

MAGGIE AND THE FLAWED MARRIAGES
IN *THE GOLDEN BOWL*

NORIKO KATO

I

Henry James intends to create in his later novels an inward mastery of the outward experience, a realm which appears inward and personal, but which is a very concrete realm of consciousness. What actually happens is not presented as it is, but as it is perceived through his characters' consciousness, which is not identified with an objective but a subjective vision of experience. As James says in "The Art of Fiction," "Humanity is immense, and reality has a myriad forms."¹ Fictions made out of imagination, that is, facts of consciousness, may have more verifiable reality than things outside human consciousness. And it is those facts of consciousness, or moral reality, that his characters create with their own imagination in order to seek for human integrity and moral freedom in their predicaments in society. Moreover, what is significant is that the way to moral reality proceeds not by way of being cut off from the outer world, but by way of the intensification of consciousness through involvement with the outer world.² To be sure, there exists a discrepancy between reality and the central characters' imaginative vision. However, it is more important for James to develop the intense inner drama through experience than to present the discrepancy as it is.

To explore how the characters of the later novels translate the imaginative vision into active experience, *Maggie in The Golden Bowl* seems a most appropriate character; for her imaginative power ultimately bridges over the gap between the outside world and her vision of it. Confronting painful

knowledge, Maggie struggles at once to understand where she is and to reshape the whole relationship of the two flawed and interlocking marriages.

Henry James employs narrative techniques appropriate to objectify the subtle world of consciousness. The whole story develops through the consciousness of only two of the characters:³ Book I develops through Prince Amerigo's consciousness and Book II through Princess Maggie's. The consciousness of each is essential in the presentation and interpretation of the plot, and is more refined as their experience and knowledge deepen through involvement with the outer world. Maggie in particular serves not only as interpreter but also as heroine, playing her role as required in the inner drama. As James defines her narrative role in the preface,

... the Princess . . . in addition to feeling everything she has to, and to playing her part just in that proportion, duplicates . . . her value and becomes a compositional resource . . . as well as a value intrinsic.⁴

Another narrative technique James employs is elaborate metaphors. The subtleness and complexity of those images in a way serve as evasion of direct reference to adulterous relations between Amerigo and Charlotte. In other words, this metaphoric world allows James's people to have a hovering attitude between reality and their own inner world since they find the reality of fact and feeling so terrifying to face. Moreover, those images contribute to ambiguity in the novel, along with its difficulty of distinguishing reality from the world of consciousness and, at the same time, provide us with keys to understand the characters' tacit inner acts.

II

Before the drama of Maggie's awakening begins, there are two underlying components in her manner: innocence and consideration for others, especially for her father, Adam Verver. At the very beginning of the novel, Maggie is

characterized as innocent—both pure and ignorant—with “the extraordinary American good faith.”⁵ As Fanny Assingham, her confidante, declares, “She was n’t born to know evil” (XXIII, 78). She is so immensely indulged in the present state of ignorance that she cannot or will not see anything around her except her father. For example, Maggie considers the Prince not as an object for love but as an object for appreciation. She is not mature enough to see him as a man; in fact, she takes no account of his individuality. Her ignorance of his personality is pointed out by his words:

“It’s you yourselves meanwhile . . . who really know nothing. There are two parts of me One is made up of the history, the doings, the marriages, the crimes, the follies, the boundless *bêtises* of other people—especially of their infamous waste of money that might have come to me. Those things are written—literally in rows of volumes, in libraries; are as public as they’re abominable. Everybody can get at them, and you’ve both of you wonderfully looked them in the face. But there’s another part, very much smaller doubtless, which, such as it is, represents my single self, the unknown, unimportant—unimportant save to *you*—personal quantity. About this you’ve found out nothing.”

(XXIII, 9)

Thus, she possesses no insight into the depth of human nature yet. In fact, she never conceives any suspicion about the past relationship between the Prince and Charlotte; or rather, she is afraid of knowing and seeing anything evil in reality. Never thinking of asking Charlotte about her lost love, Maggie, who has never suffered the least blow, tells her father:

“I would n’t in any case have let her tell me what would have been dreadful to me. For such wounds and shames *are* dreadful: at least, . . . I suppose they are; for what, as I say, do I know of them? I don’t *want* to know!”

(XXIII, 187)

Thus, she is satisfied with her present state as it is; her sense is closed to the outer world.

Besides her innocent nature, her consideration for others, especially for her father, is one of the essential motives of her acts in the novel.⁶ There seems nothing to contravene the mutual affection between Maggie and Adam. Even her own marriage with Prince Amerigo can neither lead her to be independent of her father nor totally settle her in her married life; it is not based on her genuine love but on the Prince's aesthetic and historic value. Therefore, after their marriage the center of her affection and care is not her husband but continues to be her father; what she is concerned about is not her new married life with the Prince but her father's life without her. She does not want to make Adam feel that she might have abandoned him with her own marriage. She does not want to be a person who pursues her own happiness without caring about the consequential unhappiness of Adam. In other words, she never feels happy unless her father is as happy as herself. Thereupon, she conceives a plan for marrying her father and Charlotte, who has been her dear friend for a long time. She regards it a wonderful plan to fill up the vacancy of Adam's heart after her own marriage. Moreover, she believes that the marriage will bring not only Adam but also Charlotte happiness. Sympathizing with Charlotte's misfortune—her lost love with "somebody" and lack of means to materialize her great nature—Maggie says that "she must n't be wasted" (XXIII, 185).

It is her consideration for, as well as real ignorance of, the others that form and support her plan for Adam's marriage to Charlotte. Fanny Assingham explains Maggie's motive as follows:

"Maggie had in the first place to make up to her father for her having suffered herself to become . . . so intensely married. Then she had to make up to her husband for taking so much of the time they might otherwise have spent together to make this reparation to Mr. Verver

perfect. And her way to do this, precisely, was by allowing the Prince the use, the enjoyment . . . of Charlotte to cheer his path . . . in proportion as she herself, making sure her father was all right, might be missed from his side. . . . by so much as she took her young stepmother, for this purpose, away from Mr. Verver, by just so much did this too strike her as something again to be made up for. It has saddled her . . . with a positively new obligation to her father, an obligation created and aggravated by her unfortunate even if quite heroic little sense of justice. She began with wanting to show him that his marriage could never, under whatever temptation of her own bliss with the Prince, become for her a pretext for deserting or neglecting him." (XXIII, 394-95)

Moreover, she is considerate for the others so as to protect her present happiness, while she never suspects what underlies the perfunctory happiness among the four. She says to her father that ". . . one can always, *for safety*, be kind . . ." (XXIII, 187, italics mine). Thus, her innocence and consideration for the others lead her to keep up beautiful appearances among the four.

Contrary to Maggie's expectation, "the beautiful symmetry" of her plan results in the "extraordinary perversity that the very opposite effect was produced" (XXIII, 388). Maggie and Adam, so far from being separated from each other by their respective marriages, are drawn more closely together than before. And her indulgence in domestic happiness around the cradle of the Principino with her father secludes Charlotte and Amerigo from their respective married lives and, in the end, leads them to go back to the adulterous relations.

Yet, ironically Maggie is too innocent to realize what underlies the beautiful appearances, which result from her genuine kindness for the others but are actually preserved by the Prince's and Charlotte's "exquisite sense of complicity" (XXIII, 335). Under the perfunctory equilibrium in the two marriages, Charlotte and the Prince take advantage of Maggie's ignorance of

the truth.⁷ In other words, beneath the orderly surface conflicting rearrangements bespeak a moral chaos of desire in reality. There exists the gap between what Maggie supposes the outer world is and what it actually is. Evil in reality is covered with the beautiful consistency of her innocent eyes.

However, Maggie does not remain ignorant. Her awakening to reality begins in the second half of the novel and initiates a unique development in herself; through the progression from ignorance to understanding, from innocence to experience, she gains the ability to absorb and contemplate experience and ultimately the ability to draw moral deductions to restore the two flawed marriages.

III

In the second half of the novel Henry James unfolds both the drama of Maggie's awakening and its effects on the flawed marriages. He presents her experience with close attention to her inner world. In other words, we see what has happened and is happening through Maggie's consciousness, or through James's delicate and extended analysis of her emotions and reflections. Therefore, her subjective vision of experience determines the view in Book II, and the development of Book II corresponds to Maggie's process of vision and the redemptive process for the marriages.

James begins Book II with Maggie at the threshold of the initiation into experience, using the famous image of the pagoda:

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, or 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. She had n't wished till now—such was the *odd* case; and what was doubtless equally odd besides was that though her raised eyes seemed to distinguish places that must serve from within, and especially far aloft, as apertures and outlooks, *no door appeared to give access from her convenient garden level*. The great decorated surface had remained consistently *impenetrable* and *inscrutable*. . . . 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; there so hung about it the vision of one's putting off one's shoes to enter and even verily of one's paying with one's life if found there as an interloper. She had n't certainly arrived at the conception of paying with her life for anything she might do; but it was nevertheless quite as if she had sounded with a tap or two one of the rare porcelain plates. (XXIV, 3–4, italics mine)

The metaphor evokes some unknown uneasiness in Maggie's consciousness with its oriental oddity. As Yeazell points out, ". . . the very oddness of this protracted image is crucial, forcing to our attention emotional strains which a more comfortable metaphor would fail to convey."⁸ The image implies that what Maggie is to undergo is something "odd," mysterious, and threatening, which her innocence situated in an Eden-like garden of her life has never let her suspect. Her state of being at the bottom of the perched architecture suggests that she is ignorant of the truths of life but perceives there is something threatening that she is going to undergo.

She does not clearly realize the adulterous relations between Charlotte and the Prince until she buys the golden bowl. Yet she constantly feels the throb of her deeper need to know where she really is and gradually comes to perceive more and more. In the course of her realization of her surroundings, Maggie comes to see who is actually keeping up the appearances of the

equilibrium of the four, which is symbolized by the coach in her projected vision, and who is taking advantage of the ignorance of Adam and Maggie:

So far as *she* was one of the wheels she had but to keep in her place; since the work was done for her she felt no weight, and it was n't too much to acknowledge that she had scarce to turn round. . . . [In her projected vision] [s]he might have been watching the family coach pass and noting that somehow Amerigo and Charlotte were pulling it while she and her father were not so much as pushing. They were seated inside together, dandling the Principino and holding him up to the windows to see and be seen, like an infant positively royal; so that the exertion was *all* with the others.

(XXIV, 23–24)

Perceiving the projected vision of the coach with her imagination, “[s]he had seen herself at last, in the picture she was studying, suddenly jump from the coach” (XXIV, 24). “Jumping from the coach” does not lead her to take any direct measures; but only to take a step forward out of her utter ignorance and, although suspicious of Amerigo’s infidelity, to give the appearance of knowing nothing of it. It also means that Maggie has begun to *live*, as Fanny describes Maggie’s first step to awakening. Living is a moral struggle. In fact, Maggie’s sense, Fanny declares, is now about to open to “Evil” for the first time in her life, “to the discovery of it, to the knowledge of it, to the crude experience of it” (XXIII, 385). The knowledge of evil is, needless to say, tormenting but, at the same time, indispensable for Maggie’s knowledge of the depth of human nature and progression from innocence to experience.⁹

Her painful process of vision puts her in “a lapse from that ideal consistency on which her moral comfort almost at any time depended” (XXIV, 6). However, she does not conceive the least desire to expose the truths to the others. Nothing on the surface must happen to break the perfunctory equilibrium; otherwise, the flawed marriages would be broken to

pieces like the golden bowl that is smashed into three pieces by Fanny. She would never wish to destroy the queer symmetry, by which the two couples hold together. In other words, she has to respect form, not reality. This is a principle she respects during the redemptive process of the marriages. Thereupon, trying not to let the others realize her inner change, Maggie becomes "the main performer"¹⁰ to redeem the flawed perfection of the two marriages, which is symbolized by the flawed golden bowl.

What she wishes for is a genuine happiness: she says, "I want a happiness without a hole in it The bowl with all *our* happiness in it. The bowl without the crack" (XXIV, 216–17, italics mine). This genuine happiness she wishes for comes from general human love. She says to Fanny:

" . . . I can bear anything."
 "Oh 'bear!'" Mrs. Assingham fluted.
 "For love," said the Princess.
 Fanny hesitated. "Of your father?"
 "For love," Maggie repeated.
 It kept her friend watching. "Of your husband?"

(XXIV, 115–16)

Confusing Fanny with her answers, Maggie does not specify for whose sake she tries to carry out the painful redemptive process. It is because she does not wish to save either only her father or only her husband: it is impossible to redeem the two flawed marriages unless all four can be saved. As she still loves her father as much as before, she cannot give up Charlotte for his sake. Since she suspects the adulterous relations between Charlotte and Amerigo, she finds herself beginning to see her husband as an object for love, not for appreciation. Thus, in order to acquire a genuine happiness for herself, she has to save the other three. While she was ignorant, her disinterested nature and wish for the mutual happiness were taken advantage of by the Prince and Charlotte to produce "an extraordinary perversity," but now they underlie

her redemptive process.

While gaining the painful knowledge, she has to keep up appearances that she is aware of nothing. She has to sustain the illusion of an undisturbed equilibrium among the four. In other words, it is not the truths but the pretenses that Maggie's redemptive process for the flawed marriages requires. As a result, there coexist in herself sufferings and pretense of composure: she has two selves not definitely distinguishing one self from the other—a public Maggie and a private Maggie. She says to Fanny, revealing her sufferings to her:

“I live in the midst of miracles of arrangement, half of which I admit are my own; I go about on tiptoe, I watch for every sound, I feel every breath, and yet I try all the while to seem as smooth as old satin dyed rose-colour.”
(XXIV, 110)

Thus, besides her inner self, there comes to exist another self which regulates and establishes her being in society. What is important is that she gradually integrates the two selves for the redemptive process through experience and subsequently gains ability to control the others.

James repeatedly uses two kinds of images to symbolize the tension between her inner self and the outer world: one is an image of war and the other is that of an actress. Both images present her progression from passivity to activity and her rising to supreme control over the others.¹¹ Especially the war image implies aggressiveness that she invests herself with for the moral struggle in life. The first war image is introduced when she waits for the Prince to come home from Matcham instead of seeing him at Eaton Square, her father's house. This is the first action she takes on the grounds of her suspicion of Amerigo:

... this was what was before her, that she was no longer playing with

blunt and idle tools, with weapons that did n't cut. There passed across her vision ten times a day the gleam of a bare blade, and at this it was that she most shut her eyes, most knew the impulse to cheat herself with motion and sound. (XXIV, 9-10)

Another war image is introduced when she struggles not to show her knowledge to Amerigo, whose impact she has begun to feel on herself. She undergoes "a *high* fight" in her consciousness with "her supposed stupidity" (XXIV, 143). These war images imply active actions rather than defensive ones of moral struggle in life. The following image is introduced when she is reaching the final stage of her redemptive process by being convinced that her husband will never tell Charlotte about Maggie's recognition of the truths:

She stood there, in her full uniform, like some small erect commander of a siege, an anxious captain who has suddenly got news, replete with importance for him, of agitation, of division within the place. (XXIV, 214)

This image implies her dominance over the whole situation. Thus, a series of war images vividly convey some inner power over the chaos in the outer world, which Maggie creates in her moral struggle.

The actress image not only plays a similar role to symbolize Maggie's progression from passivity to activity and pretense of ignorance, but also serves to describe the development of her imagination through experience. The development of her acting role in the redemptive process corresponds to that of her rising imaginative and creative power. Maggie not only plays her role but also gradually comes to create a new role to produce a new process "quite independent of any process of theirs [Amerigo and Charlotte's]" (XXIV, 25):

... she reminded herself of an actress who had been studying a part and

rehearsing it, but who suddenly, on the stage, before the footlights, had begun to improvise, to speak lines not in the text. . . . just as it was the sense of action that logically involved some platform-action quite positively for the first time in her life her part opened out and she invented from moment to moment what to say and to do.

(XXIV, 33)

Moreover, as she gains strength of self-control and responsibility for the redemptive process, she is provided with a more important role. The following actress image is introduced when the Prince finds out that she knows everything and consequently she has to make more efforts to sustain the illusion of the beautiful consistency among the four:

Humbugging, which she had so practised with her father, had been a comparatively simple matter on the basis of mere doubt; but the ground to be covered was now greatly larger, and she felt not unlike some young woman of the theatre who, engaged for a minor part in the play and having mastered her cues with anxious effort, should find herself suddenly promoted to leading lady and expected to appear in every act of the five. She had made much to her husband, that last night, of her "knowing"; but it was exactly this quantity she now knew that, from the moment she could only dissimulate it, added to her responsibility and made of the latter *all* a mere question of having something precious and precarious in charge.

(XXIV, 207-08)

Thus, these images imply Maggie's development of imaginative and creative power as well as rising to dominance over the others. She is made strong by the ability to control herself and a great sense of responsibility for the redemptive process, both of which she acquires through experience and sufferings. To be sure, the redemptive process has given her fear of knowledge and feelings of being isolated. For example, she comes to perceive that Charlotte and the Prince are working together by "a plan that was exact counterpart of her own" (XXIV, 41): they have their "worked-out

scheme for their not wounding her, for their behaving to her quite nobly" (XXIV, 43). She feels that Amerigo and Charlotte are "arranged together" but that she is "arranged apart" (XXIV, 45). In fact, Maggie's resolution for redemption is tried twice by the Prince's masculine power to sap her strength. The first trial results in "a temporary lapse" (XXIV, 31) of her new-born resolution, but she is able to get over the second one with "the grasp of her conceived responsibility" (XXIV, 56). Through her inner conflicts between the temptation to surrender to him and self-control, she is able to achieve "the feat of not losing sight of what she wanted" (XXIV, 57).

She most strongly recognizes her responsibility for redemption when she observes the others playing bridge and perceives "a kind of provocative force" (XXIV, 233) from them. She realizes that they are tacitly asking her to contrive some relation, "which would spare the individual the danger, the actual present strain, of the relation with the others" (XXIV, 234). Then she perceives that all depend on her: she could take "any of the immediate, inevitable, assuaging ways . . . usually open to innocence outraged and generosity betrayed" (XXIV, 237). However, it is the last alternative for her to give up the other three. At this point she is firmly conscious of her role as the scapegoat charged with the sins of the people so as to simplify "their combined struggle" (XXIV, 235). Thereupon, she decides to take on herself the burden of the wrongs done her and to remove from Charlotte and the Prince any enforced demand to confess. She has never been so intensely aware of her responsibility for the others. Attaining to a strong sense of responsibility through the moral struggle, Maggie progresses from an actress to the author of some play, which the others are rehearsing as performers.¹² Thus, she becomes the most active and dominant figure of all, while the Prince and Charlotte fade gradually from active roles to passive ones.

It is this strong sense of responsibility that helps her sustain the illusion of perfect marriages and at the same time keeps the sufferings from provoking

her into any direct measures. She is now strong enough to hold her two selves—the private self and the social self—together. For example, before she presents to the Prince the evidence of his adulterous relations with Charlotte, that is, the flawed golden bowl, she has “her managed quietness,” or “an achieved coherence that helped her evidently to hear and to watch herself” (XXIV, 164). “An awful harmony” (XXIV, 164) of her two selves underlies her redemptive process for the flawed marriages: as long as she can hold her two selves together, she is able to carry out the process. Needless to say, there is no relaxation for her, since she has to be alert not only to the outer world but also to her own self. Yet, it is through this painful process that she comes to gain moral power over the chaos of desire in the outer world.

With the increasing strength and responsibility, she develops her imagination to create a new reality in the distortion of realities: moral reality over the chaos in the outer world. The two scenes of the encounters of Maggie and Charlotte prove Maggie’s integrated arts of living, which James tries to embody in his art. What underlies her strategy in the scenes is “this extraordinary form of humbugging. . . to the end. It was only a question of not by a hair’s breadth deflecting into the truth” (XXIV, 250–51).

In the two scenes it is clear that their relationship is reversed: Maggie has an advantage over Charlotte, who has used and abused the former’s ignorance but is now in the deluded state, putting up with torment alone. In spite of her advantage, Maggie chooses to yield to the other for the sake of mutual salvation of all, the illusion of the harmony among the four, and especially the protection of Adam against knowledge. Consequently, aggressively threatened and forced to admit that Charlotte has done nothing wrong to her, Maggie quietly accepts the fiction imposed by the other. It is because Maggie perceives that “[h]er companion’s acceptance of her denial [of the guilt] was like a general pledge not to keep things any worse for her

than they essentially had to be" (XXIV, 249). Thus, she recognizes that the truth cannot save the four—Adam, Amerigo, Charlotte, and herself—but that deception can. Consequently, her encounter with Charlotte ends with "the high publicity" (XXIV, 252) of the embrace as the testimony of her submission to the other's apparent advantage, and also with the refusal publicly to dramatize private truths.

The distortion that Maggie's value has undergone persists in the second encounter with Charlotte at the Fawns for the sake of her redemptive process. It suggests Maggie's superiority over Charlotte that she is looking down on the other from the window. Yet, she goes down from the height to keep Charlotte out of torment. What she does for her is to allow her "the sense of highly choosing" (XXIV, 310), which is so different from Charlotte's aggressive attitude in the previous encounter. Perceiving Charlotte's fear that Maggie should have come for the retraction of her lies, Maggie chooses to grovel so as to show herself harmless to the other. On the other hand, Charlotte tries vainly to make herself look superior with pride, which is "for possible defence if not for possible aggression" (XXIV, 312). Thus, both of them play their own roles from their own fictions made out of their consciousness:

... she [Charlotte] sat down ... more or less visibly in possession of her part. Our young woman [Maggie] was to have passed, in all her adventure, no stranger moments; for she not only now saw her companion fairly agree to take her then for the poor little person she was finding it so easy to appear, but fell, in a secret responsive ecstasy, to wondering if there were n't some supreme abjection with which she might be inspired. ... It at last hung there adequately plain to Charlotte that she had presented herself once more to (as they said) grovel; and that truly made the stage large. It had absolutely, within the time, taken on the dazzling merit of being large for each of them alike. (XXIV, 313)

Maggie's strategy to grovel allows Charlotte to avoid admitting the evil she has committed. When Charlotte asserts that it is her own plan to go back to America with Adam and accuses Maggie of having been intervening in her marriage, Maggie submissively accepts Charlotte's fiction.

With the acceptance of Charlotte's fiction Maggie makes her own: she chooses to deceive her and to lie to her. Both of the fictions lie in the distortion of the truth, but they stand on different grounds. While Charlotte's is designed to defend herself against the admission of her sin, Maggie's creates moral reality, where she can save not only herself but also the others. What Maggie values is not reality itself but fictions made out of her integrated arts of living:

This danger would doubtless indeed have been more to be reckoned with if the instinct of each—she could certainly at least answer for her own—had n't so successfully acted to trump up other apparent connexions for it, connexions as to which they [Maggie and Adam] could pretend to be frank. (XXIV, 362)

Thus, in the course of her progression from innocence to experience, from passive to active, Maggie has exercised and developed a process to reconcile the two flawed marriages. To let life go on beautifully, it is necessary to possess arts to make the pretense, that is, arts to give form to projected faith. This integrated art of living protectively screens out revelation, while patiently working at the flaw. It is Maggie that possesses and exercises this art of living: she is an artist of life, which James distinguishes from an ordinary life and tries to embody in his art.

The Golden Bowl ends with reconciliation through experience. However, there hovers a tone of more than a completely happy ending. Why does Maggie find "pity and dread" (XXIV, 369) in the strangely lighted eyes of Amerigo at the moment of embracing, which is supposed to be "the golden

fruit" (XXIV, 369) of her redemptive process? Indeed, the flawed golden bowl has been broken by Fanny, and its broken fragments have been picked up by Maggie, who has wished for "the bowl with all our happiness in it." Yet, in the course of her redemptive process, Maggie has undergone fear of knowledge, humiliation, and torments. It is ironical that her imaginative vision not only keeps her work of redemption going but also lets her see hard facts of life. Thus, the tension between reality and imaginative vision is not fatal but has bitter effects on Maggie, while it is also true that through this tension Maggie reaches a higher level of consciousness to acquire the integrated art of living. Moreover, it is only evil rooted in the past that she has redeemed with her fictive world of the mind. Her prospect for the future is blurred at the end of the novel.

To James, the drama of rising consciousness in Maggie's life through experience is more important than the consequence of her enlarged vision. To be sure, fictions made out of moral reality cannot redeem life intrinsically. In other words, the fictions cannot be intrinsically identified with the universal truth of life; they are made out of a subjective perception of ethical imperatives. However, as Catherine Cox Wessel observes, "the lies still can salvage some happiness by making life tolerable in form."¹³ In fact, reality does not save Maggie from the predicaments in society, but illusions or fictions made by imagination can at least reshape them for life to be morally and ethically satisfying. For example, Fanny's breaking of the golden bowl reflects James's as well as Maggie's projected faith in moral reality. Because the bowl is the only evidence that proves the adulterous relations between Charlotte and the Prince, breaking the evidence gives form to Maggie's projected faith in moral reality.

While it is evident and inevitable that discrepancy exists between reality and imaginative vision, James possesses the faith that moral reality can make life endurable, even possessing beauty with all its flaws. What he

embodies in his late novels is not reality as it is, but moral reality with reality assimilated in it.¹⁴ His chief concern lies in the world of consciousness, which he regards as an important center of life; he says, "... I never see the *leading* interest of any human hazard but in a consciousness (on the part of the moved and moving creature) subject to fine intensification and wide enlargement."¹⁵ Thus, it is the enlarged consciousness through experience that he embodies in his later novels. His characters develop their own vision, intensify perceptions, acquire knowledge, and construct moral reality to endure the pressure and torments which the outer world and knowledge of the truth inflict on them. Thus, moral reality is not detached from but includes reality and transforms predicaments in reality into some morally and ethically satisfying form.

Notes

- 1 Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," *The Portable Henry James*, ed. Morton Dauwen Zabel (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 397.
- 2 Joseph Warren Beach writes that "the stories of Henry James are records of seeing rather than of doing." Joseph Warren Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Alfred Saifer, 1954), p. 56.
- 3 Fanny Assingham, Maggie's confidante, also provides us with additional light upon the situation, but she does not tend to confuse the point of view. She serves to strengthen the light thrown upon the situation from Maggie's mind.
- 4 Henry James, *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 329.
- 5 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, Vols. XXIII and XXIV of *The Novels and Tales of Henry James* ("New York Edition"; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), XXIII, 10. Subsequent quotations from the novel refer to this edition; hereafter, all page references will be noted in parentheses after the quotation.
- 6 James writes in *The Notebooks* as follows: "A necessary basis for all this must have been an intense and exceptional degree of attachment between the father and daughter--he peculiarly paternal, she passionately filial" (F. O. Matthiessen and

Kenneth B. Murdock eds., *The Notebooks of Henry James* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981], p. 131). Jean Kimball writes that "Maggie's unwillingness to comprehend either for her father or for herself any relationship which supersedes the 'decent little old-time union' . . . of father and daughter is basic to the tangle and the tragedy of *The Golden Bowl*" ("Henry James's Last Portrait of a Lady: Charlotte Stant in *The Golden Bowl*," *AL*, XXVIII [1957], 455). Dorothea Krook regards Maggie's anxiety about her father's life after her marriage as "stupid little anxiety" (*The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962], p. 238). I consider that her ignorance is as crucial in the plot as her affection for her father.

- 7 The Prince regards Maggie and Adam as innocent as children. Gaining an advantage over them in knowledge, he thinks as follows: "They knew . . . absolutely nothing on earth worth speaking of—whether beautifully or cynically . . . They were *good children*, bless their hearts, and the children of good children; so that verily the Principino himself, as less consistently of that descent, might figure to the fancy as the ripest genius of the trio" (XXIII, 333–34, italics mine).
- 8 R. B. Yeazell, *Language and Knowledge in the Late Novels of Henry James* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 47. I do not agree with Dorothea Krook's objection to the image: ". . . the oddness of the image is felt to be in excess of the originality of the experience, making it in this scene arbitrary; and its disproportionate and rather heavy-handed protraction noticeably slackens the dramatic pace at the point at which it occurs" (Dorothea Krook, *The Ordeal of Consciousness*, p. 391).
- 9 Through the intense inner drama, Maggie comes to see "the close connexion of bliss and bale" in life. James considers these contradicting features of life to be one of the most important themes as the following literary comment shows: "No themes are so human as those that reflect for us, out of the confusion of life, the close connexion of bliss and bale, of the things that help with the things that hurt, so dangling before us for ever that bright hard medal, of so strange an alloy, one face of which is somebody's right and ease and the other somebody's pain and wrong" (Henry James, *The Art of the Novel*, p. 143).
- 10 Philip M. Weinstein, *Henry James and the Requirements of Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 168.

11 Alexander Holder-Barell analyzes both of the images to illustrate her rising to supreme control over the others and the transition from passivity to activity (Alexander Holder-Barell, *The Development of Imagery and its Functional Significance in Henry James's Novels* [New York: Haskell House, 1966], pp. 40-41, 75-76). I suppose both of them convey more than Alexander Holder-Barell suggests: the war image implies aggressiveness for the moral struggle in life, while the actress image illustrates Maggie's development of imaginative and creative power.

12 "... they might have been figures rehearsing some play of which she herself was the author They might in short have represented any mystery they would; the point being predominantly that the key to the mystery, the key that could wind and unwind it without a snap of the spring, was there in her pocket she passed round the house and looked into the drawing-room, . . . seeming to speak the more in its own voice of all the possibilities she controlled. Spacious and splendid, like a stage again awaiting a drama, it was a scene she might people, by the press of her spring, either with serenities and dignities and decencies, or with terrors and shames and ruins, things as ugly as those formless fragments of her golden bowl she was trying so hard to pick up." (XXIV, 235-36)

13 Catherine Cox Wessel, "Strategies of Survival in James's *The Golden Bowl*," *AL*, LV (1983), p. 588.

14 The world of consciousness is not cut off from the outer world in James's works. Stimuli from outside and consequential subjective responses from inside interact with each other and enlarge one's vision and consciousness. James states his view of the relationship between consciousness and the outer world as follows: "What had happened, in short, was that all the while I had been practically . . . trying to take the measure of my consciousness—on this appropriate and prescribed basis of its being so finite—I had learned . . . to live in it more, and with the consequence of thereby not a little undermining the conclusion most unfavorable to it. I had doubtless taken thus to increased living in it by reaction against so grossly finite a world—for it at least *contained* the world, and could handle and criticise it, could play with it and deride it; it had *that* superiority: which meant, all the while, such successful living that the abode itself grew more and more interesting to me, and with this beautiful sign of its character that the more and the more one asked of it the more and the more it appeared to give" (Henry James, "Is There a Life After

Death?" in *The Wings of the Dove*, eds. J. Donald Crowley and Richard A. Hocks ["A Norton Critical Edition"; New York: W. W. Norton, 1978], pp. 474–75). What is significant is that consciousness contains the outer world and interprets and manipulates it freely. While the world is "so grossly finite," consciousness possesses an infinite capacity for growth and changes according as it assimilates the outer world. Thus, James values the world more in its assimilated state than in its raw state outside of consciousness.

15 Henry James, *The Art of the Novel*, p. 67.