# "So as Not to Arrive": The Object-Theater of Late Jamesian Consciousness

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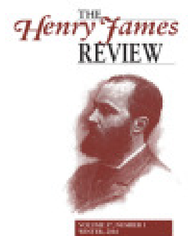


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# "So as Not to Arrive": The Object-Theater of Late Jamesian Consciousness

By Lily Cui

> A person taking up his residence in a foreign city is apt, I think, to become something of a play-goer. In the first place, he is usually more or less isolated, and in the absence of complex social ties the theaters help him to pass his evenings. But more than this, they offer him a good deal of interesting evidence upon the manners and customs of the people among whom he has come to dwell. . . . If this exotic spectator to whom I allude is a person of a really attentive observation, he may extract such evidence in very large quantities. It is furnished not by the stage alone, but by the *theatre* in a larger sense of the word: by the audience, the attendants, the arrangements, the very process of getting to the playhouse.
>
> —Henry James, "The London Theatres" (1877)

> Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily *appear* to do so.
>
> —Henry James, Preface to the New York Edition of *Roderick Hudson* (1907)

To indulge for a moment in a thought experiment, let us read this essay's two epigraphs contiguously—side by side rather than, more responsibly, with due attention to the gulf of thirty years and distinct critical occasions that separate them—and describe the cognitive sequence that results. Unsurprisingly, these two remarks by

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Henry James seem to contain incompatible impulses. The mature Master famously advocates for a narrow compass, while the fledgling novelist of 1877 defines *the theater* with dilative zest, concluding with what may be an endlessly widening sphere: "the very process of getting to the playhouse" (*SA* 93).[1] In this moment of semantic expansion, *progress* toward the theater itself becomes theater. One's engagement with the ostensibly closed semiotic field of theater-as-stage ultimately alters and enhances the terms of the original semiology to world-as-theater. By shifting the parameters of *theater* to include the pullulations that form theater's mass social context, James's definitional move disrupts the dramatic coherence of the English stage by fixing it within and in relation to a larger, more mobile human scene. Both sets of terms are thereby altered: the theater, confronted by an ungainly but equally theatrical social world, relinquishes its claim to aesthetic autonomy; in turn, this social world—the audience, the set, the journey to the playhouse—becomes cohesively legible under a common rubric of theatricality. By this light, we might revisit the oft-quoted 1907 enjoinder that would have the novelist draw a delimiting "circle" within a ponderous infinitude of relations. Taken at face value, the older James says, the art of the novel *is* circumscription. But his dictum may endorse a less austere novelistic measure than its many subsequent citations in volumes on narrative theory would suggest. After all, the younger James's narrative "geometry" included the process of getting to the circle.

Reading back and forth between these two critical moments thereby produces a particular phenomenological pattern, a rhythm of expansion and contraction or, more precisely, of expansive dynamism and shapely fixity. James's aestheticizing gesture opens back onto a larger human scene, only to recede again into marmoreal stillness, and so on. Herein lies the value of our thought experiment: the pattern artificially produced by our collapsed diachrony also emerges on the level of the sentence in James's writings of the early 1900s and becomes the script by which consciousness is constructed. Both the famed house of fiction metaphor and *The Golden Bowl* (1904) prominently feature a process I will call *dramaterialization*, in which a character's consciousness, metaphorized by an object, eventually becomes metaphorized by the scene of the character's interaction with that object. This account, however, is deceptively linear: the process neither occurs in a two-step sequence nor introduces a phenomenally stable object with which a similarly stable character engages. Rather, these passages tend to enact a continuous dialectical tension between object and scene, materialization and dematerialization. This essay will focus for the most part on three moments in the late works that bear out this pattern of dramaterialization: 1) the house of fiction metaphor, 2) the pagoda metaphor in *The Golden Bowl*, and 3) *The Golden Bowl*'s concluding scene. Each of these passages posits consciousness by locating and dislocating it, generating an intense, disembodied unease[2] out of the dialectical shifting between consciousness's objectification and its staging in a scene. The emotive intensity of these moments holds a repellant fascination in that it cannot be traced to either a psychologically or ontologically coherent character or a dramatic effect (what is happening in the plot, for instance). These moments in James's late works make for such discomfiting reading precisely because what solicits the reader's emotional "engagement" is neither character nor plot but the complex interaction between the continual exposure of realist sites of readerly investment such as character *as* mere literary effects and the texts' insistence on nonetheless conferring on

these effects the minimal objectivity—the quality of being a *real thing*—required to function within their own narratives. Feeling in late James thus registers the imperilment of the realist psychological subject for whom our feeling is ostensibly reserved.

It is not incidental that James's exhortation to an aesthetic broadening should involve a broader application of theatricality in particular. Theatricality proves central to many such unexpected dynamisms in James—to moments, for instance, in which a character's *progress* toward a figure for consciousness becomes itself a figure for consciousness. This dialectical relation between staid objectivity and elusive dynamism tends to engender an unsettled aesthetic in the late novels, a contradictory sensibility to which James had elsewhere proved alert: "'Read it,' Mr. James advised Mrs. Hugh Bell, 'for its strange mixture of pointless flatness and convincing *life*. Also of desolate untheatricality and dramatic ingenuity'" (Robins 29). At the time of this assessment of *Hedda Gabler*, James was still more than a decade away from writing *The Golden Bowl*, yet it is safe to say that the mixed allure he found in Ibsen would eventually characterize his own late masterpiece. Even by the standard of the late novels, *The Golden Bowl* seems static, chilly, weighted. A casual reader of *The Golden Bowl* might be forgiven a glib recollection of the novel as a series of hieratic symmetries and hard, heavy objects. Kevin Ohi, too, finds that this novel induces a kind of selective memory that he attributes to a disjunction between the style in which it is written and the events it reports: "That we remember *The Golden Bowl* as reserved suggests not only that its volubility about the unspeakable has its effects, but also that what we remember about the novel is not its plot but its style: its reticence is a stylistic effect and not a thematic one" (34–35). Ohi's remarks might help to clarify the reader's tendency toward mnemonic condensation: the sense of a narrative landscape overrun with objects—real, figural, and otherwise—originates largely in these objects' necessariness to narrativizing the workings of consciousness. Far from suspending or merely supplementing the narrative, objects in *The Golden Bowl* animate moments of narrative intensification, moments when consciousness is most explicitly dramatized, emplotted, and set in tense relation with the rest of the fictional world. In a similar vein, Edith Wharton's baffled interrogation of her friend—"What was your idea in suspending the four principal characters in *The Golden Bowl* in the void? What sort of life did they lead when they were not watching each other, and fencing with each other? Why have you stripped them of all the *human fringes* we necessarily trail after us through life?"—perceives a kind of inhuman sterility in the novel's uncoupling of feeling from realist expatiation (343). To invert James's description of Ibsen, a desolate *theatricality* emerges as *The Golden Bowl*'s primary narrative and conceptual principle: not only do people in this novel treat and figure each other as objects, but consciousness must be externalized, thrown from the conscious subject, and dramatized as an object before it can behave *as* consciousness. Objectification predicates self-relation. Yet while it hinges on these initial objectifications, James's theater of consciousness bears out the mobilizing, expansionary impulse in his remarks on the English stage: the objects tasked with the figural and narrative labor of enacting consciousness continually forfeit this labor to the larger scene in which they are involved, dislocating both consciousness itself and the locus of feeling within the scene.

### *Fictive Houses*

A play of interior and exterior, of subjective inscribability and objective materiality, attends Jamesian narrativizations of houses and human subjects alike. Critics have often noted the prevalence of "significant buildings" in James, in particular of Gothic structures that are "creaturely, sympathetic, and able to shape the emotions and judgments of their inhabitants" (Coulson 171). Compounding the number of works whose central conflicts radiate from or magnetize around their eponymous properties—such as "The Jolly Corner," *The Other House*, *The Spoils of Poynton*, and the unfinished novel *The Ivory Tower*—are countless moments where houses stand as the significant form of crucial narrative and affective complexes: the Venetian Palazzo that vertically emplaces Milly Theale and her travel companions; the Palladian estates that would entomb Isabel Archer; and, in *The Princess Casamassima*, the monument to inscrutable, idle wealth that besots a would-be revolutionary. Comparable structures are there for the finding in James—which is not to overlook the significance of those Jamesian houses that precisely *cannot* be found, that function as settings and dramatically determinant *spaces* but never become available to the senses as materially accoutred *places*. Nearly the entirety of *The Sacred Fount*, for instance, takes place at the country estate Newmarch—"a place of a charm so special as to create rather a bond among its guests" and of an immateriality so thoroughgoing as to suggest a rebuke to the visual faculty (indeed, the novel's narrator-protagonist singles out for disdain the déclassé ocularity of "the detective and the keyhole") (17, 57). Newmarch registers almost exclusively as a spatialization of elevated tone ("charm"), to the point where the "human furniture" seems to be the only kind installed in the place (17).

More prevalent still than these radically immaterial houses are moments when materiality is revealed to have been imperiled from the moment of its positing. This slippery phenomenality animates a figure whose resistant corporeality seems unquestionable—the house of fiction:

> Here we get exactly the high price of the novel as a literary form—its power not only, while preserving that form with closeness, to range through all the differences of the individual relation to its general subject-matter . . . but positively to appear more true to its character in proportion as it strains, or tends to burst, with a latent extravagance, its mould.
>
> The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million—a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will. . . . They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall, disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But . . . at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. . . . [T]here is fortunately no saying on what, for the particular pair of eyes, the window may *not* open; "fortunately" by reason, precisely, of this incalculability of range. The spreading field, the human scene, is the "choice of subject"; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied

> or slit-like and low-browed, is the "literary form"; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher—without, in other words, the consciousness of the artist. Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has *been* conscious. Thereby I shall express to you at once his boundless freedom and his "moral" reference.
>
> All this is a long way round, however, for my word about my dim first move toward "The Portrait," which was exactly my grasp of a single character—an acquisition I had made, moreover, after a fashion not here to be retraced. (*AN* 45–47)

I excerpt here not only the proper house of fiction metaphor, but portions of the surrounding paragraphs in the preface to the New York Edition of *The Portrait of a Lady* (1908) as well, material that has been typically omitted in the many critical treatments of the metaphor. Ironically, this citational practice often attends formalist treatments of the metaphor in question, even as such excerpting effectively shears the opening proposition—"The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million"—of its monstrous abruptness, of the sense of an architectural enormity being conjured out of thin air and absent any preliminary groundwork (James's "in short" notwithstanding). The foregoing paragraph, in fact, offers a variegated and somewhat contradictory set of figures for the novel as a literary form, depicting at times a creature of cognition that "range[s] through" human experience, at others a kind of unstable raw material that "tends to burst . . . its mould." These humble if odd figures are resoundingly flattened by the rhetorical force of the materialized house.

Given the extreme difficulty of trying to provide a "straight" synopsis of the house of fiction metaphor, it is perhaps no wonder the James of the late style, as exhibited here, became a darling of the New Critics. The passage's unsettling tone and imagery scuttle efforts to read it along the grain, indeed, to discern in which direction its grain runs. If it is meant to be an ode to the diversity of authorial consciousness, it seems to consist entirely of minor notes. To offer as broad a paraphrase as I can, James argues against instituting rigid strictures for the novel, whose form necessarily will be determined by the idiosyncratic perspective inhabited by the individual novelist. With the crucial difference of the elaborately staged architectural metaphor, the central prescription here is not too far removed from the position James stakes out in his earlier essay "The Art of Fiction" (1884), in which he proposes that the "form" of the novel "be appreciated after the fact," not preemptively legislated (*EL* 50). The figure of the house itself, however, has come in for a great deal of scrutiny, its tortured visuality in particular eliciting a range of Foucauldian and historicist readings of power and spectacularity.[3] Victoria Coulson, for instance, describes the house as a "nightmare of punitive individuation, a model of harsh polarities in which each 'posted presence,' separated irremediably from every other, figures both as sentinel and as victim of a solitary confinement" (176). Yet the place of the metaphor within the critical fiction of James's preface has gone mostly unremarked. The tendency of James critics to elide the preface's progress toward and away from the house of fiction metaphor mirrors the reifying trajectory of the passage itself. In a rhetorical move inimical to the pluralist tropology that precedes it, the house of fiction announces itself "in short" to have always already been the master-trope that underwrites all previous figural gestures—a summation, apotheosis, and telos that undoes its own

narrative history. As an instance of strategic amnesia that privileges a demarcated object-metaphor over the more unruly metaphoricity it supplants, the house of fiction passage has proven to be a spectacularly, self-consciously *useful* moment for James studies and for theories of narrative. As in my paired epigraphs, we are given a figure that claims to name the precise contours of aesthetic experience, when in fact what makes this precision possible is the figure's concealment of the less tidy *process of getting to it*. The paragraph that follows supports the passage's aspirations to portability, with James's sheepish admission that "All this is a long way round, however, for my word about my dim first move toward 'The Portrait.'" If the house of fiction lies along a sidetrack, it is nonetheless the only location that, as James's segue implies, justifies a cessation of narrative progress.

As a critical artifact, then, the house of fiction proves to be not so much an object as a process that regards and presents itself as an object. As a prose performance, the house of fiction passage may also be more dynamic than the critical record would indicate, its model of visuality more complex, and more complexly valenced, than its apparent aesthetics of surveillance might suggest. Ellen Eve Frank describes the artist at the window as "strangely disembodied, reduced from a 'figure' rather abstract to begin with, to a 'pair of eyes'" (183), and Sheila Teahan has noted the "strangeness" of James's outfitting the figure "with a pair of eyes, *or at least* with a field-glass" (qtd. in Ohi 191n31, emphasis mine), as though the field-glass could prove to any advantage without a pair of eyes behind them. At the risk of appearing to wish to dispel any of this metaphor's storied strangeness, I would suggest that the overlooked component in these readings is a specularity of vision—someone within the "human scene" whom the artist watches and who watches in turn. Touted by James (and accepted by critics) as a static object-metaphor, the house of fiction may be better described as a theatrical metaphor. Far from being a piece of objective reportage, the passage partakes of James's dramatic method, endowing us with the vantage point of a dematerialized spectator who figures the reader. This spectator can be spotted in the interstices of the passage, implicitly positioned to detect at the window not a fully embodied artist but "a pair of eyes" or "at least . . . a field-glass." The seemingly eccentric alternativity of this formulation can be explained, then, as the effect of an onlooker's limited perspective: they are "eyes" or "a field-glass" that are seen rather than seeing. Frank's canny account of the house itself as a "fantastical façade with no structure behind it" (182) speaks to the overwhelming sense it evinces of a flat surface—a "dead wall"—rather than an inhabited space, each window "pierced" or "still pierceable" by an individual "need" that is not itself penetrated by a spectator's gaze. Thus, Coulson's claim that there is "literally no place for a reader" but for one that is "equally imprisoned within the disciplinary circuits of the text, oscillating between agent and victim of the novel's panoptical power," is only partly accurate (176). The reader is indeed an implied presence, but rather than being the artist's identical counterpart, a subject-object of power "equally imprisoned" and, by "uncanny homology," inhabiting the same seat of *access* as the artist (as though peering through his eyes), this reader remains doubly dematerialized: first from the surface of the text of the preface, as Coulson observes, then from the absent interior of the house of fiction, whose surface machinations—the *effects* of authorial consciousness—are all the reader can hope to glean. The narrative voice inhabits the spatial perspective not of the simultaneously privileged and imprisoned authorial consciousness but of the excluded and dematerialized readerly

consciousness. The perspective of the passage itself, then, is an almost fetishistically restricted one—a perspective that abolishes the possibility of both an interior to the house and an embodied world outside this architectural metaphor. Critical attempts to domesticate the house of fiction—to claim, for instance, that it "emblematizes James's access to the cultural space of women's writing" (qtd. in Coulson 171; see, further, Blair)—seem erroneous on two counts: first, the metaphor is predominantly one of the reader's exclusion rather than of the author's access; second, the "house" itself is not a domestic space but strongly suggests, as I have shown, in its implied phenomenality, a theatrical one—a playhouse of fiction.[4] I would suggest that the intense unease with which the metaphor affects so many readers stems precisely from this impossible theatricality, which forces the reader to occupy a limited spectatorial perspective but to do so in the absence of any explicit material embodiment, and in fact sees the narrative voice occupying this abjected position as well—gazing upon the spectacle of authorial consciousness along with the disembodied reader. A more summary gloss of the passage might assume an identification between the narrative voice and the "privileged" position of the posted watcher. Feeling emerges from this critical disjunction between the position of voyeuristic empowerment that the passage seems to claim for its author and the actually enacted position of dematerialized and constricted spectatorship.

The cluster of terms at work here—reader, spectator, outsider—recurs several times in varying configurations over the course of James's career, each instance underpinned by a poignant impossibility. James closes his introduction to a 1907 edition of *The Tempest* by bemoaning the paucity of information about the "effect on [Shakespeare] of being *able* to write Lear and Othello" (*EL* 1217–18)—a formulation of the author's consciousness (and the limits of a reader's access to it) strikingly consistent with that offered in the house of fiction metaphor: "Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has *been* conscious." Elsewhere, James's vision of the "great spectacle of English life" is likewise a portrait of exclusion, wherein Englishmen's "unconsciousness" of the alienating effect their country might have on a foreigner

> makes a huge blank surface, a mighty national wall, against which the perceptive, the critical effort of the presumptuous stranger wastes itself, until, after a little, he espies, in the measureless spaces, a little aperture, a window which is suddenly thrown open, and at which a friendly and intelligent face is presented, the harbinger of a voice of greeting. With this agreeable apparition he communes—the voice is delightful, it has a hundred tones and modulations; and as he stands there the great dead screen seems to vibrate and grow transparent. (*EL* 721)

That the figure metonymized by this "face"—or "voice," or "apparition"—is Matthew Arnold is perhaps less consequential than the highly outré results of his congress with the newcomer. Arnold's salutations do not amount to an invitation to step behind the wall but instead cause the "great dead screen" to "vibrate and grow transparent"—no doubt a phenomenon of lively interest but one of dubious value for the inquisitive stranger whose entrance would still be blocked. Once again, vision and access are distinctly unidentical. The house of fiction gives the reader no quarter, but there *are* no quarters in the house, and, for that matter, no embodied reader capable

of inhabiting them. In the Arnold piece, the "spectacle of English life" that resides behind the "mighty national wall" remains impenetrable and certainly uninhabitable. The result of Arnold's benediction is that the spectacle becomes visible and does so through an event that itself constitutes a spectacle. In this earlier iteration of the trope, James does not even offer the pretense of interiority—the wall is only ever a wall, not, as in its later manifestation, a house whose registration in the world begins and ends, strangely, at its façade. Yet the tortuousness of the metaphor—that the wall should "vibrate and grow transparent" in defiance of, among other things, the conventions of realism—signals what will become an ever more arcane relation between reader and novel, consciousness and world, spectator and spectacle. That Arnold stands at the "national wall" of "unconsciousness" without being *of* it marks a crucial difference from the house of fiction, whose inhabitants are wholly constituted by their architectural emplacement. Whereas Arnold's wall corporealizes a national trait, the house of fiction aims to function primarily as an organizing principle for the consciousnesses who peer out through its façade—a utility ultimately belied by the haunting dislocation the house metaphor performs.

As both a minutely sculpted prose performance and a widely circulated critical and theoretical artifact (whose citationality James worries and enacts within the preface), the house of fiction makes a dual demand on our understanding. It requires an initial, provisional account of the house figure as a static, solid, and stable object as well as a counter-reading that sets the figure in motion, recognizing it as the nodal point of a set of perspectival, material, and narrative dynamisms. These two accounts should be seen in dialectical, not sequential, relation. Far from canceling out or correcting the first reading, the second relies for its effect on the intransigence of a felt concretion that resists the dereifying ministrations of formal analysis. The emotive intensity of this ostensibly staid object-metaphor emerges from this dialectical tension. *The Golden Bowl*, similarly, opens with a deceptively direct truth-claim whose deceptiveness is precisely its truth: "The Prince had always liked his London, when it had come to him . . ." (*GB* 3). With all the ease and aplomb of a royal decree, this statement seems to start us off on secure enough footing: we know the Prince will be a character in the novel, someone separate from the thing he likes—a thing that is nonetheless "his"—and we know the temporal scope and condition of his liking (he had "always" liked it, "when it had come to him"). Yet the lightly worn assumption of semantic transparency is already compromised. What does it mean for a city to "come" to one? This axiologically neutral verb—well-paired with the attenuated libidinality of "liked"—seems preemptively to distinguish itself from the more thickly charged "idea of pursuit" that, later in the same passage, is notable for *not* occurring to the Prince (4). London comes, but it need not pursue. Does this coming, then, describe an event in the Prince's consciousness—for instance, it "came to him with a flash"—and thereby link knowing with having? And would it still have been "*his* London," as James's sentence structure allows us to suppose, even on those occasions when it did not "come to him"? What does it mean, then, for this London to be "his" if the fact of his possession precedes any meaningful interaction with what is possessed? In his reading of the famous opening clause of *The Waste Land*—"April is the cruellest month"—Christopher Ricks points to the line's powerful merging of "unmistakable directness" with "lurking possibilities of mistaking its direction" (176). Aptly for Eliot's modernist precursor, James, too, opens his masterpiece on what appears to be

a note of languid certitude with regard to time, possession, predilection, and action. What is actually on offer, however, is only the *tone* of truth-giving: certainty—as the Princess-to-be, who will have quite a bit to do with knowing and having, might say—with "a hole in it" (*GB* 456).[5] The rest of the novel's first sentence gives the game away: "he was one of the modern Romans who find by the Thames a more convincing image of the truth of the ancient state than any they have left by the Tiber" (3). The Prince's celebration of dissemblance here adumbrates a more painful truth about his imminent marriage to which we will soon become privy. That the opening lines deceive in their directness (*and* in their direction) is their truth.

Following the Prince's unbudging leisure in these lines is a peripatetic first paragraph, one whose outward wending inverts the trajectory and, importantly, lacks the motive force of the Princess's deliberate centripetality in the opening of Book 2. There, as we shall see, in the famous pagoda passage, Maggie closes in on the object-metaphor for her own developing consciousness at the same time that the passage's language expands outward to incorporate her into the hypertrophying figure. Here, the novel's first line accords Amerigo a stillness with impossible powers of magnetism, such that this high tone cannot help but be undone by the inevitable narrative (and physical) movements to follow. In the novel's first pages, the Prince exhibits "no consistency of attention" and little more than a velleity—a "predilection . . . sufficiently vague" or an "undirected thought"—toward his current activity of threading through the London streets (*GB* 3). These itineracies recall the house of fiction passage, that "long way round" to James's "dim first move toward 'The Portrait,' which was exactly my grasp of a single character—an acquisition I had made, moreover, after a fashion not here to be retraced" (*AN* 47). In that preface, having traced all the inlaid and desultory movements in these lines, we bristle to find that the prized "dim first move" is, at day's end, "not here to be retraced." How James first "grasp[ed]" Isabel Archer ultimately eludes narrativization, leaving the reader of the preface with, on the one hand, an empty space where Isabel's origin should be and, on the other, the resistant body of the "encountered" figure of Isabel where we expect to be treated to the denaturalizing effects of authorial historiography.[6] The Prince, similarly, seems continually to gravitate toward repositories of solidity that may or may not be adequate to the assuredness of the novel's opening lines. Like James's protracted "move" toward Isabel Archer, the Prince's walk is punctuated by an occasional pause—before a window display of "objects massive and lumpish, in silver and gold," or before the partially obscured faces of female passers-by (*GB* 3). This latter item gestures obliquely at the cause for the Prince's lassitude: he has recently finalized his engagement to Maggie Verver, daughter of American millionaire Adam Verver, and is now succumbing to the deflated momentum that follows achievement. This revelation tempts us retroactively to favor a particular fall of the accent in the novel's opening lines: it is not necessarily the case that, on the arbitrary occasions when London had come to him, the Prince had liked it. Rather, the Prince, in a state of consummated pursuit, registers a coy preference—London might do well to come to *him*.

Several pages into the novel, then, the tone of the opening line continues to call for recalibration. As luxuriant a pace as this already seems, another half of the novel will go by before we come upon an object that provides a sufficient counterweight to this opening. If Amerigo has tone, his wife Maggie has consciousness—and her eventual domination of her husband, father, and stepmother Charlotte through the

action of this superior consciousness may in part account for its figuration through the spectacular figure of the pagoda. Maggie's pagoda sits at the literal center of *The Golden Bowl*. The opening of the pagoda passage also opens Book 2, marking the point where the narrator begins to "go behind" the Princess rather than the Prince.[7] It is worth noting that Maggie first becomes a focalizing consciousness at the moment when the question of her consciousness emerges as a problem within the plot: Amerigo and Charlotte's extended stay at a country house disturbs her previous complacency about the arrangement that confers on this pair so much unseemly latitude. The first action performed by this newly accessible consciousness, then, is to make itself an object. It appears initially as a hushed internality that in no wise prepares us for the outsize spectacle of the pagoda: "It was not till many days had passed that the Princess began to accept the idea of having done, a little, something she was not always doing, or indeed that of having listened to any inward voice that spoke in a new tone" (299). For Maggie, consciousness is simultaneously dematerialized and objectified through its figuration as a voice (and a voice with the specific materiality of tone).[8]

In many ways, the "inward voice" is a fairly standard trope. As a stand-in for a burgeoning cognizance, this figure presents consciousness as a mode of self-discourse that requires the ability to register speech acts, as well as the acuity to discern "a new tone"—the speaker's stance toward her own utterances. Given the mostly unremarkable terms of this interiorizing account of consciousness, the inversion that it shortly thereafter undergoes in the figure of the pagoda seems as formidable in its abrupt immensity as the "wonderful, beautiful, but outlandish" structure itself:

> Yet these instinctive postponements of reflection were the fruit, positively, of recognitions and perceptions already active; of the sense, above all, that she had made, at a particular hour, made by the mere touch of her hand, a difference in the situation so long present to her as practically unattackable. This situation had been occupying, for months and months, the very centre of the garden of her life, but it had reared itself there like some strange, tall tower of ivory, perhaps rather some wonderful, beautiful, but outlandish pagoda, a structure plated with hard, bright porcelain, coloured and figured and adorned, at the overhanging eaves, with silver bells that tinkled, ever so charmingly, when stirred by chance airs. She had walked round and round it—that was what she felt; she had carried on her existence in the space left her for circulation, a space that sometimes seemed ample and sometimes narrow; looking up, all the while, at the fair structure that spread itself so amply and rose so high, but never quite making out, as yet, where she might have entered had she wished. . . . At present, however, to her considering mind, it was as if she had ceased merely to circle and to scan the elevation, ceased so vaguely, so quite helplessly to stare and wonder; she had caught herself distinctly in the act of pausing, then in that of lingering, and finally in that of stepping unprecedentedly near. The thing might have been, by the distance at which it kept her, a Mahometan mosque, with which no base heretic could take a liberty. . . . [I]t was nevertheless quite as if she had sounded with a tap or two one of the rare porcelain plates. (*GB* 299–300)

Let us bracket for a moment the obdurate, inexcerptable length of the passage; the phallicism of Maggie's edifice of choice; the element of orientalist fantasy; the precious and apparently inconsequential details such as the "silver bells that tinkled ever so charmingly when stirred by chance airs"; and the sense, post-"inward voice," of an infelicitous fit between figure and ground—all this aside, there is the size of the thing. It may go without saying that this structure is imposing not only because of what Maggie imagines to be the probates of stern Mahometanism but precisely because it "spread itself so amply and rose so high." The description of the image seems to impress upon us a materially resistant—and irresistible—presence: "She had knocked in short—though she could scarce have said whether for admission or for what; she had applied her hand to a cool smooth spot and had waited to see what would happen. Something *had* happened; it was as if a sound, at her touch, after a little, had come back to her from within; a sound sufficiently suggesting that her approach had been noted" (300). This moment confronts us with the contradiction of a responsive materiality being simultaneously staged and elided, laid out before us and swallowed up whole. The quick shift from the subjunctive ("as if [Maggie] had sounded") to the past perfect ("She had knocked") consigns Maggie's action not only to the realm of metaphor, but inaccessibly so. Neither within nor between the two sentences that report her having sounded the structure is there a present moment of action in which Maggie makes contact. Unlike the straightforward suspension of temporality typically at work in a visual metaphor, the pagoda metaphor gestures toward duration and diachronic movement, only ultimately to relinquish progressive narrative time and the sensuous reality whose unfolding it accommodates. Sensate details like the "cool smooth spot" belie the process of dematerialization wrought in the grammar of the passage. The plangent affirmation that closes the pagoda passage—"Something *had* happened"—ultimately abrogates that which is necessary if anything is indeed to happen: an interval. Maggie "had waited to see what would happen," and, in the following sentence, "Something *had*." Each of these moments occurs in the irrecoverable past perfect that undergirds the metaphor.

The slight diffidence in Maggie's insistence that "Something *had* happened" soon gives way to a certitude to rival that of the novel's opening. What Amerigo's tone accomplishes there is here effected through a continual reconfiguration of consciousness as inhabited position and consciousness as object. We are told, prior to the lengthy description of the pagoda, that the structure that "had reared itself" in the "very centre of the garden of her life" metaphorizes the "situation so long present to her as practically unattackable." The following paragraph then particularizes the terms of this metaphorization with an almost pedantic assuredness: "The pagoda in her blooming garden figured the arrangement—how otherwise was it to be named?—by which, so strikingly, she had been able to marry without breaking, as she liked to put it, with her past" (300). Readers of *The Golden Bowl* tend to take at face value this internal foreclosure of meaning-making, giving the narrator leave to assign the pagoda a fixed significatory trajectory—this in contradistinction to the ever shifting sites of registration and signification of the golden bowl itself. Yet this tidy suturing of figure and ground should provoke skepticism. We might note, to begin with, that this paragraph marks an abrupt shift in narrative voice and, in a very physical sense, perspective:

> If this image, however, may represent our young woman's consciousness of a recent change in her life—a change now but a few days old—it must at the same time be observed that she both sought and found in renewed circulation, as I have called it, a measure of relief from the idea of having perhaps to answer for what she had done. (300)

The narrator here performs a self-differentiation at once stark and muddled. Suddenly, there emerges a narrative "I" attending to "our young woman's consciousness"—one watching at a stable remove wherein the circumnavigation of the pagoda will not engender corresponding circumruminations, an "I" immune to the sort of descriptive metastasis that characterizes Maggie's focalizing narration. Maggie waxes on, the figure's ground nowhere in sight, about the "structure plated with hard, bright porcelain, coloured and figured and adorned"; she claims at one point to discern "apertures and outlooks" but subsequently finds the edifice "consistently impenetrable and inscrutable." By the end of the passage, it has become a "Mahometan mosque, with which no base heretic could take a liberty"—tinkling bells notwithstanding. When the narrator interjects, he seems to be pulling Maggie up short, streamlining her figural filigree by pairing the pagoda with a single referent: the "arrangement—how otherwise was it to be named?" among Maggie, her husband, her father, and her stepmother. Yet the odd self-citation in the narrator's remarks on Maggie's "renewed circulation, as I have called it" forces us to recognize what this narrative "I" so labors to occlude—that the word in question, "circulation," is initially read, at least partially, as belonging to Maggie's consciousness. (Fittingly, "circulation" here not only names Maggie's movements around the pagoda but also gestures toward the mobility of this word itself across distinct—if only liminally so—discursive perspectives.) This retrospective designation of a referent, then, like the sudden appearance of the house of fiction, enacts a brief and crucial suspension of dramaterialization—a suspension both of the scenic method (free indirect discourse) through which James's fictional world is typically presented and of the flickering of materiality that renders Maggie's pagoda elusive even as she has supposedly communed with its hard surface. During the narrativization of Maggie's somewhat shambling initial consciousness, there is no reason to feel confident of what her pagoda looks like or of her affective orientation toward it, much less what it means. The meaning assigned to it by a narrator who momentarily steps *out from behind* must, however, be taken provisionally for granted in order for the remainder of the chapter to make sense. Through its very stabilization and concretization of a figure, this narratorial intercession reads, ironically, as a moment of *dis*continuity—a rupture into the sudden certitude of a narrative voice who discusses the pagoda metaphor in the manner of a detached exegete, rather than as a subject whose consciousness is being elaborated at the same time and in the same textual fabric as the metaphor itself.[9]

The problems with this narrative certitude extend beyond tone. When Maggie describes the pagoda, the passage that results is not only a description of an object. It is the narration of an event in consciousness, which means it also registers, however covertly, feeling—in this case, Maggie's unease about the "arrangement." It is worth noting that the pagoda metaphor actually begins as a simile, and a second-choice simile, for that matter ("This situation . . . had reared itself there like some strange, tall tower of ivory, or perhaps rather some wonderful, beautiful, but outlandish pagoda").

It only attains the objectivity of metaphor when it is next reported that Maggie "had walked round and round it—that was what she felt"—at which point the predication of action seems to shift. Now, rather than responding to Maggie's preexisting emotion with a figural approximation, the figure and Maggie's interactions with it seem to be *causing* emotions not existing prior to their figuration. The very aesthetic of the structure seems to metamorphose from the harmlessly, even playfully, exotic to the forbidding, as the pagoda takes on distinctly house-of-fiction like qualities, including "apertures" that permit no access from without but potentially serve as "outlooks" or machicolations for those within. This mounting unease, in keeping with the "indirect and oblique view of my presented action" for which James praises himself in the preface to the New York Edition, registers Maggie's growing awareness of the adultery that the "arrangement" enables and camouflages. When the passage treats the pagoda *as* a figure, it is a figure for the arrangement or "situation" in Maggie's life. When the figure expands to include Maggie so that she *interacts* with the pagoda, its field of signification broadens so that, instead of figuring the arrangement, it enacts Maggie's consciousness. When the narrator comes out from behind Maggie to make his supercilious pronouncement—"the pagoda in her blooming garden figured the arrangement"—he seems to be modeling the dangers of attempting a detheatricalizing summary of the "action" of James's plot or of events in affect, cognition, or figuration without accounting for the dramatic perspective of the centering consciousness. The narrator even pointedly uses Maggie's language at this moment ("as she liked to put it"), but in a rebuke to those who would describe free indirect discourse solely in terms of the adoption of a character's language, here the use of the character's language alone does not suffice to grant access to her perspective. This perspective is precisely located in the passage's enactment of a split between consciousness and feeling.[10] Something about Maggie's emotional distress is performed by the passage, something that evades narrativization but can only be substantialized through the process of narration. Maggie's focalizing narration *dramatizes* the disjunction between what she feels and what she consciously thinks. The narrator's unfocalized synopsis takes for granted the perfect correspondence between Maggie's experience and the language in which it is presented.

Maggie's friend Fanny Assingham eventually offers a more satisfying formulation for Maggie's cognitive relationship to the affair: "She irresistibly *knows* that there's something between them. But she hasn't 'arrived' at it" (395). Fanny's figure operates through negation; if to "arrive" would be fully to inhabit her already extant knowledge of this reality, then "that's exactly what she hasn't done, what she so steadily and intensely refuses to do. She stands off and off, so as not to arrive." As the novel's *ficelle*, Fanny has access (or, one might say, is limited), in her oral narrativizations, to the ostensibly less ambiguous objectifications of direct speech. Yet even given the relative linearity of Fanny's figuration, what it is that Maggie has not yet "arrived at" is far from clear. The obvious slipperiness of this "it" would indicate that it is Maggie's own knowledge that remains remote to her, the "something between them" cannot be neatly separated from the *knowledge* of this "something" that Fanny imputes to Maggie. Yet, as sufficiently sinuous as this reading would already be, one might further note that it is not exactly "knowledge," in the sense of an isolable and transmissible quantum of understanding, that Maggie has not "arrived at."[11] Reading the moment as anacoluthon—that is, taking Fanny's breathless claim that "She irresistibly *knows*"

as a grammatically infelicitous antecedent to her "it"—would allow us to see this knowledge set in motion, to posit "knowing" as a form of doing. *To know* is here an action that the actor cannot resist, but it also, by virtue of being an action, seems a highly resistant location for the person performing it to be expected to "arrive at." As in the house of fiction and the pagoda metaphor, "it" poses a phenomenal problem and causes distress—affective and grammatical, in this case—by virtue of being both an object of consciousness and a process that consciousness undertakes.

Fanny's remarks on Maggie's knowing condense the peregrinations of the pagoda passage to the space of a few lines, but the movement traced is identical: a provisional objectification of consciousness (as a pagoda, as an "it") is compromised when a character's progress toward and interaction with her objectified consciousness are then nominated as the *actual* metaphor for consciousness. The locus of figuration shifts from an object to a scene between this object and the character whose consciousness is being figured. This process does not play out linearly in the examples offered above: we never see consciousness figured as an object that is not already in the process of being dramaterialized into a *scene* involving the subject of consciousness. Yet to characterize the sense of objectivity initially evinced by these object-metaphors as merely chimerical, as a fetish to be unfurled through close analysis, would be to fetishize the process of unfurling. Dramaterialization does not dispel or dissolve—or disabuse the reader of an illusion of—materiality. The solid object-metaphor at once produces real effects (feeling, the sense of a stable realist character) on the surface of the Jamesian text *and* is perpetually in the process of dissolving and dislocating these effects.

In the examples of the house of fiction and the pagoda, affective intensity emerges from the dialectical relation between consciousness as a stable object that one sees and consciousness as a dynamic *scene* in which one participates. These strong feelings of unease follow from the contradictory sense, on the one hand, that consciousness is being made theatrically accessible and circumscribed and, on the other, that it is unclear not only where this consciousness is located but whether, as a scene that is in progress, it can be located at all in any of the spectacular objects offered by the text. A foreclosure of this dual composition of consciousness as it is figured in *The Golden Bowl* accounts for the much-remarked froideur that steals through the novel's ending. Having succeeded, through the power of her consciousness to act in the world, in having her rival rusticated and thereby securing not only her husband's future fidelity but his sincere admiration and love, Maggie endures a final moment of uncertainty as to what she really possesses:

> Closer than she had ever been to the measure of her course and the full face of her act, she had an instant of the terror that, when there has been suspense, always precedes, on the part of the creature to be paid, the certification of the amount. Amerigo knew it, the amount; he still held it, and the delay in his return, making her heart beat too fast to go on, was like a sudden blinding light on a wild speculation. She had thrown the dice, but his hand was over her cast. (566)

Amerigo "[knows] it, the amount," because he *is* it. Early in the novel, the Prince bemusedly recognizes on the Ververs' part a "large, bland, blank assumption" as to his inestimable worth—"of merits almost beyond notation, of essential quality

and value" (18). The ending brooks no such gap between the having of value and the knowing of it. These closing pages enact a complete identification between what Amerigo is and what he knows—between his value for Maggie as her possession and his knowing "it," an identity neatly captured in the double resonance of "speculation" as a financial activity and a form of intellection. While the earlier "it" at which Maggie's consciousness had not yet arrived was a moving target, Amerigo's "it" represents a closed circuit. Maggie's "it" was neither an object of knowledge nor the dramatized process of knowing but the impossible coincidence of the two. Amerigo's "it" collapses a dynamic relation between the subject and the object of knowledge into an identity. Amerigo knows the "amount" that will redound to Maggie because he *is* this amount, but he can be this amount only because he knows that he is. This collapse at last effects the "assurance" that the novel's first lines only affect: a release from "suspense" into (not catharsis, but) "certification." Assured of a happiness "without a hole in it"—with no room left for doubt or much else—Maggie arrives at the horizon of theatricalized consciousness, an exfoliated theatricality born out in the closing scene between her and Amerigo:

> "Isn't she [Charlotte] too splendid?" she simply said, offering it to explain and to finish.
>
> "Oh, splendid!" With which he came over to her.
>
> "That's our help, you see," she added—to point further her moral.
>
> It kept him before her therefore, taking in—or trying to—what she so wonderfully gave. He tried, too clearly, to please her—to meet her in her own way; but with the result only that, close to her, her face kept before him, his hands holding her shoulders, his whole act enclosing her, he presently echoed: "'See'? I see nothing but *you*." And the truth of it had, with this force, after a moment, so strangely lighted his eyes that, as for pity and dread of them, she buried her own in his breast. (567)

Amerigo's seeing nothing but Maggie introduces one final *it*—"the truth of it"—whose visibility not only guarantees but constitutes its own truth-value. In an inversion of the opening lines' languid beckoning after a London that might "come to him," this scene outfits both desire and possession with a unidirectional automaticity: "With which he came over to her." When Maggie expresses admiration for her routed rival, she points beyond the current scene of connubial accord toward its condition of possibility: Charlotte's high tone and maintained pretense of *wishing* to sever herself and her husband from the quartet. Maggie's expansionary gesture limns the process of getting to this concluding scene, a process that includes her stepmother. Yet Amerigo will have none of it. Maggie, "enclosed" in his "act," becomes not only the sole object in his field of vision but the object of vision that obviates all other spectatorship. And with her own eyes "buried" in horror in her husband's breast, Maggie becomes an objectified consciousness par excellence—a consciousness all seen without seeing, flush with certainty and voided of desire. What might sound, in a bad summary, like a moment of beatifying recognition in fact abjects both Maggie and Amerigo.[12] Shorn of the indefinitely expanding *scene* that allows her consciousness to act, Maggie's consciousness can only be an object, while Amerigo, able to "see nothing but *you*" and thereby incapable of recognizing the co-constitution of Maggie's conscious-

ness and the scene surrounding it, appears to have become a kind of philosophical zombie.[13] The ambient unease that elsewhere characterizes the dialectical shifting of sites of consciousness heightens here into a melodramatic horror—complete with eyes buried in the (un)dead lover's breast—at consciousness become *too* objective, stable, and localized within the bodied contours of an individual character. If in the pagoda and house of fiction metaphors consciousness is dialectical—consisting in part of an expansionary process that continually undermines internal attempts at objectification and narrative streamlining (by the narrator, by James himself)—these final moments of *The Golden Bowl* see all trace of process harrowingly evicted. In its place emerges a closed correspondence between spectator and object: a desolate theatricality, to be certain.

NOTES

[1]Ackerman has traced the shift in James's attitude toward dramatic writing. In an 1875 review of Tennyson's *Queen Mary*, James shows the influence of the neoclassical well-made play: "The five-act drama—serious or humorous, poetic or prosaic—is like a box of fixed dimensions and inelastic material, into which a mass of precious things are to be packed away. . . . The precious things in question seem out of all proportion to the compass of the receptacle; but the artist has an assurance that with patience and skill a place may be made for each, and that nothing need be clipped or crumpled, squeezed or damaged. The false dramatist either knocks out the sides of his box, or plays the deuce with its contents; the real one gets down on his knees . . . keeps his ideal, and at last rises in triumph, having packed his coffer in one way that is mathematically right" (qtd. in Ackerman 183). Following the disastrous premiere of *Guy Domville* in 1895, Ackerman argues, James adjusts his attitude toward drama, preferring an organic to a mechanical form.

[2]"Unease," which I will use throughout to characterize both the tonality of moments of subjective displacement in late James and, at times, the affective comportment of specific characters to these moments, is used often by Yeazell in her reading of *The Golden Bowl*. The word strikes me as the most felicitous for my purposes, and Yeazell's use of it pinpoints some of the most idiosyncratic qualities and actions of the late style. For instance, Yeazell writes: "Some of our unease—Leavis's sense that the imagery is not 'immediate and inevitable'—stems from the fact that James's metaphors seem almost invariably responses of the brain, not of the senses" (*Language* 41). She writes further of Maggie Verver and the pagoda: "She knows only that she has begun to feel distinctly uneasy; she is as yet far from knowing why. And she is frightened—frightened both of the feeling itself and of inquiring too closely into its causes" (42).

[3]For an extensive Foucauldian discussion of the novel and James, see Seltzer. Fuss cites the metaphor as an exemplary modern convergence of the "cultural ascendancy of interiority" and the "narrative turn toward solipsism" (11). In a passage that concatenates nearly all the interiorizing readings of the house that I will aim to invert below, Fuss writes: "James's densely populated 'house of fiction,' with each interior observer peering through the window of his own consciousness, quite nearly obliterates the exterior altogether, identifying the human scene outside the domain of art 'as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher.' Himself a privileged occupant of the house of fiction, James focuses self-reflexively on the human agent of perception, placing 'individual vision' and 'individual will' center stage in a theater of introspection where the main actor is the spectator, and the real drama takes place inside the mind of the observer" (11). I, by contrast, argue that the house of fiction in fact eradicates the interior, that James is positioned not as a "privileged occupant" but as an excluded reader/spectator, and that the theatrical position of the posted watcher is that of both spectator and spectacle.

[4]I am grateful to Nick Salvato for urging me to think about the theatrical connotations of James's "house."

[5]Krook-Gilead brilliantly argues that the Prince is "James's quintessential Aesthetic Man," an embodiment of good taste so thoroughly committed to the life of manners that he manages to fashion a persuasive argument for adultery out of the aesthetic imperative: "It is precisely because the Prince is a *galantuomo*—a Gallant Man, a man of spirit, a man who guides his life by 'the touchstone of taste,' by the standard of 'a higher and braver propriety' than any that the dear, innocent, ignorant, incorrigibly incorruptible and totally unimaginative Ververs could so much as dream of; and because, being such a man, he cannot bear the sheer ignominy of going about indefinitely 'with such a person as Mrs Verver in a state of child-like innocence, the state of our primitive parents before the Fall,' that he becomes Charlotte's lover. And this is how the touchstone of taste is seen not merely to sanction adultery but positively to insist on it—as the only intelligent, the only brave, the only decent thing to do in the circumstances" (241–42, 249).

[6]Hale notes that "James's sense of his characters' alterity is so strong that he more often than not describes the creative process as hinging on the imaginative appearance of a character whose complexities of sensibility and character 'impose' upon the author the rest of the story" (26).

[7]For discussion of inappropriate Jamesian metaphors, see Krook-Gilead and Yeazell.

[8]Bersani points to the "Jamesian tendency to extract all events, as well as all perspectives on them, from any specified time, and to transfer them to a before or an after in which they are de-realized in the form of anticipations or retrospections" ("The It in the I" 23).

[9]Yeazell has observed that, initially, James "[allots] the pagoda to the narrator, on the theory that it is too complex and exotic a metaphor for the Princess's newly awakened imagination. But in our actual reading of the novels, 'responsibility for the creation of meaning' rarely seems so clearly fixed: if one passage suggests that the oriental pagoda fantasy is the narrator's not Maggie's, in another the distinction seems simply to have dissolved. Teasing us with the suggestion that people may possess, artist-like, the power to make the terms of their world, the late style defies our attempts to impose a more conventional logic, appeals instead to deeper and less rational needs" (*Language* 13). I suggest that the instability of these figural allotments—precisely in defiance of narratorial insistences to the contrary—is responsible for much of the pagoda passage's emotive intensity.

[10]Wood, in his excellent analysis of a passage in *What Maisie Knew*, frames James's use of free indirect discourse thus: "Whose word is 'embarrassingly'?" (16).

[11]Cameron warns against critical suppositions that knowledge in *The Golden Bowl* is "inert," pointing to characters' strategic invocations of this kind of knowledge in attempts to "[deflect] attention from a more subversive question about the unstable placement of meaning: Who obfuscates or enforces it, and where?" (105).

[12]This troubling final scene has drawn much critical attention. Yeazell notes in an essay on teaching *The Golden Bowl*: "Without glossing over the notorious moral problems raised by the placement of the 'human furniture' in the novel's final scene (541), participants in the course have been inclined to read the concluding chapter for its explicit recognition that 'to do such an hour justice would have been in some degree to question its grounds'—to read, in other words, for how *The Golden Bowl* calls attention to the very 'awkwardness' which continues to haunt 'that strange accepted finality of relation' ("Teaching" 279–80). Bersani has written of the results of Maggie's "slightly cretinous strategy": "She fascinates the other characters (and especially Amerigo), but it is that very fact which exhausts her meaning, and her self. The others come to understand her blindly by being unable to stop looking at her; she has been purified—and intensified—to nothing more than an insistent claim on their desires" (*Freudian* 84–85). More recently, Winnett has noted: "With Amerigo's 'I see only you' and Maggie's refusal—'as if for pity and dread'" (580)—to return his gaze, the novel's final embrace consecrates the obsolescence of all the forms through which it has worked. Among the forms that the novel has left behind may well be the novel—or at least the Jamesian novel—itself. The final sentence's variation on Aristotle's recipe for catharsis (James substitutes 'pity and dread' for 'pity and fear') goes far toward suggesting the objectless terror that the form of the novel can generate but not contain" (229). "'Dread,' unlike 'fear,'" Winnett argues, "is unsure of or beyond its object. Jamesian intimacy is not a lie, but it is, perhaps, lying, since there is no way of giving 'honest' expression to a self that the novel reveals always already to have suffered the shattering that its plot cannot repair" (234).

[13]The "philosophical zombie" is a thought experiment in philosophy of mind: How can we know that someone who looks and behaves like a fully conscious, sentient person is not in fact a zombie, that is, a human being who lacks consciousness? Terada's remarks on the topic are particularly relevant to my discussion of the final scene of *The Golden Bowl*: "A living system is self-differential; experience is experience of self-differentiality. The idea of emotion is as compelling as it is because in the honest moments of philosophy it has served as the name of that experience. On some level everyone knows that rationality may be where we want to be, but emotion is where we are. So when we want to get from where we are to where we want to be, emotion has got to come along. If we lose it along the way there is no continuity; self-differentiality will not have been convincingly resolved. That's why the living dead emblematize postmodern subjectivity: everyone knows that if there's one thing dead subjects don't have, it's emotion. Actually things are the other way around. Romero's living dead are notably undivided about their desires, or rather, because their desires are undivided, they are mere needs and compulsions. They waver physiologically—as though their nervous systems had trouble working—but not intentionally. They don't think twice about anything; they are pure intentionality, directional in one direction at a time. A living system is self-differential; only self-differential entities—'texts'—feel. Romero's zombies have no feelings *because they are subjects*" (156).

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