and Lord Beaupré's country-house, in 'Lord Beaupré', for example, is conveyed to the reader mainly by means of the numerous scenes which take place in, and around them, rather than by description of physical details. The tale opens with a scene on the lawn of the Gosselins' house between the mother and daughter, and Guy Firminger, a family friend. Guy has just said that he does not wish to go in for a political career:

> 'I think you're very perverse, my dear,' said Mrs. Gosselin. 'I'm sure you have great dispositions.'
>
> 'For what - except for sitting here and talking with you and Mary? I revel in this sort of thing, but I scarcely like anything else.'

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[1] Op.cit., p. 157.

[2] vide. inf., ch. 4, p. 145-6

[3] AN, p. 116.

> 'You'd do very well if you weren't so lazy,' Mary said. 'I believe you're the very laziest person in the world.'
>
> 'So do I - the very laziest in the world,' the young man contentedly replied. 'But how can I regret it, when it keeps me so quiet, when (I might even say) it makes me so amiable?'
>
> 'You'll have, one of these days, to get over your quietness, and perhaps even a little over your amiability', Mrs. Gosselin sagaciously stated.
>
> 'I devoutly hope not.'
>
> 'You'll have to perform the duties of your position.'
>
> 'Do you mean keep my stump of a broom in order and my crossing irreproachable?'
>
> 'You may say what you like; you will be a 'parti',' Mrs. Gosselin continued.
>
> 'Well then, if the worst comes to the worst I shall do what I said just now: I shall get some good plausible girl to see me through.'
>
> 'The proper way to 'get' her will be to marry her. After you're married you won't be a 'parti'.'
>
> 'Dear mamma, he'll think you're already levelling your rifle', Mary Gosselin laughingly wailed.[1]

The ease and wittiness of this conversation, its picturesqueness (caused mainly by the fanciful imagery) and its observation of social decorum, reflect the world in which these people move more vividly than a detailed description of setting alone could do. It is a revelation not, primarily, of the physical environment of the characters, but of their social and mental one. In this particular case the impression is heightened by the significant structural position of the scene. (It is an important function of the opening scene "to strike the key-note and suggest the tone of the whole story".[2])

Dramatic and economic as dialogue often is in this respect, it is not always the most appropriate method of creating atmosphere. James never uses it indiscriminately and he is willing, if need be, to sacrifice it in the interests of atmosphere.

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[1] <u>CT</u>, vol. 8, p. 265.

[2] <u>Materials and Methods of Fiction</u>, C. Hamilton, London, 1909, p. 185.

x The meeting between Dencombe and Dr. Hugh on the cliff tops, in 'The Middle Years', for example, is not in dialogue, partly for reasons of economy and partly from an attempt to create an immediate atmosphere.[1] Wherever dialogue is used, therefore, it will generally be found to contribute, among other things, to atmosphere. It certainly never militates against it.

One of the greatest technical advantages of the dialogue method is its capacity to achieve more than one end at the same time. Thus, whilst helping to establish the atmosphere of Mrs. Gosselin's country-house, it is also being used to reveal character, to sound the main theme, to set the action in motion, and to contribute to the structure. It is, therefore, also very economical.

Another big advantage is, that by using dialogue for this purpose, James has no need to sacrifice his 'divine principle of the scenario'.[1] Finally, it is particularly suitable because of the peculiar nature of his themes. Besides the obvious case of the travel stories, where the use of foreign idiom immediately establishes the appropriate atmosphere, the main type of theme generally involves moral decisions.[2] asxhasxbeenxremarkedx[2] As dialogue is so effective in registering mental environment, which straightforward description can fail to convey, it is often indispensable to the treatment of these themes. The atmosphere of the psychological world of 'The Middle Years' (1893) and 'The Altar of the Dead' (1895), for example, is created largely by means of a number of scenes between the two main characters. Markow-Totevy, who identifies a definite 'moral atmosphere' in James's work,

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[1] NBxxpxx118x Vid.CT. vol 9, p. 61-62.

[2] vid. p.118 for an account of the three main groups into which his themes appear to fall.

attributes much of this to the presence, and nature, of the dialogue:

> Les details du dialogue, outre les allusions directes qu'ils comportent, créent une atmosphere morale.[1]

Among these "details du dialogue", he lists "les malentendus", "les obscurités voulues", "les pauses" and "les silences", all of which are also particularly effective in creating an atmosphere of mystery and suspense in the numerous 'supernatural' tales. Besides 'The Turn of the Screw', with its much discussed ambiguity, 'Sir Edmund Orme' (1891) also contains some good examples of these and other features of dialogue. In the narrator's first conversation with Mrs. Marden, the mother of Charlotte, the girl he wishes to marry, both he and the reader are mystified and made slightly uneasy, by her manner of speaking:

> '[Charlotte's] a bit of a coquette, you know.'
> 'Don't say that - don't say that!' Mrs. Marden murmured.
> 'The nicest girls always are - just a little,' I was magnanimous enough to plead.
> 'Then why are they always punished?'
> The intensity of the question startled me - it had come out in such a vivid flash. Therefore I had to think a moment before I inquired: 'What do you know about it?'
> 'I was a bad girl myself.'
> 'And were you punished?'
> 'I carry it through life,' said Mrs. Marden, looking away from me. 'Ah!' she suddenly panted, in the next breath, rising to her feet and staring at her daughter, who had reappeared again with Captain Bostwick.[2]

(It is not until much later that the reader learns of the existence of the ghost of Sir Edmund, and his threat to Mrs. Marden and her daughter, if the latter marries.)

Mrs. Marden's unexpected and intense "punished" contrasts vividly with her murmured repetition and the narrator's playful condescension, with which the passage opens. Her question forces the narrator into a difficult

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[1] Op.cit., p. 104.
[2] CT, vol. 8, p. 122.

position, which he evades, to some extent, by a counter-question. The understatement in Mrs. Marden's childish "bad girl" again gives a hint of something terrible to which she can only allude. The narrator's repetition of "punished" links his question to her previous one, whilst allowing him to retain his playful tone. The gravity of the situation is finally brought home by Mrs. Marsden's weighty and portentous words, "I carry it through life", and her terror is emphasised by her unexplained exclamation and sudden movement. The study in such a story, as James himself remarks, "is of a conceived 'tone', the tone of suspected and felt trouble, of an inordinate and incalculable sort - the tone of tragic, yet of exquisite mystifiatio n".[1]

The metaphors which he uses to describe atmosphere come, significantly enough, from the world of sound. Choosing mainly musical images, he speaks of the 'note'[2], the 'tone'[3], the 'key'[4], and the 'pitch'[5] of a work.

There is an unmistakeable improvement in the creation of atmosphere in the later stories, due largely to a change in technique. 'Master Eustace' (1871), for example, relies much less for its atmosphere on dialogue, and much more on description of setting than the later, and far subtler, 'The Pupil' (1892). Of the thirty-two pages of the former, approximately ten are in dialogue, whereas, in the latter, twenty-five of the fifty-two pages are taken up in conversation. Pelham Edgar writes, concerning The Portrait of a Lady (1880):

A further development is the elimination of the guide-book

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[1] AN, p. 172-3.

[2] vid. The Sense of the Past, Collins, London, 1917, p. 140 and NB, p.176, 207, 229.

[3] vid. 'Madame de Mauves', CT, vol. 3, p. 155.

[4] vid. NB, p. 265.

[5] vid. AN, p. 81.

> descriptions of his younger books. His use of local colour is more restrained and apposite, and his power of establishing the physical medium in which his characters move will scarcely admit of further development. But his later books achieve this result by subtler methods and with surer discrimination of the relation that description should hold to the other elements of the narrative. The descriptions of Osmond's Fiesole house and garden are of this developed style, but more anticipatory still of the later style are the dialogue, the picture and the reflection that build up the scene of Isabel's first meeting with Madame Merle.[1]

(He divides James's methods up into the same three categories as those mentioned above, 'description', 'reflection', and 'dialogue'.)

The mature technique of James in the matter of atmosphere, then, is a fusion of three methods, which together cover the physical, mental and moral environment of the stories. But since physical environment can be conveyed very effectively through the characters' reflections and comments upon it, and since James is so fond, in his later works, of what he calls the 'indirect vision' of things, the two oblique methods overshadow the direct one in the 'middle' and 'late' periods. And, of these two, dialogue plays a very important part.

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[1] <u>Op.cit</u>., p. 253.

CHAPTER 4

ACTION

> Action which is never dialogue and dialogue which is always action.[1]
>
> If I speak, as just above, of the action embodied, each time, in these so 'quiet' recitals, it is under renewed recognition of the inveterate instinct with which they keep conforming to the 'scenic' law. They demean themselves for all the world - they quite insist on it, that is, whenever they have a chance - as little exhibitions, founded on the logic of the 'scene', the unit of the scene, the general scenic consistency, and showing little more than that.[2]

'Action' is a word which is open to different interpretations, as James himself realises. In an essay on Mrs. Humphrey Ward, he writes:

> The novelist is often reminded that he must put before us an action, but it is after all a question of terms. There are actions and actions, and Mrs. Ward was capable of recognising possibilities of palpitations without number in that of her hero's passionate conscience, that of his restless faith...she found in Amiel's throbbing stillness a quantity of life that she would not have found in the snapping of pistols.[3]

Since he never attempts to distinguish formally between the different uses of the word, his own interpretation of it must be inferred from such comments as the following, where he equates it with 'climax':

> One would have to constitute the picture in some little action build the situation round some climax.[4]

(He rarely uses the term 'plot', but when he does so, it is generally in a derogatory sense. In the preface to The Portrait of a Lady, for example, he talks of "'plot, nefarious name".[5] This is probably what he is referring to when he talks of 'incidents' or 'episodes'.)

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[1] NB, 6th February, 1890, p. 102

[2] AN, p. 157.

[3] EL, p. 269.

[4] NB, p. 168.

[5] AN, p. 42.

There appear to be two distinct types of action in James, and these correspond, very conveniently, to the way in which J.W. Beach defines 'plot' and 'action', in the following comment on Dostoievsky's novels:

> One notes the emphasis laid on features of plot, that is the external events whose complication and resolution make the objective framework of the story; also on action, that is, the movements or gestures by means of which states of mind are objectified.[1]

In the introductory chapter to the same book, he describes 'action' as "the subjective aspect of experience", and 'plot' as "the objective element in fiction", implying that the former has to do with psychological, the latter with physical, events, a distinction which will be observed here. (Clear-cut though this is, allowance must be made for the ambiguity of the word 'action', which he uses, not only for psychological happenings, but also for the movement of a work as a whole - the sense given to it by James in his above comment. It will, however, be quite plain from the context, where this wider use is intended.)

'Plot' is far more prevalent in the works of the early period, and is often very violent, even melodramatic, at times. 'Master Eustace' (1871), for example, is full of physical incidents. The narrator, governess to Eustace, describes how he grows up to be a wild and unmanageable youth of sixteen. While he is away in Paris finishing off his education, his widowed mother becomes engaged to a Mr. Cope, a very old and close friend. Her first marriage was not happy; her husband was "fifteen years her senior, and, as she frankly admitted , coarsely and cruelly dissipated". Eustace, however has made a god or hero of his father and reacts strongly against the news of her intended remarriage. Hurrying back from the Continent, he arrived in America the day

[1] The Twentieth Century Novel, London, 1932, p. 177.

after the wedding. On learning that this has already taken place, he rushes up to his room and locks himself in there. He then storms off for a ride on horseback. Meantime, his mother, summoned by an urgent note from the governess, returns precipitately from her honeymoon. Eustace, arriving back from his ride a few minutes later, rejects all offers of reconciliation, with physical violence. He even attempts to shoot Mr. Cope, his new stepfather, though he fortunately misses. His mother, however, who has retired to her bed by this time, dies of a heart-attack at the sound of the pistol.

'Plot' diminishes considerably in importance in the later works, though it is never entirely dismissed, as Frank O'Connor would humorously have us believe:

> One ends up on tiptoe, straining to catch these last whispers coming from farther and farther off-stage, as incident and background retreat into the labyrinth of the author's mind.[1]

It is still possible to discern 'plot' in such late works as, for example, 'Mrs. Medwin' (1901) and 'Julia Bride' (1908). ('Mrs. Medwin' is the story of Mamie Cutter's attempt to 'place' Mrs. Medwin socially, for a small remuneration. She manages to do this by striking a bargain with Lady Wantridge, the only person of any importance who refuses to accept Mrs. Medwin. If Mamie will lend Lady Wantridge her charming, though irascible, half-brother, Scott Homer, "to amuse them at Catchmore", her country house, then she will agree to meet Mrs. Medwin socially. Mamie even forces her, finally, to invite Mrs. Medwin down to Catchmore at the same time as Scott Homer. This action, though less physical than much of the early tales, depends more on 'incidents' and intrigue

[1] _The Mirror in the Roadway_, London, 1957, p. 232.

than much of the later ones. Unlike the early tales, however, the treatment of it is largely 'scenic', consisting as it does of eight meetings between the four main characters in various combinations.)

However, James's preferences lie, clearly, in another direction. In a letter to Vernon Lee, he praises her work because it is "bravely and richly psychological", and, therefore, "after my own heart".[1] Since his main interest, from the beginning, is not so much in physical events, as in the ways these events affect the people involved in them, this transition from physical to psychological action is fairly easy and almost inevitable. In 'Master Eustace', for instance, he is already concerned with the effect that the numerous 'incidents' have on the minds of Eustace, his mother, and the governess-narrator.

One important way in which this preoccupation with the psychological is revealed, is in James's viewing of action as a 'relation' or 'relationship'. "For some people", he says "motives, relations, explanations are part of the very surface of the drama, with the footlights beating full upon them".[2] Whilst many writers think of 'adventure' in terms of physical happenings, to him it is "just a matter of relation and appreciation".[3] This 'relation' is often a personal one, as in The Sense of the Past, where the thing of first importance is "the relation with [the hero], or the interrelations of the 'others', the three or four, the four or five, at the most in whom my 'rounded' action is embodied".[4] Many of the tales, such as 'The Great Condition', 'Maud-Evelyn' or 'Lord Beaupré', also hinge on a personal relationship. James himself suggests

[1] Sel.Lett., p. 238.
[2] PP, p. 257.
[3] NB, p. 277.
[4] Ibid., p. 368.

that the 'scenic' method is usually the best one for dealing with 'relations':

> All life, therefore, comes back to the question of our speech, the medium through which we communicate with each other; for all life comes back to the question of our relations with each other.[1]

This fascination with personal relations, in particular, manifests itself in a love of "thickened motive and accumulated character". Rather than analysing motives directly in narrative, James prefers to let these emerge through the dialogue, either through straightforward analysis by the speakers themselves, or by a revelation of hidden motives in their speech. In the latter case the speaker sometimes deliberately attempts to disguise his motives, but at others he is not even aware of their true nature. The narrator of 'The Aspern Papers', for example, consciously conceals his desire to obtain Jeffrey Aspern's papers from Miss Tita, but when she has gained possession of these, on the death of her aunt, he appears to be genuinely unaware of the baseness of his motives in paying her so much attention. In both cases his true motives are laid bare in the dialogue,[2] which, as a result, is highly ironical. A good deal of the action of the later work could be thought of as a study of motive revealed in dialogue.

Besides being two kinds of action in James, there are also two alternative ways of dealing with it, which are outlined in his plan for 'The Special Type':

> I seem to see all sorts of things in that [i.e. a divorce case] - a comedy, a little drama, of a fine colour, <u>either</u> <u>theatrised</u> <u>or</u> <u>narrated</u>.[3]

Sometimes these two methods are combined, frequently in alternation.[4]

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[1] The Question of Our Speech, New York, 1905, p. 10.

[2] vid. CT, vol. 6, pp. 320-2, 370-2.

[3] NB, p. 232 [my italics].

[4] vid. chapter 5, p. 173 for James's 'alternation' theory; also chapter 1, p. 12 for an account of 'le style indirect libre', which is a compromise between the two extremes, a kind of narrated dialogue.

In 'Pandora', for example, James explicitly tells the reader that he has found it necessary to resort to both at different points in the action, giving his reasons for this:

> I have depicted with some precision [i.e. in 'scenes'] the circumstances under which he made the acquaintance of Miss Day, because the event had a certain importance for this candid Teuton; but I must pass briefly over [i.e. in narrative] the incidents which immediately followed it.[1]

On the other hand, there are cases where one or other of the two ways is kept to with some consistency. 'Brooksmith' is an example of a tale which is almost entirely "narrated". (Only one of its eighteen pages is in dialogue.) This is probably because there are quite a few facts to be dealt with, and because the action covers a number of years, describing a gradual, rather than an abrupt, process; also perhaps because James feels incapable of reproducing Brooksmith's speech accurately for any length of time.[2] Looking back on it as he plans 'The Real Thing', he writes:

> The little tale of 'The Servant' ['Brooksmith's' original title] ...proved a very tight squeeze into the same tiny number of words, and I shall probably find that there is much more to be done with this than the compass will admit of. Make it tremendously succinct - with a very short pulse or rhythm - and the closest selection of detail - in other words summarize intensely, and keep down the lateral development. It should be a little gem of bright, quick, vivid form. I shall get every grain of 'action' that the space admits of...[3]

Narrative, he implies, makes for brevity and economy, important features of the short story.

And yet these can also be achieved in the tale which is "theatrised". The whole action of 'Four Meetings', for example, is conveyed in four short

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[1] CT, vol. 5, p. 365.

[2] vid. sup. chapter 2, p. 64

[3] NB, p. 104.

'scenes', which are linked together by brief narrative comments only. (Twenty-nine of its thirty pages are almost entirely in dialogue.) For, whilst it is usually easier to do the 'really short thing' in narrative, it is by no means impossible to do it 'scenically'; in some cases it even proves more suitable, especially if the action is psychological.

In fact, there is often a correspondence between psychological action and the 'scenic' method, and also between 'plot' and the narrative one. In 'Master Eustace', for example, although the crisis is dealt with 'scenically', most of it (twenty-five of the thirty-two pages) is narrated. (In his critique of Hardy's Far from the Madding Crowd, written shortly after 'Master Eustace', in 1874, James comments on the relationship between 'plot' and dialogue:

> Dialogue in a story is, after all, but episode... To tell a story almost exclusively by reporting people's talk is the most difficult art in the world....[1]

That is, he appears to value the dialogue method highly, even for physical action, though he does not resort to it nearly so much in this connection as he does in psychological action.)

One of the most important reasons for James's predominantly 'scenic' treatment of psychological action is that touched on above - the pressing need for economy and brevity in the short story.[2] Because of the severe limitations of space in this genre, it is essential that the action must not only be single,[3] but must also be organically "embodied" at every stage.[4]

James believes that all fiction is, or ought to be, "an effort at representation".[5] Desiring to "represent an action" rather than to describe it, he sees that the answer lies in the 'scenic' method. The action of 'Fordham

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[1] HF, p. 270.

[2] vid.inf., chapter 5, p.174 ff

[3] vid. NB, p. 211-2.

[4] vid. Ibid., p. 368.

[5] HF, p. 76.

Castle', he implies, which consists of six 'scenes' of confidences and revelations, is 'represented' in this way:

> They [Abel Taker and Mrs. Magaw] meet - they talk - the little affair _is_ their talk.[1]

Dialogue is particularly effective in 'representing' psychological action because it reveals the actual workings of the mind. A mental movement such as evasion, for example, can be indicated, economically, in such features of dialogue as the counter-question, circumlocution, hesitation, and repetition. The following extract from 'The Great Condition' shows Chilvers' attempt to avoid giving Braddle any direct information or opinion about Mrs. Damerel, whom the latter is thinking of marrying:

> "You don't then think [says Braddle] there's anything 'off' about her?"
> "Off?" Chilver could at least be perfectly vague. "Off what?"
> "What's the beastly phrase? 'Off colour'. I mean do you think she's all right?"
> "Are you in love with her?" Chilver after a moment demanded.[2]

By repeating Braddle's 'off' twice, interrogatively, and responding to his question with a counter-question, Chilver manages to evade Braddle's demand for a direct answer. The greater part of the psychological action in the tales consists of a similar kind of underground warfare, 'embodied' in dialogue. Another, less immediately obvious, way in which dialogue is economical in dealing with this action has to do with James's love of mystery and suspense. Even in the more purely factual 'thriller' type of story dialogue is a great aid to suspense, because of what its potential ambiguity can conceal; and in

[1] _NB_, p. 293.

[2] _CT_, vol. 10, p. 389.

these later tales, where there is nothing as definite as facts, but only conjectures and suppositions, it is doubly appropriate and effective. So that, although dialogue may not be the briefest way of conveying a situation it is often the most truly economical.[1] In the following passage from 'The Great Condition', for example, the evasiveness and ambiguity of the questions, indirect answers, pauses, exclamations, unfinished sentences and pervasive irony all help to sustain the suspense of the situation; they also heighten it. Bertram Braddle is trying to discover what he believes Mrs. Damerel to be concealing about her past:

> "He did tell me," she went on, "that you could pick up nothing -"
> "Against you?" he broke in. "Not a beggarly word."
> "And you tried hard?"
> "I worked like a nigger. It was no use."
> "But say you had succeeded - what," she asked, "was your idea?"
> "Why, not to have the thing any longer between us.
> He brought this out with such simplicity that she stared. "But if it had been - ?"
> "Yes?" - the way she hung fire made him eager.
> "Well - something you would have loathed."
> "_Is_ it?" - he almost sprang at her. "For pity's sake, _what_ is it?" he broke out in a key that now filled the room supremely with the strange soreness of his yearning for his justification.
> She kept him waiting, after she had taken this in, but another instant. "You would rather you say, have had it from _him_ [i.e. Chilvers] - "
> "But I must take it as I can get it? Oh, anyhow!" he fairly panted.[2]

On the other hand, besides being a very useful means of concealing things, dialogue is also an economical way of revealing them. In such stories as 'Owen Wingrave' and 'Europe', for example, where the knowledge of a few basic facts is essential to a grasp of the situation, these are not presented directly through the narrative to begin with, but conveyed obliquely to the reader

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[1]vid. inf. chapter 3, p.136 , for a discussion of the way in which dialogue can help to convey an atmosphere of mystery and suspense.

[2]_CT_, vol. 10, p. 424.

in the course of the opening conversation.[1] Thus, the characters most closely concerned in the action expound the position; they also interpret it - an added advantage. Thus George Dane, in 'The Great Good Place' not only explains to the 'Brother', in retrospect, the way in which he came to find his haven of rest, he also interprets the significance of it:

> "He [i.e. the strange young man] suddenly sprang up and went over to my study-table - sat straight down there as if to write me my passport. Then it was - at the mere sight of his back, which was turned to me - that I felt the spell work. I simply sat and watched him with the queerest, deepest, sweetest sense in the world - the sense of an ache that had stopped. All life was lifted; I myself at least was somehow off the ground. He was already where I had been."[2]

This is probably what James is alluding to when he describes certain of his tales as "little 'scenic', self-expository things".[3]

Most psychological material, however, has little to do with facts, and tends, therefore, to be highly subjective. So that, to achieve the objectivity he admires so much in the drama, James is forced to borrow, once more, the most important feature of its technique - dialogue. Whereas nearly all authorial comment appears to be subjective in psychological fiction, when the characters' own speech is reported, there is an allusion, at least, of objectivity. This is most immediately apparent in the case of the play:

> The divine distinction of a play - and a greater than any other it succeeds in arriving at - was, I reasoned, in its special, its guarded objectivity. This objectivity, in turn, when achieving its ideal, came from the imposed absence of that 'going behind', to compass explanations and amplifications, to drag out odds and ends from the 'mere' storyteller's great property-shop of aids to illusion.[4]

Benefiting from his dramatic experience, James uses the 'scenic' method to

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[1] vid. sup. chapter 3, p. 122-3

[2] CT, vol. 11, p. 29.

[3] NB, p. 295. [My italics]

[4] AN, p. 110-1.

"objectify the Indirect Approach", as Richard Blackmur puts it.[1] If this predominantly later tendency is compared with the technique of the early work, the difference, and the improvement, become much clearer. In contrast to the objectivity of the above 'scene' from 'The Great Condition', for example, here is a narrative passage from 'The Story of a Year' (1865), in which the voice of the omniscient author is distinctly heard (early as it is the action of the tale is psychological at this point so that a comparison between the two is meaningful):

> What blinding ardor had kindled these strange phenomena: a young lieutenant scornful of his first uniform, a well-bred young lady reckless of her stockings?
>
> Good reader, this narrative is averse to retrospect.
>
> Elizabeth (as I shall not scruple to call her outright) was leaning upon her companion's arm...[2]

Dialogue is also the means of solving the problem which arises, in this connection, when a character who is closely involved in the action tells the story. It is essential that the degree of reliability of the narrator should first be established in order that the reader might know what attitude to adopt towards any information or interpretation he might offer. Since the narrator has virtual control of the narrative, however, this can only be done through the dialogue. The narrator of 'The Aspern Papers' has already been cited as someone who both wishes to conceal, and is also unaware of, his true motives, these being revealed in his conversations with Miss Tita. He is therefore unreliable, and the reader must take this into account before the story can be interpreted correctly. How much, for example, of the narrator's description of his behaviour towards Miss Tita, and her overtures to him, is

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[1] AN, p. xviii.

[2] CT, vol. I, p. 50.

to be believed? A similar problem and a similar solution is to be found when the 'point of view' method is used.[1]

Not only in relation to objectivity, but in other respects too, does dialogue prove the storyteller's greatest "aid to illusion". (Knowing that all art is a matter of selection, however 'realistic' or objective it purports to be, James acknowledges the fact that, at best, the artist can hope to achieve only an illusion of 'reality':

> The success of a work of art, to my mind, may be measured by the degree to which it produces a certain illusion; that illusion makes it appear to us for the time that we have lived another life - that we have had a miraculous enlargement of experience.[2])

Dialogue helps to create two kinds of illusion in particular - the illusion of immediacy, or actuality, and that of duration of time.

Edith Wharton maintains that the former is of special importance in the short story:

> Even more - yes, and much more - than in the construction of the novel, the impression of vividness, of presentness, in the affair narrated, has to be sought, and made sure of beforehand, by that careful artifice which is the real carelessness of art.[3]

A. Mendilow believes that this illusion is most convincingly brought about in fiction by the use of a technique equivalent to that of the drama:

> Where the omniscient author refrains from intruding himself or his comments into his work, the illusion of presentness and immediacy may persist very strongly in the mind of the reader...[4]

This implies, he continues, either "direct presentation", involving the "lavish use of dialogue", or use of the "restricted point of view", both of which are very

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[1] vid.inf., chapter 5, p.179-81

[2] PP, p. 227.

[3] The Writing of Fiction, London, 1925, p. 48.

[4] Time and the Novel, London, 1952, p. 109.

much in evidence in James. In the following passage from 'The Turn of the Screw', for example, the "lavish use of dialogue" and the "restricted point of view" of the governess are the chief means of promoting a sense of immediacy, though the description of tones of voice and gestures is of help also. The governess, alone with her small charge, Miles, has just forced him to confess to his behaviour at school, when suddenly she sees the ghost of Quint, an ex-servant of the house who has some strange power over the boy:

> "No more, no more!" I shrieked, as I tried to press him against me, to my visitant.
>
> "Is she here?" Miles panted as he caught with his sealed eyes the direction of my words. Then as his strange 'she' staggered me and, with a gasp, I echoed it, "Miss Jessel, Miss Jessel!" he with sudden fury gave me back.
>
> I seized, stupified, his supposition - some sequel to what we had done to Flora, but this made me only want to show him that it was better still than that. "Its not Miss Jessel! But it's at the window - straight before us. It's there - the coward horror, there for the last time!"
>
> ...."It's he?"
>
> I was so determined to have all my proof that I flashed into ice to challenge him. "Whom do you mean by 'he'?"
>
> "Peter Quint - you devil!" His face gave again, round the room its convulsed supplication. "Where?"
>
> There are in my ears still, his supreme surrender of the name and his tribute to my devotion. "What does he matter now, my own? - What will he ever matter? I have you," I launched at the beast, "but he has lost you for ever!" Then, for demonstration of my work, "There, there!" I said to Miles.
>
> ...With the stroke of the loss I was so proud of he uttered the cry of a creature hurled over an abyss... We were alone with the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped.[1]

This same extract illustrates the second kind of illusion which dialogue helps to create - that of duration of time. "To live over people's lives is nothing," James asserts, "unless we live over their perceptions, live over the growth, the change, the varying intensity of the same - since it was by these

[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 137-8.

things they themselves lived."[1] But he believes that one of the most difficult things for the writer to do is "to give [this] impression and illusion of the real lapse of time, the quantity of time represented by our poor few phrases and pages".[2] As late as 1914 he still thinks of it as "the stiffest problem that the artist in fiction has to tackle".[3] In order to achieve what Sartre calls 'durational realism' the writer must make his fictional time resemble the reader's own sense of time passing. This is particularly difficult in the short story, since there is not the same room for expansion here as in the novel. James generally resorts to one of two methods; either he limits the time covered by the action to a very brief period, which he then treats 'scenically' ('Covering End' for example spans one day); or if the time covered is, of necessity, longer, he reserves 'scenic' treatment for its most significant points (these he calls 'discriminated occasions'). In 'The Wheel of Time', for example, he is forced to resort to 'summary' or narration, between 'discriminated occasions', since the action covers a period of twenty years or more, from the first incident, involving Fanny Knocker and Maurice Glanvil, to the next, and last, between Arthur and Vera, their respective children. There is little sense of time passing in the long narrative 'summary', only of time having passed. In the two main incidents, on the other hand, with their 'scenic' treatment, the reader is made to feel that time is passing as he watches, and that he is living through the experiences at approximately the same rate as the characters concerned; a sense of involvement results. The technique varies, then, between pure 'scene' and pure 'summary', according to

[1] Quoted by Edel at the beginning of The Untried Years.

[2] Sel.Lett., p. 225.

[3] NN, p. 349.

whether James wishes to show time passing or time having passed. (The latter he describes as having "to produce the illusion of mass without the illusion of extent", an apt distinction between the two processes.) "In every novel", writes James, at the age of twenty-three, "the work is divided between the writer and the reader". The reader's part is to enter as fully as he can into the action, the writer's, to enable him to do so by creating the illusion of duration. Sartre maintains that if he "packs six months into a single page, the reader jumps out of the book", and concludes his essay, on the problem of creating the sense of duration, in the following way:

> It is dark, the hero struggles to express himself; his words are not pictures of his soul, but rather, free and clumsy acts, which say too much and too little. The reader gets impatient, he tries to see beyond these involved and fumbling statements. Dostoevsky, Conrad, and Faulkner have known how to use this resistance of words, which is a source of endless misunderstanding and involuntary revelations, and thereby to make of dialogue 'the rich fictional moment', the time when the sense of duration is richest.[1]

(However, though James places a high value on dialogue in this respect, he also realises the dangers of an indiscriminate use of it.[2])

James wishes to produce not merely 'illusion' but "intensity of illusion".[3] In fact, the one is dependent on the other, as he points out:

> I might be able to produce illusion, if I should be able to achieve intensity.[4]

"Since one was dealing with an Action," he continues, "one might borrow a scrap of the Dramatist's all-in-all, his intensity..."[5] This statement, together with his frequent use of the phrase 'scenic intensity'[6], suggests that he

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[1]Francois Mauriac and Freedom, Literary and Philosophical Essays, London, 1955, p.21.

[2]vid. HF, p. 83.

[3]PP, p. 227.

[4]AN, p. 15.

[5]Ibid.

[6]e.g. NB, p. 249.

associates intensity almost exclusively with the drama. It is quite justifiable, therefore, to assume that he finds dialogue the answer to this, as to other, problems. The end of 'Broken Wings', for example, where he specifically comments on the "intensity" of the situation, is in direct speech. Mrs. Harvey and Stuart Straith have finally discovered that each is a failure by worldly standards, as a writer and painter, respectively:

> "If we're beaten," she then continued.
> "Let us at least be beaten together!" he took her in his arms; she let herself go, and he held her long and close for the compact. But when they had recovered themselves enough to handle their agreement more responsibly, the words in which they confirmed it broke in sweetness as well as sadness from both together: "And now to work!"[1]

As the above extract indicates, intensity is usually required at important points in the action, such as the opening, the climax and the conclusion. More often than not, therefore, these are dealt with 'scenically' in the tales. Lady Greyswood's question to Mrs. Knocker, for example, with which 'The Wheel of Time' opens, takes the reader straight into the action:

> "And your daughter?...Tell me about her. She must be nice."[2]

Mrs. Chilver's dramatic words to Braddle, in 'The Great Condition':

> "It's only your punishment!"[3]

are described by James as "the logical last note of the thing - the climax and denouement."[4] And Abel Taker's final pronouncement: "Why certainly I'm dead",[5] gives a similarly dramatic conclusion to 'Fordham Castle'.

This tendency to emphasise openings, climaxes, and conclusions reveals

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[1] CT, vol. 11, p. 238.
[2] Ibid., vol. 8, p. 453.
[3] Ibid., vol. 10, p. 426.
[4] NB, p. 273.
[5] CT, vol. 12, p. 149.

a preoccupation with the structural aspect of action. Further evidence of this is to be found in the marked 'plot' patterns of many of the tales. Beach sees both 'plot' and 'action' in James almost wholly in terms of 'composition':

> It is an arrangement of objects (that is, of the persons and incidents involved) - by likeness and opposition, by balance and cross-reference, with all regard to emphasis and proportion - corresponding to the arrangement of figures, of background, and foreground, of masses and lines, in a painting.[1]

Frank O'Connor finds his action too contrived, for in fiction, he believes, "the less contrived the action is the better".[2]

One very important type of 'contrivance' is coincidence, which usually manifests itself in parallel situations, like those of Mrs. Magaw and Abel Taker in 'Fordham Castle'. Another is that of antithesis or contrast, as in the case of Beadel-Muffet and Mortimer Marshall in 'The Papers', a tale which James explicitly states to be based on "a little antithesis".[3] Such situations are frequently brought out 'scenically', mainly because of the potential irony of the spoken words which serves to reflect irony of action. In 'Julia Bride', for example, the extraordinary coincidence and irony of both Mr. Pitman's and Murray Brush's appeal to Julia to vouch for their innocence to the women they wish to marry, while she has arranged to meet the two men in order to ask them to vouch for hers, is brought out by Murray's almost exact repetition of Mr. Pitman's words (i.e. "she wants awfully to meet you"[4]):

> "She has heard so much about you and she really wants to see you."
> "Oh mercy me!" poor Julia gasped again - so strangely did history repeat itself and so did this appear the echo, on Murray Brush's lips, and quite to drollery, of that sympathetic curiosity of Mrs. Drack's which Mr. Pitman, as they said, voiced.[5]

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[1] The Method of Henry James, Yale, 1918, p. 26.
[2] Op.cit., p. 232.
[3] NB, p. 313.
[4] CT, vol. 12, p. 165.
[5] Ibid., p. 185.

(Another writer who uses dialogue in a similarly ironic fashion to emphasise coincidence and antithesis is Thomas Hardy; see, for example, The Well-Beloved.) The irony of the parallel and contrasted situations of Barton Reeve and Mrs. Despard, and Philip Mackern and Margaret Hamer, in 'The Given Case' is also indicated in the dialogue. In the first of the seven brief 'scenes' of which this tale consists, the chief facts of the situation are given in a conversation between Reeve and Margaret, namely, that he is in love with Mrs. Despard, whose husband will not grant her a divorce, whilst Margaret is in a somewhat similar position as regards Philip Mackern. (She is engaged to another man who is away in India.) In the second scene, between Mackern and Mrs. Despard, this parallelism is further emphasised, a good deal of the emphasis resulting from the dialogue, in which Mackern makes several ambiguous allusions to the similarity of Mrs. Despard's and Margaret's position:

> "There's only one thing for [Margaret] to do." He clearly wished to show he was not to be humbugged.
>
> "And what wonderful thing is that?"
>
> "There's only one thing for any woman to do," he pursued with an air of conscious distinctness, "when she has drawn a man on to believe there's nothing she's not ready for."
>
> Mrs. Despard waited;..."Will you kindly let me pass?" she then asked.
>
> But he went on as if he had not heard her. "It's to make up to him for what she has cost him. It's simply to do everything."[1]

The third section takes us back to Reeve and Margaret, the fourth to Mackern and Mrs. Despard. There is a change of partners in the fifth, where Margaret and Mrs. Despard continue to bring out the coincidences of their respective positions in direct speech. The crisis of the tale is reached in sections six and seven when, first Reeve and Mrs. Despard, then Mackern and Margaret,

[1]CT, vol. 10, p. 361.

come finally face to face. From having run parallel for some time, their situations are now sharply differentiated; for, whereas Mrs. Despard decides to sacrifice her own desires for the sake of the conventionally 'moral', Margaret Hamer refuses to do so. Thus the tale ends on a note of strong contrast, which, again makes itself felt in the dialogue: "Pity _me_ - pity me!" are Margaret's concluding words. She needs pity, James seems to imply, whereas Mrs. Despard, deprived as she is, does not.

Yet another type of contrivance occurs when the whole action of a tale is based on an initial misunderstanding. This, too, lends itself to 'scenic' treatment, as the irony of the situation can be very effectively brought out through parallel misunderstandings in the dialogue. 'Rose-Agathe', for example, turns on the fact that the narrator thinks his friend, Sanguinetti, is in love with a hairdresser, a married woman, whereas he is really in love with her beautiful dummy model. A delightful series of misunderstandings follow this initial one, most of them based on the ambiguity and vagueness of the pronoun 'she' in all its parts. This is kept up to the very end, when Sanguinetti announces, to his friend's great amazement:

> "She is mine! she is mine! mine only!"
> "She has left the shop?" I demanded.
> "Last night - at eleven o'clock. We went off in a cab."
> "You have her at home?"
> "For ever and ever!" he exclaimed ecstatically.
> "My dear fellow, my compliments!"
> "It was not an easy matter", he went on. "But I held her in my arms!"[1]

It is only when Sanguinetti introduces him to her, with the comment, "It's a pity she creaks", that the narrator realises that he has been referring all

[1] _CT_, vol. 4, p. 139.

along to "the right-hand effigy of the coiffeur's window - the blonde!"[1]

Such patterned action seems, to Frank O'Connor, more fitted to the theatre:

> Now, not only does James impose his action on his characters,... but he also turns it into pattern. This is good theatrical practice, for in the theatre anx action effective the first time, is many times more effective when repeated, and James deliberately reduplicated his effects in this way.[2]

The influence of the theatre on James's concept of action is apparent not only in this, but in other directions also. On a very simple level, it is revealed in the dramatic terminology used to describe the action of many of the short stories. Some of them have for example, what he calls a "prologue", - an "overwhelming space-devourer".[3] 'Exposition'[4] follows 'prologue', and 'development', 'exposition'. In one usage of the term 'development', he makes the comparison with the drama explicit:

> There must be a development and a supplement, complement, to make a drama, and a climax - to complete the case.[5]

He refers also to the "dear little intense crisis", of 'In the Cage', and the 'crisis' of 'climax' of 'The Turn of the Screw' is thought of, by the governess, in purely theatrical terms:

> ...with the word he spoke, the curtain rose on the last act of my dreadful drama and the catastrophe was precipitated.[6]

The final stage of the action he describes, again in the language of the drama critic, as the 'denouement'.[7]

James's choice of action is frequently dictated by the amount of conflict

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[1] Op.cit., p. 232.

[2] Op.cit., p. 232.

[3] NB, p. 301.

[4] vid. ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 341.

[6] CT, vol. 10, p. 91

[7] vid. NB, p. 273.

to be found in it, as, for example, the conflict between a mother and her daughters in 'Europe'. One of his own comments proves quite clearly that he associates this with the drama:

> There might be a small drama in the embodiment in two opposed persons, on a given occasion, of these conflicting, irreconcilable points of view... Make the conflict, in other words, a little drama.[1]

J.Barzun links this kind of action - "the short, sharp conflict" - with the type of dialogue he finally evolved in his mature work:

> Even the expansion of dialogue into something gigantic, searching, omniscient, does not contradict this tendency; Jamesian dialogue only expresses the conflict of wills more precisely than the crude traditional words associated with stock situations.[2]

Another indication of James's desire for dramatic action can be seen in the importance he attaches to the "march of an action".[3] Concerning The Spoils of Poynton (originally intended as a short story), which "MUST BE AS STRAIGHT AS A PLAY",[4] he instructs himself: "make it march as straight as a pure little dramatic action".[5] For only thus will he be able to achieve "scenic intensity, brevity, beauty".[6]

One final proof of the influence of the drama is the way in which James sometimes equates the short story with the one-act play: "Ah, the one-act! Ah, the 'short story'! It's very much the same trick!"[7] The action of one tale in particular, 'Covering End', resembles that of a play, which is hardly surprising, since it was first written as a 'one-act', then converted into a short story. It is almost completely 'scenic'.[8]

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[1] NB, p. 197.
[2] Henry James, Melodramatist, The Question of Henry James, ed. F.W.Dupée, London 1947, p. 269.
[3] vid. NB, p. 263.
[4] Ibid., p. 253.
[5] Ibid., p. 249.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., p.269.
[8] vid. inf. chapter 5, p.169-70 for a detailed comparison of the two versions.

In James's description of how he adapted the play for fiction, there is an intimation of one important way in which the two mediums differ. He added, he informs H.G. Wells, "such indications as might be the equivalent of decent acting".[1] In fiction, he writes elsewhere:

> Action, tone and gesture...all must be told, for nothing can be shown. Thus the very dialogue becomes mixed with the narration; for [the writer] must not only tell what the characters actually said, but must also describe the tone, the look, the gesture with which their speech was accompanied - telling, in short all which, in the drama, it becomes the province of the actor to express.

His criticism of George Gissing is based largely on the fact that he attempts to achieve all his effects solely through dialogue; the author's voice "can be kept out for occasions, it can not be kept out always".[2] Fiction can never, therefore, be completely 'scenic' like the drama. Even in The Awkward Age, the nearest of all his works to pure dialogue, there are narrative 'stage-directions', though these are as brief as possible, and limited to short summaries of appearance and manner. As Pelham Edgar points out, James avoids any disadvantages attendant upon this necessity by close attention to minute details:

> James, in his later books, gives the greatest care to these small particulars. To a conscience growing ever more severe no item was negligible and this explains his avoidance here of the monotony of stereotyped forms. Occasionally 'Mrs. Brook said' or 'Mitchy replied', but more ordinarily she 'plaintively wondered' or 'wonderfully murmured', or 'her pale interest deepened', while Mitchy 'brightly thought' or 'visibly wondered' or 'his great goggle attentively fixed him' or 'he turned upon his hostess his sociable glare'.[3]

He not only avoids the pitfalls, but turns necessity to virtue, by exploiting the possibilities inherent in this kind of comment for his own ends. 'Stage-

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[1] Sel.Lett., p. 183.

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[2] NN, p. 350.

[3] Henry James: Man and Author, London, 1927, p. 135.

directions' are often used, for example, as a sort of running commentary on the psychological state of affairs. The reader is encouraged to draw his conclusions about the situation from this description of physical gestures, movements, and tones of voice. In 'A New England Winter', for example, Miss Daintry, a Bostonian spinster of no mean perception, listening to the somewhat pretentious talk of her nephew, Florimond, betrays her true feelings by a physical gesture:

> His aunt listened to him attentively, with her nippers on her nose. She had been a little restless at first, and, to relieve herself, had vaguely punched the sofa-cushion which lay beside her - a gesture that her friends always recognised; they knew it to express a particular emotion.[1]

The reader is also helped by another gesture, this time from Florimond; (Miss Daintry again reacts to this further manifestation of his character):

> He put his gathered fingers to his lips an instant [and] seemed to kiss them into the air. Miss Daintry had never encountered this gesture before; she had heard it described by travelled persons; but to see her own nephew in the very act of it led her to administer another thump to the sofa-cushion. She finally got this article under control, and sat more quiet, with her hands clasped upon it, while her visitor continued to discourse.[2]

The sofa-cushion figures yet once more in a 'stage-direction' about Florimond's tone of voice:

> "Oh, I don't like sharp [women]", Florimond remarked, in a tone which made his aunt long to throw her sofa-cushion at his head.[3]

All three passages reveal the skill with which James manipulates this technical necessity.

The question now arises as to whether dialogue can ever be said to have a direct effect on the action. In certain cases a speaker appears to

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[1] CT, vol. 6, p. 118.

[2] Ibid., p. 119.

[3] Ibid., p. 120.

dictate a whole course of events by means of a few words, though it is difficult to decide to what extent he is to be held responsible for this. The problem crops up most often in connection with a character who is intimately concerned in the action - usually either a narrator or confidant. The narrator of 'The Madonna of the Future', for example, who is also a kind of confidant, feels personally responsible for the turn events take after he has attempted to deprive Theobald of his illusion. Theobald, an American painter living in Florence, has been planning, for many years, to paint the perfect madonna, but meantime, his model has grown old and fat. The narrator, whom he takes to visit her, cannot help exclaiming, as they leave her house; "My poor friend, you've dawdled! She's an old, old woman - for a Madonna!"[1] His description of Theobald's reaction to these words implies a justifiable sense of responsibility:

> It was as if I had brutally struck him: I shall never forget the long, slow, almost ghastly look of pain with which he answered me. "Dawdled - old, old!" he stammered. "Are you joking?"[2]

When Theobald dies, shortly afterwards, from no apparent physical cause, the question assumes graver proportions. Would he have continued to live, happy in his illusions, had not the narrator taken it upon himself to enlighten him?[3] Though there is no conclusive answer to this, what is undeniable, and of particular interest here, is the fact that his verbal interference has a radical effect on the action, bringing about as it does the crisis of the tale. W.C. Booth would probably hold him fully responsible, since he maintains that:

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[1] CT, vol. 3, p. 36.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Cf. Ibsen's The Wild Duck.

> The reflector, in becoming inconscient about his own motives and about the reality around him, becomes a vicious agent in the story, and his viciousness and unconscious distortions come to play a role far beyond anything James described in writing about observers.[1]

Mark Monteith, in 'A Round of Visits', is another example of a character "who seems to take over a subject".[2] His final words to the policeman who questions him concerning Newton Winch's suicide, are a virtual admission of responsibility: "I really think I must practically have caused it".[3] Yet all he has done has been to talk to Winch.

Though there is a definite change in James's technique, corresponding fairly closely to a change in the nature of his action, critics are by no means agreed on the exact date of this. Some give it as post-1890, others as post-1895, thus assigning it either to the beginning or to the end of his playwriting years. Markow-Totevy, for example, settles for 1890[4], whilst Levy[5] and Warren[6] prefer 1895. There is no definite proof in either direction. James's own comments, as recorded in his notebooks, seem to corroborate the post-1895 theory, since he first mentions his resolve to adopt the 'scenic' method on February 14th, 1895, when he refers to:

> The <u>singular value for a narrative plan too</u> of the (I don't know what adequately to call it) <u>divine principle of The Scenario</u>...[7]

In May of the same year, he records his decision to use this technique for all his short stories:

> Everything of this kind I do must be a complete and perfect little drama. The little idea must resolve itself into a little action and the little action into the <u>essential</u> drama aforesaid.[8]

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[1] The Rhetoric of Fiction, London, 1961, p. 347.
[2] Ibid., p. 341.
[3] CT, vol. 12, p. 349.
[4] vid. Henry James, Paris, 1958, p. 103.
[5] vid. Version of Melodrama, California, 1957, p. 12.
[6] vid Rage for Order, Chicago, 1958, p. 142.
[7] NB, p. 118.
[8] Ibid., p. 198.

1896 finds him writing in the same vein:

> Well, the scenic scheme is the only one that I can trust, with my tendencies, to stick to the march of an action.[1]

And, as late as 1909, he repeats a similar point of view:

> ...the only way in which it seems now pretty clear that I shall henceforth be able, with any vital or any artistic economy, to envisage my material at all...is in the 'dramatic' way... I've seen my stuff...as peculiarly (that's the point) an Action... When an Action plants itself before me, it ceases to be a question of whether it 'can' be Dramatic.[2]

However, there are many indications in the tales themselves that his technique in in the process of alteration well before 1895. The dramatic tendencies are there from the start. The first story of all, 'A Tragedy of Errors', for example, is largely 'scenic'. (It must not be forgotten that James experiments in the drama only because he has strong leanings towards it to begin with, so that to account for the dramatic features of his work solely in terms of the effect of five years of playwriting is to oversimplify and misrepresent the position.) It is therefore quite impossible to give a definite date for the change. The important thing to note is that a change does occur, and that it does not take place overnight.

Not all critics are agreed that this change is for the better. F.R. Leavis, for example, prefers the earlier technique, particularly that of the 1880's.[3] The word 'change' cannot, therefore, be used synonymously with 'improvement', though even Leavis would agree that there is a definite technical development from the early to the middle works.

About one thing, at least, there is no doubt - that in the majority

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[1] NB, December 21st, p. 263.

[2] Ibid., December 19th, p. 346.

[3] Vid. The Great Tradition, London, 1963, p. 188.

of his short stories James thinks of action in terms of the drama. He wants his stories to 'march', equates the short story with the one-act play, and writes a drama which he then converts with ease into a short story. In the light of this, it is not surprising to find him searching for a more satisfactory method of dealing with such action, and even less so that he should turn to the stage for his model. Thus, he gradually develops what he calls his 'scenic' method, which, like the drama, relies heavily on dialogue. The link between action and dialogue is, therefore, an important one.

CHAPTER 5

FORM

> On the question of form [Gissing] certainly strikes me as far too little. It is form above all that is talent...I mean the whole question of composition, of foreshortening, of the proportion and relation of parts. Mr. Gissing, to wind up my reserves, overdoes the ostensible report of spoken words;... It is attended visibly...with two or three woeful results. If it had none other it would still deserve arraignment on the simple ground of what it crowds out - the golden blocks themselves of the structure, the divine exercise and mystery of the exquisite art of presentation.[1]

> It was [Balzac's] view indeed positively that there is a law in these things, and that, admirable for illustration, functional for illustration, dialogue has its function perverted, and therewith its life destroyed, when forced...into the constructive office. It is in the drama, of course, that it is constructive. ... We must always remember that, save where dialogue is 'organic'...it is essentially the fluid element.[2]

In spite of these solemn warnings, James himself often uses dialogue in the 'constructive office'. If the closeness of his own technique to that of the drama is borne in mind, this comes as no surprise. His belief in the importance of form has never been questioned. Indeed, he has been criticised for being interested in it at the expense of all else. Frank O'Connor, for example, gives an amusing description of the attitudes of Ben Jonson, Flaubert, James and Joyce towards form:

> [They] loved literature too well; [they] cared more for its form than its content, and adopted toward it the fetichistic attitudes of impoverished old maids inheriting ancestral mansions.[3]

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[1] NN, p. 349.

[2] HF, p. 83.

[3] The Mirror in the Roadway, London, 1957, p. 224.

But, as James implies in the following comment on Madame Bovary, there is no question for him of a separation between form and content:

> The form is in itself as interesting, as active, as much of the essence of the subject as the idea, and yet so close is its fit and so inseparable its life that we catch it at no moment on any errand of its own. That verily is to be interesting - all round; that is to be genuine and whole. The work is a classic because the thing, such as it is, is ideally done, and because it shows that in such doings eternal beauty may dwell.[1]

Form and action are intimately bound up with each other in James. Many of the remarks made on action are, therefore, equally applicable to form. In order to avoid repetition, and yet not to omit anything of importance, there will now be a brief summary of the remarks made in the last chapter which are relevant to both.

a) 'Plot Patterns' and Influence of the Drama

It is obvious that the use of coincidence, parallelism and antithesis besides providing bases for dramatic action, will also give a very definite shape to a story. This links up with James's statement that he learnt mastery of form from the drama:

> What I have gathered from [playwriting] will perhaps have been exactly some such mastery of fundamental statement - of the art and secret of it, of expression, of the sacred mystery of structure.[2]

An examination of the structure of 'John Delavory' will illustrate both these points. The 'plot' of this story, thirty-one of whose thirty-nine pages are 'scenically' treated, is of a mathematical precision. The following attempt to put it into diagram form is an account of the various meetings between the three main characters, all but two of which are 'scenic'. The second half of

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[1] Selected Literary Criticism, ed. M. Shapira, 1963, p. 221.

[2] NB, August 11th, 1895, p. 208.

the tale corresponds almost exactly to the first, structurally speaking, and a distinct 'pattern' emerges.

Section	Narrator and Mr. Beston	Narrator, Mr. Beston and Miss Delavoy	Narrator and Miss Delavoy	Parallelism and Antithesis
I	[Narrator and confidant]			
II	X			Antithesis
			X	Parallelism
		X		Both
III		X		Both
			X	Parallelism
IV	X			Antithesis
V			X	Parallelism
VI		X		Both
VII		X		Both
			X	Parallelism
VIII	X			Antithesis

As Barbara Hardy remarks:

> James's concept of form is a very personal and restricted one, based on tautness of dramatic tension and eschewing multiplicity and even the appearance of accidentality.[1]

It is a concept which often involves an approximation of the respective divisions of his form to the "successive acts of a play".[2] (One of the things that attracts James most to dramatic form is the challenge it offers him:

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[1] The Novels of George Eliot, London, 1963, p. 2.

[2] AN, p. 110.

> ...its the contact with the DRAMA, with the divine little, difficult, artistic, ingenious, architectural FORM that makes old pulses throb and old tears rise again.[1])

b) Equation of Short Story with One-Act Play

On first looking at the subject matter of what was to become 'Covering End', James sees "the adumbration of a short tale aussi bien as of a play",[2] and he encounters very few problems when he changes the form of the one-act play 'Summersoft' into that of a short story. Close comparison of the two will reveal adequate reasons for this ease of adaptation, the only difference between the play and the tale being the addition, in the latter, of a few narrative passages (which either describe character and setting, or give 'stage-direction' equivalents). The dialogue in each remains virtually identical.

<table>
<tr><th>Summersoft</th><th>Covering End
(Division into sections)</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>(I)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Chivers and Mrs. Gracedew [she does not speak]</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Narrative description of Mr. Prodmore</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mr. Prodmore and Chivers</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Cora and Mr. Prodmore</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>(II)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Captain Yule and Mr. Prodmore</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Narrative description of Captain Yule</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Chivers and Mr. Prodmore</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Chivers and Captain Yule</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Chivers</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Chivers and Mrs. Gracedew</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>(III)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Narrative description of Mrs. Gracedew</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Chivers and Mrs. Gracedew</td></tr>
</table>

[1]NB, January 22nd, 1899, p. 268.
[2]Ibid., February 6th, 1895, p. 185.

Summersoft	Covering End

| | **Narrative 'stage-directions'** |

Captain Yule and Mrs. Gracedew

Chivers

Captain Yule, Mrs. Gracedew, Cora and Mr. Prodmore

| | **Narrative description of the tourists** |

Chivers and Mrs. Gracedew

Mrs. Gracedew, tourists, Mr. Prodmore, Captain Yule, Chivers and Cora

(IV)

Mrs. Gracedew and Captain Yule

(V)

Mrs. Gracedew and Cora

Mrs. Gracedew and Captain Yule

| | **Narrative 'stage-directions'** |

(VI)

Mrs. Gracedew and Cora

(VII)

Mrs. Gracedew and Mr. Prodmore

(VIII)

Mrs. Gracedew and Captain Yule

Chivers and more tourists

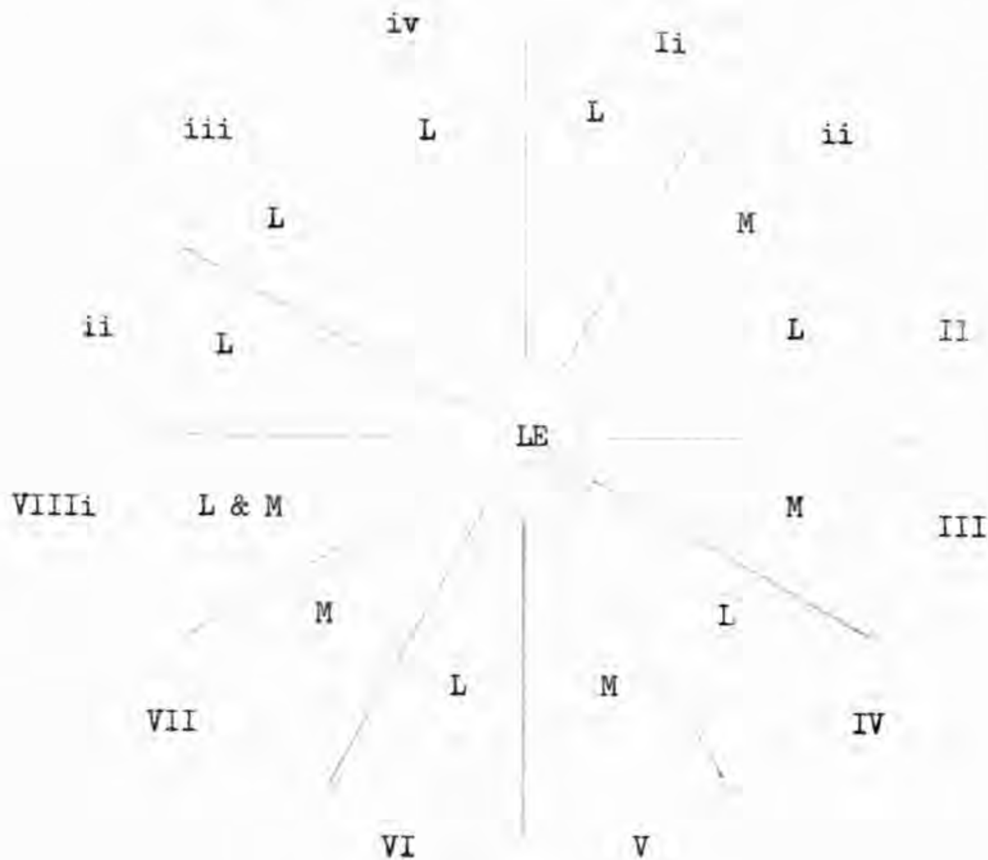
| | **Narrative description of the tourists** |

Mrs. Gracedew

c) Use of Confidants

Not only do confidants sometimes have a direct effect on action, they also play an important structural role on occasions. Lady Emma, in 'Maud-Evelyn', for example, is the structural 'centre' of the work, though she does not take much part in the action. She has alternate interviews with the two main characters, Lavinia and Marmaduke, up to the climax, when she

meets them both together. The tale ends with three brief 'scenes' between herself and Lavinia. Once again, the mathematical precision of the form lends itself to a diagram:



LE = Lady Emma
L = Lavinia
M = Marmaduke
I - VIII= Sections into which the tale is divided

d) <u>'Relationships'</u>.

Referring to James's statement: "The whole of anything is never told; you can only take what groups together", Matthiessen remarks that "this throws a good deal of light...on how James conceived of structure."[1] J.H. Raleigh also links "the treatment of individual relationships" to "the question of

[1] <u>Henry James and the Major Phase</u>, London, 1944, p. 181.

structure", in the later work.[1] The above plan of 'Maud-Evelyn' demonstrates how a preoccupation with 'relationships', especially personal ones, often leads to a well-defined form. Lady Emma's 'relations' with the two leading characters forms an alternating pattern which culminates in a 'scene' with both of them. The denouement, her three, short, conversations with Lavinia, is rather like the 'codetta' of the sonata form. (Twenty-seven of the thirty-seven pages of this tale are in dialogue.)

e) Dialogue for Emphasis, Suspense and Revelation

The effectiveness of dialogue at significant points in Jamesian action is of obvious relevance here, since these points are generally found to be structurally important also. The following plan of the use of dialogue for emphasis in 'The Great Condition' shows how this can give a very definite form to a work:

Section	I	II	III	IVi	ii	Vi	ii	VI	VII
Dialogue	Introduction		Crisis		Crisis	Crisis		Climax	Denouement
Number of 'scenes'	1		2		2	2		1	1
Narrative		Exposition		Development			Development		

Most of the crises here take the form of verbal mystifications, or revelations; the advantages of dialogue in this connection have been sufficiently dealt with in the previous chapter.[2]

[1] 'Henry James: The Poetics of Empiricism', PMLA, March, 1951, p.118.
[2] vid.sup., chapter 4, p. 146-7.

f) 'Alternation' Theory

Besides tales which are almost entirely 'scenic', there are some which alternate between dialogue and narrative and, as the above diagram indicates, this often makes for a very satisfying form. The best account of the 'alternation' theory is given by James himself, in his preface to The Tragic Muse:

> [It ought] to get itself done in dramatic, or at least in scenic conditions - though scenic conditions which are as near an approach to the dramatic as the novel may permit itself and which have this in common with the latter, that they move in the light of alternation. This imposes a consistency other than that of the novel at its loosest and for one's subject, a different view and a different placing of the centre.[1]

The theory itself is based on a belief in the value of contrast,[2] which, in turn, implies a desire for variety.[3] Although James has been credited with an admiration for drama at the expense of fiction, he sees that the latter has definite advantages over the former in certain directions, the main one being just this ability to vary its parts:

> The order in which the drama simply says things gives it all its form, while the story told and the picture painted, as the novel at the pass we have brought it to embraces, reports of an infinite diversity of matters...and finds its order and its structure, its unity and its beauty, in the alternation of parts and the adjustment of differences.[4]

The "alternation of parts" in 'The Great Condition', except for the two 'scenes' of crisis at section IVii to Vi and the two concluding sections, is perfectly regular. That of 'The Jolly Corner' is more subtly varied. Having opened with Spencer Brydon's actual words to Alice Staverton, the first section then

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[1] AN, p. 90.
[2] vid. ibid., p. 198.
[3] vid. NB, p. 92.
[4] NN, p. 279.

proceeds from a narrative exposition of his situation, through a reported 'scene' between him and Alice, in which a few direct remarks are given, to two concluding dialogue 'scenes' between them. Section two, by contrast, is a narrative account of Brydon's experiences with the ghost of what he might have become, had he remained in New York. There is a good deal of 'represented' speech in it, and also three examples of monologue, which mark particularly tense moments of the action. The third, and final section begins with a brief passage of narrative and ends in a last 'scene' between Alice and Brydon.

g) Brevity and Economy

It is along these lines that the short story was first defined. It is also in these respects that it has been most clearly differentiated from the novel. For one vital question, which inevitably crops up in the numerous books and articles written on the short story, is whether, in fact, it has a distinct form at all. There are some critics, though these are in the minority, who maintain that, save for length, its form is basically the same as that of the novel.[1] The majority, however, have identified an appreciable difference between the two. As early as 1885 Brander Matthews writes:

> A true short-story differs from the novel chiefly in its essential unity of impression... A short-story deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation... The short-story is a single effect, complete and self-contained, while the novel is of necessity broken into a series of episodes. Thus the short-story has, what the novel cannot have, the effect of 'totality', as Poe called it, the unity of impression.[2]

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[1] e.g. J.W. Beach, vid. The Method of Henry James, Yale, 1918, p. 3.

[2] The Philosophy of the Short-Story, New York, 1901, p. 15-7.

So conscious is he of the basic structural differences between the two, he comments on it more than once.[1] In 1902, following the book edition of Matthews' article, H.S. Canby expresses a very similar point of view:

> In its capacity for perfection of structure, for nice discrimination of means, and for a satisfying exposition of the full power of words, [the short story] is much superior to the novel, and can rank only below the poem. But the novel and the short story are distinct instruments, differently designed, for diverse needs. And with such a point or view it is impossible not to grant to the latter a separate use and clarification.[1a]

C. Hamilton makes the same point in 1909.[2] More recent critics of the genre, such as H.E. Bates,[3] have not differed essentially from these early ones.

(In the comments of all these writers, there is the suggestion that the short story is more dependent on a well-defined form than the novel.[4])

Though James himself never explicitly states that the short story has a definite form of its own, it is implicit in the way he constantly differentiates, in his notebooks, between what is suitable for a short story and a novel, both as to form and content. The preliminary note for what was probably to become 'Paste', one of his briefest and most 'scenic' tales, is a case in point.[5]

If there is contention among the critics over the form of the short story, there is even more over that of the 'nouvelle'. Again, there are two schools of thought, either that it is like the novel, only shorter,[6] or like the short story, only longer.[7] Edel's action, in publishing the 'nouvelles'

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[1] Ibid., pp. 26, 73.

[1a] The Short Story, Yale Studies in English, vol. 12, p. 29-30.

[2] vid. Materials and Methods of Fiction, London, 1909, p. 170.

[3] vid. The Modern Short Story, London, 1941, p. 215-6.

[4] vid. C. Hamilton, op.cit., p. 184; H.S. Canby, op.cit., p. 29; B. Matthews, op.cit., p. 30; H.E. Bates, op.cit., p. 32-3.

[5] vid. NB, p. 177 - "a small drama".

[6] vid. B. Matthews, op.cit., pp. 15, 26; also C.Hamilton, op.cit., p. 170.

[7] vid. J.W. Beach, op.cit., p. 175; also E. Wharton, The Writing of Fiction, London, 1925, p. 48.

together with the short stories in his edition of The Complete Tales, indicates that he shares the latter point of view. So too does James's, in placing them together in his collected editions. And any difficulty in distinguishing between different genres in his work arises between the 'nouvelle' and the short story, never between the 'nouvelle' and the novel. Finally, in a review of George Eliot's 'The Lifted Veil' and 'Brother Jacob', he equates these "two short tales" or "short stories" with "that form of fiction which the French call the **nouvelle**".[1] Thus there is sufficient justification, for dealing with his 'nouvelles' under the same heading as his short stories. All the following remarks on the structure of the short story will therefore apply to the 'nouvelle' also (except, of course, for those on brevity).

Edgar Allan Poe,[2] the first conscious craftsman of the short story, believes that its outstanding characteristics are, or should be, "unity of impression", economy and conciseness:

> A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents, but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought, he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the out-bringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to one pre-established design.[3]

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[1] LRE, p. 290.

[2] Early critics of the short story have been deliberately chosen, since they are more likely, as near contemporaries of James, to reflect his own concept of the genre.

[3] "Hawthorne's Tales", Graham's Magazine, 1842.

According to Matthews, the short story should be characterised by originality, unity, compression, brilliancy of style, a good "story", a "logical, adequate and harmonious" construction, and interesting subject matter.[1] At least three of these, unity, compression and a "logical, adequate and harmonious" construction, are concerned with form. In Canby's description, structural characteristics likewise predominate. Besides being an "impression", and a single action, the short story should have a "unified climactic development"; it should also be characterised by unity, and compression or terseness.[2] C. Hamilton discusses such matters of form as the need for economy and emphasis (and the difficulty of striking the right balance between the two); the importance of initial and terminal positions; and the effect of the 'point of view' method on structure.[3] Finally, H.E. Bates makes a comparison, drawn by James himself, between the form of the short story and that of the play.[4] All these writers stress the need for unity, economy and conciseness. Implicit in their comments, also, is a recognition of what James ruefully describes as, "the rude prescription of brevity at any cost".[5]

Concerning the first of these features of the short story, unity of time has already been discussed,[6] and unity of impression, which is the only other aspect of unity relevant here, will be considered later on, with referance to the 'point of view' method.

Not all critics are agreed on the importance of brevity in the short

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[1] Op.cit., p. 23ff.

[2] Op.cit.

[3] Op.cit.

[4] Op.cit., p. 32-3.

[5] AN, p. 219.

[6] Vid.sup., chapter 4, p. 152.

story; its length appears to be a somewhat arbitrary affair. Poe, for example, observes guardedly that:

> Undue brevity is just as exceptionable [in the short story] as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.[1]

However, as the term 'short' alone indicates, brevity is generally thought to be a necessary element. Indeed, at the beginning of the short story's history, in the early nineteenth century,[2] this is perhaps the only thing which distinguishes it from the novel. James himself, in his plan for <u>The Tragic Muse</u>, implies that brevity is an indispensable feature of the short story technique:

> [I must] bring myself to be brief and quick in the handling of the different episodes...Let me write it as if, at any stage, it were to be a short story.[3]

He realises, however, that brevity "is intelligible only when organic".[4] When it is organic then its effect on the structure is profound:

> The merit of the thing ['Europe'] is in the feat, once more, of the transfusion; the receptacle [of form] being so exiguous, the brevity imposed so great. I undertook the brevity, so often undertaken on a like scale before, and again arrived at it by the innumerable chemical reductions and condensations that tend to make of the very short story one of the costliest, even if, like the hard, shining sonnet, one of the most indestructible, forms of composition in general use.[5]

Though dialogue does not, at first, appear to contribute to brevity, it is by no means incompatible with it. In fact, some of James's shortest tales are almost entirely in dialogue. 'Paste', which is examined in more detail

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[1] <u>Op.cit</u>.

[2] Some critics would date its beginnings much earlier than this, as far back as the 'Gesta Romanorum'.

[3] <u>NB</u>, 2nd February, 1889, p. 92.

[4] Notes to 'Theatricals: Second Series', <u>CP</u>.

[5] <u>AN</u>, p. 239.

below, is an example of the "really 'short' thing", (it is approximately 5,000 words long), 'scenically' treated.

Economy, though it often implies brevity, is not always synonymous with it; the most economical method is not necessarily the briefest. As Bernard Shaw once said: "True economy is making the most of what you've got." James's own love of it is everywhere apparent: "I delight in deep-breathing economy and organic form".[1] Loving economy, and disliking brevity, it is no wonder that he prefers the 'nouvelle' to the short story. For the 'nouvelle', which demands the former, though not the latter, offers him more scope for his genius. 'The Coxon Fund', for example, is an attempt "to arrive, on behalf of the multiplicity, at a certain science of control...problem ever dear to any economic soul desirous to keep renewing its ideal of economy".[2]

However, James realises that in both the 'nouvelle' and the short story, "there is no economy of treatment without an adopted, a related point of view".[3] (Beach contrasts the 'point of view' method with the use of the narrator[4] but this seems to be something of a false distinction since the two are identical in many cases.[5] They will therefore be considered as synonymous here.) The part played by dialogue in relation to the 'point of view' method is a very important one, for it offers the only means of objective approach to otherwise subjective material.[6] Oliver Lyon's 'point of view' in 'The Liar', for example,

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[1] AN, p. 84.
[2] Ibid., p. 231.
[3] Ibid.. p. 300.
[4] Vid. op.cit., p. 185.
[5] e.g. The Aspern Papers.
[6] Vid. sup. chapter 4, p.148-150.

is not only highly subjective, which is to be expected, but it even leads to a distortion of the truth. The dichotomy between the facts of Colonel and Mrs. Capadose's situation and Lyon's prejudiced interpretation of these, makes itself felt most clearly in the various conversations he has with the married couple, (thus emphasising the usefulness of dialogue as an objective means of control). Lyon's unconscious exaggeration of Mrs. Capadose's position is hinted at in the narrative:

> If our friend had not been in love with her he could have taken the diverting view of the Colonel's delinquencies [i.e. that he tells lies]; but as it was they turned to the tragical in his mind ...[1]

but the most convincing demonstration that his theory (that Mrs. Capadose is secretly ashamed of these "delinquencies") is based on wishful thinking rather than fact, comes from a discussion with her, in which she expresses nothing but admiration for her husband:

> Then he spoke to her of her husband, praised his appearance, his talent for conversation, professed to have felt a quick friendship for him and asked (with an inward audacity at which he trembled a little) what manner of man he was. "What manner?" said Mrs. Capadose. "Dear me, how can one describe one's husband. I like him very much."
>
> "Ah, you have told me that already!" Lyon exclaimed, with exaggerated ruefulness.
>
> "Then why do you ask me again?" She added in a moment, as if she were so happy that she could afford to take pity on him, "He is everything that's good and kind. He's a soldier - and a gentleman - and a dear! He hasn't a fault. And he has great ability."
>
> "Yes,; he strikes one as having great ability. But of course I can't think him a dear."
>
> "I don't care what you think him!" said Mrs. Capadose, looking, it seemed to him, as she smiled, handsomer than he had ever seen her.[2]

In his own words, James "adore[s] a rounded, a completely and patiently achieved objectivity."[3] The combination of the 'point of view' method and 'scenic'

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[1] CT, vol. 6, p. 411

[2] Ibid., p. 410.

[3] Letter to H.G. Wells; 1913.

treatment is an ideal one, for he can achieve an objectivity comparable to that of the drama, without sacrificing the personal subjective touch of fiction.

The 'point of view' is economical because it offers a means of selection, giving the writer control over his material and a framework for it. Of 'The Chaperon', for example, James writes:

> Fortunately in this case the principle of composition is loyally observed; the values gathered are, without exception, gathered by the light of the intense little personal consciousness, invoked from the first, that shines over my field and the predominance of which is usurped by none other.[1]

The situation, concerning the restoration of Rose Tramore's mother to society, is seen solely through Rose's eyes. All that is related, therefore, is given coherence and a significant pattern. When James fails to observe this "principle of composition" he is dissatisfied with the results. He criticises 'The London Life', for example, because "there are interviews to which [his] central figure [is] not a party, scenes revolving on an improvised pivot of their own".[2]

By presenting only those 'scenes' at which his 'central intelligence' is present, besides achieving a well-defined form, James also achieves that 'unity of impression' which Poe and others have identified as an important feature of the short story.

Dialogue can also be of great value in respect to economy because of its powers of immediacy and actuality. It is interesting to compare James's use of it with that of Prosper Mérimée and Guy de Maupassant, both of whom undoubtedly encouraged him to strive for compression and conciseness in the

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[1] AN, p. 139.

[2] Ibid., p. 136.

short story.[1]

Turning first to Mérimée, 'Mateo Falcone' is one of the briefest of his short stories. It is told from the 'point of view' of a narrator not intimately concerned in the action. The narrative introduction gives the setting - the wild Corsican mâquis - and a slight characterisation of the main actors - Mateo Falcone, his wife, Giuseppa, and their young son, Fortunato, to whom they are passionately devoted. The exposition of the situation and its consequent development are both in dialogue, the necessary facts emerging in the course of a series of conversations between Fortunato, a bandit, and some soldiers. The boy's dishonourable behaviour, in betraying the bandit to the soldiers, after having first given him refuge, and his parents' discovery of this, are, again, 'scenically' treated. So too is the terrible climax, where Mateo takes Fortunato out into the 'mâquis' to shoot him, and the moving conclusion, - Giuseppa's sorrow and Mateo's instructions for the funeral. The action is swift and single, the characterisation slight but adequate, and the unities of time, place and action are all observed. The structure is sharply defined, with exposition, development, climax and conclusion following one another rapidly and inevitably. In spite of the extreme brevity of the tale, which is only about 5,000 words long, Mérimée has seen fit to treat the greater part of it 'scenically' - the most economic method in this case.

'The Necklace' by Maupassant, is even briefer, and equally concise, though it covers a longer time than 'Mateo Falcone', the first part of the action taking place over a few days, the climax and denouement following after

[1] re. Mérimée, vid. LRE, pp. 169-70, 310; re. Maupassant, vid. Edel's comment, CT, vol. 8, p. 7.

many years. Like James, Maupassant resorts to dialogue for all 'discriminated occasions'. (Of the five sections, only one is in pure narrative.) Again, the exposition is in narrative, the omniscient author describing the reduced circumstances of Monsieur Loisel and his wife, and her frustrated social aspirations. The development of the situation, when the husband encourages his wife to accept an invitation to dine out, is in dialogue. So too is the first crisis, where, having borrowed a beautiful diamond necklace from a friend, and having enjoyed a great success at the dinner, the wife discovers that she has lost the necklace on her way home from it. The subsequent development, showing the gradual deterioration of the couple as they attempt to save up enough money to purchase another necklace, is, naturally enough, summarised in narrative, but the real climax of the story is in dialogue once more. (This is not surprising, since the 'plot' is highly contrived, and the climax takes the form of an unexpected 'twist', which means that suspense and revelation are of first importance.) The wife, having finally managed to pay off the debt, at such great cost to her happiness, meets her friend again after many years, and discovers, to her utter desolation and dismay, that, whereas the necklace she bought was of real diamonds, the one she borrowed was merely 'paste'. The irony of the situation is reflected in the dialogue.

One of James's own stories, 'Paste',[1] is based on this tale by Maupassant, though the 'twist' is different, for a necklace believed to be 'paste', turns out to be real. Two other differences, which make James's version potentially far more subjective than Maupassant's, are the added psychological dimension, and the 'point of view' treatment. (Dialogue, therefore, is even

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[1] CT, vol. 10, p. 451 ff.

more essential here than in 'The Necklace'.) The tale opens in dialogue, after which comes a brief narrative exposition. This is followed by eight 'scenes' between the three main characters, Arthur Prime, Charlotte Prime, his cousin, and Mrs. Guy, a 'society' woman. In the first one Charlotte and Arthur discuss the jewels which his deceased stepmother has bequeathed to him, and Arthur, believing them to be 'paste', gives them to Charlotte. During the next five scenes, Charlotte, having returned to her post as governess at Bleet, a large country-house, discusses the matter with Mrs. Guy, who is a guest there. Mrs. Guy maintains that one of the pieces of jewellery, a pearl necklace, is real (and persuades Charlotte to let her wear it for dinner!). Charlotte now feels compelled to offer it back to Arthur, though she secretly hopes that he will tell her to keep it. The seventh 'scene', between the two of them, reveals Arthur's conflicting feelings on the matter. If he admits that the pearls are real, then this is a grave reflection on the morals of his stepmother, who was a minor actress, before her marriage to a country vicar. If, on the other hand, he allows Charlotte to keep them, on the assumption that they are 'paste', he may prove to be wrong, and thus forfeit the opportunity of considerable financial gain. His greed gets the upper hand, and he finally decides to take them back. In the eighth and last 'scene', Charlotte meets Mrs. Guy once more. She is wearing the necklace, which she says she has bought from a Bond Street jeweller. Charlotte cannot decide whether this is true, or whether she has got them direct from Arthur, and the story ends on a familiar note of ambiguity. Taking into account the added psychological dimension, the compression here is equal to that of 'The Necklace' (even though the latter

is only 3,000 words, as compared with 5,000), and it is even more 'scenic' in treatment.

In each of these short stories, brevity, economy and unity of impression, the three main characteristics of the short story, are achieved by means of a predominantly 'scenic' treatment. Far from being incompatible with these aims, therefore, it appears that dialogue is often directly conducive to them. As such, it is of decided structural value in James's tales.

CHAPTER 6

DEVELOPMENT

> Le dialogue Jamesien est extrement subtile, a ses règles strictes d'effets. Les insistences sur certain mots, les malentendus, les obscurités voulues, sont agencés de façon à produire à un moment précis, une suggestion particulière. On trouve un dosage minutieux, presque une acrobatie, dans la choix, la place des mots et des répliques, à un point tel que/ce dialogue a été appelé un 'marivaudage cérébral'. Les pauses, les silences même y jouent un role; la nuance révélatrice se trouve souvent dans ce que les personnages n'expriment pas, dans ce que (James nous le fait sentir) ils ne veulent pas exprimer.[1]

Although the above is a sensitive summary of the main features of what has come to be regarded as 'Jamesian' dialogue, it is also a warning against thinking of these as static and uniform throughout James's career. For there are marked differences between the technique of the early and that of the later works, which I now hope to illustrate by comparing passages from representative 'early', 'middle' and 'late' tales with one another. The passage from the 'middle' period will also be compared with one from the plays.

The following 'early' extract, from 'The Story of a Year' (1865), is a 'scene' between John Ford, a young recruit just off to the Civil War, and Elizabeth Crowe, his newly-acquired fiancée. Ford is trying to persuade Elizabeth not to sacrifice herself to his memory if he should die in battle, but she swears eternal loyalty to him and his memory. (Ironically enough, while he is away, she is unfaithful to him and considers marrying someone else, even as he lies dying).

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[1] Henry James, Markow-Totevy, Paris, 1958, p. 104.

Abbreviations:

A = Answer
AI = Apparent Irrelevancy
Amp. = Amplification
Ant. = Antithesis
AP = Ambiguous Pronoun
Arch. = Archaism
C = Colloquialism
Cl. = Cliche
CQ = Counter-question
CS = Completed Sentence
E = Exclamation
Ell. = Ellipsis
Euph. = Euphemism
G = Generalisation
H = Hyperbole
I = Irony
IC = Inverted Commas
Int. = Interruption
IQ = Indirect Question
It. = Italics
JT = Jamesian Terminology
LA = Literary Allusion
M = Metaphor
P = Pause
Par. = Parenthesis
Para. = Paralellism
Pers. = Personification
Prov. = Proverb
Q = Question
R = Repetition
S = Silence
Sim. = Simile
US = Unfinished Sentence

Extract A.[1]

Text	
"That is an allegory," said the young man, as the sun went	
under, looking into his companion's face, where a pink flush	
still seemed to linger: "it means the end of the war. The forces	Amp.
on both sides are withdrawn. The blood that has been shed gathers	M,H
itself into a vast globule and drops into the ocean."	
"I'm afraid it means a shabby compromise," said Elizabeth,	
"light disappears, too, and the land is in darkness."	M,Arch.
"Only for a season," answered the other. "We mourn our dead.	Arch.
Then light comes again, stronger and brighter than ever. Perhaps	Amp,M
you'll be crying for me, Lizzie, at that distant day."	
"Oh, Jack, didn't you promise not to talk about that?"	Q.
says Lizzie, threatening to anticipate the performance in question.	
Jack took this rebuke in silence, gazing soberly at the	S
empty sky. Soon the young girl's eyes stole up to his face.	
If he had been looking at anything in particular, I think she	
would have followed the direction of his glance; but as it	
seemed to be a very vacant one, she let her eyes rest.	
"Jack," said she, after a pause, "I wonder how you'll	P
look when you get back."	IQ
Ford's soberness gave way to a laugh. "Uglier than	A
ever. I shall be all incrusted with mud and gore. And then	Amp.
I shall be magnificently sunburnt, and I shall have a beard.	
"Oh, you dreadful!" and Lizzie gave a little shout.	C,E
"Really, Jack, if you have a beard, you'll not look like a	
gentleman."	
"Shall I look like a lady, pray?" says Jack.	QI
"Are you serious?" asks Lizzie.	CQ

[1] CT, vol. I, p. 51-3.

"To be sure. I mean to alter my face as you do — A
your misfitting garments,- take in one side and let — M,Sim,P
out the other. Isn't that the process? I shall crop — Q,M
my head and cultivate my chin." — Amp.
"You've a very nice chin, my dear, and I think it's
a shame to hide it." — C
"Yes, I know my chin's handsome; but wait till you — A
see my head."
"Oh, the vanity!" cried Lizzie, "the vanity of men in — E,R
their faces! Talk of women!" and the silly creature — E,E
looked up at her lover with most inconsistent
satisfaction.
"Oh the pride of women in their husbands!" said — E,Para.
Jack, who, of course knew what she was about.
"You're not my husband, Sir. There's many a slip" - — Prov.,I.US
But the young girl stopped short.
"'Twixt the cup and the lip," said Jack. "Go on. I — CS
can match your proverb with another. 'There's many a — Prov.
true word', and so forth. No, my darling, I'm not your — US
husband. Perhaps I never shall be. But if anything — R,I
happens to me, you'll take comfort, won't you?" — Q
"Never!" said Lizzie, tremulously. — A,E,H,I
"Oh, but you must; otherwise, Lizzie, I should think — E,C
our engagement inexcusable. Stuff! who am I that you — Q,OA
should cry for me?"
"You are the best and wisest of men , I don't care; — A,H,C
you <u>are</u>." — It.
"Thankyou for your great love, my dear. That's a
delightful illusion. But I hope Time will kill it, in — Pers.,M
his own good way, before it hurts anyone. I know so
many men who are worth infinitely more than I - — H,P
men wise, generous, and brave - that I shall not feel as — Amp.,Pa.,P
if I am leaving you in an empty world."
"Oh, my dear friend!" said Lizzie, after a pause, — P,E
"I wish you could advise me all my life."
"Take care, take care," laughed Jack; "you don't know — R
what you are bargaining for, But will you let me say a — M,Q
word now?"

A distinctive feature of this passage is the question-answer formula. There are nine questions altogether, two of them direct, two 'leading', two indirect, a further two rhetorical (both of them by Jack), and one counter-question, which is also an answer of sorts. Of the answers themselves, there

are seven in all. Three, of the five direct ones are affirmations, such as Jack's adamant 'To be sure!', one of them an emphatic negation, Lizzie's 'Never!', and one a literal reply to a figurative question, which reveals her ingenuousness. The sixth is a question, and the seventh silence. There is, therefore, a fair amount of variety within this one category.

Both speakers, characteristically enough, are very fond of exclamations, of which there are eight in all. Jack's homely ejaculation 'stuff!' indicates his youth and provinciality, Lizzie's 'Oh, my dear friend!', her sentimentality. Her apostrophe, beginning 'Oh the vanity...', and Jack's 'Oh the pride ...' reveal yet another, melodramatic side to their natures.

The three cases of repetition fall very neatly into the three main types: repetition of single words ('vanity'), that of phrases, ('take care'), and that of whole clauses (I'm not your husband'). Their function is almost solely rhetorical.

The two unfinished sentences are both the beginning of familiar proverbs, so that they evoke no feeling of suspense, since the end is known, whether given or not. Lizzie's 'There's many a slip' is a not very subtle attempt at allusion, whilst Jack's 'There's many a true word', is an effort to cap hers as wittily as possible.

The four examples of pause (two indicated in the 'stage-directions', two by means of a dash), are again largely rhetorical in function.

The only case of parenthesis here, Jack's aside on 'many men', could alternatively be thought of as an amplification, of which there are five other

instances. Like his elaborate simile concerning his beard and dressmaking, they are all used by him in order to dramatise his language and to impress Lizzie.

The simile just referred to is by no means the only occasion on which imagery occurs, for there are at least five speeches containing it. The first three are linked together by a common image of sunset. The other two follow after simile and personification; 'Time', for example, is not only personified, he is also seen as 'killing' illusions. All five are again highly rhetorical, verging on the melodramatic, as in Jack's description of the sun as a 'vast globule' of blood.

This last example illustrates yet another characteristic of melodramatic utterance - the use of hyperbole, of which there are five clear cases. As might be anticipated, Jack is fonder of this figure than Lizzie, who nevertheless resorts to it when she particularly wishes to stress her point, as in 'Never!'.

Other means of emphasis are italics, used once by Lizzie, and inverted commas, once by Jack.

One more indication of Jack's inclination to see himself in the role of the tragic hero, is his echo of Hamlet's words:-

> "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her?"

(though one very much wonders whether he is not wasting this literary allusion on Lizzie).

Irony, as a figure of speech, is used once, consciously, by Jack: 'Shall I look like a lady, pray?'. It is also used unconsciously, more than

once, by both characters in their jokes about the possibility of their not marrying, the irony being that they do not, in fact, marry, in spite of their obvious intention to do so at this point. There is yet another, more complex type of irony which pervades the passage, but this will be considered in relation to 'tone'.[1]

The most outstanding feature of the diction is the prevalence of colloquialisms. Lizzie's 'You dreadful!' indicates a lack of maturity, whilst Jack's more robust 'Stuff!' contrasts rather oddly with the allusion to Hamlet which follows it. More in keeping with the 'tragic hero' side of his nature is the Biblical and archaic phraseology to which he occasionally resorts. His weighty: 'We mourn our dead', for example, reveals his sense of self-importance.

It is significant that the two features which predominate syntactically, parallelism and antithesis, are also tricks of rhetoric, and that Jack is fonder of them than Lizzie. The balance of phrases in: 'I shall crop my head and cultivate my chin', is rendered still more emphatic by the alliteration of the two verbs, and the contrast in meaning between them.

The inversion of noun and adjectives in the phrase 'men, wise, generous, and brave', is a minor point, but one which again indicates Jack's tendency towards rhetoric.

There is a certain amount of 'liaison' between speeches, and this is brought about by repetition, linked metaphors, parallelism and antithesis; also, on a simpler level, by means of the question-answer formula.

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[1] i.e. the writer's attitude towards his material and his reader.

The rhetorical effect of Jack's language is further heightened by the occasional presence of fairly pronounced rhythms. Besides echoing the rhythm of blank verse in his allusion to Hamlet, for example, he also emphasises the important points of his speech on courage by means of a heavy stressing of the emotive words: 'men, wise, generous, and brave'.

The 'tone' of the passage is predominantly ironic. Jack's speech is meant to be melodramatic and a little ridiculous, Lizzie's to reveal a certain shallowness, though they could, on the other hand, be interpreted as a failure, on James's part, to reproduce 'realistic' dialogue.[1] The latter possibility is unlikely, since there is so much unmistakeable irony in the tone of the 'middle' and 'late' works. (James is far more of a humourist than he is usually given credit for.) If the tone of this passage is, in fact, ironic this means that the language of both Jack and Lizzie has been made deliberately rhetorical in the interests of characterisation.

Indeed, one of the main functions of dialogue here is to characterise Jack's understandable sense of self-importance and Lizzie's rather foolish sentimentality. It also serves to anticipate the ironic action, to a certain extent. Though the main theme is sounded in the course of the opening conversation, it is not much emphasised, and 'atmosphere' is conveyed more powerfully in an initial passage of narrative, than in the dialogue. The 'scene' has no very significant structural role in the tale as a whole.

In the next tale, 'The Altar of the Dead', however, dialogue plays a very important part, structurally, occurring as it does at the climax of a

[1] Vid.inf. chapter 7, p.220-2 for a discussion of 'realism' and related terms.

predominantly narrated story; it also helps to emphasise the theme, and to build up an appropriate atmosphere of suspense and mystery. The speakers are characterised by it to lesser extent than in extract A. In the following excerpt Stransom is intimating to his fellow-worshipper of the Dead that, though she has forgiven Acton Hague for the wrong he did her, he never will. Her refusal to tell him what wrong Acton did her adds further tension to an already tense situation.

<u>Extract B.</u>[1]

Stransom after a minute broke out: "Good God, how   P
he must have used <u>you</u>!"   It.,E
She dropped his hand at this, got up and, moving
across the room, made straight a small picture to which,
on examining it, he had given a slight push. Then turn-
ing round on him with her pale gaiety recovered: "I've
forgiven him!" she declared.   E
"I know what you've done," said Stransom; "I know   R
what you've done for years." For a moment they looked   Amp.
at each other across the room, with their long community
of service in their eyes. This short passage made, to
Stransom's sense, for the woman before him, an immense,
an absolutely naked confession; which was presently,
suddenly blushing red and changing her place again, what
she appeared to become aware that he perceived in it.
He got up. "How you must have loved him!" he cried.   E
"Women are not like men. They can love even where   G
they've suffered."   Amp.
"Women are wonderful," said Stransom. "But I assure   R,JT
you I've forgiven him too."
"If I had known of anything so strange I wouldn't
have brought you here."
"So that we might have gone on in our ignorance
to the last?"   Q
"What do you call the last?" she asked, smiling   R,CQ
still.
At this he could smile back at her. "You'll see -   A,P
when it comes."   Amp.,M
She reflected a moment. "This is better perhaps;   P
but as we were - it was good."   P

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[1]<u>CT</u>, vol. 9, p. 255-9

"Did it never happen that he spoke of me?" Stransom inquired. — Q,AI

Considering more intently, she made no answer, and he quickly recognised that he would have been adequately answered by her asking how often he himself had spoken of their terrible friend. Suddenly a brighter light broke in her face, and an excited idea sprang to her lips in the question: "You _have_ forgiven him?" — S; CQ,AI,It.

"How, if I hadn't, could I linger here?" — CQ,I

She winced, for an instant, at the deep but unintended irony of this; but even while she did so she panted quickly: "Then in the lights on your altar-?" — CQ,US

"There's never a light for Acton Hague!" — CS,E

She stared, with a visible fall. "But if he's one of your Dead?" — Q

"He's one of the world's, if you like - he's one of yours. But he's not one of mine. Mine are only the Dead who died possessed of me. They're mine in death because they were mine in life." — A,P,R; R,R,Ant.; M,R,Amp.; R,Ant.

"_He_ was yours in life then, even if for a while he ceased to be. If you forgave him you went back to him. Those whom we've once loved-" — It,R; G,US

"Are those who can hurt us most," Stransom broke in. — R,Int.,M,CS

"Ah, it's not true - you've _not_ forgiven him!" she wailed with a passion that startled him. — P,It.,E

He looked at her a moment. "What was it he did to you?" — AI,Q

"Everything!" Then abruptly she put out her hand in farewell. "Goodbye." ... — A,H,E

[They do not part immediately, however, but carry on talking in the same vein for some time longer.]

He made a supreme appeal. "What _did_ he do to you?" — Q,It.

"It would have come out - _she_ would have told you. That fear, at my heart - that was my reason!" And she closed the door, shutting him out. — AI,P,AP,It.; Pers.,P,R,E,A

The first thing of note here is the increase in the use of repetition, pause and italics. There is also none of the rather crude imagery of the first one. Other than this, there is a fairly close correspondance in the number of such features as the 'question-answer' formula, exclamation, amplification and the unfinished sentence. There is a distinct difference, in the majority of cases, however, between their function, mirroring a shift

in interest and emphasis.

Out of the nine questions in both passages, for example, four are counter-questions in extract B, as compared with the one of extract A. One of these four is unfinished, a type which is not to be found in extract A with its far lower tension. Another new type is the leading question. But there are none of the rhetorical questions of extract A here.

The three consecutive counter-questions in extract B reflect a general tendency to avoid direct answers. In fact, only two, out of the six answers could be called 'direct', and one of these, the friend's hyperbolic 'Never!', is really rather indirect and evasive, in spite of its emphasis. As in extract A one answer takes the form of silence, but there are also examples of three new kinds of indirect reply, typified in the friend's final refusal to specify what Acton Hague did to her. The speakers are altogether more adept at avoiding direct answers, which generally involve committal. They are more deliberate conversationalists in every way.

Another device not to be found in extract A is the apparent irrelevancy of some of the speaker s'remarks, which reflects the increased complexity of their thought processes and their greater complicity. Stransom's question: 'Did it never happen that he spoke of me?', for example, does not appear immediately relevant to the preceding remark, but his friend sees the connection, and seizes the allusion at once.

Although there are an almost equal number of exclamation marks here (seven as compared with eight) they are used with more discrimination than in extract A, where they often seem nothing more than rhetorical flourishes.

In extract B each of them marks a highly significant point in the conversation. What could be more properly emphasised, for example, than Stransom's terrible remark: 'There's never a light for Acton Hague!'?

Again, though there are an equal number of unfinished sentences in both passages, their function differs in each case, for in extract B they create a feeling of suspense, though this is only temporary, as both of them are completed. One completion takes the form of an interruption, a device not to be found in extract A. Stransom interrupts his friend in order to contradict what he anticipates she is going to say, thus revealing an intimate understanding of the way in which her mind works and an awareness of the full implications of all that has been said up to that point.

Amplification, though used to a similar degree in the two passages, is seldom mere 'padding' in extract B, as it frequently is in extract A. It is much more essential here because the action is more psychological and, therefore, in need of greater elucidation and interpretation. When Stransom, for example, says that Acton Hague 'is not one of my Dead', the reader is grateful for the amplification which follows: 'Mine are the Dead who died possessed of me'.

The imagery of this passage, besides being less prevalent than in extract A, also differs greatly in kind and function. Because it is more subtle it is not nearly so immediately obvious. It is debatable whether 'hurt' in 'those who can hurt us most', for example, is a live metaphor or not, and whether James has the idea of movement uppermost in his mind when he causes Stransom to say: 'You'll see - when it comes'. The latter may

be an attempt to dramatise the abstract world of thought and mental action. Metaphor is certainly being used to help define the indefinable. Stransom's above statement that his Dead are those who died 'possessed' of him, for example, represents his effort to describe his sense of communion with them - a nebulous concept.

There is another distinct difference between the two extracts in the matter of repetition. It has increased in number from three to ten in the later passage and is an altogether more complex figure; Stransom, for example, repeats 'mine' not once but three times in the same speech. Besides its obvious function of creating 'liaison', it is also used to emphasise the theme, by the repetition of such key phrases as 'the Dead'. And the friend resorts to it to show her desire for explanation of Stransom's 'the last': 'What do you call the last?', she pleads.

There is a corresponding increase in the use of pause, from four to eleven (indicated equally, as in the first passage, by means of dashes and 'stage-directions'). Like amplification, these pauses are not primarily rhetorical in function, as they are in extract A, but rather indications of psychological action.

The lack of proverbs and literary allusions here is a change for the better. The two cases of generalisation, which, in a sense replace them, reveal both speakers' ability to draw philosophical conclusions from the situation. 'Women', Stransom concludes from his dealings with his friend, 'are wonderful'.

A minor typographical point which should be noted is the marked

increase in the use of italics, from one to six. In addition to emphasising statement, as they do in extract A, they here help to link speech to speech by a system of back-references. They are also a means of condensing statements, by implying more than is actually said. Stransom's emphasis on '*you*' in the opening sentence, for example, implies that Acton Hague has also used *him*. This last function reflects a movement in the passage as a whole towards indirection and allusiveness.

The fact that James thinks it necessary to point out that there is 'deep but unintended irony' in one of Stransom's remarks is an indication that the irony is of a subtler kind that in extract A (though the tone itself is not ironic as it is there). His question: 'How, if I hadn't [forgiven him], could I linger here?', is doubly ironic. Firstly, because it emphasises the the irony of the fact that they should be prevented from knowing each other by the very thing that should draw them together - their common acquaintance with Acton Hague, and the wrong he did them both. Secondly, because Stransom has not, in fact, forgiven Acton Hague, as his next remark shows, yet he still 'lingers' there.

The use of the Jamesian adjective 'wonderful', which reflects Stransom's aesthetic attitude towards moral virtue, and his response to his friend's plea for a definition of his phrase 'the last', mark him out as 'supersubtle fry". The diction is otherwise unremarkable.

The syntax, on the other hand contains a number of interesting features. The archaic structure of some of Stransom's language, which is even more pronounced than Jack's, is strongly reminiscent of the Bible and the Liturgy.

The rather contrived syntax of his elevated: 'There's never a light for Acton Hague!' adds emphasis to the statement mainly because of the use of 'never', where one would normally expect to find 'no' or 'not'. Though Jack and Stransom both strike one as conscious rhetoricians, the latter has greater powers of control over his speech than the former, who tends to get carried away by his own words. One reason for this is that Stransom has something more important to say than Jack.

There is as much, if not more parallelism and antithesis in extract B as in extract A, pointing, again, to a deliberate artfulness on the part of the speakers.

Given this rhetorical side to their speech, it is hardly surprising to find that its rhythms are, if anything, more pronounced than those of Jack's, with the stress always falling on the important words: 'They're mine in death because they were mine in life'.

A new feature of the syntax is the freedom with which ambiguous pronouns are used to link speech to speech, and also as a means of creating a feeling of suspense. The passage closes, for example, on a tense and enigmatic note with the friend's remark: 'It would have come out - <u>she</u> would have told you'.

The 'stage-directions' are no longer couched in such bald terms as in extract A. Instead of 'she said', for example, James either avoids commenting altogether, or describes the speaker's reactions: 'She stared, with a visible fall'. Their movements and gestures are also given in much more detail. Although this might seem to imply an increase in authorial comment,

and a correspondingly more subjective technique, this is not the case. On the contrary, James appears to be striving towards a more objective, more dramatic approach to his material. So that, instead of telling the reader directly what the characters are doing or thinking, he uses such phrases as 'she appeared to become aware', or such incolved sentences as 'he quickly recognised that he would have been adequately answered by her asking how often he himself had spoken of their terrible friend'. In other words, the action is being related from their own 'point of view'. (This is not quite as objective as the 'point of view' method proper, however, where the vision, in any one 'scene', is always single.)

Dupée sums up the qualities of the dialogue of the 'middle' period in the following way:

> The characters, themselves more articulate,...now talk about the language itself, evidencing its richness in nuance at the same time that they are furthering the action. The internal structure of dialogue, as well as its relation to the enveloping marrative, undergoes an intense stylisation. The theatre's influence is felt in monolithic scenes and resounding curtains. Patches of talk are set off from the rest...except that the business of the story is mainly done in them. Of business, moreover, there is a definite sum to be accomplished in each area of dialogue, some item of revelation or decision to be added to the whole account.[1]

The "theatre's influence" can be assessed more accurately after a passage from one of the plays has been compared with extract B. As the play concerned, 'Guy Domville', was written in 1893, two years before 'The Altar of the Dead', it is likely that any obvious influences will emerge in the course of this comparison. (This attempt to compare drama and fiction has the authority of James himself:

1. Henry James, London, 1951, p. 194.

> Signor D'Annunzio's plays are, besides his novels, of decidedly minor weight...The example is interesting when we catch in the fact the opportunity for comparing with the last closeness the capacity of the two rival canvases, as they become for the occasion, on which the picture of life may be painted. The closeness is never so great, the comparison never so pertinent, as when the separate efforts are but different phases of the same talent.[1])

Another advantage of examining a passage from the plays is that of considering dialogue in an unadulterated form. 'Guy Domville' has been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, because its date of composition, 1893, represents a mid-point in James's playwriting career; secondly, it was actually performed on the London stage, unlike some of his plays, and, finally, because records are available of the reactions of contemporary critics towards it.

Extract C.[2]

[The following passage between Frank Humber and Mrs. Peverel, with whom he is in love, occurs immediately after Frank's conversation with Lord Devenish, who has come to learn something more about Guy Domville and his relations with Mrs. Peverel. (Guy, tutor to her young son, has resolved to enter the Church, but Lord Devenish comes with news of a large fortune, if he will forego his calling.) Frank does not, at this point, realise that Mrs. Peverel is in love with Guy, so that this conversation with her about Guy's position lends itself to irony and suspense. The resulting intensity, however, as will become clear in the course of analysis, is of a very different kind from that of extract B.]

Mrs. Peverel:	(Surprised) What does the gentleman desire?	Q
Frank:	To have speech of our young divine.	A,I
Mrs. P:	Pray who is he?	It,Q
Frank:	I believe that letter tells.	A
Mrs. P:	(With the letter) "For Mr. Domville, introducing my Lord Devenish".	IC

[1] Selected Literary Criticism, ed. M. Shapira, 1962, p. 268.

[2] CP, 1949, p. 487 ff, Act 1)

Frank: (Surprised) My Lord Devenish? Q,R
Mrs. P.: (Wondering) Isn't that the name - the name - ? P,R,CQ,US
Frank: The name of a nobleman of extraordinary R,CS
assurance! E
Mrs. P: That's just what I mean - the one who was said P,A
to be Mrs. Domville's great adorer. Euph,H
Frank: Do you mean the lady's lover? I never knew any Q,I
Mrs. Domville but the mother of our good friend.
Mrs. P: I speak of the widow of one of his kinsmen - the Amp.,P
one that was the head of the family. Amp.
Frank: (Smiling) He's not the head of <u>ours</u>! God bless you for Ant.,It.,E
such a letter! E
Mrs. P: (Turning over <u>Lord Devenish</u>'s letter) It's not AP
sealed, you see. (Absent) What does he want of
Mr. Domville? Q
Frank: I don't mean <u>that</u> one - I mean <u>yours</u>, that came It.,P.Amp,
yesterday. You see it has brought me over. It/
Mrs. P: Didn't you come over to see your friend? Q
Frank: <u>You're</u> my friend, and when I come to your house It.,Amp.
you're always the person I come for! Especially E,Amp.
when you let me know that you desire it.
Mrs. P: (Surprised) Is that what my letter conveyed? Q
Frank: It conveyed that I might ride over if I liked - A,R,P
which is the same thing. And it conveyed some R
other things. Have you already forgotten? Q
Mrs. P: I don't remember - I'm miserably sad. We're A,P,Amp.
losing our best company.
Frank: Dear lady, it's you who are mine, and I haven't
lost you yet! E
Mrs. P: You haven't yet gained me, Mr. Humber! E,Ant.
Frank: What then did your letter mean? Q
Mrs. P: I don't know <u>what</u> it meant! I'll tell you some A,It.,E
other time!
Frank: Thankyou for that. I assure you I look forward
to other times.
Mrs. P: Oh, we shall have leisure! It stretches out like I,E,Amp.
the Great Desert! The cruel loss will be Geordie's. H,Sim,E
He parts with his comrade - with his idol! Amp,P,H,E
Frank: The child loves him so? Q
Mrs. P: Loves him? He clings to him - he's spending his R,CQ,P,Amp.
last hour with him! Such devotion as my boy has E
enjoyed and such perfect tenderness - such an R,P,R
influence and such an example! And now it all E
goes! E
Frank: It goes to a greater work! R,E

Mrs. P:	(Musing, with a vague shrug) Yes, yes - a greater work!	R,P,R,Ell, E.
Frank:	He'll rise to high honours - be one of the Princes of the Church.	M,Cl,P,Amp.
Mrs. P:	I don't know if he'll be one of its "Princes" - but he may very well be one of its Saints.	IC,R,P. Ant.
Frank:	Ah, that's more difficult! for that you must give up things!	It,E,I E
Mrs. P:	(With decision) Well - he'll give them up! He's one of those who can!	P,E,R It.,R,
Frank:	Dear Lady, your boy loses one friend, but he keeps another! I don't compare myself - except for the interest I may take - with such a companion, with such a benefactor as Guy. I'm not clever, I'm not learned, I shall never rise to honours, much less to holiness! But I can stand firm - I can keep watch - I can take his little hand in mine. Mrs. Peverel, let me be something to him!	Ant. E,P,Par. P. R,R Cl,M,Para. E,R,P,Cl,M Cl,M,P,R,Cl. It,E,IQ
Mrs. P:	You can be as good-natured as you like - my house is always open to you. What more do you want?	P,A Q,I

In comparing the two extracts, allowances must be made for the fact that there are no passages of narrative in extract C. The number of times a figure recurs, therefore, may tend to be higher in relation to the length of the passage. This makes no serious difference, however, as it is the type, and function, of the figure used that is the main interest here. For example, there are fourteen questions in this passage, as opposed to the nine found in extract B, but this, of itself, signifies very little until their function is examined. At least seven of the fourteen are direct demands for facts; three more are rhetorical, and there is only one indirect, one leading, one unfinished, and one counter-question. That is to say, the purpose of the question differs considerably in each passage. In extract B the emphasis is on what it reveals about the speakers themselves, whereas here it is used mainly to elicit factual information, as, for example, Mrs. Peverel's first question: "What does the gentleman desire?" In answering such questions the speakers reveal

a tendency towards evasion which was noted in extract B. Only two, out of the eleven, in extract C aredirect, all the others are indirect - interruptions, qualifications and counter-questions. But the resulting suspense is of a different order from that of extract B, where it is emotions, thoughts, motives, and decisions which are kept deliberately vague and undefined, whereas here, the speakers conceal only the facts of the situation. Frank's indirect reply to Mrs. Peverel's: "Who is he?", for example, hides nothing more than a man's name, but when Stransom's friend refuses to tell him what Acton Hague did to her, the important thing to the reader is not what he did but her motive in evading a direct reply. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are no apparently irrelevant answers in extract C, since these are largely psychological in function.

Another unmistakeable indication of the difference between the two lies in the play's greater dependence on exclamation (twenty-three cases, as opposed to seven). Rather than making the dialogue more dramatic, however, this profusion t nds to make it melodramatic; since nearly every other sentence is stressed in this way, the exclamation mark loses its powers of emphasis, which rely to a great extent on rarity value. (The difficulty of comparing two different mediums makes itself felt here, for the exclamation marks in a play are not meant to be read by the audience as in a work of fiction, but to be interpreted by the actors. If the actor is skilful enough, the above charge becomes invalid.)

The same criticism, with the same qualifications, can be applied to the use of italics in extract C. That is to say, though they may look excessive

on the printed page, whether they actually are or not depends very much on the interpretation of the individual actor. In both cases the devices may be deliberate indications of a fondness for melodramatic language on the part of the speakers, though this is not verifiable from the tone of the passage, as the writer's voice is completely absent. The same could be said of the use of capital letters and inverted commas, two other marked features of extract C.

Repetition, in this pass ge, also makes for melodrama, in Frank's final outburst in particular. One of its main functions in extract B, to supply a link between speeches, is almost entirely absent here, where it is only used once or twice for this purpose.

Antithesis, of which there are four cases, is used predominantly as a vehicle for gay and witty repartee. 'I haven't lost you yet!' says Frank to Mrs. Peverel, to which she banteringly replies: 'You haven't yet gained me, Mr. Humber!' This is in consonance with the rest of the dialogue, which, as a whole, has more surface brilliance and glitter than that of extract B, though very few of its nuances.

Simple irony, of which there are more examples in the play, is also exploited for witty ends, especially by Frank, who labels Guy 'our young divine', corrects Mrs. Peverel's euphemistic 'her great adorer' to 'the lady's lover', and responds to her remark that Guy may become a saint with a laughing understatement: 'Ah, that's more difficult!' There is no great significance in such irony and its superficiality contrasts sharply with the 'deep but unintended irony' of extract B.

There are twice as many examples of pause in the play (all of them indicated by dashes rather than stage-directions). But, like exclamation, this is generally at the mercy of the actor's personal interpretation, so that it is rash to infer too much from the increase. Of more importance is the fact that, as in Mrs Peverel's 'I don't know if he'll be one of its Princes - but he may well be one of its Saints', pause is used mainly for rhetorical effect here, whereas in the tale it is an indication of psychological action.

Though there are far more cases of amplification in extract C (fourteen as opposed to five), it again differs in function. Like the question, it is related to the facts of the situation, rather than a personal interpretation of them. (The problem of supplying 'a certain seated mass of information' is both intensified and simplified in a play; intensified because this can be given only through dialogue; simplified because, within the conventions of the drama, the audience expects to be presented with the necessary facts in a fairly direct way. James's method of presenting these could never be called 'direct', even in his plays, but it is so in comparison with the method of the tales of the same period.) The dialogue of extract C is much more businesslike than that of extract B.

The metaphors in the two passages are equally conventional, on the whole, but many of those in extract C are clichés, unlike those in extract B. These clichés, such as 'rising to honours', 'standing firm', or 'keeping watch', can be seen either as an indication of character, or as a sign that the dialogue of the play is inferior to that of the tale. Besides being more prevalent, the imagery of extract C also differs from that of extract B in that it has

hardly any psychological implications.

The diction is similarly conventional and cliché-ridden. Again, it may be thought of in two ways. Frank's reference to the child's 'little hand', for example, is either a mark of his sentimentality, or a proof that the dialogue is not 'realistic'. In the absence of James's voice, it is impossible to say which it is. (The reader is helped to determine James's attitude towards his characters by the tone of the narrative comments in extract A, and, to a lesser extent, in extract B, but he receives no aid at all in extract C.)

The syntax bears several resemblances to that of extract B. There is balance, brought about by the use of parallelism, antithesis and repetition, and the speeches are linked together in much the same way by the question-answer formula, repetition, italics and antithesis. The 'relationships' thus indicated, however, are far more factual and less psychological. There is a good deal of rhythmic prose here, as in extract B, but, whereas in the tale, rhythm is generally a sound guide to feelings, in the play it is of more purely aesthetic value,[1] and often for wholly rhetorical effect.

So that, although there are many superficial technical similarities between the two passages, these differ very much in function and effect. (This is due in part to the difference in mediums.) However, there are a sufficient number of likenesses between the two to make it obvious that James's later technique is influenced by his experience with the drama. In fact, he quite categorically states his indebtedness to it.[2]

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[1]Vid. sup. chapter 1 , p.50 for Shaw's comment on it.

[2]Vid. <u>NB</u>, p. 188, 208.

The comparison of extracts A and B indicates that this influence does not necessarily cause him to introduce new elements into his dialogue, but rather to give existing ones a more dramatic function. Contrast, for example, Jack's predictable completion of Lizzie's unfinished sentence: 'There's many a slip'-''Twixt the cup and the lip', with Stransom's dramatic conclusion to his friend's: 'Then in the lights on your altar -?', - 'There's never a light for Acton Hague!' There are only few elements, such as the apparent irrelevancy, and 'Jamesian' terminology, in the later passage which are not to be found in the first.

The likenesses between these two extracts, or even those between extracts A and C, show that this movement towards dramatic dialogue, however, does not date solely from James's writing of plays; the playwriting seems only to encourage an already powerful tendency. And when the subtleties of extract B are compared with the comparative baldness of extract C it becomes plain that he is by no means convinced that the drama is capable of conveying all he wishes to express. Indeed, in many ways, he is relieved to leave the drama for fiction.[1] Edel describes this complex position with great clarity:

> Le théâtre lui avait enseigné la forme, la composition, la façon de traiter une situation dans les conditions difficiles. Il avait été un romancier devenu dramaturge; il était [après 1895] un dramaturge redevenu romancier. Au fond, ses romans avaient toujours été dramatiques; mais jamais encore il ne s'était, là, montré vraiment capable de construire une intrigue - il avait été plutôt un écrivain qui comprenait les situations psychologique, des conflits, et pouvait décrire toute la complexité des relations entre individus. Maintenant il joignait à ce sentiment naturel pour le drame une connaissance profonde de la technique théâtrale, et, comme dans ses romans, il était plus libre que sur la scène, il pouvait atteindre son but.[2]

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[1] Vid. <u>NB</u>, p. 179.

[2] <u>Les Années Dramatiques,</u> Paris, 1931, p. 164.

In his later works, James combines the advantages of each medium - the compression and immediacy of drama, the subtlety and allusiveness of fiction - whilst avoiding the shortcomings of both. Directing his readers' responses at every turn, he yet manages to retain an illusion of objectivity.

Concerning 'The Pension Beaurepas' (1879), D.W. Jefferson writes:

> ...the peculiar horror of their family relationship is expressed in a dialogue of a pointedness which makes one wonder why James failed so completely as a dramatist.[1]

It is not possible to go into all the likely reasons for James's failure as a playwright, but what must be considered here is whether or not the cause lies in poor, or inappropriate, dialogue.

This is not probable. The critics who watched the first performance of 'Guy Domville' drew attention, in particular, to "the unforced truthfulness of the dialogue"[2]; Arnold Bennett spoke of the "gems of dialogue",[3] and Shaw's praise of it has been referred to more than once. Another thing that makes it unlikely that the root of the trouble lies in dialogue, is the fact that so many of his tales and novels have been successfully adapted for the stage, radio and cinema.[4] For, in these various adaptations, it is generally the dialogue 'scenes' which are retained with least change, as being already sufficiently dramatic. (In fact, many of his works require very little

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[1] Henry James, London, 1960, p. 30.

[2] CP, p. 472.

[3] Ibid.

[4] 'The Aspern Papers', Washington Square and The Wings of the Dove, for example, have been adapted for the stage, 'The Turn of the Screw' has been made into an opera and a film (renamed The Innocents), and at least two novels, The Bostonians and Washington Square (renamed The Heiress), have been adapted for radio.

alteration beyond the omission, or summarising, of certain long narrative passages.) This proves that James is capable of writing good dramatic dialogue, even in fiction. The reasons for his failure as a dramatist must, therefore, be sought elsewhere.

An extract from one of the late tales will now be compared with that from 'The Altar of the Dead', for although there are many similarities of technique between the middle and the late period, there are also a number of differences. (These, again, are ones of proportion rather than kind.) In order to make the comparison as just as possible, a passage dealing with a similar tense situation has been chosen; in both cases the scene has been taken from the climax of the story.

'The Bench of Desolation' is an account of Herbert Dodd's relationship with Kate Cookham over a period of many years. In his youth he promises to marry her, poor as he is, but falls in love with another woman, whom he marries instead. Whereupon Kate threatens to sue him for breach of promise, unless he gives her a certain sum of money. This he does, though it hastens the ruin of both his career and his marriage, (his wife dies at an early age). On re-meeting Kate years later he discovers that she has greatly increased the money he gave her, and brought it back for him. The following passage is an account of the mixed feelings, motives and reactions of both characters under these odd circumstances. (The record of the lapse of years is almost wholly narrative, which makes the dialogue, when it comes, additionally dramatic by contrast.)

Extract D.[1]

He kept her a moment before him. "Do you mean that
we don't - that we don't -?" But he broke down. P,R,Q,US
"Do I 'mean' -?" She remained as for questions he might R,IC,CQ,US
ask, but it was well-nigh as if there played through her
dotty veil an irrepressible irony for that particular one.
"I've meant, for long years, I think, all I'm capable of A,Amp.
meaning. I've meant so much that I can't mean more. So R,Amp.
there it is."
"But if you go," he appealed - and with a sense as of P
final flatness, however he arranged it, for his own attitude
- "but if you go shan't I see you again?" R,Q
She waited a little and it was strangely for him now P
as if - though at last so much more gorged with her tribute than
she had ever been with his - something still depended on her.
"Do you <u>like</u> to see me?" she very simply asked. AI,CQ,It.
At this he did get up; that was easier than to say -
at least with responsive simplicity; and again for a little
he looked hard and in silence at his letter; which, at
last, however, raising his eyes to her own for the act,
while he masked their conscious ruefulness, to his utmost,
in some air of assurance, he slipped into the inner pocket
of his coat, letting it settle there securely. "You're AI
too wonderful." JT,A
But he frowned at her with it as never in his life.
"Where does it all come from?" Q,AP
"The wonder of poor me?" Kate Cookham said. "It comes CQ,Coll.,A
from <u>you</u>." It.
He shook his head slowly - feeling with his letter
there against his heart, such a new agility, almost such
a new range of interest, "I mean so <u>much</u> money - so It.,P,Amp.
extraordinarily much." R,IQ
Well, she held him a while blank. "Does it seem to P
you extraordinarily much - twelve-hundred-and-sixty? R,P,Amp.,Q
Because, you know," she added "it's all." Amp.
"It's enough!" he returned with a slight thoughtful E
drop of his head to the right and his eyes attached to the
far horizon as through a shade of shyness for what he was
saying. He felt all her own lingering nearness somehow
on his cheek.
"It's enough? Thank you then!" she rather oddly went Q,R,E,AI
on.
He shifted a little his posture. "It was more than Amp.
a hundred a year - for you to get together." P,Amp.,IQ

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[1]<u>CT</u>, vol. 12, p. 421.

"Yes" she assented, "that was what year by year I tried for." — A

"But that you could live all the while and have that -!" — E,US
Yes, he was at liberty, as he hadn't been, quite pleasantly to marvel. All his wonderments in life had been hitherto unanswered - and didn't the change mean that here again was the social relation?

"Ah, I didn't live as you saw me the other day." — E,Amp.

"Yes," he answered - and didn't he the next instant feel he must fairly have smiled with it? - "the other day you were going it!" — A / R / It,C,E

"For once in my life," said Kate Cookham. "I've left the hotel," she after a moment added. — Amp. / P

"Ah, you're in - a - lodgings?" he found himself inquiring as for positive sociability. — PQ

She had apparently a slight shade of hesitation, but in an instant it was all right; as what he showed he wanted to know she seemed mostly to give him. "Yes - but far of course from here. Up on the hill." To which, after another instant, "At The Mount, Castle Terrace," she subjoined. — P / A,P,Amp. / Amp,Ell. / P,Amp,Ell.

The counter-question is used, just as much in this passage, with a very similar function, as in extract B, but there is an increase in the number of unfinished questions, from one to two. There are three rhetorical, two indirect and one leading question; also, one which takes the form of a qualification. There are even fewer direct questions (two as compared with the five of extract B). The question-answer formula, as a whole, is more varied and subtle in its implications than in any of the other passages. Out of the eleven answers returned, for example, three are counter-questions, two are indirect, and two are apparent irrelevancies. Two more are emphatic affirmations, and only three are what could be called 'direct' answers. Both questions and answers are less concerned with facts than extract B even, the main interest lying rather in motives, feelings and thought processes. When Herbert asks Kate, for example: "If you go, shan't I see you again?", it is

not the factual information involved that is of first importance, but her motive in evading a direct reply with a counter-question: "Do you like to see me?"

Exclamation is used more sparingly here, and, therefore, to greater dramatic effect than in extract B. Herbert's brief "It's enough!", for example, contains a wealth of implication. The same is true of italics and inverted commas, which are reserved for the really significant points in the action.

There is a corresponding decrease in the use of repetition for purposes of rhetoric. (The absence of parenthesis and hyperbole also suggests a less rhetorical kind of speech.) Its main function here is to provide a link between speeches. When Kate, for example, echoing Herbert's "It's enough!", adds her own "Thankyou then!", there is, or ought to be, a relation established, in the reader's mind, between his acceptance of the money and her gratitude towards him, this relation being stressed by her initial repetition of his words.

A marked increase in the use of pause, from eleven to eighteen, is to be noted here (almost half of these being conveyed, as in extract B, by means of 'stage-directions', and just over half by dashes). Its predominant function is again less rhetorical, more psychological. The reader can imagine, for example, that Herbert, having said to Kate; "I mean so <u>much</u> money -", then stops to reconsider the sum, and is moved to add: "so extraordinarily much". The pause for reflection is thus very naturally and simply represented in his speech.

A figure which has increased even more, from five to ten examples, is amplification. It is used here not, as in extract A, to arouse emotions, but, as in extract B, to clarify a complex and delicate situation. The fact that it recurs twice as much here as in the latter points to an ever-increasing interest in psychological action, coupled with a desire to 'represent' this as closely as possible.

A great many things are implied rather than stated, it being left to the reader's imagination to define them. One of James's favourite 'tricks' in this connection is the unfinished sentence. That which remains unspoken, as long as it is sufficiently hinted at, is far more suggestive and enigmatic than that which is baldly stated. Herbert's opening unfinished sentence, for example, creates an immediate sense of mystery, and Kate's counter-question, again incomplete, prolongs the suspense. One big advantage of this indirect method is that it is much more economical than full statement. All Herbert's incredulity, gratitude and recognition of Kate's sacrifice is summed up, for example, in his brief exclamation: 'But that you could live all the while and have that -!'

There is even less metaphor here than in extract B, and what there is, is not always obvious. When Kate, for example, says of her 'wonder' that 'it comes from _you_', she may or may not be using the verb of action as a deliberate metaphor. What imagery there is, however, is psychological in function.

Irony is hinted at, but again it is left to the reader to determine the precise nature of it, there being none of the relatively straightforward

irony of extract A. The misunderstanding which arises between Kate and Herbert over 'money' and 'wonder', for example, is very subtle, revealing as it does Herbert's obsession with both. (Misunderstanding is a most important feature of the late technique.)

The diction is comparable to that of extract B, with its one case of 'Jamesian' terminology, 'wonderful', and its fairly conventional, though not hackneyed, vocabulary. In the 'middle' and 'late' tales, as a whole, the conversations tend to be very 'low-toned' (as one critic phrased it) - in contrast to the rather high-pitched rhetoric of the early ones. However, there are a number of colloquialisms, which are not to be found in extract B, though they are prevalent in extract A. The function of these appears to be that of emphasis, rather than of characterisation as in the first passage. The slight shock of Herbert's colloquial 'going it', for example, causes it to stand out from the rest of his largely formal phraseology, and Kate's 'poor me', with which she emphasises the personal pronoun, makes Herbert's subsequent misunderstanding even more obvious, when it comes.

This same example points to another way in which extracts B and D differ. Though ambiguous pronouns are a feature of both, they are not used in the former to cause, or to reveal misunderstanding, whereas in the latter Herbert's preoccupation with thoughts of money and Kate's with his feelings for her, come out in her misinterpretation of the pronoun 'it': 'Where does it all come from?'

Ellipsis is more noticeable here than in extract B, its main function being to indicate the high degree of intimacy and unspoken understanding between the two speakers. There is no need for Kate, for example, to go into

detailed explanations about her lodgings; Herbert immediately grasps what she only implies, that lodgings are cheaper 'up on the hill', and that she wants him to know her address. Yet, in spite of the allusiveness of such remarks, their meaning usually remains perfectly clear.

Parallelism and antithesis, on the other hand, occur far less frequently than in extract B, as might be expected in an altogether less rhetorical passage. Where balance is present, it is much less elaborate and extensive than in either of the other two fictional extracts, the patterning of words and phrases being on a smaller scale. 'It's all', says Kate: 'It's enough!' replies Herbert: 'It's enough?' she repeats. The dialogue is not so obviously theatrical; its impact is gradual and cumulative, rather than immediate.

In extract A there is an inclination to link speech to speech fairly simply by means of the question-answer formula, repetition, completion of sentences and other devices. In this final passage, what is initially only a tendency has become a system. (Extract B, roughly speaking, represents a mid-way stage in the hardening of this system.) Nearly all argument and exposition now proceeds by this means. The conversation is a series of cross-references, some of them obvious, some very subtle, and some mystifying and obscure. Apparent irrelevancies, of which there are several examples, form an established part of this process, indicating as they do a firm grasp of the situation in hand. Herbert is not at all surprised, for example, by Kate's unexpected leap: 'Do you <u>like</u> to see me?', because he realises the full implications of it, and, therefore, its link with what has preceded it: 'but if you go shan't I see you again?'

Like parallelism and antithesis, rhythm is not nearly so marked, nor so rhetorical in this passage as it is in extract B. However, it is still used to involve the reader in the situation, though in a more subtle way. Whilst there are none of the hammer-like rhythms of Stransom's rousing speech on the Dead, for example, there is the delicate rhythmic repetition of Kate's speech to Herbert: 'I've meant so much that I can't mean more', in which all the important words are stressed. The rhythms are, on the whole, less contrived than those of the other excerpts.

The tone of the passage is a compromise between the subjectivity of the first, and the objectivity of the second. There are more 'stage-directions' in proportion to dialogue, than in either of those two, but they are of a different kind. Whilst suggesting and describing things to his reader, James never once assumes the role of omniscient author. He manages to achieve this by telling the story solely from Herbert's 'point of view'; everything passes through his consciousness before it reaches the reader, thus giving the illusion of objectivity, yet retaining the personal touch. When he comments on one of Kate's reactions, for example, he does so only via Herbert's awareness of her: 'it was as if [italics mine] there played through her veil an irrepressible irony'. (The phrase 'as if' occurs time and again.) James does not wish to appear to dictate his characters' feelings or motives to the reader; these must be allowed to emerge, either through Herbert's reflections on them, or, alternatively, through the objective medium of dialogue. The 'point of view' technique is a curious mixture of objectivity and subjectivity, for, whilst it purports to be the record of an actual observer of the scene, and is to that

extent objective, this observer is frequently a participant in that action, and is therefore bound to be subjective. Nevertheless, in comparison with the 'omniscient author' method, and insofar as it relies heavily on dialogue, it is objective, and James values it greatly as such:

> We usually escape the worst of this difficulty of tone _about_ the tone of our characters, our projected performers, by keeping it single, keeping it 'down' and thereby comparatively impersonal, or as we may say, inscrutable; which is what a creative force, in its blest fatuity likes to be.[1]

To an even greater extent than in extract B the advantages that fiction has over drama are exploited in this last passage, though none of the immediacy of the latter is relinquished. James has the resources of two mediums at his disposal, and he does not hesitate to make the most of this, using both dialogue and narrative as they are most effective. In 'The Beast in the Jungle', for example, another late tale, many of the high points of tension are in dialogue, but the real climax and denouement of the story, John Marcher's discovery that 'he had been the man of his time, _the_ man to whom nothing on earth was to have happened', is in narrative. The development in technique may be seen, then, as a progress from the methods of fiction in the 'early' period, through the methods of drama in the 'middle' period, to a final synthesis of the best of both in the 'late' - a very simplified account of what is in reality a highly complex process.

> Une chose reste certaine [writes T.S.Eliot] c'est que les livres de Henry James forment une oeuvre, qu'ils constituent un tout. Il est essentiel de les lire tous, car il importe avant tout d'en saisir à la fois l'unité et la progression. Le développement graduel et la fondamentale identité d'inspiration y sont également importants, et leur leçon est une.

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[1] _NN_, p. 276.

[2] _Nouvelle Revue Française_, Nov., 1923.

CHAPTER 7

'REALISM'

It is in the life of the dialogue that The Awkward Age differs most obviously from the late 'great' conventionally admired novels where, while granting the author's right to stylisation, it is too often intolerably like the author's own late style.[1]

...his dialogue became inhumanly literary to the point of being unintelligible, as anyone can verify by repeating the sentences to his neighbour and giving him the sense of them. His neighbour would not even understand the words.[2]

His dialogue is over-intellectual - people, even in the most cultured of environments, do not talk always in epigrams and in half sentences finished by intuition on the part of the hearer.[3]

[After 1896] the internal structure of dialogue, as well as its relation to the enveloping narrative, undergoes an intense stylisation.[4]

Many readers find James's dialogue, particularly that of the later work, what they call 'stylised'. Implicit in this term is the assumption that there is another kind of dialogue which is not.

A. Abalat identifies two distinct types of dialogue, one of which is "la reproduction photographique de la parole parlée, dans son raccourci imprévu, sautillant, fiévreux, prime-sautier, elliptique"[5], and is found in such writers as Flaubert, Daudet, or the Goncourts; the other is "littéraire, phrasé, construit, livresque"[6] and is found more frequently in dramatists, such as Molière, Scribe or Feuillet.

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[1] The Great Tradition, F.R. Leavis, London, 1963, p. 188.

[2] G.B.Shaw, Memorandum to L. Edel.

[3] F.L.Pattee, The Development of the American Short Story, New York, 1923, p. 207.

[4] F. Dupée, Henry James, London, 1951, p. 194.

[5] L'Art d'Ecrire, Paris, 1911, p. 302.

[6] Ibid.

Of these two, James is generally placed in the latter category, the former, as Abalat's examples show, being reserved for 'realistic' writers. The implications are, therefore, that James's dialogue is not 'realistic', that 'realistic' dialogue is not 'stylised' and that - on the whole - it is superior to the Jamesian type.

But what I hope to show is that there is a case to be made out for calling James's dialogue 'realistic' (and that, even should it prove not to be, this makes it no less 'real'); that all dialogue is 'stylised' to a greater or lesser degree; and, finally, that 'realistic' dialogue is not necessarily preferable to a more 'stylised' kind.

However, it is useless to attempt to do this before some effort has been made to define such ambiguous terms as 'realism', 'realistic', 'real' and 'reality'. Since these have been used in many different senses in the fields of philosophy, literature and metaphysics, there is, unfortunately, no absolute definition for any of them. But for the purposes of this discussion they will be given one particular meaning,namely, that attributed to them by R. Wellek, in his article 'The Concept of Realism in Literary Scholarship'.[1]

Wellek identifies at least two distinct uses of 'realism' in literary criticism. The first, "realism in the wide sense of fidelity to nature", is not his prime concern, which is to define the more specialised application of the word that arises in the nineteenth century and is "anchored in a particular moment in history, referable to a well-known body of texts".[2] 'Realism' crystallises into this meaning about 1856, in connection with a

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[1]Groningen, 1961.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 4.

definite literary literary creed, namely that:

> Art should give a truthful representation of the real world: it should therefore study contemporary life and manners by observing meticulously and analyzing carefully. It should also do so diispassionately, impersonally, objectively.[1]

His shorthand definition, "the objective representation of contemporary social reality", is the sense in which 'realism' will be used here. James, however, uses it in both this and the 'wider' sense. With reference to the literary creed, for instance, he writes of 'The Altar of the Dead':

> The thing takes place in London, vaguely, fancifully, obscurely, without'realism', or dots upon the i's.[2]

But, in an essay on Zola, he gives it its 'wider' sense:

> ...it is of high importance that realism should not be compromised. Nothing tends more to compromise it than to represent it as necessarily allied to the impure ...[3]

'Realistic' Wellek defines as the adjective from 'realism' and quotes, in support of this interpretation, James's similar use of the term in his reference to the French "famous 'realistic' system".

Though Wellek offers no formal definition of 'reality', it is clear, from the following extract, what he understands by it:

> All art in the past aimed at reality, even if it spoke of a higher reality: a reality of essences or a reality of dreams and symbols.[4]

James again uses the term in a similar sense:

> Reality is the object of Mr. Zola's efforts, and it is because we agree with him in appreciating it highly that we protest against its being discredited.[5]

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[1] *Op.cit.*, p. 6.

[2] *NB*, p. 165.

[3] *HF*, p. 277.

[4] *Op.cit.*, p. 4.

[5] *HF*, p. 277.

Strictly speaking, 'real' is the adjective from 'reality', and means 'bearing some relation to reality'. With the coining of the phrase 'real life', however, its meaning appears to have shifted to that of 'realistic', and, as such, is used to imply a relation to 'low' life. James himself reacts against this misapplication of the word:

> The real has not a shade more affinity with an unclean vessel than with a clean one.[1]

The characters and situations which strike a writer as 'real', he says, "will be those that touch and interest one most".[2] But since each writer's interests vary, it is obvious that 'reality' will have "a myriad forms"[3], no one of them being necessarily more 'real' than another.

In spite of all the things which have been written about James's 'stylised' dialogue, there is a fairly strong case to be made out for its 'realism'. Indeed, Wellek classes him among the "greatest writers" of 'realism',

He was in direct contact with the 'realistic' writers in France and, as Marie Garnier points out:

> Il n'était pas 'a priori' hostile à la représentation du réel de la réalité tangible en particulier. Ce que nous avons de son culte de Balzac en est un preuve. Ses goûts en matière théâtrale indiquaient d'ailleurs un esprit qui ne craignait pas les tableaux sincères commes tels.[4]

The dialogue of his early works, where the influence of these French writers is at its height, has frequently been described as 'realistic'.[5] The following

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[1] HF, p. 277

[2] Selected Literary Criticism, ed. M. Shapira, London, 1963, p. 55. [3] Ibid., p. 56.

[4] Henry James et la France, Paris, 1927, p. 131.

[5] vid. W.D. Howells, 'Henry James Jnr.', Century Magazine, 1882, no. 25; G.Cantwell, 'A Little Reality', Hound and Horn, May 1932; J.W.Beach, The Method of Henry James, Yale, 1918, p. 168; L.B.Levy, Versions of Melodrama, California, 1957, p. 15.

rather trivial conversation between Robert Bruce and his sister, in 'The Story of a Year' (1865), is probably the sort of thing these critics have in mind:

> 'Why, Robert, where have you been all this while?' said Miss Bruce.
> 'At Dr. Cooper's.'
> 'Dr. Cooper's? I should think you had! Who's Dr. Cooper?'
> 'Where Miss Crowe's staying.'
> 'Miss Crowe? Ah, Mrs. Littlefield's friend! Is she as pretty as ever?'
> 'Prettier - prettier - prettier. Ta-ra-ta! tara-ta!'
> 'Oh, Robert, do stop that singing! You'll rouse the whole house.'[1]

The most convincing argument, however, comes from Dorothea Krook, who maintains that, in the dialogue of The Awkward Age, which deals with the upper classes:

> ....speed and tautness are fused with the easiness, informality and essential simplicity characteristic of the actual speech of this class [my italics].... Nor, it seems, is this special kind of simplicity in the least incompatible with the late-Jamesian characteristics of the style of The Awkward Age: that it should also be oblique, allusive, elliptical; that every half-sentence, exclamation, long pause should bristle with crucial implications,... The main dramatic reason (and justification) for its being so intensely oblique, allusive, and elliptical is not difficult to discern. It is the speech of a homogeneous, closely-knit social group, sharing common standards, attitudes, forms of behaviour,... able to practice (in James's own phrase) 'that economy of expression which is the result of a common experience'.[2]

James, in one of his letters, makes this same 'realist' point:

> I must at any rate mention that I had in view a certain special class (highly 'modern and actual London group and type').

In the preface to the same novel he again stresses the fact that the situation and the characters are based on actual models:

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[1] CT, vol. 1, p. 85.

[2] The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James, Cambridge, 1962, p. 150. F.R. Leavis describes it as "sophisticated 'society' dialogue".

> Half the attraction was in the current actuality of the thing: repeatedly, right and left, as I have said, one had seen such a drama constituted.... There had of course to be, as a basis, the free circle, but this material was of the admirable order with which the good London never leaves its true lover and believer long unprovided. One could count them on one's fingers (an abundant allowance), the liberal firesides beyond the wide glow of which, in comparative dimness, female adolescence hovered and waited.[1]

(It is with this class that James believes "real talk"[2] is to be found - a point of view shared by Morris Gedge, the caretaker of a famous poet's supposed home, in 'The Birthplace':

> Sometimes he liked the person, the face, the speech: an eduuated man, a gentleman, not one of the herd; a graceful woman ....These chances represented for him light yearnings and faint flutters; they acted indeed, within him, in a special, an extraordinary way. He would have liked to talk with such stray companions, to talk with them really, to talk with them as he might have talked if he had met them where he couldn't meet them - at dinner, in the "world", on a visit at a country-house. Then he could have said...things he couldn't say now.[3])

When James ventures outside of his chosen circle, the dialogue frequently, though not inevitably, becomes 'stylised'. That is to say, the character concerned assumes verbal habits of a class alien to him. Since this class is usually the one James himself is nearest to in his own life, it often sounds as though he is using such a speaker as a mouthpiece for his personal views. For instance, although the speech of Mr. Prodmore, the hard-headed businessman in 'Covering End', is entirely in character at times:

> [To Chivers] 'my calculation was that we should punctually converge on this spot'.[4]
>
> [To Cora] 'Why the dickens are you so late?'[5]

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[1] AN, p. 10.
[2] Ibid.
[3] CT, vol. 11, p. 425.
[4] CT, vol. 10, p. 247.
[5] Ibid., p. 249.

[To Mrs. Gracedew] 'Seventy thousand - done!'[1]

on other occasions it is far too subtle, oblique and metaphysical:

> 'My astonishment's my own affair,' [he informs Mrs. Gracedew] not less so than my memory!'[2]

Mrs. Gracedew and Captain Yule, on the other hand, who are of a different social standing, are perfectly 'realistic' in speech, even though their language is practically the same as that of Mr. Prodmore's occasional lapses. So too is Chivers',[3] surprisingly enough, who is at the opposite end of the social scale. (He confides to Captain Yule, for example, that his taste "was always for something a bit more merry-like" than Cora Prodmore. 'Like' figures largely in his vocabulary.)

In fact, James's dialogue is quite often 'realistic' in a way it is rarely acknowledged to be - namely, in its representation of the speech of the lower classes. (It is the middle strata of society which seem to cause him the most trouble.) The butler, Brooksmith, and Mrs. Bundy, the landlady of 'Sir Dominick Ferrand', have already been mentioned in this connection.[4] Brooksmith's speech to the narrator of the tale, after the death of his master, is a particularly good example of what is meant:

> Oh, sir, it's sad for <u>you</u>, very sad, indeed, and for a great many gentlemen and ladies; that it is, sir. But for me, sir, it is, if I may say so, still graver even than that: it's just the loss of something that was everything. For me, sir... he was just <u>all</u>, if you know what I mean, sir. You have others, sir, I daresay - not that I would have you understand me to speak of them as in any way tantamount.[5]

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[1] <u>CT</u>, vol. 10, p. 337.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 334

[3] Vid. sup., chapter 2, p. 98

[4] Vid. sup. chapter 2, p. 99

[5] <u>CT</u>, vol. 8, p. 25.

The repeated 'sirs' and 'justs', the phrases 'that it is', 'if I may say so', and 'I daresay', but, above all, the slightly incorrect usage of 'tantamount', characterise him as one of the servant class of his day.

The following is James's description of speech which is'realistic' in yet another way:

> The young Englishmen...talked together as they usually talked, with many odd silences, lapses of logic and incongruities of transition; like people-thoroughly conscious of a common point of view, so that a style of conversation superficially lacking in finish might suffice for a reference to a fund of associations in the light of which everything was all right.[1]

This approximates fairly closely to what Malinowski first identified as 'Phatic Communion':

> ....a type of speech [he writes] in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words...Are words in Phatic Communion used primarily to convey meaning, the meaning which is symbolically theirs? Certainly not! They fulfill a social function, and that is their principal aim....[2]

Mr. Vivian Cook describes it, in simple terms, as "language that promotes or maintains affective rapport".[3] Certain areas of Jamesian dialogue are, in this sense, a 'reproduction photographique' of one sort of actual speech. This is true, for example, of a good deal of the conversation between "the two young Englishmen" in 'An International Episode', mentioned above:

> '[New York] seems a rum-looking place.'
> 'Ah, very odd, very odd,' said the other, who was the clever man of the two.
> 'Pity it's so beastly hot,' resumed the first speaker, after a pause.
> 'You know we are in a low latitude,' said his friend.
> 'I daresay,' remarked the other.

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[1] CT, vol. 4, p. 257.

[2] The Meaning of Meaning, Ogden and Richards, New York, 1944, Supplement by B. Malinowski, p. 313-6.

[3] Private letter to me, 8th January, 1965.

> 'I wonder,' said the second speaker, presently, 'if they can give one a bath.'
> 'I daresay not,' rejoined the other.
> 'Oh, I say!' cried his companion.[1]

The 'oh's' and 'ah's' and 'daresays', the pauses, ellipses and non-sequiturs here are all typical of language which does not function primarily "as a means of transmission of thought".[2]

Finally, James's dialogue is 'realistic' in that it bears a close resemblance to his own conversational habits. Edith Wharton says that she had "never known a case in which an author's talk and his books so enlarged and supplemented each the other".[3] She remembers his "elaborate hesitancies", his "parentheses", his "silver-footed ironies, veiled jokes, tiptoe malices" and the "series of images" which he poured forth.[4] His monologues were "a series of disconnected ejaculations, epithets, allusions, parenthetical rectification and restatement".[5]

G.W.E. Russell, too, recalling James's speech, says:

> If ever there was a man that talked like a book - and one of his own books too - that man is Mr. Henry James. With his solemn gnomes and mysterious epigrams, he propounds those social and physical conundrums which supply his devout admirers the largest part of their intellectual exercise.[6]

Lastly, there is the testimony of Miss Ruth Draper:

> In his speech...he was as careful to round his sentences and make keen observations, as he was in his writing... He was very careful of his speech and one felt there was a certain self-consciousness but really it was the effort of the artist in him to make speeches beautiful and his thought [was] as completely

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[1] CT, vol. 4, p. 243-4. [2] Malinowski, op.cit.
[3] A Backward Glance, London, 1934, p. 177. [4] Ibid., p. 178-9. [5] Ibid., p. 193
[6] The Legend of the Master, ed. S. Nowell-Smith, London, 1947, p. 10.

> expressed as it would be in writing...He wasn't a careless speaker, you know; so many of us put in so many words that have no particular meaning, and everything he said counted as important.[1]

(It is interesting to compare the narrative style of the 'late' period with that of the dialogue. The narrative is far more intricate, syntactically speaking, than the dialogue, as even a brief extract from a passage quoted above will show:

> She waited a little and it was strangely for him now as if - though at last so much more gorged with her tribute than she had ever been with his - something still depended on her. 'Do you <u>like</u> to see me?' she very simply asked.[2]

Compared with other passages that could have been given, the narrative here is relatively straightforward, but even so it is far more contrived and artificial than the dialogue.)

Extracts from the works of three 'realistic' writers will now be examined, in an attempt to analyse the differences, if any, between their sort of dialogue and that of James. The first is taken from <u>The Old Wives' Tale</u>, a novel by Arnold Bennett, one of the first of the English 'realists', who was himself strongly influenced by the original French school of 'realism'.

[Constance and Sophia Baines, sisters of sixteen and fifteen respectively, are watching Maggie, the Baines's domestic servant, walk across the square in her new clothes on her afternoon 'off'.]

> "There she goes!" exclaimed Sophia.

[A description of Maggie and her amorous adventures follows.]

> "No gloves, of course!" Sophia criticised.
> "Well, you can't expect her to have gloves," said Constance.
> Then a pause as the bonnet and dress neared the top of the Square.
> "Supposing she turns round and sees us?" Constance suggested.

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[1] Recorded for the Third Programme, 14th July, 1956, compiled and introduced by Michael Swan, produced by Douglas Cleverdon.

[2] Vid sup. chapter 6, p. 211.

"I don't care if she does," said Sophia, with a haughtiness almost impassioned; and her head trembled slightly.

There were, as usual, several loafers at the top of the Square, in the corner, between the bank and the 'Marquis of Granby'. And one of these loafers stepped forward and shook hands with an obviously willing Maggie. Clearly it was a rendezvous, open, unashamed. The twelfth victim had been selected by the virgin of forty, whose kiss would not have melted lard! The couple disappeared together down Oldcastle Street.

"Well!" cried Constance. "Did you ever see such a thing?"

While Sophia, short of adequate words, flushed and bit her lip...

"It's too ridiculous!" said Sophia, severely. She had youth, beauty, and rank in her favour. And to her it really was ridiculous.

"Poor old Maggie!" Constance murmured. Constance was foolishly good-natured, a perfect manufactory of excuses for other people; and her benevolence was eternally rising up and overpowering her reason.

"What time did mother say she should be back?" Sophia asked.

"Not until supper."

"Oh! Hallelujah!" Sophia burst out, clasping her hands in joy. And they both slid down from the counter just as if they had been little boys, and not, as their mother called them, 'great girls'.

"Let's go and play the Osborne quadrilles," Sophia suggested (the Osborne quadrilles being a series of dances arranged to be performed on drawing-room pianos by four jewelled hands).

"I couldn't think of it," said Constance, with a precocious gesture of seriousness. In that gesture, and in her tone, was something which conveyed to Sophia: 'Sophia, how can you be so utterly blind to the gravity of our fleeting existence as to ask me to go and strum the piano with you?' Yet a moment before she had been a little boy.

"Why not -" Sophia demanded.

"I shall never have another chance like today for getting on with this," said Constance, picking up a bag from the counter.[1]

A good deal of the characterisation of the two sisters is carried out by means of the dialogue here. Their exuberant girlishness, and chapel-going background, for example, is brought out in Sophia's 'Hallelujah!' and Constances unspoken didacticism, which ends up in a colloquialism: 'Sophia, how can you be so utterly blind to the gravity of our fleeting existence as to ask me to go and strum the piano with you?' However, the characters are

[1] The Old Wives' Tale, A. Bennett, London, 1954 (first published 1908).

also described through the 'stage-directions' or narrative comments, which are much higher, in proportion to dialogue, than they are even in James's 'late' works. Though there is very little variety, or conscious manipulation of the question-answer formula here, it is just as possible to identify this as a recurring stylistic feature, as in Jamesian dialogue. The same applies to exclamation (7), ellipsis (4), italics (1), and colloquialisms (4). These last-mentioned characteristics are generally taken as proof that the language approximates more closely to that of actual life than James's, but this is true only with reference to a particular class and a particular age-group. (The speakers here being young girls of lower-middle class origin, it is hardly surprising to find a number of colloquialisms and exclamations.) In addition, the presence of 'unspoken dialogue' - a device much favoured by James - shows that Bennett is very far from giving a 'reproduction photographique' of actual speech.

The next extract is from Dorothy Richardson's long novel, Pilgrimage. Although she is thought of primarily as one of the initiators of the 'stream-of consciousness' technique, in her own explanation of what she is trying to do she places herself with the 'realists'.[1] Her aim, she writes, is to "produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism."

Pointed Roofs, Pilgrimage, vol. 1, London, 1938 (first pub. 1915), p.19

[This conversation, between Miriam and her two sisters, takes place on the eve of her departure for Germany, where she is to become a governess in a German school.]

'All right. I won't.' [Miriam]

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1. See Wellek, op.cit., p.10, for a discussion of the difference between the 'realism' of the 'stream-of-consciousness' and the 'realism' that started as a literary movement in nineteenth-century France.

'Won't marry a German Professor, or won't tell mother, do you mean? ... Oo-Crumbs! My old cake in the oven!' Harriet hopped to the door.

'Funny Harriet taking to cookery. It doesn't seem a bit like her.'

'She'll have to do something -so shall I, I s'pose.'

'It's awful,' said Miriam, shivering.

'Poor old girl. I expect you feel horrid because you're tired with all the packing and excitement.'

'Oh, well, anyhow, it's simply ghastly.'

'You'll feel better tomorrow.'

'D'you think I shall?'

'Yes - you're so strong,' said Eve, flushing and examining her nails.

'How d'you mean?'

'Oh - all sorts of ways.'

'What way?'

'Oh - well - you arranging all this - I mean answering the advertisement and settling it all.'

'Oh, well, you know you backed me up.'

'Oh, yes, but other things...'

'What?'

'Oh, I was thinking about you having no religion.'

'Oh.'

'You must have such splendid principles to keep you straight,' said Eve, and cleared her throat, 'I mean, you must have such a lot in you.'

'Me?'

'Yes, of course.'

'I don't know where it comes in. What have I done?'

'Oh, well, it isn't so much what you've done - you have such a good time...Everybody admires you and all that...you know what I mean - you're so clever...You're always in the right.'

'That's just what everybody hates!'

The dialogue of this passage is a far more serious attempt to give a verbatim account of actual speech than that of Arnold Bennett's. But even here, close analysis would reveal recurring stylistic features, many of which are characteristic of Jamesian dialogue also. There are, for example, seven questions, six answers, seven cases of repetition, seven of exclamation, five of amplification and one of parallelism. But there is a marked increase in those devices which emphasise the familiar and haphazard element in speech,

such as ellipsis (12), colloquialisms (7) and pause (13). Frequent use is also made of the 'phatic' content of speech, there being eight examples of 'oh well's' and 'oh yes's' in this short passage alone. Two new features, which likewise represent an effort to be 'realistic', are the use of abbreviations, such as 'I s'pose' (and 'for goodney', for 'for goodness' sake' on p. 18) and phonetic spellings (there are no examples here, but 'Ike spect' for 'I expect' on p. 23). These last are a definite sign of selection, for Miss Richardson carefully chooses where to use them, realising that they cannot be employed throughout.[1] As with Bennett, the difference between this and Jamesian dialogue is not so much that of the degree of 'stylisation' reached, but rather of the class of speaker represented and the literacy, therefore, of the language used. The vocabulary of Miss Richardson's characters, which consists largely of such schoolgirlish exaggerations as 'horrid', 'awful', 'simply ghastly' and 'splendid', indicates that they are of a very different mental calibre from James's 'super subtle fry'. It is also only to be expected that they should resort frequently to such things as colloquialisms, ellipses and abbreviations, for they are more familiar with each other than the more socially correct Jamesian speakers.

The last extract is an example of what has been described as the 'slice-of-life' method. (This is by no means a new term. Edith Wharton, disussing the 'stream-of-consciousness' novel in 1925, says that it "is the 'slice-of-life' of the '80's resumed".[2] James's use of the same metaphor

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[1]Professor Quirk, in his examination of Dickens' language, attempts to explain why it is not possible to use a completely phonetic spelling system. Vid. <u>Charles Dickens and the Appropriate Language</u>, Durham, 1959, p. 17.

[2]<u>The Writing of Fiction</u>, London, 1925, p. 144.

is particularly interesting, as it reveals his own attitude towards selection in a work of art:

> By the last true touch we mean of course the touch of the hand of selection; the principle of selection having been involved at the worst or the least...in any approach whatever to the loaf of life with the 'arrière-pensée' of a slice. There being no question of a slice upon which the further question of where and how to cut it does not wait, the office of method, the idea of choice and comparison, have occupied the ground from the first. This makes clear, to a moment's reflection, that there can be no such thing as an amorphous slice, and that any waving aside of inquiry as to the sense and value of a chunk of matter, has to reckon with the simple truth of its having been <u>born</u> of naught else but the measured excision...How can a slice of life be anything but illustrational of the loaf, and how can illustration not immediately bristle with every sign of the extracted and related state?[1])

The dialogue of the following excerpt from <u>The Caretaker</u> by Harold Pinter, is supposedly 'realistic in the extreme. (In comparing it with the dialogue of fiction, allowances must be made for the difference in mediums. Since it is written expressly for the stage, there are no narrative comments, and the number of times a feature recurs will, therefore, be higher in relation to the length of the passage, as compared with a similar one from fiction.)

<u>The Caretaker, Harold Pinter, London, 1960</u>

Davies: If you hadn't come out and stopped that Scotch git I'd be inside the hospital now. I'd have cracked my head on that pavement if he'd have landed. I'll get him. When I find myself around that direction. (Aston crosses to the plug box to get another plug.)
I wouldn't mind so much but I left all my belongings in that place, in the back room there. All of them, the lot there was, you see, in this bag. Every lousy blasted bit of all my bleeding belongings I left down there now. In the rush of it. I bet he's having a poke around in it now this very moment.

Aston: I'll pop down sometime and pick them up for you. (Aston goes back to his bed and starts to fit the plug on the toaster.)

D. Anyway, I'm obliged to you, letting me ... letting me have a bit of a rest, like...for a few minutes. (He looks about.) This your room?

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[1] <u>Letters</u>, vol. 2, p. 237.

A. Yes.
D. You got a good bit of stuff here.
A. Yes.
D. Must be worth a few bob, this...put it all together. (Pause) There's enough of it.
A. There's a good bit of it, all right.
D. You sleep here, do you?
A. Yes.
D. What, in that?
A. Yes.
D. Yes, well, you'd be well out of the draught there.
A. You don't get much wind.
D. You'd be well out of it. It's different when you're kipping out.
A. Would be.
D. Nothing but wind then. (Pause)
A. Yes, when the wind gets up it ...
D. Yes ...
A. Mmnn ... (Pause)
D. Gets very draughty.
A. Ah.
D. I'm very sensitive to it.
A. Are you?
D. Always have been. (Pause) You got more rooms then, have you?
A. Where?
D. I mean, along the landing there...up the landing there.
A. They're out of commission.
D. Get away.
A. They need a lot of doing to. (Slight pause)
D. What about downstairs? I was lucky you come into that caff. I might have been done by that scotch git. I been left for dead more than once. (Pause) I noticed that there was someone living in the house next door.
A. What?
D. (gesturing) I noticed...
A. Yes, There's people living all along the road.
D. Yes, I noticed the curtains pulled down there next door as we come along.
A. They're neighbours. (Pause)
D. This your house then, is it? (Pause)
A. I'm in charge.
D. You the landlord, are you? (He puts a pipe in his mouth and puffs without lighting it.) Yes, I noticed them heavy curtains pulled across next door as we come along. I noticed them heavy big curtains right across the window down there. I thought there must be someone living there.

Here again the dialogue has a certain basic features in common with James's, such as the question-answer formula (8), and repetition (10), though these differ very much in function in each case. So too do amplification (3) and the unfinished sentence (3), both of which emphasise the carelessness of a particular kind of speech. As with Dorothy Richardson, the devices meant to represent familiar speech are altogether far more dominant than in a comparable passage from James. Besides the ten or more colloquialisms and five slang expressions, for example, there are two cases of swearing, one of jargon and fifteen of pause. Again, the 'phatic' elements of language, such as 'I mean', 'yes', 'well', 'like', and 'mmnn' are very prominent. (This is one way in which Pinter attempts to reproduce Davies' Welsh accent - 'Every lousy blasted bit of all my bleeding belongings I left down there now' [my italics].) The syntax reveals the same bias towards the familiar and careless, for there are at least nine examples of ellipsis, six of tautology ('now this very moment') and three of solecism (though 'You got a good bit of stuff there', and 'I been left for dead', may be abbreviations for 'You have got...' and 'I have been left...') One very interesting construction, which occurs five times, is a peculiar, but highly effective form of inversion. Thus, instead of the expected: 'Do you sleep here?' we find: 'You sleep here, do you?' This appears to approximate more closely to the order in which ideas strike Davies's mind. The same is true of: 'Must be worth a few bob, this ...' (it is the money he thinks of first!); 'You got more rooms then, have you?'; 'This your house then, is it?'; and 'You the landlord, are you?' It is as though he is musing to himself, then suddenly remembers to turn his thoughts into a formal

question - a kind of 'impressionism' of words. But again, though this and other features of the dialogue appear to make the language nearer to that of actual speech, they are typical of speakers of one particular class and education only. The majority of James's characters are far too cultured to make the grammatical mistakes, for example, that Davies is constantly guilty of. As Wellek points out:

> In spite of its claim to penetrate directly to life, and reality, realism, in practice, has its set conventions, devices and exclusions.[1]

The speech of the characters in these three passages is, therefore, only more 'realistic' than Jamesian dialogue if this term is taken as applying to one specific area of society. Wellek nowhere states that it does - he merely stipulates that it should imply 'the objective representation of contemporary social reality', which brings us back to James's point, that:

> ....there are simply as many kinds [of reality] as there are persons practising the art, for if a picture, a tale, or a novel be a direct impression of life (and that surely constitutes its interest and value) the impression will vary according to the plate that takes it, the particular structure and mixture of the recipient.[2]

He contrasts the French 'realists' with "the writers to whom the life of the soul is equally real and visible".[3] It is amongst the latter that he himself must be placed, for his 'reality' is a predominantly psychological one. (Interestingly enough, in his early work, where the subject matter is less psychological, the dialogue is usually thought to be more 'realistic'.) It is only to be expected, therefore, that the dialogue in which this is represented will differ from that of the 'realists', whose 'reality' is of another kind.

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[1] Op.cit., p. 18.

[2] HF, p. 141.

[3] ELE, p. 192.

But there are no grounds for assuming, as many exponents of the school of 'realism' appear to do, that they are any nearer to an ultimate 'reality' than he is. On the contrary, it is arguable that James is the nearer, and for the following reasons.

In ordinary conversation there is a great deal that is not actually said, only thought, but which is just as much a part of the experience as the spoken words. On recollection it is almost impossible to distinguish between what has actually been uttered and what has taken place only in the mind. Words and thoughts become inextricably mingled and this synthesis constitues the 'reality' of the occasion. O. Jespersen describes this process as follows:

> In all speech activity there are three things to be distinguished, expression, suppression, and impression. Expression is what the speaker gives, suppression is what he doesn't give, though he might have given it, and impression is what the hearer receives. It is important to notice that an impression is often produced not only by what is said expressly, but also by what is suppressed.[1]

In Jamesian dialogue this complex is faithfully 'represented' by means of various conventions and devices, such as pause, parenthesis, and amplification, things which might not actually occur in a verbatim recording of the conversation, but which nevertheless convey the 'reality' of the experience as fully as possible. "One of James's special gifts," Matthiessen points out, is this "ability so to handle a conversation, that he keeps in the air not merely what is said but what isn't - the passage of thought without words".[2] In dialogue which attempts to reproduce only the actual words spoken, this added dimension of 'thought without words' is absent; the experience is therefore

[1] The Philosophy of Grammar, London, 1924, p. 309.

[2] Henry James: The Major Phase, Oxford, 1944, p. 169.

incomplete and not fully representative of the situation.

Another disadvantage attached to the latter kind of dialogue is that, since so much that is important is left unexpressed in ordinary conversation, it is usually forced to keep to trivial subject matter. In The Old Wives' Tale, for example, the two girls discuss Maggie's gloves, and in The Caretaker the talk is mainly of beds, draughts and curtains. It is very doubtful whether really important themes can be dealt with, - economically at least - in 'realistic' dialogue. The conversation from Pilgrimage shows that, even where big themes are handled, it takes a good many lines of dialogue, innumerable 'mm's' and 'er's' and twelve volumes to do so. This is due mainly to the 'realist's' desire to give the reader the impression of doing his own selection among a mass of detail.

In fact, the chief difference between the two kinds of dialogue is not so much the degree of 'stylisation' reached, but that of the impression or 'illusion' given. Whereas in the case of the 'realistic' work, the reader is meant to have the illusion of himself selecting what is important, as in actual life, in Jamesian fiction he is conscious of the fact that the author is doing this selection for him. In other words, the necessity for selection is frankly recognised.

This does not alter the fact that selection is an essential part of both methods. If the aim of the writer were solely to reproduce actual speech as closely as possible, he would do better to use a tape-recorder. (At least one modern playwright, Bernard Kops, does, though only in order to collect material, from which he then selects rigorously. This editing seems to him absolutely vital, since, as he explained to me when I discussed the question

with him, "all art is a matter of selection".) As R. Liddell puts it, selection is one of the things "that turns talk into the art of conversation".[1] Edith Wharton is of a similar opinion.[2]

All art is, therefore, a 'stylisation' of life, and that which is the most 'stylised' is not necessarily the least 'real', for, as Mandilow says:

> The novelist's truth need not be restricted to that limited kind that factual realism can provide...the significant formalisation of life may be truer than the falsification of it by simpler conventions claiming to be truthful.[3]

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[1] Some Principles of Fiction, London, 1953, p. 77.

[2] Vid. A Backward Glance, London, 1934, p. 203.

[3] Time and the Novel, London, 1952, p. 36.

CONCLUSION

Dialogue is of particular interest and importance in James because it is here that his peculiar contribution to English fiction can be most clearly seen.

First and foremost, it reveals his psychological insight and powers of analysis. As J.I.M. Stewart expresses it, James "turned massively upon the inner consciousness".[1] This is not to imply that there are no 'psychological' writers in English before him (there is Richardson in the eighteenth century and George Eliot in the nineteenth, to mention only two). What is new in James is the way in which he almost invariably 'represents' his characters' mental activity in their speech, rather than describing it.

That is to say, he carries fiction to the limits of drama, in an attempt to objectify his highly subjective material. To this end he evolves what he calls his 'scenic' method. Thus, dialogue figures more largely in his work than in many other novelists. It is forced, as in the play, into a "structural and compositional office",[2] and is no longer merely "the most fatuous of the luxuries of looseness".[3]

Another of James's contributions to English literature - his highly personal subtlety and allusiveness - springs mainly from this preoccupation

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[1] Eight Modern Writers, The Oxford History of English Literature, Oxford, 1963, p.95.
[2] NN, p. 279.
[3] Ibid.

with a 'scenic' technique, for the dramatic is an essentially indirect method of presentation. Where the voice of the omniscient author is not to be heard, the reader is forced to make his own inferences, and draw his own conclusions. He is never directly told what to think, only guided by means of hints and allusions. With James, literature becomes predominantly a matter of interpretation.

In this he is the first of the modern writers - "a growing point in prose fiction".[1] He anticipates, to a large extent, the 'stream-of-consciousness' novel of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. F. Lees has identified his elaboration of 'free indirect speech' as his main contribution to this technique, but there are unmistakeable signs of future developments in his dialogue too. Its increasing complexity and ambiguity, in the later works, reflects a growing sensitivity and depth of response to the ambivalence which is the hall-mark of the subconscious. This largely unconscious response in James is transformed, in certain modern novelists, to an awareness that is their actual point of departure.[2] His dialogue usually becomes their narrative.

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[1] J.I.M. Stewart, op.cit., p. 105.

[2] 'Identification and Emotion in the Novel', The British Journal of Aesthetics, April 1964, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 109-110.

APPENDIX

Influences on James's Concept of the Dialogue Form

James makes three attempts to exploit pure dialogue form. He also uses a barely disguised version of it for The Awkward Age. In the first of these dialogues, 'Daniel Deronda: A Conversation' (1876)[1], the three speakers all have Greek or Latin names, suggesting an influence from classical literature. The dialogue proper is preceded by a brief narrative passage in which the scene is set. Then follows a discussion of 'Daniel Deronda', each character putting forward his or her own point of view (that of Constantius seems to coincide most closely with James's). Mr. Leavis points out the advantages of the form:

> The conversation form, which lends itself to the effect of ease and lightness and also permits a command of varied tone, belongs to the critical method with which James responds to the given challenge - one that he takes, it is clear, with a warm and glowing admiration and a proper kind of humility. He uses the conversation with its different voices, representing a diversity of approaches and possibilities of response, to convey a due sense of the complexity both of the work and the critical recognition it calls for.[2]

Thirteen years later, in March 1889, appears 'An Animated Conversation',[3] a discussion of the relative merits of England, France and America. Again, there is a brief narrative introduction, in which the author explains that "the colloquy took a turn which, little dramatic though it may appear, I can best present in the scenic form".[4] The number of speakers has increased to

[1] PP, p. 65 ff.

[2] Introd. to Selected Literary Criticism, ed. M. Shapira, London, 1963, p. xx.

[3] ELE, p. 279 ff.

[4] Ibid., p. 280.

six. (Together they form a fairly recognisable Jamesian circle.) Four are American, though two of them live in Paris, and two are English, so that each culture under discussion has its own two representatives. They touch on such things as the nature of the novel, French literature, and women novelists, each airing his or her own point of view. The last of the dialogues appears three months later, in June, 1889, under the title 'After the Play'[1]. Its four speakers discuss, amongst other things, the differences between the English and the French theatre, 'realism', the use of scenery, and the opposed attitudes of the English and French towards the printing of plays for public perusal. The varied tone, the ease and lightness and the representation of different viewpoints commended by Leavis in 'Daniel Deronda: A Conversation', are marked features of the two later dialogues also.

(a) Plato: The most obvious and pervasive influence with respect to the dialogue form is Plato, the first real master of it. It is unlikely that James was influenced directly by Plato, since he never formally studied Greek. His friend T.S. Perry, in a letter written to Percy Lubbock after James's death, describes the classical side of his education:

> ....he and I read together at Mr. Leverett's school a very fair amount of Latin literature. Like Shakespeare he had less Greek.[2]

Apparently he failed to increase this limited knowledge of the language (in spite of good resolutions in 1860[3]). He acquired his awareness of Greek

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[1] The Scenic Art, ed. A. Wade, London, 1949, p. 226 ff.

[2] Letters, vol. i, p. 8.

[3] Vid. letter from Geneva, Sel.Lett., p. 389.

philosophy and literature from translations.[1] It is therefore highly probable that any Platonic influence on his works comes to him through the medium of nineteenth century French literature, of which he was passionately fond.

(b) Revue des Deux Mondes:

He says himself that from 1858, the year the James's returned to America from their stay in Europe, that the strongest literary influence on him was French:

> The best of one's education, such as that was, had begun to proceed almost altogether by the aid of the Revue des Deux Mondes, a periodical that supplied to us then, and for several years after ... all that was finest in the furniture and fittings of romance.[2]

As he points out here, the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' was very important in this respect.[3] It is almost certain that he kept on reading the Revue for most of his life. In 1878, for example, he advises a Mr. Henley, who wishes to get hold of Turgenev's works:

> You would find [in the British Museum Reading Room], in back volumes of the 'RDM' 10 and 15 years ago - 2 or 3 superb things of T[urgenev]'s.

This means that he must have read it at least from 1863 to 1868, and there are many other signs that he continued to do so, one of them being its publication, from 1875 to 1878, of several of his short stories.[4] An examination of the 'Revue des Deux Mondes ' from 1858, the year James begins

[1]Vid. his review of Epictetus, NR, p. 173.

[2]Autobiog., p. 287. [3]Vid. also Autobiog., pp. 273, 281.

[4]The Last of the Valerii,' 15th Nov., 1875, p.431ff; 'Eugene Pickering', 1st Jan., 1876, p.153ff.; 'The Madonna of the Future', 1st April, 1876, p.59ff.; 'The Passionate Pilgrim', 1st Oct., 1876, p.512ff.; 'Four Meetings', 15th Dec., 1878, [illegible].)

reading it, to 1895, the year he resolves to give up regular playwriting, reveals several interesting possibilities as to influences on him, particularly with regard to his concept of the dialogue form. His own three dialogues fall well within this period, so too do the main body of his plays; The Awkward Age, his experiment in the dialogue novel, follows shortly after it, in 1898. The simplest way of dealing with this material is to look first at individual writers who appear to have affected James, then to consider the more general influence of the various practitioners and critics of the genre.

One of the main contributors to the magazine during this period, is George Sand. There is abundant evidence of James's admiration for her, though he had grave misgivings about certain aspects of her work. His interest is manifest, for example, in a series of essays on her, written over a number of years.[1] George Sand is one of the first writers to recognise the 'roman' and the 'nouvelle dialogué(e)' as a distinct literary kind.[2] D. Fahmy gives a description of its distinguishing features:

> [George Sand] se trouve ainsi amenée à definir un nouveau genre, intermédiaire entre le genre dramatique et le roman: c'est le roman, ou la nouvelle dialoguée qui emprunte au théâtre sa forme extérieure, le dialogue, sa division en actes et en scènes,...[3]

Many of her first dramatic works, he continues:

> ...écrit entre 1831 et 1840 ne paraissent pas non plus faits pour etre jouées. Leur auteur ne cherche jamais à les faire paraître sur la scène...Ils se rattachent au genre qu'elle definera plus tard sous le nom de 'roman' ou 'nouvelle dialoguée'. Elle les fit tous praître dans la 'Revue des Deux Mondes'.[4]

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[1] 'George Sand's Mademoiselle Merquem', July 1878, LRE; 'George Sand', July, 1876, LRE; 'George Sand', July, 1877, FPP; 'Last Gleanings from George Sand's Writings', October, 1877, LRE; 'George Sand', 1897, NN.

[2] Henri Monnier is the innovator of the form in France, vid. inf., p.250.

[3] George Sand, Auteur Dramatique, Paris, 1935, p. 179. [4] Ibid., p. 112.

The following is a list of dialogue works contributed by her to the 'Revue', from 1858 to 1872. The length of it suggests that James could hardly help but be aware of her experiments in this direction:

i) 'Le Pavé', nouvelle dialoguée, 15th Aug., 1861, p. 796ff.

ii) 'Le Drac', rêverie fantastique en trois actes, 1st Nov., 1861, p. 5ff.

iii) 'Plutus', étude après le théâtre antique, 1st Jan., 1863, p. 5ff.

iv) 'Mademoiselle la Quintine', 15th March, 1863, p.293; 15th April, 1863, p.766ff. (A serialised novel which breaks into formal dialogue on occasions.)

v) 'La Nuit de Noël', fantaisie d'après Hoffman, 15th Aug., 1863, p.769ff.

vi) 'Le Dernier Amour', 15th Nov., 1865, p.540ff. (Another serial novel, with snippets between two lovers given in dialogue form.)

vii) 'Cadio', roman dialogué, 1st Sept., 1869, p. 5ff, and following six numbers.

viii) 'Lupo Liverani', un drame en trois actes, 1st Dec., 1869, p.513ff.

ix) 'Un Bienfait n'est Jamais Perdu', un proverbe, 15th Dec., 1872, p.911ff.

x) 'Maupret' (a play, reviewed posthumously), 1st May, 1877, p. 239ff.

Not only does she write novels, tales and plays, she also experiments in 'proverbes' and 'saynètes'. In a passage explaining the function of these last two, she also describes how she comes to write a 'nouvelle dialoguée':

> Certaines situations de la vie intime ou certaines émotions individuelles sont plus aisément retracées par le dialogue que par le récit, et sans songer à sortir du cadre du roman, nous avons quelquefois senti le besoin de leur donner la forme d'une conversation entre un petit nombre de personnages. Ces essais ne méritent ni le titre de 'proverbe', qui semble indiquer la mise en action d'une idée générale, ni celui de 'saynètes', qui promet une action particulière assez vive et specialment dramatique. Nous nous contenterons donc de celui de 'nouvelles dialoguées', qui doit bien faire comprendre que ceci n'a jamais été destiné au théâtre.[1]

[1] Preface to 'Le Pavé', RDM, 15th Aug., 1861, p. 796.

Of all her experiments in the dramatic form, it is the 'roman' and 'nouvelle dialoguée' which are most likely to have affected James's technique.

George Sand, however, is by no means the only writer attracted to the dialogue during this period. The 'Revue' is full of Platonic dialogues, plays, reviews of plays, reviews of novels which have been turned into plays, essays on, or about, dialogue and other experiments in the dialogue form.

There are, for example, Platonic dialogues by Taine, on J.S. Mill[1], by Montégut on music[2], one by Cherbuliez on Tasso[3], and four by Klaczko on art.[4]

The texts of at least four plays are printed in full.[5] (It was one of James's sorrows that the English public refused to read plays in book form, although they loved dialogue, to excess, in novels and short stories.[5a])

Of the many play reviews, the ones of particular relevance here are those of Zola's 'Renée'[6], Daudet's 'La Lutte pour la Vie'[7], and Maupassant's 'Le Paix du Ménage'.[8] For James knew and admired the works of all these men; he also wrote an essay on each of them.

Then there are numerous reviews of novels adapted for the stage, the most pertinent being those on Cherbuliez's 'L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski' and 'Samuel Bohl'[9], Zola's 'Pot-Bouille'[10], 'Le Ventre de Paris'[11], and 'Germinal'[12],

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[1] 'Philosophe Anglaise', March, 1860, p.44ff.

[2] 'Une Dialogue sur l'Influence de la Musique', 1st June, 1862, p. 704ff.

[3] 'Le Prince Vitale', 1st July, 1893, p.5ff.

[4] 'Causeries Florentines', 15th Oct., 1879 - 1st April, 1880.

[5] 'Le Mariage du Duc Pompée', par E.d'Alton-Shée, 15th Dec., 1863; 'Les Portraits de la Marquise', O.Feuillet, 15th Dec., 1868, p.920ff; 'Le Divorce et Juliette', O. Feuillet, 1st Jan., 1889, p.5ff; 'Ni Dieu Ni Maître', G.Durny, 15th Aug.,1890, p.802ff and 1st Sept., 1890, p.57ff.

[5a] Vid. AN, p.107. [6] 1st May, 1877, p.215ff. [7] 15th Nov., 1889, p.461ff.

[8] 1st April, 1893, p.696ff. [9] 1st Feb., 1879, p.700ff. [10] 15th Jan.,1884,p.453ff.

[11] 15th March, 1887, p.453ff. [12] 15th May, 1888, p. 454ff.

Daudet's 'Les Rois en Exil'[1], Bourget's 'Mensonges'[2], and Pierre Loti's 'Pêcheur d'Islande'.[3] Again, these are men James admired, and wrote about.

Many of the critical essays, though not themselves in dialogue form, contain specific comments on it. The reviewer of Cherbuliez's 'A propos d'un Cheval', for example, writes:

> L'auteur a emprunté aussi la méthode platonicienne, et il a fait emploi le plus judicieux et le plus habile.[4]

There is also a review of Cherbuliez's dialogues 'Les Causeries Athéniennes',[5] and several essays on Plato himself, one of which is a fairly exhaustive study of his method.[6] Finally, there is a series of essays on George Sand, the third of which discusses her dramatic technique in detail.[7]

However, it is the actual experiments in the dialogue form which are of most interest. These are numerous and difficult to classify, as they often fall into no recognisable category:

i) L'Atelier de Phidias, étude tirée de l'antique, Beule, March, 1861.

ii) La Mort de Phidias, scènes[8] tirées de l'antique, Beule, 15th March, 1862, p. 359ff.

iii) Trop Menule Fil Casse, scènes de la vie russe, I.Tourgénieff, 15th July, 1861, p.257ff.

iv) Feu de Paille, scènes de la vie à la campagne, G. Droz, 15th Jan., 1869, p. 482ff.

v) Une Rupture, scène de la vie mondaine, Anon., 1st Nov., 1868, p.122ff.

vi) Le Voyageur, O. Feuillet, 1st Jan., 1884, p. 5ff.

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[1] 15th Jan., 1884, p. 453ff.

[2] 1st May, 1889, p. 215ff.

[3] 1st March, 1893, p. 209ff.

[4] 15th Oct., 1860, p. 985.

[5] 15th May, 1866, p. 482ff.

[6] 'Platon et son Oeuvre,' etc., 1st Jan., 1868, p. 43ff.

[7] 'George Sand. III. La Politique, la Nature et l'Art, Dernières Années' 15th March, 1878, p. 332ff.

[8] It is difficult to know exactly what 'scène' is meant to imply.

vii) Charybde et Scylla, proverbe, O. Feuillet, 1st Dec., 1887, p.481ff.

viii) Le Cas de Conscience, proverbe, O. Feuillet, 1st Oct., 1865, p.738ff.

ix) Au Pied du Mur, proverbe, E. de Najac, 1st May, 1865, p.121ff.

x) Le Recteur Bertholdus, L. Siefert, 1st June, 1870, p.726ff.

xi) Le Chevalier Trumeau, E.Pailleron, 1st Nov., 1880, p.128ff.

xii) Les Antibel, E. Pouvillon, 1st and 15th May, 1890, p.5ff and 267ff.

xiii) Bernadette de Lourdes, un mystère, E.Pouvillon, 15th Dec., 1893, p.721ff; 1st Jan., 1894, p.63ff.

xiv) La Veillée du Prince, M. Blaze de Bury, 15th March, 1871, p.395ff. (A dialogue in verse.)

This whole body of writing reflects the keen interest in drama which is such a noticeable feature of nineteenth century French literature, a phenomenon the dramatic critic of the 'Revue' himself comments on:

> Tous les écrivains qui s'étaient d'abord fait connaître par des romans, par des articles de journaux - et quelquefois même par des études critiques - nous les avons en ces derniers temps aborder quelque jour le théâtre. Cela tient au goût passioné que nous avons en France pour le genre dramatique, et ne tient à nulle autre cause évidemment.[1]

(It is interesting to note a similar absorption with drama in the Greece of Plato's time.)

(c) Gyp:

Gyp, one of the most prolific writers of dialogues in nineteenth century France, makes an explicit statement of her own passion for the theatre:

> ....j'aime énormement le théâtre que me donne cette impression de vie.

She has not been mentioned up to this point, firstly because she did not start

[1] 15th May, 1894, p. 464.

writing until the 1880's, and secondly because, although she contributed two dialogues to the 'Revue'[1], her regular magazine was 'La Vie Parisienne', with which she first made her name.[2] (Her name, incidentally, was Countess Sibylle Gabrielle Marie Antoinette de Martel de Janville.) Born in 1850 of a very wealthy and aristocratic family, great-granddaughter of Mirabeau - she married young and the early part of her life was taken up with being a wife and mother. Finding herself suddenly in need of money, however, she decided to start writing. (It was a close tie between that or becoming a circus equestrian.) She herself describes how she came to write her first dialogue in 1880:

> Comment j'ai lancé - après Henry Monnier[3]- le roman dialogue? ...C'est à la suite d'un dîner au Sauvoy...Ce fut si cocasse, que j'écrivis le dîner et l'adressai à tout hasard à 'la Vie Parisienne'. Le samedi suivant ça paraissait sous le titre; 'Par le temps qui court'.[4]

Following this initial attempt at dialogue writing, she continued to contribute to 'la Vie Parisienne' for the next two years, at the end of which her dialogues appeared in book form. She then published other dialogue collections,[5] and

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[1] 'Mademoiselle Eve', 1st June, 1889, p.481ff., 'Une Passionate, 15th Feb., 1891, p. 721ff. and 1st March, 1891, p. 37ff. - the latter is not a formal dialogue, but there is scarcely a word of narrative in it.

[2] She contributed sixteen signed dialogues to this magazine in 1880, ten signed, and probably many more, signed 'S' or anonymous, in 1881, and five signed ones, in 1882; among the many signed 'S' or anonymous in the 1882 numbers, there is a dialogue novel in twenty-five instalments which we know to be hers, since she published it under the same title, 'Autour de Mariage', in 1883.

[3] His 'Scènes Populaires, dessinées à la plume', were published in 1830, five years before George Sand's first attempt at the dialogue form - 'Une Conspiration in 1537' (1835). This was followed by 'Nouvelles Scènes Populaires' (1835-9), 'Grandeur et décadence de Joseph Prudhomme' (1852) and 'Mémoires de Joseph Prudhomme' (1857).

[4] Gyp et Ses Amis, M. Misoffe, Paris, 1932, p. 59-60.

[5] e.g. Du Haut en Bas, dialogues, Paris, 1894.

wrote novels, which were dialogues in all but their typographical lay-out,[1] pure 'romans dialogués',[2] and also several plays, either alone,[3] or in collaboration.[4]

If she is remembered at all nowadays it is for her popularisation of the 'roman dialogués':

> Elle a toute fois, sinon créé le roman dialogué, du moins donné à ce genre sa forme caracteristique: ainsi a-t-elle devancé Lavedan, Hervieu, Donnay.[5]

It is amazing that a writer who was loved and admired in her day by such great, and discerning, men as Nietzsche, Jules Lemaître, Pierre Loti, Guy de Maupassant, Rudyard Kipling,[6] and Anatole France[7] should have become almost completely forgotten. James, in his preface to The Awkward Age, has no need to explain who she is, nor what she has written, but, apart from one of two specialists in nineteenth century French literature, very few present day readers of it have any idea to whom he is referring. In fact, I have encountered only one reference to her influence on James, and that comes from a Frenchwoman writing in 1927.[8] Yet he himself explicitly states his debt to her:

> Gyp had long struck me as mistress, in her levity, of one of the happiest of forms...[9]

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[1] e.g. Le Mariage de Chiffon, Paris, 1894.

[2] e.g. Les Séducteurs, Paris, 1888.

[3] e.g. Mademoiselle Eve, Paris, 1889.

[4] e.g. Autour de Mariage, par Gyp et H. Cremieux, Paris, 1883.

[5] Bibliographie des Auteurs Modernes de la Langue Française, vol.7-8, p.416.

[6] Vid. Something of Myself, London, 1937, p. 71-2.

[7] Vid. 'La Vie Littéraire, Paris, 1890-2, vols. 2, 3 and 4.

[8] Vid. Henry James et la France, M. Garnier, Paris, 1927, p. 168.

[9] AN, p. 106.

Although he is determined to emulate her closely, he realises that he will have to practise dissimulation if he wishes to succeed with the British Public, who do not like plays in printed form.[1] However, he stresses the fact that it is Gyp who originally inspired the dialogue form of The Awkward Age:

> But that I did, positively and seriously - ah, so seriously! - emulate the levity of Gyp and, by the same token, of that hardiest of flowers fostered in her school M. Henri Lavedan,[2] is a contribution to the history of The Awkward Age that I shall obviously have had to brace myself in order to make...My private inspiration had been in the Gyp plan (artfully dissimulated for dear life and applied with the very subtlest consistency, but none the less kept in secret view).[3]

What he admires, and therefore attempts to imitate most closely, in Gyp is her "light irony", for which the 'roman dialogué' is ideally fitted:

> My idea was to be treated with light irony - it would be light and ironical or it would be nothing; so that I asked myself, naturally, what might be the least solemn form to give it, among recognised and familiar forms. The question thus at once arose: what form so familiar, so recognised among alert readers, as that in which the ingenious and inexhaustible, the charming, philosophic 'Gyp' casts most of her social studies.[4]

Although the dialogue has been examined in some detail, for its possible effect on James's concept of form, this is not to suggest that it is the only, or even the most direct influence at work. However, it is clear that this kind

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[1] But as with the printed piece our own public, infatuated as it may be with the theatre, refuses all commerce...so the horror seems to attach itself to any typographic hint of the proscribed playbook or any insidious plea for it. The immense oddity resides in the almost exclusively typographic order of the offence. An English, an American Gyp would typographically offend, and that would be the end of her. (AN, p. 107)

[2] Another prolific writer of dialogues, dialogue novels, plays and sketches. James would have read reviews of at least four of his plays in RDM: 'Une Famille', 1st June, 1890, p.704ff.; 'Le Prince d'Aurec', 15th June, 1892, p.940ff.; 'Les Deux Noblesses', 15th May, 1894, p.464ff; 'Viveurs', 1st Dec., p.704ff.

[3] AN, p. 107.

[4] Ibid., p. 106.

of writing interests him a great deal, and it is more than likely that it leads him to modify his ideas on structure. His basically dramatic leanings are both stimulated and satisfied by the work of these nineteenth century novelist-playwrights. But it must be remembered that his admiration for the theatre stems, primarily, from a love of form, and not the other way round:

> I was greatly to love the drama, at its best, as form; whatever variations of faith or curiosity I was to know in respect to the infirm and inadequate theatre.[1]

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[1]Autobiog., p. 60.

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