1995


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HENRY JAMES AND
THE PROCESS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
The Department of English

by
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May 1995
In Memory of
Walter M. Nielsen
and
Katherine T. Nielsen

In Memory of
Charles A. Fenton

For
Charles Fenton Nielsen
and
Penelope Ross Nielsen
Acknowledgments

I am grateful for kindness and assistance received in the progress of this project. Among Jamesians my benefactors have included Alfred Habegger, Suzi Naiburg, Julie Rivkin, Cheryl Torsney, and William Veeder. Among autobiography specialists, Paul John Eakin.

I thank the members of my committee for their patience, wisdom, and assistance—James Olney, Daniel Mark Fogel, J. Gerald Kennedy, Dana Nelson, and Richard Moreland.

In particular, I owe to Gale Carrithers, who influenced my decision to come to Baton Rouge more than anyone else, my deepest gratitude for help thoughtfully and faithfully given, and always with good cheer.
Preface

In a certain sense, autobiography and poetry are both definitions of a self at a moment and in a place: and I do not mean, for autobiography, that it is a definition of the writer's self in the past, at the time of action, but in the present, in the time of writing.

James Olney, Metaphors of Self (44)

Henry James is the great autobiographer. Few left so varied and rich an autobiographical trove. Few have so dedicated their late years to the project of life-recapitulation. Although the autobiographical nature of his late production has often been remarked, it has usually been students and theoreticians of autobiography who have done so. The sponsors of fiction have appropriated his last decade and a half by naming it his "Major Phase," a phrase that means to honor the novels of those years and to ignore the fact that the majority of James's work in his "major phase" was autobiographical. It is still not the conventional or dominant view that James's major phase was nothing if not recapitulative, self-referential, and self-fascinated. Nor has it been suggested that this enterprise of astonishing variety, creativity, and duration extends from earliest 1900 until his death in 1916.

The explanation of why James's pre-eminence as an autobiographer has been neglected may have to do with the cultural or critical hegemony of fiction, or even with his own notion that he was first of all a novelist. But judges of cultural worth are often wrong, and James was partly
correct (he did write fiction before he wrote autobiography) and would, like the rest of us, be a poor judge of the significance of his own work. The precise explanation for the neglect of his autobiographical achievement does not concern me; it is more to the point that James's career is, in its structure and architecture, perfectly autobiographical. That is, it gives geographical expression to the autobiographical process. James's departure from homeland and late-life return are a bodily re-enactment of the inward shifts all autobiographers experience. Emotional separation and memorial return precede all autobiography; in James's case, those acts took on the grandest of temporal and spatial dimensions, and they filled his career and his life. James left homeland and familial domination to find his artistic destiny and achieve his professional self. After long absence he returned to the ground of origin and personal meaning to find himself alienated and cut off from so much that had shaped him. His willful autobiographical project reasserts and re-establishes his past and his relationship with it. It exhibits anxiety about the past, both the incidents and the feelings that attach to them. Indeed, he revises the past quite literally by revising the texts that fill it—texts that, in a family of writers, are the analogue of memory.
Throughout his autobiographical phase, James worked with a variety of genres that he turned to his own proto-autobiographical needs. Before writing the three volumes of conventional autobiography that crown his career—*A Small Boy and Others* (1913), *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914), and *The Middle Years* (1917)—he took early and sometimes agonized steps toward autobiography in essay, travel, history, fiction, and even a sort of cultural biography. The proto-autobiographies enabled him to put into play the methods of self-referentiality and even to consider the motives for autobiography. His great themes are self and family, his place within family, the family's place within culture, and the production and empire of art. He surveys his past from the classic (but by no means universal) autobiographical position: late life.¹

James Olney and Paul John Eakin have helped focus study on the autobiographer's present moment of composition. It is now clear that autobiography should not be considered a simple account of a verifiable past but rather a complex narrative act executed in the present as a way of interpreting that past. I would suggest that autobiography may be first of all—not secondarily but primarily—of reference to the present moment, to the act of writing in the present. Henry James, the most neglected of autobiographers, is significantly useful for the study of this process of autobiography; to an extent unmatched by

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most autobiographers, he dramatizes the present struggle of recollection. His triumphal and distinctive exclamations of recollective mastery—"I recover the place itself" (SB 53), "I abundantly grasp" (SB 54), "I distinguish in the earlier twilight" (SB 31), "I rescue from the same limbo" (SB 31)—are both exultations in the endurance of the creative faculty of memory as well as the chief act by which he gives life to his recollective self. The result is that in addition to the I-who-reside-in-history that all autobiographers create, James gives life to an I-who-remember. He creates what we may call a present recollective moment of unusual extent and provides unusually rich documentation of the present consciousness acted upon by all the anxieties and ambitions of the elder writer.

I suggest that the Jamesian autobiographical text, which readers have so often thought to lack coherence, becomes significantly orderly when we recognize that it is the unacknowledged needs of the recollective consciousness that often determine the sequence and relationship of memories of past events. Memories are quite often summoned not in accord with chronology but affective content.²

By and large, autobiography is an unstable witness to history and, if properly read, has little more referential value than fiction. We may be most interested in it for its reference to a material world, but what can only be judged
with certainty is the autobiographical process itself, not the claims that are advanced from that process. The proto-autobiographies make this point even more clearly than the autobiographies. Since they attempt no completed and polished narrative of James's self, they let us stand closer to the moment of composition. The question of reference can never really be settled in autobiography studies; the dark secret of the field may be that autobiography means little as a matter of reference and much as a matter of process.

Late life is conventionally the time for autobiographical retrospection, but it was pre-eminently so for James. The variety and persistence of the autobiographical impulse in his case would seem to have at least two consequences. First, we may suppose that these works reflect the needs of late life and are therefore subject to many of the prejudices and emotional needs of the reminiscential elder. Second, I would suggest that we may expect that texts sharing common origin and occasion will also share common effects. That is, what James undertakes in one text may be expressed in others as well. After all, by convention we expect to find consistencies in an author's body of fiction; if any thematic, referential, methodological, or linguistic effect of the narrative act has appeared before, we anticipate that it will again. How much more likely it must be that a writer's
autobiographical texts behave in the same way. Narrative that works over the same or comparable ground of origin, the writer's own past, and is undertaken for the same or comparable purpose surely must achieve continuity and consistency with other parts of the self-referential body of work.

I believe that the resources and methods of James's proto-autobiographies should inform a reading of the autobiographical texts as well. Accordingly, I propose to ground my reading of James's autobiographical process in a sequential and approximately chronological consideration of his proto-autobiographies. I open and close my treatment of that material with considerations of works of fiction which offer us (and offered James) models of the autobiographical process. The first of those, The Sense of the Past, he started at the approximate opening of a new century, just as he was opening the crowning phase of his career.

I hope to demonstrate that the proto-autobiographical material gives us new interpretive tools for autobiography studies, and that those can be used to advantage to read three passages of the autobiographies in new and unusual ways. Two of those passages are the most discussed in James's memoirs, the dream of the Galerie d'Apollon and the "Obscure Hurt" episode. The third is his account of a visit to Mrs. Cannon's house, a passage that has rarely attracted comment. I argue that it is James's description of his
father taking him to a whorehouse at the age of twelve. I hope to demonstrate the autobiographical plausibility of this reading and to establish the profound difference between autobiographical and biographical plausibility.

Notes

1. It is conventional within Jamesian criticism to note the self-referential flavor of much of James's late work. For example, the best general description of the autobiographies themselves, that by Carol Holly, begins by acknowledging James's late production of "volume after volume of autobiographical prose" ("History" 427).

2. I am indebted to James Olney for my remarks about the affective content of memories. According to my notes of our conversation of 16 November 1990 concerning James and the general question of the reference of autobiographical narrative, he said, "If it [reference] is to the process of recovery, not the content of what is recovered, then it cannot be the content that determines the structure of narrative. It must be affective qualities of memories that determine structure and sequence of narrative."

For remarks typical of readers' assessment of the orderliness of Jamesian recollection, see Bell 469-70 and Sayre 141-42.
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Key to Works by Henry James


SP--The Sense of the Past. London: Collins [1917].

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Abstract

James's autobiographies differ from most by dramatizing so extensively the process of recovery and reanimation of memory, the act that signifies autobiographical activity. They therefore reveal a great deal about the generic nature of autobiographical recollection. James's Major Phase, from 1900 to his death in 1916, was chiefly and gloriously autobiographical in purpose and crowns his career with an autobiographical production of astonishing variety, extent, and creativity.

The proto-autobiographical material includes biography of a culture (William Wetmore Story and His Friends), travel memoir and cultural analysis (The American Scene), and recapitulation and intimate disclosure of his creative life (the Prefaces of the New York Edition). The proto-autobiographical phase is marked by bookend fiction projects, The Sense of the Past and "The Jolly Corner," that dramatize the agony of recollection and the fear of reanimating the past, thereby giving James models of the recollective process in a safer fictive form. The proto-autobiographies enabled him to put into play the methods of self-referentiality and even to consider the motives for autobiography. I argue that autobiography is often most revealing about the present moment and the act of writing. Henry James is significantly useful for the study of this process of autobiography; to an extent unmatched by most
autobiographers, he dramatizes the present struggle of recollection. He also gives significant prominence to the father, a figure to be accounted for somehow in any autobiography.

Nowhere are James's anxieties in greater force than in the "obscure hurt" passage of his autobiography, which deals curiously and obscurely with his choice of literature rather than service in the Civil War. By exploiting a hitherto overlooked discovery, that James was drafted and was exempted for "various complaints," I am able to shed new light on the processes and motives for autobiographical silences and misrepresentation.

His process of arranging memories in accord with affective content enables an unexpected reading of his father taking him to Mrs. Cannon's house; a place that biography calls a boarding house becomes by autobiographical context a brothel.
Chapter 1: The Advance Toward Autobiography

Henry James was poised at the dawn of a new century to open the memorial record of his own past, prepared to make the great work of his late years, from the age of 56 to his death at 72, a process of personal recapitulation. A novel he undertook at the turn of the century models the very process of imaginatively entering a memorial past. It was called, significantly, The Sense of the Past and was to have his attention upon occasion throughout his autobiographical phase, but it was published posthumously in an unfinished state. In has to do with Ralph Pendrel's need to visit the past, and Pendrel does so in an uncanny way, when he discovers that an ancestor's portrait, dating from 1820, is also a portrait of himself. When Pendrel arrives in England (ever the antecedent culture in James) and stands before the family mansion, he muses to himself that "I am the future, and I dream of making it [the past] speak" (SP 46.) The narrator continues, speaking of Pendrel's "desire to remount the stream of time ... . No man, he well believed, could ever so much have wanted to look behind and still behind--to scale the high wall into which the successive years, each a squared block, pile themselves in our rear and look over as nearly as possible with the eye of sense into, unless it should rather be called out of, the vast prison yard" (SP 47).
James writes here of Pendrel's need for the truth of the recoverable past and the ways in which it is not a documentable truth but a more inward and elusive truth. The distinction that Pendrel and his narrator make, that is, is what enables proper understanding of the past: the profound difference between the truth of the empirically verifiable and the truth of autobiography. What he wants with this retrospect is not the documentable experience that might interest a historian but the undocumentable and inward experience, the sort of experience that leaves a trace only in consciousness and is recovered by an autobiographer only through the imaginative reconstitution of experience. The terms with which James describes Pendrel's needs are the same he was to encounter later when he wrote his autobiography. James's experience then of reconstituting the past, I shall argue, also turned on the contemplation of a family portrait.

If his idea in fine was to recover the lost moment, to feel the stopped pulse, it was to do so as experience, in order to be again consciously the creature that had been, to breathe as he had breathed and feel the pressure that he had felt. The truth most involved for him, so intent, in the insistent ardor of the artist, was that art was capable of an energy to this end never yet to all appearance fully required of it. ... He wanted the unmistakable accidents, the little notes of truth for which the common lens of history, however the scowling muse might bury her nose, was not sufficiently fine. He wanted evidence of a sort for which there had never been documents enough, or for which documents mainly, however multiplied, would never be enough. That was indeed in any case the artist's method... . Recovering the lost was at all events on this scale much like entering the enemy's lines to get back one's
dead for burial... . (SP 47-48)

The time to which Pendrel returns is 1820, a date that James's biographer, Leon Edel, associates with a significant epoch in James's sense of his own familial past. He says it signified "the period of his father's boyhood. It was a past he could call up in his memories of his grandmother in Albany, in her old-time clothes, reading books with the candle set between her eyes and the printed page" (A Life 504).

It is, I am sure, significant that James did not close the book on The Sense of the Past during his lifetime. Writing it, after all, would involve him in the process of modeling the imaginative reconstitution of the past that he had underway throughout his autobiographical period. Pendrel's act of revisiting the familial past in order to satisfy a present need is consonant with James's purposes in composing his own life narrative. The formal narrative of The Sense of the Past breaks off in mid-sentence; to that are added sixty pages or so of dictated notes in which James speaks in the present about the purposes of the characters as if they were part of another narrative. In uncanny ways, this echoes James's experience with his own autobiography. His final autobiographical text, The Middle Years, was published posthumously in the same year as The Sense of the Past, and it, too, is incomplete and breaks off at an ellipsis. Moreover, just as Pendrel's story
collapses into notes, James's life collapsed into a deathbed dictation, delusional notes in which he imagined his family as the family of empire, the Bonapartes.

The parallel of Pendrel's and James's circumstances suggests a comparable similarity in the experience of composition. That is to say, perhaps The Sense of the Past could not be finished so long as the project it models so effectively was itself incomplete. In a sense, only death could complete both of them.¹

Before the century had begun, James had agreed to write a biography of an expatriate New Englander, William Wetmore Story, whom James knew and considered to have pursued a socially active but artistically limited career as a poet and sculptor in Italy. Story's family paid James and turned over his effects, and the result, after considerable agony, was William Wetmore Story and His Friends: From Letters, Diaries and Recollections (1903). It is of interest because it prefigures so remarkably the origin of James's own autobiography. That, too, was undertaken at the request of a family (his own), after a death (his brother's), and was to make liberal use of letters and other family documents. It, too, witnesses the irresistible rise to prominence of James himself in a text that was intended to be the biography of another. In the case of Story, James had reservations about the substance of the subject's life and work, and part of his solution was to write in the first
person and from memory and personal experience of the worlds his subject represented: the New England aristocracy and the milieu of the expatriate artist in Rome. He had described his dilemma in a letter of January 25, 1902, to William Dean Howells: "There is no subject--there is nothing in the man himself to write about. There is nothing for me but to do a tour de force, or try to--leave poor dear W.W.S. out, practically, and make a little volume on the old Roman, Americo-Roman, Hawthornesque and other bygone days" (HJL IV 224-25). After the book appeared, James described his own contribution even more evocatively in a letter to Lady Millicent Fanny St. Clair Erskine dated December 23, 1903: "Story was the dearest of men, but he wasn't massive, his artistic and literary baggage were of the slightest and the materials for a biography nil. Hence ... I had really to invent a book, patching the thing together and eking it out with barefaced irrelevancies... . But the magic is but scantily mine--it is really that of the beloved old Italy, who always will consent to fling a glamour for you, whenever you speak her fair" (HJL IV 302). Still more interesting is the reaction of Henry Adams, who recognized in the book so much of the cultures he shared with James and Story. After remarking that "all of my New England generation" was of "only one mind and nature," and each knew all to their depths (or shallows, as Adams would have it), he writes in a letter of November 18, 1903: "So
you have written not Story's life, but your own and mine,—pure autobiography,—the more keen for what is beneath, implied, intelligible only to me, and half a dozen other people still living. ... You strip us, gently and kindly, like a surgeon, and I feel your knife in my ribs. No one will ever know it" (441).

James visited America from August 1904 to July 1905; it was the first time he had been back to his homeland in twenty-one years. The result was The American Scene, a series of highly reminiscential essays recording his visits along the Eastern Seaboard. Some were published first in periodicals in 1905 and 1906, and the book itself appeared in 1907. It is James's most explicit rehearsal of the autobiographical process. This is, first of all, an explicitly self-referential narrative, recording his experiences as—in his words—the "repatriated absentee," the "brooding analyst," the "expatriated observer," and even the "palpitating pilgrim." Second, he has returned to the ground of his origin, occupying the very landscape that he will later call to mind in the works acknowledged as autobiographies. Finally, re-occupying the material ground of his origin inevitably brings back traces of the world he knew. The discovery of change is always accompanied by a sense of loss and often provokes a leap into nostalgic reminiscence as a way of recovering the meaning of the
past. Inasmuch as these steps prefigure the main texts, they deserve further mention.

James's informal titles for himself as a visitor—"palpitating pilgrim" and the rest—are early manifestations of the bifurcation of subjectivity that is the signature of autobiography. That is, the practice and theory of autobiography are vexed by the strange separation of the I who speaks from the I who acts, the author who recollects and writes and the younger self who is recollected and contained within memory. The question of autobiography and the veracity of its reference is always organized by this separation of self into subject and object. In his acknowledged autobiographies, James will later bring to his history his own "small boy" who characteristically will gape so touchingly within and at the progress of memory. In The American Scene, the role of visitor and observer is separated from his writing and recollecting role by the use of these informal titles. Generally, the utterance of I designates the consciousness now recollecting and writing; the recollected self who is placed within memory as the American visitor is flagged with something like "the restored absentee."

For example, when James is describing his discovery of sizable collections of immigrant groups, people he calls "aliens," he sees in them an isolation caused by dullness of appearance: "[B]ut I remember observing how, in the
Broadway and the Bowery conveyances in especial, they tended, almost alike, to make the observer gasp with the sense of isolation. It was not for this that the observer on whose behalf I more particularly write had sought to take up the sweet sense of the natal air" (AS 459-60). The present acts of remembering and writing are explicitly allotted to the "I" and excluded from the self who rode municipal transit. Indeed, that character is most explicitly exiled from the speaking and acting present; the writer acts in behalf of that character.

In fact, the presence and abundance of aliens trouble James the most. The autobiographer wishes for continuity of past and present, and for James the immigrants are the face of change itself. They are the shape of change at its most threatening. To be sure, James is troubled by other forms of change, as well. He laments that the construction of new buildings of the last quarter century, driven as it has been by the necessities of commerce, has changed the look of the island. It has left the gothic spire of Trinity Church "cruelly overtopped" (AS 420), sitting on Broadway now as a "smothered visibility" (AS 421). The tall buildings have "usurped a glory" and look, "from the water, like extravagant pins in a cushion already overplanted, and stuck in as in the dark, anywhere and anyhow" (AS 419). The commercial reconstruction takes a personally aggressive turn when James finds that his own "birth-house" in
Washington Place had been "rudely" and "ruthlessly suppressed," leaving him with the feeling of "having been amputated of half my history" (AS 431).

But it is the aliens, the immigrants, who fill James with regret and foreboding. He chances to visit Ellis Island, the point of arrival in the new world for the European fugitives and aspirants, and he says it has changed him utterly. It forces him to recognize that "the sanctity of his American consciousness" is now compromised, for he must now share "the intimacy of his American patriotism with the inconceivable alien." In fact, "any sensitive citizen," when confronted with this new truth, will be appalled, will carry a "new chill in his heart. So is stamped, for detection, the questionably privileged person who has had an apparition, seen a ghost in his supposedly safe old house. Let not the unwary, therefore, visit Ellis Island" (AS 426-27). This experience, intense as it was, merely grew more intense, as he was confronted on every hand by evidence that his "supreme relation"—that to his native country—must undergo a "profane overhauling" (AS 427).

Here and throughout the first three chapters of The American Scene, there is a furious resentment directed at the immigrants. The resentment is largely class-based, perhaps, and driven by a fear of greater numbers, but it is expressed in all the conventional attitudes of cultural
superiority. At one point James employs a dramatic succession of images, each of which reduces an ethnic minority to the grotesque and the bestial. The immigrant who arrives with mature expectations is thought to resemble "the dog who sniffs round the freshly-acquired bone, giving it a push and a lick, betraying a sense of its possibilities, but not ... directly attacking it" (AS 462). The Jews fill the Lower East Side to bursting, as if they were "at the bottom of some vast sallow aquarium in which innumerable fish, of overdeveloped proboscis, were to bump together, for ever, amid heaped spoils of the sea" (AS 464). So Jews, with their big noses, are also what James calls "concentrated." The "intensity of the Jewish aspect" seems to mean that any part of them is equally expressive of their identity. He wonders whether "the unsurpassed strength of the race permits of the chopping into fine fragments without loss of race-quality? There are small strange animals, known to natural history, snakes or worms, I believe, who, when cut into pieces, wriggle away contentedly and live in the snippet as completely as in the whole" (AS 465). James's reduction of the Jews to the animal reaches a nadir when he considers the appearance of the fire escapes that mark the front of every Lower East Side tenement. They remind him of a "spaciously organized cage for the nimbler class of animals in some great zoological garden. This general analogy is irresistible--it
seems to offer, in each district, a littler world of bars and perches and swings for human squirrels and monkeys" (AS 466-67).

So James had come home, only to find strangers in his home. They are the ghostly apparition that the privileged had seen in his home after visiting Ellis Island. Infuriating to say, though, they were not interlopers. He recognizes that they were "at home, really more at home... than they had ever in their lives been before; and that he was at home too, quite with the same intensity" (AS 460). There is a fine and accumulated irony here. James would have thought that he had so little in common with the immigrants, and yet here they both are, landsmen. Both are, in a sense, immigrants to this new land, transplanted by chance from Europe. Moreover, it is they, not James, who are adapting and changing. James is shocked to discover that he cannot communicate with immigrant laborers; he is faced with only staring blankness when he encounters them on a stroll. Had he met them in Europe, there would have been communication, "mutual recognition, founded on old familiarities and heredities" (AS 454). In the old country, that is, the old country of rigid social hierarchies, a man knew his place and, knowing it, could know where he stood with others. America has changed that; its promise of economic transformation is also a promise of class transformation. The immigrants have exchanged rigid social
hierarchy for the fraternal horde of the presumably undifferentiated single class: American.

James's use of the opprobrious "alien" is telling. In truth, it is not the immigrants who are alien, but James himself. Whatever else The American Scene may be, it is the late-life text in which its writer records his own alienation. The estrangement was not unanticipated. In a May 1903 letter to his brother William before he had reached a final decision to undertake the visit, he writes of how he is more familiar with Europe and says of his "native land" that "time, absence and change have, in a funny sort of way, made [it] almost as romantic to me as 'Europe,' in dreams or in my earlier times here, used to be" (HJL IV 272). Once the trip was underway, James's letters to friends in England are filled with the plaints of a man homesick for his familiar hearth in Rye and with the derogation of so much that he found. By May 1905, after almost a year on the road in America, his "native land" had overwhelmed him with the strange "Muchness of space and distance and time." While staying at a private club in Chicago, he wrote to Edward Warren sounding for all the world like any other visitor accustomed to the smaller and tidier scale of Europe. "[T]his club (which looks old and sober too!) is an abode of peace, a benediction to me in the looming largeness; I live here, and they put one up (always, everywhere), with one's so excellent room with
perfect bathroom and w.c., of its own, appurtenant (the universal joy of this country, in private house or wherever; a feature that is really almost a consolation for many things)" (HJL IV 355).

There was no consoling James for the aliens and the change they signified. The change that James must necessarily find most threatening, of course, is the effect on the language. It is during a late-night tour of several Lower East Side cafes, "the Yiddish world," as he describes it, that he is attacked by a sense of doom. These cafes were, he says, "torture-rooms of the living idiom" (AS 471). He hears the assault as if he were the representative of the Spoken Word of Custom and Tradition: "It was the incurable man of letters under the skin of one of the party [that's James himself, in the third person again] who gasped, I confess; for it was in the light of letters, that is in the light of our language as literature has hitherto known it, that one stared at this all-unconscious impudence of the agency of future ravage" (AS 470). He is willing to make concessions, but he cannot accept that once so ravaged, it will still be English or literary. "The accent of the very ultimate future, in the States, may be destined to become the most beautiful on the globe and the very music of humanity (here the 'ethnic' synthesis shrouds itself thicker than ever); but whatever we shall know it for, certainly, we shall not know it for English--in any
sense for which there is an existing literary measure" (AS 470).

James's responses to this perceived threat to the language are varied, but I am especially interested in two, both of which are the response of the man of letters. The professional writer, he is saying as he thinks over his evening in the torture-rooms of the Lower East Side, must come to the defense of the traditions of the land of origin. "For that honour, the honour that sits astride of the consecrated English tradition, to his mind, quite as old knighthood astride its caparisoned charger, the dragon most rousing, over the land, the proper spirit of St. George, is just this immensity of the alien presence climbing higher and higher, climbing itself into the very light of publicity" (AS 470). This is a startling and vivid dedication, even if (and perhaps because) it is so deeply sentimental and nostalgic. If we take James's posturing seriously, it may seem rather foolish and naively retrograde. Perhaps the purpose is foolish, but the terms in which James imagines himself in contest and the politics that it expresses are important and need our attention. James here imagines himself sentimentally and anachronistically in contest and even combat; it was not his characteristic posture. I do not suggest he was not willful or aggressive; the whole of his attack on the "alien" was surely ferocious, in its way. I do suggest that
it is unusual and remarkable that James would publicly welcome a battle. There may be other times when he does it, but the one that comes to mind is in the autobiography and concerns the defense of the father and family. Defense of the "consecrated English tradition" is a defense, after all, of the heritage assembled and transmitted in the name of the fathers generally, and specifically by the father and son in this instance. Investing the contending self in the shape and moment of St. George places him in a triumphal pose at the service of church and state, the great patriarchal institutions.

The other response James makes to the threat of the "alien" that I want to consider occurs earlier, when he describes his visit to the old neighborhood. James had "an unbroken ease of frequentation of that ancient end of Fifth Avenue to the whole neighborhood of which one's earlier vibrations, a very far-away matter now, were attuned" (AS 428). It is a "precious stretch of space between Washington Square and Fourteenth Street," and it has "a value ... even a charm for the revisiting spirit." Even here, though, was the observable presence of the change that time had brought, and the threat and danger of that change was made present and active by the immigrants. "There was no escape from the ubiquitous alien into the future, or even into the present; there was an escape but into the past."
James acquired a great impulse toward autobiography at this point. He recognized a purpose and a motive for memory. What he knew at this moment was why he remembered: To reclaim the past as a shelter from change and from the ugliness of the present. It is important that the past he conjures with this "unimpaired morsel of the Fifth Avenue heritage" is largely imaginary, or nostalgic. James would not say that; what he does say here is that it was a "pleasanter, easier, hazier past" (AS 428). It is not the case that every autobiographer sets out to defend and reclaim the ground of origin, but some do. I like to think that James did and that he found his purpose here.

In James's case, the role of the father in sheltering, sponsoring, and presenting the child to the world will shape a great deal of what we find in his autobiographies. Those associations were formed from earliest experience, but he began to give them the dignity of significant form in these years, in the recollective process that undergirds the public display of his private experience. The return to America was for James also a return to family, and his meditations, recollections, conclusions, and writings that the visit prompted were curiously--perhaps characteristically, for James--given a dual focus of native land and family. The threat to the language that he perceived as emanating from the admixture of the alien was a threat to the process of conservation, to the perpetuity
of the past, and to the dominance of the past over the present. For James, change always and everywhere destabilizes, but what was troubling James was not the possibility of simple change but change unstructured or unguided by loyalties to precedent, tradition, or the familiar—that is, change as a present threat to ancient orders of authority and a challenge to the orderly transmission of meaning and heritage. The figure that came to James so often to image this threat was the defenseless, unsheltered, and above all young child. Most often imagined as a young girl, sometimes as an infant, this child has its origins deep in James's memories of young relatives, especially the tragic Minnie Temple, and informed his design of the central figures of the major fiction that dominate the period immediately preceding his autobiographical period.

Leon Edel was first to argue that James's work from 1895 to 1900 exhibits a singular fascination with children, a fascination so carefully worked that the child characters are created in a sequence from infancy to majority. "His precocious little females grow a little older in each story, as if they were a single child whose life experience is being traced from the cradle to coming of age." Edel suggests that James felt "some inner need to relive forgotten experience, some compulsion to revisit, step by step, the hidden stages of his own growth and development,
within his safety disguise of a little girl— as if indeed these books were the single book of little Harry James."

Edel's claims for the writer-character bond are especially emphatic in the case of the eponymous figure in *What Maisie Knew*: she "is a careful presentation of the Henry James of the late autobiography, *A Small Boy and Others*: she possesses his curiosity, she is engaged in a systematic study of her elders, she searches determinedly for her identity amid her absent and estranged parents and governesses" (Edel IV 260, 261, 262).3

It is possible and in fact probable that the therapeutic work James did in this period from 1895 to 1900 was a necessary preliminary to the immediately succeeding autobiographical phase. Edel never makes that case, of course; he is not interested in autobiography. He prefers to consider James a novelist, not an autobiographer, and small wonder; Edel has a professional interest in staking a claim to James's life story, and as an autobiographer James has pre-empted Edel's material. To the degree he thinks of James as an autobiographer, to that degree does Edel cede control over the material that he makes his own life work. In the terms of the advice offered once to James by his friend Henry Adams, he has taken his own life before Edel could take it. Retrospection concludes, summarizes, and crowns James's career.
Before his autobiographical phase could begin, he first had to order his sense of his own past and understand his small boy to be sheltered and unthreatened, safe within significant traditions and inherited meaning. The way in which he manages personal memory and the anxieties attached to it will be a main focus of any reading of the autobiographies. What James did with *The American Scene* was a critical step in his discovery of his autobiographical voice, for just at that point re-emerges the figure of the endangered innocent, the child who is a precursor in the figuring imagination for the small boy of his autobiographical texts. Near the close of his American visit, he delivered a June 8, 1905, commencement speech at Bryn Mawr. That lecture, "The Question of Our Speech," reanimates all the fears of ethnic threat he sees throughout *The American Scene*. He concludes *The American Scene* with a peroration on the growth of ugliness underway in America, a conversion not informed or guided by a sense of the past. (The publisher of the American edition amputated that peroration without James's authorization.) At the core of both closing statements, the commencement and the textual orations, is nestled the same figure, the vulnerable and impressionable young creature.

In lecturing the young women, he depicts the English language as a dainty belle who, although she came over to this world to help "father and mother" this community,
found herself "frightened quite to death" by her "dire predicament." That predicament is simply that she is an "unfriended heroine," for she has lacked what other languages have had: "the great idioms of Europe in general have grown up at home and in the family, the ancestral circle" (QS 38-39). James next seems to speak of her as a possession, referring ambiguously to her once as "precious property" and again as "property" that is handed over. In that transaction, she is in a defenseless, appalling (perhaps appealing), and ambiguously naked state: "distracted, dishevelled, despoiled, divested of that beautiful and becoming drapery of native atmosphere."

Handed over to whom? He mentions four recipients. The first two are familiar—the "common school," an institution James never attended and hence might fear, and the newspaper, a cultural institution directly competitive with James and the frequent object of his antagonism. The other two are less familiar—"the American Dutchman and the Dago" (QS 40-41).

The resort to racist epithet suggests that James's anxiety here runs unexpectedly deep. And how telling it is that he selects the one ethnic slur that is a corruption of his own name—"dago" being originally "Diego," or James. The writer is, after all, estranged and alienated, and, like the immigrants, he is Europeanized. Even more suggestive, if the "unfriended heroine" is a precursor of
the small boy who shall gape so often in the pages of his autobiography, then this may be an unplanned exposure of a plan that shall come to full form later, when the small boy is, as he says here, "handed over" to the Europeanized James—when the Europeanized writer will have his way with the memories of the small boy. The writer will do with his most "precious property" just what this "Dago" does, betray and exploit the innocent and unprotected.4

James continues describing what he foresees as the violation of the language, doing so with his characteristic circumspection and deferral of meaning. Still, the sources of his conclusions, the cultural presumptions that underlie them, and the imagery that express them are striking. He expects that the "quickly assimilated foreign brothers and sisters" shall soon enough "dump their mountain of promiscuous material into the foundations of the American" (QS 42-43). After a small digression to inveigh against the vulgarisms of the newspapers, he begins his most significant maneuver. He concedes that a language must always be "a living organism," able to respond to and with "new tricks, new experiments, new amusements." This is so, but only "so long as the conservative interest" remains constant. The statement that follows seems far-fetched until we read it as a continuation of his sponsorship of the exposed and threatened innocent: "The conservative interest is really as indispensable for the institution of
speech as for the institution of matrimony. Abate a jot of the quantity, and, much more, of the quality, of the consecration required, and we practically find ourselves emulating the beasts, who prosper as well without a vocabulary as without a marriage service" (QS 46-47). The invocation of the bestial is familiar but it almost obscures the unexpected yoking of marital and linguistic rituals. In fact, he has been pursuing that association throughout; it appeared most pointedly in his use of "promiscuous." His model for matrimony is the design by which property and its transfer is controlled. The management of meaning in language is to be controlled, that is, in the way that property is accumulated and transferred in an orderly fashion through careful matrimony. He had, of course, imaged the young child earlier as a possession and even as "precious property." James's political decree here repeats the prohibition of Dr. Austin Sloper in Washington Square. In that novel of 1880, the father successfully opposes the marriage of his daughter, Catherine, for precisely this reason--the orderly management of property; her suitor was penniless. James here is doing the work of the father. In lecturing the young women, he is inveighing against the depreciation of the coin of the language, seeking to control meaning, decreeing the superiority of the conservative interest, sponsoring the young heroine, modeling matrimony both as an instance of hierarchical
domination and as a design for the systematic accumulation of capital. It is work that has not been done, James makes clear in the seventh and concluding section of the fourteenth and last chapter of *The American Scene*. It is his farewell summation; he had once given thought to a second volume to account for his impressions of the Midwest and Pacific Coast, but by the time the book was prepared he had abandoned that plan. Most of the other chapters were published first in periodicals, but this Florida chapter was composed with its position in the book in mind. This was meant to stand as his assessment in sum and in farewell, and its judgments are of a piece with its significant twin, the stinging assessment of America in his 1879 *Hawthorne*. The cultural criticism in this seventh Florida section is James's most pointed and interesting. His displeasure with the changes in America has been evident throughout *The American Scene*, to be sure, but this section is different. Here he attributes purpose and effect to the changes, and judges both. This section, for reasons yet to be explained, was dropped from the American edition. It appeared in the English edition. Although it is not clear who was responsible, the judgments were repressed, and so their textual restoration becomes an event of importance.  

Here he releases what he calls "my exasperation" in "rude accents" in answer to the rhetorical question asked
by the spirit of the land, "See what I'm making of all
this--see what I'm making, what I'm making." What angers
him is not that "you have caused the face of the land to
bleed" but that what has been put in place is ugly,
thoughtless, unformed by taste or judgment or knowledge.
What has been made is "some ugliness about which, never
dreaming of the grace of apology or contrition, you then
proceed to brag with a cynicism all your own." In other
words, this America has been made only in response to
market opportunity and availability, and the making has
been by people acting on impulses unguided and untended by
moral purpose, ethical restraint, social need, or cultural
precedent. At this point James restores the image of the
unescorted young woman and converts her to his new purpose.
It is, he says, as if "some monstrous unnatural mother
might leave a family of unfathered infants on doorsteps or
in waiting rooms" (AS 734, 735). It is not the "unfathered
infants" that continue the image, however; it is the
"monstrous unnatural mother" who is the later version of
the unsponsored child of his Bryn Mawr address. The
consequence of such "promiscuous" attentions to the
innocent and the unattended as he warned of earlier is here
imagined as monstrous and unnatural. She has become the
mother of illegitimacies, and her production exceeds nature
and natural law, is ungoverned by civil law, and is,
especially and explicitly, unsanctioned by the present
authority of the father. These infants have been sired but they remain "unfathered." 6

During the ten months or so in 1904 and 1905 that James was in America, he made preliminary notes for The American Scene in a journal. The practice was not unique to this phase of his production, by any means. It seems to have been a form of aid commonly employed. His notebooks, journals, diaries, and other dictated matter are extant from as early as 1878 and continue until his deathbed dictation in the voice of Napoleon. The journal that holds his 1904-1905 impressions is especially rich in material bearing on his autobiographical project, but we must pause over two moments of special importance for our later reading of his formal autobiography. The first is his address to his alter ego, and the second his visit to the family graves.

The act and ideology of self-reference was James's norm. Certainly, his non-fiction is often marked by the process of self-address, passages in which the speaking voice is addressed to, is cast toward, another James. His custom of doing this in The American Scene was remarked earlier; in that case, the utterance of "I" is usually reserved to the writer speaking at the moment of recollection and composition, and the historical James whose visit and reactions are being recollected is spoken of with a variety of informal titles--"brooding analyst"
and the like. It is a separation of the subject that is at the heart of autobiography, and occurs elsewhere in James as well. In the notebooks a second self is often present, addressed variously as a "good angel" or "blest Genius" and otherwise. In the 1904-1905 journal it is often "mon bon," and the passage is important for its proud declaration of autobiographical process.

In his entry for December 11, 1904, James is struggling with the memory of his recent return to Cambridge and his visit to the family graves. He invokes the spirit here as mon bon and asks for help in writing the visit so that he will not have to reanimate the memory. He is pulled away from the notes by the press of other business, and he resumes his entries three months later, March 29th, at Coronado Beach, California. He is now seven months on the continent. He invokes the spirit as "my familiar demon of patience" and announces his confidence in the sustaining power of his recollective faculty. It is a moment worthy of attention for its bearing on James's autobiographical process, but it is also a moment of astonishing intimacy.

His jottings in this journal return more than once to the memories of his visit to the family graves. Many other memories flood the text, but they are all of Cambridge (or the process of recall, as above), and the problem seems to be how to attach them to the visit to Cambridge Cemetery. It was a sacred moment at the graves; his parents had died
in 1882, his sister in 1892. The experience was emotionally intense, and the recollection was no less complex: "[T]he history is written in my troubled and anxious, my always so strangely more or less aching, doubting, yearning, yet also more or less triumphant, or at least uplifted, heart" (NO 237). Indeed, James's memories never lose their affective content. He insists that where memory persists, its original emotional content is full, as well. In the notations before the passage concerning the graves, he describes the process of bringing to present consciousness Cambridge memories from as early as the 1860s and as recent as his visit of November 1904, a few months previous. In each case, the memory is both present and felt experience—"the sense, still, after such a lifetime, of particular little thrills and throbs and daydreams." Or, Oliver Wendell Holmes's house, which he has "passed, never, since without the sense" of the first experience. Or, the pleasure of hearing of Holmes's European success, which persisted and influenced his own choice of expatriation later: "I always think of the occasion, that hour, as a sovereign contribution to the germ of that inward romantic principle which was to determine, so much later on (ten years!), my own vision-haunted migration." And the call of the proud recollection: "I recall, I can FEEL now ..." (NO 239).
Finally he comes to the cemetery memory. It awaits him, "like a waiting lion—or more congruously, like a cooing dove that I shrink from scaring away." He had contrived in November to be there in the "favouring hour," and the "highest deepest note" of the Cambridge visit is "the never-to-be-lost memory of that evening hour" among "that unspeakable group of graves." This is the moment that gives significant meaning to his experience of America: "I seemed then to know why I had done this; I seemed then to know why I had come." And he is flooded: "Everything was there, everything came," by which he signifies the mysterious capacity of present consciousness to be coextensive with the past—"the recognition, stillness, the strangeness, the pity and the sanctity and the terror, the breath-catching passion and the divine relief of tears" (NO 239-40).

There are further details of the place and the experience, but save for a reference to his sister Alice's urn and the Dantesque lines his brother William had had inscribed on it, they all appear elsewhere. Much of what is here in the private journal, that is, he placed on public display in The American Scene. Not all was so treated, of course; the parts of the journal entry that occasioned the deepest anxiety were repressed. Nevertheless, the two passages are so remarkably similar that it is likely that James had the journal before him as he dictated The
American Scene. The latter becomes, at this point, an account of how memory is converted into public narrative.

He begins, in The American Scene, with another instance of his life-long reluctance to be slavishly bound by the text of the past. He invokes his freedom from literal representation by placing himself atop a "breakwater against the assault of matters demanding a literal notation," and from this position he looks down "over the flood of the real." He makes the same distinction between the reality of the past and the inventions of the present by saying that some of the silences he must impose on those ghosts of the past are actually a matter "of what one read into anything, not of what one read out of it." The account of the visit that follows closely resembles the journal entry, even though he never says explicitly that he is at a cemetery or among graves. In the journal, the western sky was "more and more turning to that terrible, deadly, pure polar pink that shows behind American winter woods." In the published version, there is "a wintry pink light in the west, the special shade, fading into a heartless prettiness of grey, that shows with a polar chill through the grim tracery of November." Next, in both versions, he recognizes a large stadium across the Charles River, and soon the speaker turns to memories of James Russell Lowell, called J. R. L. in both texts.
There is no mention of graves, nor of a cemetery, nor of his relatives by name or suggestion. There is no mention of weeping. There is no mention of his sister, nor her urn, nor its inscription. All of that is repressed and replaced by the stadium, Soldier Field, which is "like some memorial slab." Instead of the literal or the real, he gives us a figurative memorial slab, and instead of a memorial already inscribed, this memorial slab "waits to be inscribed." Quite plainly, what was most painful and troubling in the experience (and which remained a source of anxiety in memory) was repressed; direct statement was deflected into the indirection of simile--"like some memorial slab that waits to be inscribed."

Furthermore, what has caused the repression, that deflection--the reason he has put up the breakwater against the literal and the real--is the presence of "the American public." He is renarrating private memory for that public; in the journal he had been alone in memory, but he is not alone now. The presence of the public is signified by a crowd in the football stadium. (The stadium was empty in the journal.) The memory of a football game stands for the public's capacity for "momentary gregarious emphasis" expressed in the "many-mouthed uproar" of a cheer, and that is, he says, why he must "omit here all the reflections it prompted" (AS 411-12). "It" here refers to the stadium, but in fact the stadium prompted no reflections in the journal;
he witnessed the game and the cheer a couple weeks before he visited the cemetery. The reflections he is omitting were the effect of the literal memorial slab and inscription.

So the literal takes refuge in the figurative. Anxiety leads James to break the bonds of the past. Some past reality is exiled to the unconscious by the repression of painful, tear-inducing memory. The painful is metonymically replaced by the painless. James achieves a present narrative of memory that acknowledges the intrusion of the public but refuses to tell his inward secrets. The memory of sacred ghosts and this sacred ground of family meaning is here sheltered from conversion by the Dagos and other commoners of that crowd.

Notes

1. Marshall also argues that James was caught in the uncompletable in *The Sense of the Past*, but she makes her case without reference to his continuing autobiographical project. She is chiefly interested in her aesthetics-based reading of the distinction between life and art. Williams, on the other hand, follows Edel's suggestion of a self-referential resonance for the fragmentary novel, but her reading emphasizes "James's career-long interest in portraits" (73). No one, to my knowledge, has construed *The Sense of the Past* as I do—a part of James's autobiographical project and as a model of his process of autobiographical self-reconstitution. Williams's emphasis on the role of the portrait anticipates some of my argument, to be presented later, on the significance of the portrait of James and his father.

2. The proliferation of these informal labels is not always taken as a phenomenon of the richness and variety of self-reference. Killoran, for example, treats *The American Scene* as a novel of manners and the multiplicity of labels as a shattering of persona. She claims this as an instance of Hegelian "estrangement of mind from itself and eventual
return to itself" (311). My view is that rather than a shattered persona in a fictive text, James gives us an integrated self in an autobiographical text. James's self is always aware of the variety of momentary possibility, but it is aware, and self-aware, and in that awareness is its integration, not its fragmentation.

3. For Edel's full and persuasive presentation of the sequence, see "The Little Girls" (The Life of Henry James IV 260-70). His schema of the major fictions of the period is: "Taking them in their sequence as he wrote them, we begin in the cradle with Effie, who is murdered at four (The Other House, 1896); she is resurrected at five (What Maisie Knew, 1897) and we leave her at seven or eight, or perhaps a bit older. Flora is eight ('The Turn of the Screw,' 1898) and the one little boy in the series, Miles, is ten: we are in the period of the child from eight to ten. Then we arrive at adolescence: the adolescence of an unnamed girl in a branch post office ('In the Cage,' 1898). Little Aggie, in the next novel, is sixteen, and Nanda Brookham eighteen when the story begins (The Awkward Age, 1899). With the writing of this novel, James completes the series" (261).

Edel considers the succession of fictions to have enabled the adult writer to achieve emotional and psychological stability. He re-encounters and re-orders "his buried life," Edel says, by this adventure of artistic re-creation--what James described as a "celestial, soothing, sanctifying process." Edel describes it as occurring "[b]elow or beyond the adult self," where the "hurt self discovered its healing substance. The subject, the essence, of these works was that of the growth and development of the human, the artistic, imagination" (260, 261, 260).


5. The book was published in London by Chapman and Hall on January 30, 1907, and on February 7 in New York by Harper. James wrote to his American agent, James B. Pinker, on May 5, complaining of Harper's "real mutilation of my volume," but mentions only the omission of his page headlines. He does not mention the omission of the missing seventh Florida section (HJL IV 448).
6. Notably enough, James repeats some of this language in his letter to his agent protesting the editorial treatment of the American edition. His text has been left unescorted by the running headlines; the editors "leave the poor book to make shift without them." He describes the act as, again, "monstrous" (HJL IV 448).

7. Leon Edel's introduction to the 1987 edition of the notebooks deals with other occasions of the separated subject and emphasizes the occasionally erotic relationship with the daimon in its notebook manifestations. See "Introduction: Colloquies with His Good Angel," especially xiii-xiv.

James arrived in America on August 30, 1904, and sailed for home in England on July 5, 1905, reaching Liverpool on July 13. Some of the *American Scene* material had started appearing even before he returned. Altogether, ten of the fourteen chapters appeared in periodicals, from April 1905 through November 1906. The book was published soon after that, early in 1907. By then he had been at work for some time on his next great proto-autobiographical work, the collected edition formally known as *The Novels and Tales of Henry James* but more familiarly as the New York Edition. Toward the end of 1908, he wrote to his friend, William Dean Howells, the editor of *Harper's Monthly* who had published some of the chapters of *The American Scene*, that work on the New York Edition had "prevented my doing any other work whatever" (*LHJ* II 119), but that was a slight exaggeration. In fact, the work on the two overlapped. He started the revision of novels for the New York Edition soon after returning to England in 1905 and worked on prefaces or revisions for the first four volumes of the new edition while completing *The American Scene*. Twenty-four volumes appeared from December 1907 into 1909.

James wrote his prefaces as a way of speaking about the background or creative origins of each of the collected fictions. They are, then, a recapitulation of the course
and process of his professional life. Many recall the germ of a fiction, the comment or anecdote from which he built the final composition. Some record the process itself, and occasionally he speaks of his own creative intentions.² My chief interest with the prefaces of the New York Edition concerns their rich collection of disclosures about James's inward professional life, but a word or two about the process and significance of textual revision is necessary. Some readers have been righteously indignant that James changed what he had written in his earlier life, but such opinions I regard as part of the tendency to idealize writing. They are of a piece with sentimental notions of the search for le mot juste and the dilettante's supposition that there is only one way to say something. Usually it is poor writers who resist changes, who will not edit themselves, or who resist others' editing. Writing is editing. I take James's revisions to be the act and prerogative of a living writer.

Some modern ideology of the text tries to distinguish writing from speaking by describing writing as language that is beyond revision because it has left the writer. In fact, it is not the writing that leaves; the leaving is all on the other side. Writers turn their backs, they turn to other texts, or to other entertainments, or they simply leave. Writers have certain powers of recall, even total recall. A piece of writing can now (and could in James's
time and before) always be reclaimed so long as the law authorizes it, so long as copyright is intact and the line of descent legitimate. Writing, and particularly Jamesian writing, is not what leaves, it is what is left to others, it is what is left behind.

It is in the past, and of the past, to be sure, and to revise it while alive is to recall to present consciousness that which has been. It is to reanimate the past, and in that reanimation to feel again the feelings that had been present before. Once reclaimed and returned to present consciousness, that is, texts, and particularly Jamesian texts, may be said to have certain things in common with memory.

The pastness of the completed fictions seems to have been much on James's mind as he completed his work on the edition. He ends his final preface, for The Golden Bowl, with a meditation on and defense of revision. Although he mentions the process at other times, this is his most extended treatment; like the process of revision itself, the defense, too, is retrospective. He admits that the "question of the 'revision' of existing work had loomed large for me," chiefly because it "had been for years one's only law" to leave what was past safely and plainly in the past: "to get and keep finished and dismissed work well behind one" (PR 1330). He imagines himself as a parent showing off "the first-born of my progeny" to visitors;
since he (and Scribner's) were presenting them in "an inheritance of brighter and more congruous material form, of stored up braveries of type and margin and ample page," he wanted the "awkward infants" to look their best when they descended "from the nursery to the drawing room" (PR 1331).

James's invocation of the familial environment continues the familiar image of the young but protected and escorted child he presents so often and almost inevitably throughout his autobiographical period. His own relation to the children here is ambiguous, however. Although he speaks of them as his progeny, he does not act or speak with the pride of the sire. His pride is feminized and maternal, and by the next paragraph has resolved itself into that of the non-parental but adult nurturer, for he speaks there of playing "the nurse's part" by wishing to wash and dress up the children for their presentation.

In life he was solely the avuncular visitor, never the proud parent. As he wrote these prefaces he was only recently returned from his American visit, during which he re-experienced his role within family as the beloved uncle. Commonly imagined as a figure of ambiguous sexual identity, the bachelor uncle holds a position somewhere close to but outside the real business of family production, and James seems perfectly fitted for the role. Before leaving for America in 1904, he had written to William James on May 6th
a lengthy letter anticipating their reunion and closing as "your hopelessly celibate" brother. Much closer to departure, he wrote his young nephew and namesake, Henry James III, with lavish gratitude for Harry's offer to meet and assist him on the New York docks; he calls it an offer of "your manly breast to hurl myself upon" and closes "with many caresses all round" (HJL IV 305-309).

A man without children in life, then, James images his great productions as his brood and presents them to the world. They are his children, but they are just as much himself, and in making them presentable he is at once also making himself presentable. This instance of the presentation of the child is really a self-presentation, and it enacts once again the by now familiar separation of self into adult and child versions. We may well begin to suspect that when we glimpse the familial child in James's late phase, we are also witnessing the autobiographical.

This instance should also remind us that James's conception of the parental role was hardly rigid and was subject to the sort of revision he is here describing. Always, however, what is subject to change is not the parental system but his own position within that system. The system itself remains rigid, at times even dedicatedly patriarchal and often hostile to women. In his address to the young ladies of Bryn Mawr, he had spoken of matrimony as a way of controlling meaning and property and of
preventing the invasion of the bestial. In the letter to William which he closes as the "celibate" brother, he dismisses a woman's claim to have been the original of Milly Theale as silly and adds, "But who--of her sex and species--isn't silly enough for anything, in this nightmare-world of insane bavardage" (HJL IV 306). Here in the Preface to The Golden Bowl he speaks of the typography and the graphic sense of the New York Edition as an "inheritance" for his children, an invocation of lineage and transfer of property that perfectly amplifies the Bryn Mawr notion of matrimony. That emphasis on linearity also continues in this section on revision when he characterizes his own process of re-experiencing his text. Re-reading here is programmatically linear and even militarily so: he compares the "march of my present attention" with the "march of my original expression." The engagement with the past is imaged as leaving a line of footprints in a snow-covered plain, and the line of prints associated with the older work is different from the line his steps make now. He has "quite unlearned the old pace" and his tread breaks "the surface in other places" (PR 1329-30). It may be only accidental and trivial that James chooses to demonstrate growth and change by superimposing linear designs, but probably not. He speaks of re-reading in different terms elsewhere; here the linearity seems obviously to continue the associations of lineage and control, just as the
military bearing aroused by marching through a cold, featureless landscape claims a certain unchallengeable authority for the process. And his purpose here is defensive, of course. His revisions for earlier volumes in the New York Edition had attracted question, challenge, even opposition. How better to defend than with the shelter of prior authority?

That is what James has in mind next when he makes revising out to be an expression of "one's 'taste,' as our fathers used to say" (PR 1333). Having made it clear that revising is not rewriting but a necessary part of re-reading--"To revise is to see, or to look over, again--which means in the case of a written thing neither more nor less than to re-read it" (PR 1332)--he says he has revised from a later and necessarily changed position. Whenever he has encountered what he cannot still believe in, he has left it out, and the progress of the acts of verification or omission through the course of the texts that summarize his professional life is "to retrace the whole growth of one's 'taste,' as our fathers used to say: a blessed comprehensive name for many of the things deepest in us" (PR 1333). The authority of priority--the prior knowledge and antecedent experience of earlier generations--is invoked by this reference. James defends himself against an accusation of disrupting continuity by invoking the common recognition of a wider continuity; instead of breaking with
his own past, revising brings his past into alignment with a larger past, one of greater duration, one reaching back to the "fathers." What might be seen as a break in cultural continuity, then, he presents as reinstating continuity, and he does so by his appeal to generational succession and cultural transmission.5

This "taste," that which is named by the fathers, what is it if not assembled by the course of one's life? What is its purpose if not judgment and understanding? What is its reference if not to the human life it signifies? Taste is nothing if not self-conscious. James says here that taste is the "active sense of life"—that is, it must inform action and deed. It can only be "active" by acting, and being self-conscious, it must inevitably re-read and revise its past. One acts, inevitably, in response to the sense of life and simultaneously upon the sense of that life.6 It may be that life is lived to enact the privilege of revising one's past; it is surely the case that such revision is the summary and completion of the life. James is here elaborating an ideology of autobiography and making the retrospective revaluation of a lifetime's capital and production a part of the very life in question. More than that: it is a necessary part of the life. The act of re-reading and revising summons, interprets, and closes; it calls to review all that consciousness has produced in the course of the life, and the same act that calls to review
also reanimates all the contents of consciousness to conduct the review. The act of retrospective revision is a summary act; life's purpose, by this design, is to understand life. Life, by this design (it is James's design), is self-conscious, self-referential, self-inquisitive, and self-revising.  

Something of the way in which Jamesian revision can embody and summarize the progressive development of consciousness can be discerned in what is perhaps his most famous change. It has been commented upon quite often, and it occurs at a critical point in the novel whose heart was most significantly changed in the New York Edition, The Portrait of a Lady. It is the exchange of a kiss between the lady of the title, Isabel Archer, and her suitor, Caspar Goodwood. The moment is presented in notably chaste terms in the 1881 version and was revised in 1906 in highly eroticized terms. This event is a main document in James's conversion of Portrait into a far more erotically aware fiction, and the changes plainly reflect his altered attitudes toward the erotic, both in how presentable he considered it and in the shape and feel of its dynamic. The 1881 text: "[H]is kiss was like a flash of lightning; when it was dark again she was free" (PL1 799). The 1906 revision: "His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed; and it was extraordinarily as if, while she took it, she felt each
thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his face, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense identity and made one with this act of possession. So had she heard of those wrecked and under water following a train of images before they sink. But when darkness returned she was free" (PL2 II 436).

James's personal experience of the erotic is documented by a letter of this same period, 31 January 1906, to a sculptor, Hendrik C. Andersen, who had sent a photograph of his statue of two lovers. James comments at length and quite knowingly about this other representation of a kiss:

I don't think I find the hands, on the backs, living enough and participant enough in the kiss. They would be, in life, very participant—to their fingertips, and would show it in many ways. But this you know, and the thing is very strong and (otherwise) complete. There is more flesh and pulp in it, more life of surface and of blood-flow under the surface, than you have hitherto, in your powerful simplifications, gone in for. So keep at that—at the flesh and the devil and the rest of it; make the creatures palpitate, and their flesh tingle and flush, and their internal economy proceed, and their bellies ache and their bladders fill—all in the mystery of your art.

(HJL IV 394-95)

The revision of Isabel Archer's experience is striking, and the letter to Andersen quite suggestive. The revision and the letter are clearly based on a different range of experience than the 1881 text could consider. It is not clear, however, that such experience is necessarily intimately personal; that further range of experience could be mere writing, the record of others' experiences.
Taste is the "active sense of life" for poets, which for James means any word-workers "who passionately cultivate the image of life and the art, on the whole so beneficial, of projecting it" (PR 1333). Further, there is no moral distinction between acts in the material world and the expression of them: "[W]e recognise betimes that to 'put' [say] things is very exactly and responsibly and interminably to do them. Our expression of them, and the terms on which we understand that, belong as nearly to our conduct and our life as every other feature of our freedom" (PR 1340). Moreover, such "literary deeds" are acts of reference, and, far more than our empirical acts, their reference is to us. Our "many vital or social performances"—conventional actions—shall be lost, James says as he closes this final preface. It is not a matter of choice but simply in the nature of things that we are "condemned"—his word: note the moral inflection—we are condemned "to abandon, and outlive, to forget and disown and hand over to desolation" our connection with our social or vital life. On the other hand, "our literary deeds" are of a "superior and more appreciable order" and "their attachment and reference to us, however strained, need n't necessarily lapse." We have the "incomparable luxury" of an "essentially traceable" relation with our writing (PR 1340).
This "traceable" relationship is the Jamesian familial relationship. He is invoking the sheltering and protective benevolence that is available in his image (and memory) of the familial, and then extends it to his relationship with his writing. He believes in the endurance and even persistence of reference, and he has two senses in mind for that word. Beyond the simple and obvious content of writing's "reference," its semiotic performance, it signifies as well in the way that only acts of consciousness can: they speak for and about their source. All writing, then, is a self-referential act, and one's autobiography may be read in the numberless choices undertaken in the process of composition. Readers can find an instance in the smallest thing. We linger over that sentence in which James describes words' relation to their source: "[T]heir attachment and reference to us, however strained, need n't necessarily lapse." The separation of the particle "not" seems to echo or even enact the separation he is expressing, and what is that small apostrophe but the small stroke of the writer? Isn't it his trace, the effect of his settling on the received artifact and marking it distinctively and intimately as his own?

There are two points not to be missed here. First, James seems fascinated and even dedicated to the process of autobiography. He has reached the approximate mid-point of what we may recognize as his summary phase, and he is
beginning to recognize his autobiographical intentions. Second, he here invests the necessity of honoring the autobiographical connection with great moral purpose. He has described the autobiographical purposes of revision in the language of high moral purpose throughout, but he concludes this preface (and the Prefaces) with, again, a ringing peroration that has a secondary referential register in the familial:

It rests altogether with himself [the artist] not to break with his values, not to "give away" his importances. Not to be disconnected ... he has but to feel that he is not; by his lightest touch the whole chain of relation and responsibility is reconstituted. Thus if he is always doing he can scarce, by his own measure, ever have done. All of which means for him conduct with a vengeance, since it is conduct minutely and publicly attested. Our noted behavior at large [conventional social deeds] may show for ragged, because it perpetually escapes our control; we have again and again to consent to its appearing in undress—that is in no state to brook criticism. But on all the ground to which the pretension of performance by a series of exquisite laws may apply [that is, writing] there reigns one sovereign truth—which decrees that, as art is nothing if not exemplary, care nothing if not active, finish nothing if not consistent, the proved error is the base apologetic deed, the helpless regret is the barren commentary, and "connexion" are employable for finer purposes than mere gaping contrition. (PR 1340-41)

We may fairly suppose that by "art" James has in mind his own work, by "active care" he means familial concern, and by "finish" he cites the acts of taste; his "connexion" are all to his own past.

It is a common illusion that the past is fixed and completed, and that things that reside in the past have
taken their final form. Such was the thinking, surely, of the friends who remonstrated with James about his revising his earlier fiction, but James would say that the past is present experience if it is contained in consciousness. Such is the certain knowledge he shares with all other autobiographers. Surely no autobiographer ever thought the past to be fixed and final. Why would anyone undertake to write what cannot be shaped? James had opened his great autobiographical phase by imagining the past and even the sense of the past, and he crafted a fiction in which his character makes the past his own present and actually participates in his own past. That fiction, *The Sense of the Past*, was still an open possibility as James worked on his revisions. The experience recorded in the notebooks and the writing in *The American Scene* made it clear that affective content of the past becomes present experience for James, and that anxieties attached to ancient memories or near experience can alter and deflect presentation. In any way in which the past can be known, it must also be present as well, and a part of the active, shaping consciousness.

By revising the texts of his past, the documenting products of his own imagination, James is beginning a process that he will resume more than once in his autobiographical phase. He revised Minny Temple's letters before he included them in *Notes of a Son and Brother*. He
revised his brother's letters before he included them in the earlier parts of the same volume. He radically revised the texts of his own personal life by burning great amounts of his personal correspondence and other papers. It is, in my view, the greatest tragedy of his late years, and it is one of two significant fires in James's life (the first was the occasion of his "Obscure Hurt"). And there are, we may be sure, the numberless acts of revision of the past recorded in his journals. We know by now, for example, of the notable silence in his public retelling of his visit to the graveyard.

What are the obligations to the past? James's answer is that the past, the near past anyway, is our own. The act of will that summons the past to present consciousness also establishes the sovereignty of conscious will. The near past that is held in experience is our own, and will be reanimated and re-experienced in response to that will. We can observe no willingness in James to pretend that a present account is, should, or even could be identical with the past, just because he understands the past to persist in present experience. The will that summons also claims and appropriates. The presence of consciousness is also the presence of purpose. What is summoned will be subject to the appropriation and purposes of the willful summons. If what others take to be material texts or completed artifacts are subjected to revision, it is because those
texts are instances of the activity of the consciousness now contemplating them. That consciousness is continuous with the consciousness that created them, and to re-read now is to reanimate consciousness as now constituted and so to exert present purpose with a clarity not available earlier. What is acted upon is not the text, James might say, but what formed that text, the informing and shaping principle of taste. The text is simply the visible product of that taste's earlier state. What has changed is not the thing seen but the ability to see and understand, and seeing and understanding are phenomena of consciousness.

If we can observe the revision of the documents of the past, we can be sure that texts that exist solely within consciousness are subjected to the same imperial will. That is, in asking, "What are the obligations to the past?" we have also asked about the obligations to memory. James's answer must be the same. To remember is to reanimate and re-experience, and memory will be arranged in accordance with present purpose. And so it is. Memory is so rarely identical with the past that we must puzzle over the common illusion that it is a verifiably accurate record. Whoever supposes such has surely forgotten how often we forget, has never lost her keys or misplaced his drink. What is demonstrated when we find the keys or the drink is not that memory is intact but that consciousness is intact. Memory is not perfect, which it signifies by interruptions, gaps,
and even rearrangements and revisions. Present consciousness, however, is continuous with past consciousness, which it signifies by recognizing the keys and the drink. Remembering is best imagined as an act and not an artifact; as a re-collection and not an installation in a memorial space; as an animation and not a burial; as a salvation and not a condemnation. The obligations to memory are to make it speak and to make it coherent, and sometimes we are obliged to make it silent.

James is nothing if not repetitive or circular, and it was toward his ending of the final preface, as he gathered himself for his rush to completion, that he recalled a figure with which he had started his prefaces and another he brought out for consideration at midpoint. He wrote then, as he looked back at the near past of his revising and re-reading for the New York Edition, of how that process recorded "the general adventure of one's intelligence; so that one at all times quite marvelled at the fair reach, the very length of arm," between the original and final readings (PR 1335). The great adventure recalled his beginning, the Preface to *Roderick Hudson*, and the extent of arm recalled his Preface to "The Aspern Papers." The latter moment, introducing the twelfth of the twenty-four original volumes, included his most memorable image for the acts of editorial recollection and expressed it in the process of autobiography: "I delight in a
palpable imaginable visitable past—in the nearer distances
and the clearer mysteries, the marks and signs of a world
we may reach over to as by making a long arm we grasp an
object at the other end of our own table" (PR 1177). In
"The Aspern Papers," published much earlier (in 1888) but
reanimated now twenty years later, an unnamed modern editor
and writer has designs upon literary memories and papers
held by an elderly woman. The narrator, who speaks in the
first person, brings a delicacy of approach and a
surreptitious and seductive appeal to bear on the elder's
reluctance and deep sense of privacy. When she finds him
reading the papers, she denounces him as a "publishing
scoundrel." They engage in a contest much like the one
James was to conduct with himself in his autobiographical
phase. The papers date to the 1820s, which is the same era
to which Ralph Pendrel returns in The Sense of the Past. In
that eternally open fiction which also opened James's
autobiographical phase, Pendrel enacts James's wish for a
visitable past by making the past not only imaginable but
precisely palpable and visitable.

The sense of adventure with which he ended the prefaces
had figured in the way he announced its beginning. In that
beginning, he ended his first paragraph to his first
preface—characteristically, speaking about himself—by
confessing himself "addicted to 'stories' and inclined to
retrospect," and so "he fondly takes, under this backward
view, his whole unfolding, his process of production, for a thrilling tale, almost for a wondrous adventure" (PR 1040). James's true subject is James. We witness the gradual acceptance of that inevitability. Here he tries to say that he is interested in the process by which he produced his fictions, but his syntax betrays him. He has placed that "process of production" in apposition with a preceding and governing phrase, "his whole unfolding," which makes it impossible to ignore a second reading, a perhaps definitive reading, of "his process of production." For it is not the fictions but the production of himself that truly fascinates him. It even seems typically Jamesian that this confession of self-fascination must be uttered in the third person and presented as the interest of a certain unnamed but nevertheless present artist.

Just as significantly, the ambiguity of reference here reminds us of the ways in which James and his corpus are one and the same. They surely are one in James's imagining himself as the object of his own revision. In recognizing the self-referential purpose and process of the prefaces, we claim them also as autobiographical, and so did James. He uses precisely the same terms to speak of the prefaces and the autobiographies. Here in the first preface, to Roderick Hudson, just before training his focus on "his process of production," James had announced that his prefaces would "represent, over a considerable course, the
continuity of an artist's endeavour [and] the growth of his whole operative consciousness" (PR 1039-40). He continues that theme soon in his Preface to Portrait of a Lady, in the third and fourth volumes of the edition, where he sets out to describe the process of conceptualizing Isabel Archer, and to describe that would be "to write the history of the growth of one's imagination" (PR 1076). Not at all remarkably but certainly most interestingly, this is precisely the purpose he satisfied when he came to write about himself. In the second of the autobiographies, Notes of a Son and Brother (1914), he admits to what readers of the proto-autobiographies will recognize as the truth, that he had long believed a great subject for a "teller of tales" would be the "personal history, as it were, of an imagination" (NS 454). Only gradually did it dawn on him (indeed, it was a moment of light) that he would be his own subject:

What was I thus, within and essentially, what had I ever been and could I ever be but a man of imagination at the active pitch?—so that if it was a question of treating some happy case, any that would give me what, artistically speaking, I wanted, here on the very spot was one at hand in default of a better. It wasn't what I should have preferred, yet it was after all the example I knew best and should feel most at home with—granting always that objectivity, the prize to be won, shouldn't just be frightened away by the odd terms of the affair" (NS 455).

Several points are to be emphasized. First, it is directly clear here that James's subject, himself, only gradually became one with his purpose; or, to put the
matter a bit differently, his purpose had been self-referential for a long time and had been only partly satisfied by earlier projects. Second, as this passage suggests, what distinguishes autobiography may be as much a matter of process and purpose as of reference. The autobiographical process, at any rate, may be distinguished apart from the question of reference. Third, if his purpose and process had been autobiographical for some time and became formally autobiographical when he recognized himself, then the formal designation of autobiography is a matter of the claim the writer makes. Fourth, if a revisionary text is also autobiographical, then revision must also be part of the program of autobiography, one of the methods available but not necessary to it. Autobiography is undertaken, often, to salvage and to correct, sometimes to preserve, protect, and defend, but never to report what was already known.

The prefaces are autobiographical in more than process; they are autobiographical in reference as well. James speaks in considerable detail about his inoculation with Europe and the idea of Europe, or "Europe," as he occasionally renders it. In his thirteenth volume while recalling three stories concerning the American encounter with Europe—"A Passionate Pilgrim," "Madame de Mauves," and "The Madonna of the Future"—he returns to the growth of his own estrangement. The first of those stories, which,
like the oldest fiction included in the New York Edition, was written in 1870, concerns an American in England trying to secure his inheritance. "A Passionate Pilgrim" reminds him of how "hard" (his word and his quotation marks) he had taken "the adventure of my twenty-sixth year" (PR 1204). He means the fifteen months or so he spent in Europe from February 1869 through May 1870. He renewed then his earlier acquaintance with England and felt the "never-to-be-forgotten thrill of a first sight of Italy" (PR 1205). As a result, when he returned to America, he did so as a "repatriated victim" dragging with him "a lengthening chain, the torment of losses and regrets." From that moment, he recognizes in 1908, dates his sense that what was inextinguishably his was in Europe, not in America. He had been changed, and he had to decide whether to spend his future "in brooding exile" in America or "come into his own!" by returning to Europe. He images his American self here by "romantic analogy with the state of dispossessed princes and wandering heirs." Europe holds his heritage, his patrimony, that is, and it is of the imperial order. Europe as the site of the romantic we have seen him announce before; he seemed to mean something vaguely picturesque by it at times. The playful invocation of a sentimental image of imperial destiny, however, is an early appearance of a fullness of self that was to achieve fullest statement in the Napoleonic dictation of his
deathbed. The initiation to Europe had begun, he says, when he was "hurried off to London and to Paris immediately after my birth." He had been still an infant when the family of four moved to Europe in 1843. (He says in his autobiography that his earliest memory is of the Colonne Vendome in Paris at the age of two [NS 32-33].) When he returned to Europe in his thirteenth year, he says, far from feeling himself to be in some uncharted space, he felt "restored to air already breathed and to a harmony already disclosed" (PR 1205).

Vivid as James's account of his discovery of the distant prior culture has been, what is most remarkable about it remains before us. He pictures himself as being acted on by both cultures, placing himself in a passive, even defenseless, position. Indeed, he has already referred to himself as the "repatriated victim." Now, the influence of each culture is imaged as something that enters him and does so forcefully or against his will. Even more notably, he refers to each one three times. In the case of Europe, the influence is first "the nostalgic poison," and that corporal invasion is later repeated as "the head of one of those well-directed shafts from the European quiver" that he "carried in my side, buried and unextracted." In its third appearance, the European inoculation is as a "nostalgic cup ... applied to my lips even before I was conscious of it ... that poison had entered my veins." The
elements of aggression and orality already present in the European corporal invasion are retained and exaggerated in the account of what was applied to him, still all passive, during his second American return. On that occasion, his "young life" was "made bitter, under whatever appearances of smug accommodation, by too prompt a mouthful--recklessly administered to one's helplessness by responsible hands--of the fruit of the tree of knowledge." Someone with authority over the youngster forced him to do something he remembers to this day. The language here is resentful, the act was reckless, the child was helpless. The metaphor associates an oral experience with the loss of Eden. Having prepared the reader thus by the suggestiveness of oral sexuality, James writes: "Why otherwise so queer a taste, always, in so juvenile, so generally gaping, a mouth? Well, the queer taste doubtless had been there, but the point of my anecdote, with my brace of infatuated 'short stories' for its occasion, is in the infinitely greater queerness it was to take on between the summer of '70 and that of '72, when it set me again in motion" (PR 1205-1206).

The thrice-mentioned poison is metonymically replaced by the thrice-mentioned queerness. What precisely is revealed here is much less interesting than what is concealed. James everywhere uses forms of "to gape" to describe the youthful gaze, and it is especially common in his autobiography where it typically characterizes his
small boy. But what happened? We misread autobiography to ask what happened, if we are asking about an historical event in the material world. What can be known is what has happened in language, not in history. What has happened here is that James has three times used "queer" in a context clearly suggesting sexual activity. It is not definitive, but it is suggestive and it cannot be overlooked.

The autobiographical reference of the prefaces is not only to the events of the life but also to his familiar subjects, sometimes in unfamiliar ways. There is, for example, the point in his preface to the fifteenth volume in which he confesses that he cannot remember the precise origin of three tales of the literary life—"The Death of the Lion" (1894), "The Coxon Fund" (1894), and "The Next Time" (1895). He remarks that they "can be intelligibly fathered but on his own intimate experience" (PR 1229). This rings at least two changes on his customary use of the familial and the fathered. The unescorted and unprotected young girl is nowhere near; this reference to the father is as the begetter and the source, a role James does not usually invoke for the father. Moreover, he places himself in (or near) the position of the father, rather than at some curious other site—nurse, perhaps, or matron. The ideology of autobiography would make him simultaneously the
youngster's protector (as is his customary image) and the progenitor (as here).

A much more Jamesian invocation of the familial informs his characterization of the engagement of the whole mind in the process of retrospection. In his preface to the thirteenth volume (the first text is *The Reverberator*), he depicts the imagination as the faculty that complicates retrospection, even when it is accompanied by its "natural caretakers, the judgement, the memory, the conscience." He fantasizes about the possibility of those three being "free to remount the stream of time [there's that phrase from *Sense of the Past*] ... with the flower of the flock, the hope of the family, left at home or 'boarded out,' say, for the time of the excursion." Here is James's customary sense of family--common purpose, comfortable hierarchy, privilege and favor for the talented. The imagination cannot be left behind, though, and always goes forth with the family on excursions of textual retrospection. When the text is engaged, an "effusive parental welcome" causes "so splendid and furnished and fitted a world to arch over it" (PR 1194-95). Here is James's customary and supplementary notion of the parental--as usual, the term seems synonymous with paternal--as a source of security and even defining shelter.

In the preface to volume ten, the act and art of re-reading take on the startling associations of a visit to a
seraglio. He recalls the occasion and setting for the composition of two works significantly involving houses, *The Spoils of Poynton* and "The Other House," and as he turns the pages of *Spoils*, the memories—or as he calls them here, "the shrunken concomitants"—are summoned back. "They lurk between the lines; these serve for them as the barred seraglio-windows behind which, to the outsider in the glare of the Eastern street, forms indistinguishable seem to move and peer; 'association' in fine bears upon them with its infinite magic. Peering through the lattice from without inward I recapture a cottage..." (PR 1143). It is important to pause here and be clear about what James has in mind. For the purpose of recovering the secrets of his own creative acts, he is imagining the secrets as kept and shielded by the shutters, devices that reveal a bit but suggest far more, just as, say, the veils of a dusky dancer might. What is within is only slightly glimpsed and could be recognized, we know, only by its context; as James would put it, "association" works its "infinite magic." What would be glimpsed are the habitues and intimates of the scene of sexual luxury. The seraglio is not a conventional Western brothel, not, that is, simply a scene of sexual exchange. It is not Western but Eastern, as James says, and the sexual exchange is flavored not by suggestions of commerce but by suggestions of excess, luxury, aristocratic
privilege and indulgence. And James is on the outside, looking in.

What can have put this in James's mind? The cottage he glimpses through the lattice / lines is, he goes on to say, the house where he wrote the two fictions, which are significantly about houses. The cottage was in an exotic locale, beside a sea cliff far from London, so his customary scene of composition and commercial production was transported to a scene of "luxuriance" and "perfection." We can, then, account for much of the image by simple inspection. What confounds, though, is the oddity of James imagining himself separated from the secrets of his own creativity, his own prior activity. How even odder it may seem that they would become available when filtered through the signifying mark of a palace of sexual luxury. Perhaps it will do for now to note the oddity of this moment and recall the scene later, if we happen to find James once again placing himself, all uninformed and innocent, at the scene of sexual availability.

Although those latticed windows may be accounted for, it is difficult to find a necessity for them. They are present to the figuring imagination only briefly, and they seem to be there only perversely, or without obvious necessity. At most, the lattice and the suggestion of the affairs of the seraglio merely assist in displacing the point of reference--from the obvious to the exotic, from
London to the sea cliff. In other words, the lack of true necessity suggests some unbidden cause, as if the seraglio is brought to consciousness by some unspoken impulse. What may be most unspoken here is the source of the separation James creates between himself outside and the habitues inside. Whatever is happening inside, it is left quite vague, perhaps deliberately vague. All he can see are "forms indistinguishable" that "seem to move and peer." Whatever else is there is left to the imagination, and would properly be assigned to the recreation of the male elite. What is inside is not James's world at all. In this regard, this moment in the Preface to The Spoils of Poynton would seem to have much to do with any other moment when James speaks about his sense of separation from the male world. He does so most explicitly in his preface to volume eighteen (Daisy Miller and "Pandora"), where he feels exiled not from the recreational world of the male elite but from its working world.

He writes there about the experience of his return to New York a quarter-century before, in 1881 and 1882, when he would have been pleased to assemble impressions of the financial district, "the monstrous labyrinth that stretches from Canal Street to the Battery" (PR 1273). He has to ask himself what there was of city life to entertain him "when nineteen twentieths of it, or in other words the huge organised mystery of the consummately, the supremely
applied money-passion, were inexorably closed to him" (PR 1274-75). The world that was left to him exhibited the "extraordinary absence ... of a serious male interest" (PR 1274). He had been "practically banished from the true pasture," and had been consigned to the world of the powerless and the marginal of culture and family. He was "alone, I mean, with the music-masters and French pastry-cooks, the ladies and children" (PR 1274).

What was lost to him, or his later sense of what was denied him, is worth attention. The financial district was in its day the pre-eminent domain of the capitalist and the dominant male, or so it seemed. The account of what he lost is remarkable for its length and the intensity of the longing. He had been "almost violently admonished" against attempting to cultivate something for which he was "unprepared and uneducated," and the experience was to remain "impenetrable and inconceivable." What was there in the male financial district was "essentially New York," and the city contained "nothing else worth speaking of."

Moreover, "I had had to retire, accordingly, with my yearning presumptions all unverified—presumptions, I mean, as to the privilege of the imaginative initiation" (PR 1273). His one consolation is that no competitor was allowed an access he was denied—to ritual and the company of the elect.
James's immediate purpose here is to suggest how he came to produce at about this time a series of fictions—"Daisy Miller," "Pandora," "The Patagonia," "Miss Gunton," "Julia Bride"—against the background of up-town, and why the fear of a spill in Wall Street "would have forbidden me, for the very shame, in the eyes of the expert and the knowing, ever to mount again; so that in short it was n't to be risked on any terms" (PR 1275). The lingering impression is of the elder writer remembering a time around his fortieth year when he had felt himself exiled from the company of the male elite and had not challenged the terms or the cause of that exile.

He had expressed the same idea even more plainly in an earlier preface, for The Reverberator. There, in explaining what he could make of Americans, he says, "The men, the non-European, in these queer clusters, the fathers, brothers, playmates, male appendages of whatever presumption, were visible and thinkable only as the American 'business-man', and before the American businessman, as I have been prompt to declare, I was absolutely and irredeemably helpless" (PR 1203). James means to speak of whether he could make anything of this male for artistic purposes; he does not mean to make some hidden play on words here. He is the richest metaphorician in the American canon, but he intends no subtlety, surely, with these all-male gatherings he calls "queer clusters." And it is clear
enough, I think, that he means to say that the men themselves or their companions are "male appendages"—adventitious to the more vital females. Of course he does not mean to say that these "queer clusters" were visibly brandishing their "male appendages" as he stood "before" them. Still, something seems to be up. He continues to speak of denial, and one might wonder what, precisely, is being denied. It is plain that some notion of courtship seems to be informing James's suggestion of what is lost. "No approach I could make to him on his 'business side' really got near it"—an approach simply for business' sake, for art's sake, that is. But what, precisely, is meant by that "it"? Just what is under that pronominal ambiguity? Perhaps there is a different sort of incompetence being claimed in the next sentence: "That is where [where "it" was?]"—"That is where I was fatally incompetent, and this in turn--the case goes into a nutshell--is so obviously why, for any decent documentation, I was simply shut up to what was left me." What James says he means by being "shut up," he goes on, is that the men were "wiped out, at a stroke, so far as any grasp of the principle of their activity was concerned." So some sharp blow has cost them that which may be grasped? Whatever we might understand by that, James himself professes not to know: "What in the name of goodness did I, or could I, know, to call know, about the very alphabet of their activity?" James's
An ingenuous claim to innocence brings to mind the rejoinder of the sex symbol of a later day, Mae West’s famous reminder that "goodness had nothing to do with it." Nor does it have anything to do with what is suggested by emphasizing unexpected meanings of "know." A passage that started out focused on a single man of a certain age exiled from the company of the male elect has shifted rather abruptly to a man suddenly anxious about the figure he cuts by yearning for that company. It is the classic bind that trapped the Victorian male bachelor, and this, we may suggest, is an expression of male homosexual panic.⁹

What James is speaking of is one thing and has to do with conscious word choice. What we may read in his words may well be quite another thing and has to do with silences and obscurity. He means to say he was not able to be close enough to men to portray them, and we may be sure that he does not mean to say anything further. Explicit statement is regularly deferred, and clear or at least consciously intended reference is lost in the far reaches of metaphor. James is the great metaphorician, and one of the things one gains by speaking indirectly is deflection or deferral. Meaning may not be surrendered but retained if one can prevent direct statement. Moreover, the repetition and the constant return to ideas of failure and denial, far from explaining an absence, make the lack even more noticeable and increase rather than diminish the reader’s wish for
explanation. This sort of moment clearly speaks of unconscious narrative drives and even resembles some forms of male hysteria. There is a clear pattern in the terms James summons in his effort to avoid plain speech. To speak of his relation with men, he conjures "queer clusters" and "male appendages"; he claims to be "helpless" and "incompetent," which frustrates his "approach"; being "shut up" enables "decent documentation"; a graspable "principle" was involved in a severing "stroke." How much to force this interpretation is a matter of personal taste, perhaps, and even critical investment. My own purpose is served by the recognition of evasion and a hysterical response to a threatening and uncertain situation involving issues of male self-identity.

It should also be noted, however, that what is always deferred is the overt or the confessed, and while this deferral may be characteristically Jamesian, it is hardly conventionally considered autobiographical. Nothing James does is so at odds with autobiographical convention. We may fairly assume that the autobiographer has something to reveal; else why would he open the memorial record of his past? James is no exception, of course. Like most autobiographers, however, what he needs to reveal is not at all what actually is revealed. The autobiography may well be contained in the struggle for metaphoricity and the evasion of directness. What is always most interesting
about autobiography is its enactment of consciousness, the consciousness of the writer now composing, and what best enacts that consciousness is probably its obvious silences and its erasures and elisions.

Nothing is so characteristic of James as the contest between the need for exposure and the desire to withdraw. It is a signature tension of his autobiographies, and it is a significant source of what makes them so fascinating.

James's autobiographical period is not empty of fiction. Far from it. Most of what James has to say in this late period concerns himself; his great subject was himself, his processes, his intimate experience of the most creative consciousness of his period. Nevertheless, some people, the ones who like fiction, say that the fiction of the autobiographical period was the best of his career. If they were here now they might suggest that even if James's great subject was himself, he was never truly off his subject, even in the fiction. And we could agree. Perhaps when James writes fiction, he still presents his true subject but under a different name or in some safer way.

Notes
1. A schematic log of James's literary labors from 1905 through 1907 has been compiled by Herschel Parker, based on archival materials at Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. James had completed revisions, prefaces, or proofs for Roderick Hudson, The American, and The Portrait of a Lady by October 12, 1906, when he sent his agent the last changes for The American Scene.
2. It stretches neither James's intention nor interpretive credulity to argue the self-referential purpose of the Prefaces. It does stretch critical credulity, I submit, to persist in reading them as the adventures of a fictive hero. Thomas M. Leitch, in addition to his many intelligent contributions in "The Editor as Hero: Henry James and the New York Edition," does precisely that. Perhaps we grow too accustomed to fictive structures; perhaps we can only grasp a central character active in the world by first imagining him contained within the frame of fiction. Leitch stands good sense on its head when he argues that "James presents a version of himself quite deliberately modeled on his heroes" (25). He is quite acute to recognize, however, that James "defines his entire career in terms of dialectical conflict between social and imaginative reality" (25).

3. Memory is, according to James Olney, the signature process of autobiography. In "Psychology, Memory, and Autobiography: William and Henry James," he has written, "For the self to describe its nature and attempt to delineate its peculiar being ... by drawing all the past up into the fine focus and reticulation of present consciousness is both to create the self, which is both the subject and object of autobiography, and it is to perform the act of autobiography. To put the matter otherwise, the act of memory, in its focussing and in its ordering, is quintessentially the act of autobiography" (48).

4. See, for example, his letter of November 12, 1906, to Mrs. Dev-Smith, where he refers to the revising as "tidying-up" and admits he considers her "view of that process erratic and--quite of course--my own view well inspired!" (LHJ II 55.) Parker reports several other objections, including some from editors at Scribner's worried because the elaborate and intricate changes could cause errors (497-98, 499, and 506).

5. By associating linearity and lineage, I invoke a line of inquiry that has been opened by some of the harshest critics of autobiography. Feminists and cultural critics have posited autobiography as a genre interested in the linear transfer of identity from life to text and in the linear transfer of heritage from father to son. Autobiography is, in this view, an expression of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance fascination with the self, and the self a unitary being draped in Western and masculine modes of self-expression. Heller, Sosna, and Wellbery's collection, Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self, is an important contribution to this investigation and provides an effective point of entry to the discussion.
This line of questioning is extremely useful, I think, in understanding James and his autobiographies. His attitude toward Western culture and heritage was profoundly nostalgic, his acts of memorial recovery were deeply patriarchal, and his sense of his own perpetuity was sheltered within an imperious and imperial will.

This line of questioning is less useful in defining autobiography, however, which resists chronological or geographical boundary. Such pre-Renaissance writers as Augustine and Margery Kempe are nothing if not autobiographical. An acute awareness of the limits of Western, post-Renaissance notions of autobiography can be found in James Olney's *Tell Me Africa*, especially 26-79.

6. James's work here on his sense of taste and revision closely parallels some of the work of his contemporary on the continent, Wilhelm Dilthey, a philosopher and social theoretician. In papers prepared in 1910 and collected as "The Construction of the Historical World in the Human Sciences," Dilthey wrote that the person seeking connecting threads in his past has already "created connections" which are expressed in the search. Dilthey, often regarded as an early and important theoretician of autobiography, held that such understanding involved "value, purpose, and meaning," and that it was inflected by time; meaning is attached to the past, value to the present, and purpose to the future. (Quoted in *Selected Writings* 215-16).

7. James here is very close to classic autobiography theory. Georges Gusdorf does not mention James in "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," but he makes precisely James's point in what is one of the foundation papers of autobiography theory. Gusdorf argues that recollection is different from and truer than the event itself: "Autobiography is a second reading of experience, and it is truer than the first because it adds to experience itself consciousness of it" (38). Olney, on the other hand, is speaking of Henry and William James—William's theories of self-consciousness and Henry's exemplification of them—when he writes: "Implicit in the very fact of memory is consciousness of a self that is continuous from past to present and that also, paradoxically, is made different by this present exercise of memory: a self that is the same in its essential nature, yet a self that is renewed, extended, and amplified by the act of memory" (48).

8. For a full treatment of the revisions to *Portrait*, see Powers. He follows Edel's remarks in *The Master* (470) about this revision. Powers and other critics emphasize the threat Isabel feels in Goodwood's aggression, but I find
that threat had been implicit in the 1881 text. What I find important about the revision is that its erotic detail so perfectly exemplifies the way in which later experience enables James to see his characters and their situation in a new and fuller way, just as he said it did.

9. This reading is deeply indebted to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "The Beast in the Closet: James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic." Her James text is a fiction, "The Beast in the Jungle," which was first published in the autobiographical period, in 1903, and reprinted in the New York Edition.

10. See Veeder for an interesting psychoanalytic examination of James's characterization of the business world and his own small boy's relation to it. Veeder finds that James makes business a defining mark of maleness and pleasure the mark of femaleness. The James family men, few of whom were in business, were therefore "exposed"--James uses the word twice--and Veeder remarks that the word "has definitely a sexual intimation, a menace of castration. Castration here means being cut off from business, being exposed to the dangers of pleasure. ... In James's America, a male who is not in business is feminine in gender because he is signed by, is singled out for, nonexistence. 'Castration' marks not the anatomically female sex but a culturally effeminated group" (99). Edel, referring to the wounds of the James family, goes even further when he remarks, "Any maiming of the body is in reality a castration" ("James Family" 93).
Chapter 3: A Model of the Autobiographical Process

James had begun the new century and the new phase of his career with *The Sense of the Past*, a fiction that modeled the process of autobiographical reanimation of the past. I mean to close this consideration of proto-autobiographical material with a discussion of a short story, "The Jolly Corner" (1908), which borrows in significant ways from that still open novel and has points in common with other texts of this period as well. It concerns an expatriate who has returned to his native city, New York, after many years in Europe. He has claims to property, and in the course of the story he seeks to lay claim to his own past as well. In crossing, or recrossing, the Atlantic, Brydon repeats in reverse the voyage of Ralph Pendrel, whom James imagined (at the opening of what I am calling his autobiographical phase) as an American crossing over to England to claim some ancestral property. Both Brydon and Pendrel, his precursor in a sense, find themselves within the family past upon entering the family mansion. In the case of Brydon, his obsession is to reanimate and confront the spirit of the man he would have become, had he but remained in New York and pursued an American destiny. Brydon's return to New York seems very much like James's return, chronicled only a few years before in *The American Scene*.
My reader will quickly see why I am interested in this tale. The personal and geographical ways in which Spencer Brydon seems to repeat Henry James are really quite insistent. Of all James's tales, few have caused more talk, and some of the most interesting talk (and relevant to my purposes) has been driven by the question of whether and in what degree Brydon is a reference to his author. Up to now, such commentary interested in the question of autobiography has been based on psychoanalytic or psychological reasoning, and appropriately so. It seems clear that psychoanalysis and psychology are allied with autobiography in their need to illuminate the dark past of the voice now speaking. The psychoanalytic readings of the "The Jolly Corner" and of literature generally have placed teller and tale under analysis and have sought to understand the one through the psychology of the other. The most important, because it was the earliest and most dramatically arresting, has been Saul Rosenzweig's "The Ghost of Henry James" (1944). Rosenzweig, it seems to me, contributed at least two lasting insights, the discovery that James's ghost figures are continuous and that they take their origin in the unlived life; they "represent not the shadows of lives once lived, but the immortal impulses of the unlived life" (449). Some of Rosenzweig's arguments have proved easy for some critics to resist, however; in common with much psychoanalytic criticism of his day, he seems to
argue a direct transfer of content from the author's unconscious into the character's conscious, which strikes most modern readers as too controlling an interpretive maneuver. We prefer to believe in an artifact that has been shaped less by unacknowledgeable motives and more by conscious choices than Rosenzweig will allow. For example, he identifies the "obscure hurt"--a notable incident in James's autobiography--with the Civil War wounds of John Ford in "The Story of a Year" and the wounded hand of Brydon's alter ego. Brilliant as the insight is, it is argued in such a way as to leave "The Jolly Corner" too much out of account. He advances psychoanalytic theory at the cost of illuminating the autobiographical content. In common with much early psychoanalytic literary criticism, he misrepresents the nature of autobiographical revelation, as when he says the "Obscure Hurt" episode of Notes of a Son and Brother (1914) was "experienced" as involving the "manliness of war" (NS 454). In fact, we can never know how anything that occurs in a text, autobiographical or not, was experienced. We can only know how it has been represented, and in autobiography especially, representation is all we can know.

Leon Edel has given Jamesians their James, a James for the century and beyond, and his James is a figure supremely to be understood psychologically. He makes "The Jolly Corner" out to be "a profoundly autobiographical tale" (V
315), and my reservations about his reading of the tale in the fifth volume of *The Life of Henry James* (1972) are chiefly quibbles. It does seem, for example, that he sees a multiplicity of selves in the tale, a number perhaps caused more by the necessity of speaking of the James that Edel has created in his biography than by their actual presence in the text. To speak of a "myth of Past and Present, of the conquest of brothers and mythical worlds" (V 316) is to speak of things in Edel, not in "The Jolly Corner." In fact, those contributions by psychoanalytic critics that I find interesting are also similarly flawed—perhaps overinterested in their own system. Manfred MacKenzie presents James as a novelist preoccupied with shame, as understood by neo-Freudian sociologists. Robert Rogers considers James's writing to be "full of mother surrogates" (432), a position held most securely in "The Jolly Corner" by the ample lap of his friend, Alice Staverton. (Female laps in James are always and forever "ample.") Rogers also finds the house and all its contents to fairly bristle with phallic and vaginal symbolism; in fact, "bristling" is masculine and the house is feminine. John W. Shroeder is quite illuminating about the passage through a birth canal that can be found in Brydon's recovery of consciousness in Alice's lap.

All of these and many other readings offer quite startling insights into the story and the creative life.
This makes them and the rest of the psychoanalytic studies an important reservoir of interpretation about the inward life of the artist. We may find, however, that their own interpretive system is their dominating interest and that they are limited to interpretation, not revelation. Put another way, their first field of reference is to consciousness in general, not to this quite particular instance of consciousness that carries the name Henry James. As a result, although they all assume that the art is a manifestation of the conscious and unconscious life of the artist, their contribution to understanding lies not, strictly speaking, in the domain of autobiography but elsewhere.  

On the other hand, precautions are often heard, sometimes from psychoanalytically informed critics, warning against confusing James and Brydon. Cushing Strout says, after much insight, "Spencer Brydon and Henry James cannot be merged" (108). Peter Buitenhuys sensibly says that the tale is not "a biographical story" (212), and right he is. He meant to say it was not autobiographical, but never mind; it's not that either, in the sense he means it. The point in question was whether the ghost is an expression of James's unconscious, and things could scarcely be more autobiographical than that, if it were true.

This epistemological caution is well-intentioned and wise counsel, we may be sure. What is wisest of all is the
matter of predictability: Can we say, with a reasonable certainty, that what is revealed of one (Brydon) is also a revelation about the other (James)? And the answer is no, of course not. In truth, whether Brydon is James by another name is not of much interest to me; what interests me is that he, just as obviously as Ralph Pendrel in The Sense of the Past, undertakes the reanimation of the past. That effort is distinctively autobiographical, and it is why I believe this fiction to be an important event in the chronology of James's summary autobiographical phase. James is pre-eminently the autobiographer most fascinated by the problem of reanimation of the past, the one who makes that struggle most dramatically a phenomenon of present consciousness. If ever a character in fiction were intent on conjuring the living spirit of his own past, it is James's invention, Spencer Brydon. What James has in mind is the dramatic modeling of the process of autobiographical confrontation with the individual past.

As a model of autobiographical recollection and not the act itself, this tale can be neither James's nor Brydon's autobiography, but it may be Brydon's autobiographical act. James stands in precisely the same relation to this act as to the inward acts of all his other characters. They all have their origins within James, and in the case of Brydon, the similarities are striking. The differences, too, are quite interesting, and may be of some importance for
reading autobiography. It is not necessary to believe that this composition enabled all the acknowledged and public autobiographical outpouring that was to come. It is a fact of chronology, though, that the story preceded that production, and it seems to me hardly challengeable that it models it as well. I propose a reading of the story that recognizes its coincidences with its subject but argues its autobiographical importance not for its reference or revelation but for its dramatization of the work of autobiography. I find it especially important that it emphasizes fear, courage, and reversal in its treatment of the subject's inward life. Finally, my reading will open a new interpretation of one of the most important passages in James's autobiography, the dream of the Apollo Gallery in the Louvre.

It is important and interesting but hardly necessary that author and subject have so much in common. The contemporary New York has "assaulted" the vision of the repatriate in the same way that it affected James. The anonymous narrator tells us Brydon is contending with "the differences, the newnesses, the queernesses, above all the bignesses" (JC 313), qualities all familiar to the reader of The American Scene. Brydon has also reclaimed a friendship with Alice Staverton, who shares with him the memory and experience of the older New York. As he always does, James attaches notes of the nostalgic and the
imperial to memories of that period; it is "the better time ... their common, their quite far-away and antediluvian social period and order" (JC 315). Both expatriates, James and Brydon, have lived cultured lives in Europe, both left America to pursue their careers abroad, and in both cases it would seem that the departure occurred thirty-three years prior.

Brydon has returned to take an interest in the corner house where he "had first seen the light" (JC 314). James, too, had returned to the site of his own nativity in New York, only to discover that the house had been destroyed. That lack he had memorably recorded in The American Scene as comparable to being "amputated of half my history" (AS 431). He expresses the same identification of house with personal narrative when he discovers that the Boston house where he had lived in the closing years of the Civil War was also destroyed; in that case, it felt "as if the bottom had fallen out of one's own biography" (AS 544). In fact, if James's experience of either house is related in some way to his presentation of Brydon's experience, it may be the Boston place. James had actually arrived a month before it was leveled and so was able to walk the halls, and the experience seems almost an eerie prelude to Brydon's pursuit of the spirit of his own past and, in particular, an early form of the moment when Brydon and the spirit stand on opposite sides of the closed door. James sought in
Boston "to recover on the spot some echo of ghostly footsteps—the sound as of taps on the window-pane heard in the dim dawn" (AS 543).

Brydon's house is spectral, of course, but there is something quite reminiscential about it as well. It is associated with writing in interesting ways. He is keeping it empty, and the spaces are "great blank rooms" where "absolute vacancy reigned" (JC 317). The sense of the past saturates the place and the visitor's consciousness. James's account of his Boston experience had recorded his own wish to reanimate past feelings through the present experience of the material of the past. That house, significantly enough, sheltered him when he was winning his "earliest fond confidence in a 'literary career'" (AS 543), suggesting that its attachment to the final phase of that career may be even as tender as the birthplace. All three are the shelter of one's past and memories; James makes it clear that each of his houses is a primal signifier of the life narrative that takes its origins there. In fact, all three houses are identified with narrative—James's birthplace reminds him of his own history, his Boston place brings up his biography, and Brydon's experience is represented as scriptive. He was keeping the rooms "blank," the way a writer might speak of any space he expected to fill, and when he senses himself being followed, it is the impression "least suited to his book," as if he had a sense
of how this was to be written. The narrator immediately adds: "He was kept in sight while remaining himself ... sightless" (JC 326), and suddenly Brydon is no longer the consciousness directing the writing. The scene of origin is also the scene of writing, and Brydon is alternately subject and object.\textsuperscript{5}

Twice Brydon images his New York self as a thing of contained potential. In the first case, it is as writing, specifically a letter that he never opened but instead burned still in the envelope: "I've never known what was in the letter" (JC 320). The other image, also highly resonant, appears when he tells Alice that "I had then a strange alter ego deep down somewhere within me, as the full-blown flower is in the small tight bud" (JC 321). As he does so, Brydon brings into alignment a series of suggestions of the house as the scene of writing. The flower within the bud and the unopened letter are alternate expressions of the same notion of unrealized potential, of course, and it may be important that in the prefaces James quite frequently relied on the common image of the growth of a flower to describe the development of one of his fictions; a flower speaks so of the organic self-production of the lovely.\textsuperscript{6} If I am correct, and the texts, flower, and letter form a circle of association with writing as its radius, then perhaps it is proper to follow another line back a bit to the last suggestion of writing, when the
narrator spoke of someone's plans for a book. In that case, it was Brydon who was said to have a book in mind, and to have it in mind when he was aware of himself both as observer and as observed. The full flower within the bud carries in its train adages of the child being father to the man and, inevitably, James's fondness, especially during his autobiographical period, for the small child as a creature of consciousness. If there is a book in mind, a secret text here, or a sub-text, it is autobiographical.

Each house is significantly different from Brydon's; his is on the corner, of course, and James's birthplace had been the first house in from the corner, on Washington Place near Washington Square. Brydon's is not clearly located, but it must be imagined as being at least in the same area as James's; it is close to Miss Staverton's, or close enough to walk to, and her street, Irving Place, is not far from Washington Place. So James's and Brydon's houses are close but cannot be superimposed. They could not be the same, of course. If they were the same, no one could suggest that one is the cause of the other, that one is modeled on the other.7

This is not autobiography itself, but a model of the autobiographical agony. It is a fiction, and it models the experience of the autobiographer in contest with his sense of his own past. The separation between houses is not the same as the separation between fact and artifact in
autobiography; it is the fictive model of that separation. We are able to glimpse in this story, that is, the generic difference between the two, as well as the actions of the author seeking a way of managing the psychological and emotional agonies of autobiographical retrospection.

Critical attention to the tale has until now been commanded by questions of little interest to the reader of autobiography. I am not interested in whether the specter is Brydon's Good Self or his Bad Self; I want to know about the place itself and what the living spirit, Brydon, does there. In my view, the story enacts the agony of autobiographical recollection. It does so by dramatizing the return to the space and ground of origin and the encounter with the imagined and recollected traces of what the present visitor might have become. The confrontation seems to be clearly a test of personal courage that exacts a fearsome toll on the will of the one who returns.

The returner is obsessed with this matter of how he would have "turned out" had he stood on his native ground. Spencer tells Alice he is struck by how his acquaintances from thirty-three and more years ago "have been hammered so hard and made so keen" by the "charm" of the "rank money-passion" (JC 321). He confesses to a "morbid obsession" about himself and what his life would have been had he not "given it up," a surrender he committed "almost in the teeth of my father's curse" (JC 320).
Brydon's interest in his alter ego and the alternative life may be related to a dissatisfaction with the life he has led. He does not speak with much pride of the life he made for himself after defying the father. We are told by the narrator that he had "the experience of a man and the freedom of a wanderer, overlaid by pleasure, by infidelity" (JC 316), and Spencer tells Alice it has been a "selfish frivolous scandalous life" (JC 321). The life he might have led and the person he might have become, she tells him, "would have been quite splendid, quite huge and monstrous," someone who holds power (JC 321). She even confides that he is not as good as he might have been. He in turn confides that he means to meet his alter ego, to conjure him, to see what might have been. "He isn't myself. He's the just so totally other person. But I do want to see him. And I can. And I shall" (JC 322).

He does so by revisiting the house alone at night, often twice a night, at dusk and for a longer vigil around midnight. Otherwise, by day and evening he is in attendance at the customary haunts of the man of affairs, among club and dinner companions, but he comes to think of this time in the spectral, familial shelter as "the real, the waiting life" (JC 324). So what had been corporeal, material, or real changes places with what had been shadowy, spectral, or unreal. It is what we may call a chiastic inversion, a dynamic figure that involves both transformation and
repetition. The inversion mirrors his own descent into his own consciousness, and the rise of his consciousness into the vacant house. He turns into a hunter, or at least James's characterization of him shifts to the language of the hunt. Brydon is "fairly hunting on tiptoe" with a "desire to waylay him and meet him." He senses that the other, the one he seeks, is evading his "pursuit," this new "sport" he has created. He is "stalking" a "creature more subtle ... than any beast of the forest" (JC 324). Brydon recalls his own earlier experiences as a huntsman, but he had never before tasted "pleasure so fine" as the tension of this hunt. On the night when he knows the spirit to be present, Brydon's claims reach a crescendo of the confrontational: "He has been dodging, retreating, hiding, but now, worked up to anger, he'll fight!"

What awaits him is "the hunted thing," is the "other self he was running to earth" (JC 327).

What he finally sees is appalling. The figure covers his face, bends his neck, lowers his head, but he is, clearly, a dandy: "So Brydon, before him, took him in; with every fact of him now, in the higher light, hard and acute—his planted stillness, his vivid truth, his grizzled bent head and white masking hands, his queer actuality of evening-dress, of dangling double eye-glass, of gleaming silk lappet and white linen, of pearl button and gold watch-guard and polished shoe." The hands before the face
reveal that "one of these hands had lost two fingers, which were reduced to stumps, as if accidentally shot away" (JC 335). While the hands are up, Spencer regards him as his other self; when the hands come down and the face is "presented," he recognizes that "the face was the face of a stranger." In fact, the rejection is total: "It was unknown, inconceivable, awful, disconnected from any possibility." The "evil, odious, blatant, vulgar" specter approaches him "as for aggression" (JC 335). Spencer suddenly becomes aware of himself, observes himself: "He knew himself give ground. Then harder pressed still, sick with the force of his shock, and falling back as under the roused passion of a life larger than his own, a rage of personality before which his own collapsed, he felt the whole vision turn to darkness and his very feet give way. His head went round; he was going; he had gone" (JC 335-36).

Before he fainted, Spencer had wondered who the specter might be. We might ask the same thing in a different way: Who, indeed, would want to attack Spencer? He had abandoned that early life, and he had defied his father's will to do it. He had left that early life just when it was first setting out on a career, making the first life-course choices. Spencer's choice had been to disown that life, leave it for a selfish course of indulgence, scandal, and infidelity. We are to understand this specter as a creation
of Spencer's consciousness—indeed, it is called a "duplication of consciousness" (JC 327)—and so the memories and associations that would inform it would surely be his. Such memories and associations would be those that attach to guilt, and the guilt would have been occasioned by a failure to fulfill familial expectations. The specter, that is, would be acting much the way that an abandoned son or illegitimate brother might act—someone who had been denied the authoritative shelter of the familial, the patrimony that might have been his. The abandoned child, the unescorted innocent who had appeared before in James's autobiographical period, haunts his imagination still, it seems, and this appears to be what it has come to. That is to say, the force of familial domination and expectation was significant in James's life and in his art, and it seems likely that we have an effect of that expectation in the formation of this specter.

The confrontation is presented as terrifying, and perhaps surprisingly so, given that Brydon has quite deliberately sought out the specter, summoned him forth, conjured him out of his own consciousness of self. Indeed, it must be terrifying to recognize some part of ourself that we cannot control and cannot account for. What most terrifies Brydon, it seems, is that he does lose control. He had figured the experience from the first as a test of courage and will, and as it develops it quite exceeds his
expectations for the event and for himself. When he senses the presence of the specter, we are told "he wasn't afraid," even though he was then feeling "a consciousness unique in the experience of man. People enough, first and last, had been in terror of apparitions, but who had ever before so turned the tables and become himself, in the apparitional world, an incalculable terror?" (JC 325). He quickly senses, however, that it is against himself that the tables have been turned when he understands that he has become the hunted. "It worried, it finally quite broke him up, for it proved, of all the conceivable impressions, the one least suited to his book. He was kept in sight while remaining himself—as regards the essence of his position—sightless" (JC 326). When he next returns to the house, he knows that the specter is waiting at the top of the stairs, "holding his ground," and it knows "that I've come, as they say, 'to stay'" (JC 328). The night and the encounter are quickly resolved into a test of personal courage. Once Brydon is on the upper floor, it becomes an instance of "concentrated conscious combat, the sense of a need to hold on to something ... to move, to act, to charge, somehow and upon something—to show himself, in a word, that he wasn't afraid" (JC 328). Waiting through his customary two hours, from midnight to two, looms more frightening, and he decides that it will "prove his courage" (JC 328) if he
waits at least until a quarter to two. Courage is what is about to be tested.

The fourth floor is before him. "The door between the rooms was open, and from the second another door opened to a third. These rooms, as he remembered, gave all three upon a common corridor as well, but there was a fourth, beyond them, without issue save through the preceding" (JC 329). And he sees, senses, and knows that the fourth door has been closed since he left it open a quarter hour before. Immediately Brydon's circumstances change, and his emotional environment is reversed. He is struck with the force, not of an observation, but of "recollection, the violent shock of having ceased happily to forget." The hunter-prey dialectic has now been reversed; the term "prey" had become "by so sharp an irony so little the term now to apply" to the other. Brydon's moment of first encounter with his past is presented drenched in the language of courage, or, rather, the loss of courage and more specifically, the loss of intent:

Ah this time at last they were, the two, the opposed projections of him, in presence; and this time, as much as one would, the question of danger loomed. With it rose, as not before, the question of courage--for what he knew the blank face of the door to say to him was "Show us how much you have!" It stared, it glared back at him with that challenge; it put to him the two alternatives: should he just push it open or not? Oh to have this consciousness was to think--and to think, Brydon knew, as he stood there, was, with the lapsing moments, not to have acted! Not to have acted--that was the misery and the pang--was even still not to act; was in fact all to feel the thing in another, in a new and terrible way. ... It was the strangest of all things
that now when, by his taking ten steps and applying his hand to a latch, or even his shoulder and his knee, if necessary, to a panel, all the hunger of his prime need might have been met, his high curiosity crowned, his unrest assuaged—it was amazing, but it was also exquisite and rare, that insistence should have, at a touch, quite dropped from him. Discretion—he jumped at that... "If you won't then—good: I spare you and I give up. You affect me as by the appeal positively for pity: you convince me that for reasons rigid and sublime—what do I know?—we both of us should have suffered. I respect them then, and, though moved and privileged as, I believe, it has never been given to me, I retire, I renounce—never, on my honour, to try again. So rest for ever—and let me!" (JC 330-31)

Brydon turns and retraces his steps, passing back down the corridor marked by door frames until he reaches the far end of the upper floor. There he can acknowledge that his earlier purpose has been "broken by his concession and his surrender," and he flings open a window to the living world. He considers hailing the first person he sees in the night but restrains himself. When discretion was proposed just a bit earlier he had "jumped at" the idea, and now he again considers jumping—from the fourth-story window. He wonders about leaving by ladder and by jumping if he should see the specter again. But he does not leave by the window; instead, his "escape" (JC 334) is attempted by the stairs. Once on the ground floor, he finds that a door to the vestibule he had left closed is now open. Here the specter confronts him.

Note the reversal. He who had hunted is now the one who has been followed and confronted. Before, the specter was within a closed room; now Brydon is the one with nowhere to
flee. Before, he had ascended into a world without light and life; now he has descended to a level progressively better illuminated by light from without.

What may we say about the memory that lies behind this tale? Can we say that Brydon's experience reflects James's own memory? The answer is clearly yes, we can, if we are speaking of Brydon's experience of the material world. As I have already noted, Brydon's responses to New York seem of a piece with James's reactions in *The American Scene*. Moreover, Adeline R. Tintner, our best historian of James's referentiality, believes that James describes Brydon's birthplace by reference to his memories of the two Greenwich Village townhouses where he stayed during his visit of 1904-1905. He wrote to his hostess at 21 East Eleventh Street, Mrs. Mary Cadwalader Jones, in terms that closely suggest the experience he also assigned to Brydon: "My New York of those dear East Eleventh Street 'first-floor-back' hours lives again for me as I write ... it's astonishing, it's prodigious, how I find my spirit gratefully haunting them always or rather how insidiously turning the tables they, the mystic locality itself, haunt and revisit my own departed identity" (quoted in Tintner "Landmarks" 408). Most of the details of the site of Brydon's final confrontation with the specter have, Tintner says, been taken from the Jones mansion--the stairwell, skylight, vestibule, and especially the black and white
marble squares of the floor. Those "even today ... dominate the hallway. [Tintner is writing in 1976.] They were a convention of the time (they still exist in other houses on Tenth and Eleventh Streets east and west of Fifth Avenue) and probably also existed in James's destroyed family house. In the story they are symbolic of an education in taste" (409). The window over the front door of the Jones mansion is rectangular and appears to have been replaced in James's account of Brydon's mansion by the fan light over the door in the mansion of Lawrence Godkin on West Tenth Street, where James also stayed (Tintner "Landmarks" 409).

So much for the possibility of James's exploiting memory of the public, the visitable world. What of his use of the more intimate experience? Do the personal memories of James's inward life inform the more intimate elements of Brydon's experience? Again, it would seem so. There is, for example, James's return to the house, not where he was born, but where his hopes of a writing career were born. That house, on Ashburton Place in Boston, had been occupied by the James family during the late years of the Civil War. It and one adjacent survived when James returned for one last walk through the halls of memory, and in The American Scene, a text almost precisely contemporary with "The Jolly Corner," the returning memoirist represented that experience in terms that anticipate his treatment of Brydon's.
That possibility, on the spot (that both houses were doomed), was not present to me, occupied as I was with reading into one of them a short page of history that I had my own reasons for finding of supreme interest, the history of two years of far-away youth spent there at a period—the closing time of the War—full both of public and of intimate vibrations. The two years had been those of a young man's, a very young man's earliest fond confidence in a "literary career," and the effort of actual attention was to recover on the spot some echo of ghostly footsteps—the sound as of taps on the window-pane heard in the dim dawn. The place itself was meanwhile, at all events, a conscious memento, with old secrets to keep and old stories to witness for, a saturation of life as closed together and preserved in it as the scent lingering in a folded pocket-handkerchief. But when, a month later, I returned again (a justly-rebuked mistake) to see if another whiff of the fragrance were not to be caught, I found but a gaping void, the brutal effacement, at a stroke, of every related object, of the whole precious past. Both the houses had been levelled and the space to the corner cleared... . It was as if the bottom had fallen out of one's own biography, and one plunged backward into space without meeting anything. (AS 543-44)

There is much to remark here, and first might be the sense we have of the elder writer returning to the ground of origin where his completed and achieved vision of himself was first formed. Second might be the repeated recourse to images of the textualization that is the basis of that career—two early references to "history" and a late mention of "one's own biography." Third might be the willingness to draw sensory experience from the memory—the sense of the past is converted to living memory and, even further, into felt experience. Fourth might be the sense of a backward free fall, a loss of position in a material universe, much like a loss of consciousness (like Brydon's collapse) or even a full leap into immaterial memory (James
three times speaks of Brydon leaping from the fourth floor). Fifth might be the by now familiar image of the ghostly on the other side of a partition, as if this world of the living is separated from the other world, the world of the memorial and the ghostly, by a membrane. Finally, we must remark the continued association of memory, the memorial, and the ghostly.

It is clear that Brydon's present is closely tied to matters in James's near past. What of James's deeper past? What can be made of the Boston experience of plunging "backward into space without meeting anything"? Is Brydon a point of attachment in present consciousness for concerns or fears that reside deeper in memory? James's memory, strictly speaking, is not recoverable, but his writing is, and some of that writing is of the personal and less formal sort that is most suggestive of the processes and necessities of memory. If we undertake our own free fall into James's deeper past, the "memories" of James's past writing, do we find the ghosts of later writing, perhaps the ghost of "The Jolly Corner"? Yes, we do. The Notebooks record several places where James gave early shape to visions and notions that were to find fuller expression in the late tale, and some of them repeat the image of contact with the spirit world at a partition. The first one occurs quite early in James's career, in 1879, in his oldest
surviving notebook. He had been inscribing professionally useful memories for only a year.

January 22d. Subject for a ghost-story.
Imagine a door—either walled up, or that has been long locked—at which there is an occasional knocking—a knocking which—as the other side of the door is inaccessible—can only be ghostly. The occupant of the house or room, containing the door, has long been familiar with the sound; and, regarding it as ghostly, has ceased to heed it particularly—as the ghostly presence remains on the other side of the door, and never reveals itself in other ways. But this person may be imagined to have some great and constant trouble; and it may be observed by another person, relating the story, that the knocking increases with each fresh manifestation of the trouble. He breaks open the door and the trouble ceases—as if the spirit had desired to be admitted, that it might interpose, redeem and protect. (NO 10)

In common with Brydon's specter, the 1879 ghost is contained within a closed room. Moreover, the encounter is observed and even enabled by a third participant, the one who speaks. The very first occurrence of this episode, then, includes a presence for the one who shall speak it later.

Other matter of "The Jolly Corner" occurs in two notebook entries in the mid-1890s; those concern the question of the fragmented self, the signification of Good Self and Bad Self, and the mediation of a feminine figure. I regard this matter as secondary to the ghost, which I take to be the vehicle of autobiographical significance, the point of attachment for past guilts and intentions, and the focus of anxieties about autobiographical disclosure. (That anxiety makes its most amusing appearance when
Brydon, at the height of his terror, is worried about keeping his name out of the papers; it seems more the fear of the fastidious James than the quaking Brydon.) So although those other notebook entries are not to my immediate purpose, they do remind us that the process of writing, like the process of memorial recollection, often involves the assemblage and condensation of the content of separate and separable memories. (The entries are dated 4 January 1894 and 5 February 1895; Notebooks 82-84, 112-13.)

The 1879 matter next appears in a notebook entry on 16 May 1899.

Note the idea of knock at door (petite fantasie) that comes to young man (3 loud taps, etc.) everywhere—in all rooms and places he successively occupies—going from one to the other. I tell it—am with him: (he has told me); share a little (though joking him always) his wonder, worry, suspense. I've my idea of what it means. His fate, etc. 'Sometime there will be something there—some one.' I am with him once when it happens, I am with him the 1st time—I mean the 1st time I know about it. (He doesn't notice—I do; then he explains: 'Oh, I thought it was only—' He opens; there is some one—natural and ordinary. It is my entree en matiere.) The denouement is all. What does come—at last? What is there? This to be ciphered out. (No 183)

This episode of spectral tapping at a boundary, like the entry two decades earlier, involves a third party, who now has become the most important participant in the episode. In both cases there is the observer, the visitant, and the visited. In this latter case, the observer is also the one who utters "I," despite James's dislike for first-person narrative.
So now we know: Images and notions that were first given shape in the great back yard of James's consciousness were put to use in this tale that I am calling a dramatization and a modeling of the autobiographer's encounter with his past. The images and pursuits were noted in the closest thing we have to a form of James's recoverable memory, his notebooks. Brydon's agony is in significant ways, then, shaped by the intimate memory of his author. To speak in a way that James and his character, Brydon, have already authorized, we might say that these notebook entries contain within them the final story in precisely the way the bud contains the mature flower deep inside itself. That was the way Brydon spoke of his *alter ego*, the self he abandoned. These earlier, unformed images, these ideas that could have been something quite else, what are they if not the *alter ego* that Brydon seeks out; or, perhaps more properly, they are the *alter ego* of the *alter ego*. We might think of them as a dream within a dream.

The other notebook entries that fed "The Jolly Corner," ones that manage questions of fragmented identity and of reintegration of the self through the mediation of another, were attached to these previously imagined actions of conjuring the spectral. Sometime between May 1899 and the composition of "The Jolly Corner," those images were brought to present consciousness and arranged into a
coherent, presentable, publishable narrative about the practice of reanimating the past. Those ghosts gave James a form—however evanescent it might be—a form in present consciousness to which he could attach issues of fragmentation and reintegration. Those ghosts become, in the tale of Spencer Brydon, the unachieved and abandoned self, and so those whose origin is intimately associated with the memories of their creator (ghosts from Henry James) become by this usage intimately associated with the one who walks the halls. There must be, then, something eerie and uncanny in this, for presences within the text are of reference, intimate reference, both within and without the text. They are beings at the threshold, at the door frame, at the window pane, at the membrane between past and present, the boundary between imagination and reality, the line between life and death, fragmentation and reintegration. They are, or it is, if I may shift my emphasis to Brydon's specter, the ghost that haunts the autobiographer, the terror that makes personal discovery painful and threatening, the secret within each of us.

Dates are important. James first encountered these ghosts in 1879, then again two decades later in 1899. He revisited the Boston house in 1904 and he stayed in the Jones mansion in 1904 and 1905. He published his ghost-haunted account of the Boston house in The American Scene in 1907. The culmination of all this haunting came in the
publication of "The Jolly Corner" in 1908. At that point, he still had not written a word of what he might recognize as autobiography. Considerably later, James returned to these ghosts, Brydon's ghosts. It happened in 1914, and at that point he was well along in the summary of his life; he had already written two of his autobiographical texts. He was preparing notes for a resumption of The Sense of the Past, the novel that opened his autobiographical phase at the opening of the century. He had not worked on it much in the intervening years, and so he needed to reanimate his sense of it. Two drafts of such notes survive. The earlier one, a thing of thirteen typed pages, is dated November 1914 and is titled "First Statement (Preliminary)." In it he comes to remark on the "very centre of my subject," and he needs to recall "The Jolly Corner," for both it and The Sense of the Past concern a living encounter with the presence of the past. As he calls the tale to mind, his memory appears to play a trick on him. James gets things backward as he describes the tale he wrote only eight years before:

The most intimate idea of that ['The Jolly Corner'] is that my hero's adventure there takes the form so to speak of his turning the tables, as I think I called it, on a 'ghost' or whatever, a visiting or haunting apparition otherwise qualified to appal him; and thereby winning a sort of victory by the appearance, and the evidence, that this personage or presence was more overwhelmingly affected by him than he by it.
What he says here quite reverses things. The hero does not "turn the tables" on the ghost; instead, it is the ghost who turns the tables on the hero. The visitor is not an apparition, in any sense; it is Brydon who has returned, who is the visitor. James's use of the words "as I think I called it" is notable; clearly all these old anxieties are well in the past, no longer felt experience. The hesitation, too, is appropriate, for he has confused the matter, but he is also correct about having used the expression "turning the tables." That sense of confusion and hesitation is repeated and doubled by the "or whatever," said of the ghost.

This reversal after eight years has been often remarked but never really explained. It has been accepted, one suspects, as a sign of failing powers. It seems clear, however, that it was not a mistake, and that James was rendering his last sense of that encounter with Brydon's ghost exactly as it happened. I mean that "The Jolly Corner" was not the last time Brydon's ghost appeared. Some time after that tale was written, James re-experienced that episode. When it happened this time, it came to him from the other side of the door.

I mean to say that a passage of his autobiography, one of the most striking passages in all the James recollective work, is actually a re-experiencing of the same episode that overwhelms Brydon. It is the dream of the Galerie
d'Apollon. Having once imagined (and written) the episode from the point of view of the living Brydon, James dreams (and writes) it later from the point of view of the specter on the other side of the door. James credits this dream with life-saving significance. He presents the dream in the context of his discovery of art, and although critics have interpreted the dream variously, most seem to take it as emblematic of the triumph of James's artistic will. The dream is extraordinarily vivid and detailed; it is more detailed than most dreams and more vivid than most of James's autobiography, actually. The dream is nested within his description of the gallery, which is itself nested within his account of his first encounters, in the company of his older brother William, with the art and culture of Europe and, even more, a sense of the grandeur of Western civilization. Edel has dated the dream conjecturally as belonging to 1910, the same year that William died and Henry began A Small Boy and Others (V 444-45). It was published in 1913.

I believe we are now in a position to understand this dream correctly. It properly belongs in the sequence of spectral encounters, as has sometimes been noted. What we must acknowledge is that the reversal of point of view is not an accident or the result of a memory lapse or elderly confusion but was, in fact, the explicit and accurate transcription of his dream work. What the dream of the
Louvre represents, then, is one of the great life-affirming steps James's unconscious had granted him. In both the autobiography and the earlier story, the character James designates as the "hero" is the bearer of the same initials, S.B.--Spencer Brydon and the younger version of himself, the eponymous Small Boy. What the dream demonstrated to James was that he could imagine himself in the position of the abandoned American self: the dream quite literally restored what he had lost, an integrated sense of self. Not only was integration possible, it was no longer dependent on the mediation of another, and no longer was it possible only in the imagination of narrative. It had come to him, as a product of his own consciousness, as a dream. His unconscious had released him from exile and placed him at the center of his sense of himself; he was no longer an exile, an expatriate from himself, a victim of familial diaspora. He was enthroned within the empire of the family.

This is the experience that enabled him to dare autobiography. Life-saving vision, indeed.

The Galerie d'Apollon became for years what I can only term a splendid scene of things, even of the quite irrelevant or, as might be, almost unworthy; and I recall to this hour, with the last vividness, what a precious part it played for me, and exactly by that continuity of honour, on my awaking, in a summer dawn many years later, to the fortunate, the instantaneous recovery and capture of the most appalling yet most admirable nightmare of my life. The climax of this extraordinary experience—which stands alone for me as a dream-adventure founded in the deepest, quickest, clearest act of cogitation and comparison, act indeed
of life-saving energy, as well as in unutterable fear—was the sudden pursuit, through an open door, along a high saloon, of a just dimly-described figure that retreated in terror before my rush and dash (a glare of inspired reaction from irresistible but shameful dread,) out of the room I had a moment before been desperately, and all the more abjectly, defending by the push of my shoulder against hard pressure on lock and bar from the other side. The lucidity, not to say the sublimity, of the crisis had consisted of the great thought that I, in my appalled state, was probably still more appalling than the awful agent, creature or presence, whatever he was, whom I had guessed, in the suddenest wild start from sleep, the sleep within my sleep, to be making for my place of rest. The triumph of my impulse, perceived in a flash as I acted on it by myself at a bound, forcing the door outward, was the grand thing, but the great point of the whole was the wonder of my final recognition. Routed, dismayed, the tables turned upon him by my so surpassing him for straight aggression and dire intention, my visitant was already but a diminished spot in the long perspective, the tremendous, glorious hall, as I say, over the far-gleaming floor of which, cleared for the occasion of its great line of priceless vitrines down the middle, he sped for his life, while a great storm of thunder and lightning played through the deep embrasures of high windows at the right. The lightning that revealed the retreat revealed also the wondrous place and, by the same amazing play, my young imaginative life in it of long before, the sense of which, deep within me, had kept it whole, preserved it to this thrilling use; for what in the world were the deep embrasures and the so polished floor but those of the Galerie d'Apollon of my childhood? The "scene of something" I had vaguely then felt it? Well I might, since it was to be the scene of that immense hallucination. (SB 196-97)

We have but to visualize this already highly pictorial experience to recognize that it is in every detail a repetition of what would have been witnessed by Brydon's alter ego.

Both encounters begin at a door. The dreamer is where the alter ego was, penned within a closed room. After the visitor leaves the door, the dreamer glimpses him
retreating along a high saloon, or salon—Brydon's fourth floor, with a central corridor onto which other doors and windows open. Brydon turns and, making "blindly for the greater staircase, left gaping rooms and sounding passages behind" (JC 333). When Brydon loses consciousness (really flees before the alter ego's aggression, that is) the narrator observes, "His head went round; he was going; he had gone" (JC 335-36). The words precisely describe the flight of the Gallery specter as well.

The difference between Louvre and brownstone is well within the limits of variation that dreams and their interpreting dreamers introduce; in fact, the dream-landscapes are almost identical. In addition to the corridors, both structures have "embrasures," and light is seen through many of the windows; what the dreamer sees as lightning looks like early dawn to Brydon. In Brydon's heightened state of fear, the mansion seems to take on larger dimensions, those of a museum, perhaps, or in any case a structure more impressive: "The house, withal, seemed immense, the scale of space again inordinate; the open rooms, to no one of which his eyes deflected, gloomed in their shuttered state like mouths of caverns" (JC 333).

Brydon's mansion is, of course, spectrally empty; the Apollo Gallery is, for reasons that are unexplained, also empty. (James supplies many details of its opulence in the passages that precede the dream, but in the dream itself
the "priceless vitrines" are notable by their absence. It has been emptied for this occasion.) The dreamer speaks of his "aggression" against his "visitant," and a visitant is, of course, just what Brydon is, just as "aggression" is also the word used to describe the alter ego's advance against him.

There are ways in which the dreamer repeats Brydon's actions as a reversal. The "grand thing," the dreamer says, was to have acted, and acting is precisely what Brydon says he cannot do. The dreamer throws himself against the door at "a bound," and "jumping" is the word used several times of Brydon, both to describe how he approached the idea of discretion and what he was willing to do from the fourth-floor window to get away.

One of the most remarkable things about the dream is that it contains a dream, a "sleep within my sleep." I noted earlier that Brydon had used a comparable nesting image for his own alter ego, the potential flower within his own young bud, and I suggested that the earlier ghosts of the notebooks are in some sense the alter ego of this alter ego. They are an alternative and more primitive form, nested within a memorial structure and reclaimed within a later hallucination. If the dreamer feels his place of rest endangered, the safe place of dream, it is a threat as well to the sanctuary of notebooks and professional notation, the earliest dreamland.
One significant difference between the episodes helps make an important distinction. The dreamer and Brydon's ghost are never besieged in precisely comparable ways. The dreamer had to defend himself "by the push of my shoulder against hard pressure on lock and bar from the other side" of the door. Brydon can never bring himself to touch the door, or any part of it. In fact, this is denied to Brydon in a passage a great deal like the dreamer's: He could not "apply his hand to a latch, or even his shoulder and his knee, if necessary, to a panel" (JC 330). But of course it is not important that Brydon never touched that door; Henry James did, and that makes all the difference. That door, and the pressures of hand to latch and of shoulder to panel would be just as real to James in that denial as they could be in any affirmation. The experience must be imagined before it can be stated affirmatively or negatively. We are speaking, after all, of the acts and events of James's consciousness. We should remember, too, what Freud said of negation— that it is the sign of the return of the repressed from the unconscious. 10

In fact, James is drawn irresistibly to that door. He stands before it four times altogether. His behavior is just as obsessive as Brydon claims his own to be. The first time occurs before Brydon has even formulated his intention of conjuring his alter ego. After he handles the job foreman at his other property with such mastery, the sense
of what he might have become begins to form. The "wanton wonderment" of that possibility starts to take shape, "very much as he might have been met by some strange figure, some unexpected occupant, at a turn of one of the dim passages of an empty house. The quaint analogy quite hauntingly remained with him, when he didn't indeed rather improve it by a still intenser form: that of his opening a door behind which he would have made sure of finding nothing, a door into a room shuttered and void, and yet so coming, with a great suppressed start, on some quite erect confronting presence, something planted in the middle of the place and facing him through the dusk" (JC 316). Later the narrator—assisted by James, may we say?—imagines what Brydon does not do, put hand to door. Once that image fades, Brydon "crossed straight to the door," taking James with him, where he announces his surrender and abandons his intentions of confronting the alter ego. Later still, James is before the door a fourth time when Brydon vividly imagines recrossing the fourth floor to check on whether the door is still closed. Instead he turns and leaves the fourth floor forever, his will having utterly broken. Indeed, the fullness of confrontation with the presence of his past, the will to autobiography, if you will, has grown weaker through the course of the story. We cannot be sure whether Brydon crosses the floor to the door that last time; we may be confident, however, that James does.
It was the dream of the Apollo Gallery that ended James's compulsive return to that door. The will that had failed before was healed by the dream. The unsatisfactory integration that is achieved in Brydon's case, which had compelled his destruction of the family house, was superseded and replaced by a later integration. Brydon became his American self, or surrendered to it. James's dream not only enables integration, raises the lost self to the conscious core of his being, but also attaches that lost self and his sense of integration to the grandeurs of Western civilization. He does not have to make the choice that Brydon accepted; he does not have to surrender his European past. Indeed, this integration resolves and silences the European theme, which so fascinated (or obsessed) James throughout his career. By reinterpreting Brydon's American mansion as the Louvre and recognizing both worlds as his own and as intimate elements in his own narrative of self, James achieves what he had glimpsed so ambiguously as being only possible for Brydon: "People enough, first and last, had been in terror of apparitions, but who had ever before so turned the tables and become himself, in the apparitional world, an incalculable terror" (JC 325). The Apollo Gallery dream means that becoming himself need not occur only in the apparitional world and need no longer be so incalculable nor terrible. With that came the knowledge that aggression could be repelled, that
invasion could be prevented, that willed action could be undertaken, and that public exposure could be dared. It meant that the self as subject of writing need not be feared.

It meant, in fact, that autobiography was now possible and acknowledgeable as such.

Notes

1. My point about Brydon reversing the process undertaken by Pendrel is not original but is often remarked, notably by Edel (V 313). He also believes James's late production is organized by the need for recapitulation; he calls James's last decade an "American phase," and dates its start from the composition of "The Jolly Corner," which he places in 1906 (V 316-17).

James himself associated The Sense of the Past and "The Jolly Corner." In a 1914 note concerning his plans to resume The Sense of the Past, he wrote that he could "remember saying to myself in writing that thing [the story] that I was filching in a small way ... and might conceivably regret it" (NO 505).

2. The relation between psychoanalysis and autobiography has been smartly argued by Gregory S. Jay in "Freud and the Death of Autobiography." To be sure, Jay is interested in destabilizing what he sees as autobiography's privileges, whereas I am more interested in recognizing the writer's burden of achieving autobiography. Nevertheless, the alliance between what I take to be the century's dominant modes of non-fiction and personal inquiry is recognized quite elegantly and intelligently here. Jay remarks: "Psychoanalysis is the only discipline in the human sciences whose movement began, and in some sense continues, as a sustained act of autobiographical reflection" (109).

3. For further psychoanalytic criticism of "The Jolly Corner," see Wegelin 155-58, Honig, Stovall, Tremper, Strout, and Miller 229-34. For a survey of the criticism of the tale, including the psychological commentary, see Fogel, and Wagenknecht 155-60.

4. My assertion is based on Daniel Mark Fogel's demonstration that the number of years Brydon spent in Europe, thirty-three, exactly conforms to the time elapsed between James's adult departure for Europe in 1875 and the first publication of the tale in 1908.
5. Edel says James's first title for the story was "The Second House" (V 313). His source is a letter to James's American agent, James B. Pinker, that neither he nor Lubbock has included in their collections of James's letters. Psychoanalytic critics have interpreted Brydon's house variously. Edel himself calls it "the house of Family" (V 313). Rogers, so interested in masculine and feminine Freudian symbols, points out that houses and homes, like doors, windows, and gates, are decidedly feminine in James (436 ff). MacKenzie more recently called it the house of consciousness and argued that in autobiographical terms it is, with the "skyscraper" that Brydon is building, the "dynastic house of fiction" (362). Honig points out that Brydon insists on sparing his birthplace from the suggestions that it be rebuilt and that he creates two standards of value, one for the home and a quite different one for the "skyscraper" property. Brydon lets decency govern the one and the money-passion the other (85).

6. He describes the arrival of the idea for The Spoils of Poynton, for example, by saying "the flower of conception had bloomed—all in the happy dusk of indifference and neglect" (PR 1142). Elsewhere, when he cannot recall the origin of three tales ("Owen Wingrave," "The Friends of the Friends," "Sir Edmund Orme"), he relies on the confidence that "any tinted flower of fable, however small," can only have "'groved,'" like "the celebrated Topsy" (PR 1261). There are many more examples, and an interested reader can find them all and many more things by reference to Jean Kimball's exceptionally detailed and accurate "classified subject index" to the prefaces, published in the Henry James Review in 1985. All Jamesians are deeply indebted to that research, and I make my own grateful acknowledgment here.

7. Adeline R. Tintner identifies Brydon's house with 21 East 11th Street, the home of Mrs. Mary Cadwalader Jones ("Landmarks" 408-409). Jones was the sister-in-law of Edith Wharton and her longtime friend. James stayed in the house during his American Scene visits of 1904-1905.

8. Chiastic inversions are built on the classic rhetorical figure of chiasmus. In that figure, the order of a pair of terms in the first of two parallel clauses is reversed in the second. Such inversions are notably common in James. For example, James arranged the terms of his 1904-1905 discovery of the ethnically transformed America in a chiasmus, or actually in an interlocking succession of chiasms. What had been his homeland was now foreign, and the foreign Europe had become his homeland. Moreover, that chiasmus was repeated and deepened by representing the
aliens as having reversed his change; they had made the same trip from Europe to America that he was making, but they were traveling to the unknown and he to the known. His own repatriation formed a chiasmus with his expatriation, of course, just as the aliens' trip to the New World actually repeated his trip to the Old World. Ralf Normann (137-84) has argued that chiasmus is at the core of James's style of writing and his very habits of thinking.

9. The most provocative recent interpretation of the dream is Suzi Naiburg's psychoanalytically and aesthetically informed essay. She shifts the focal point away from the specific identification of the defeated specter and argues instead the identity of dreamer and specter. She understands the dream to be concerned with what she calls the "Apollonian mastery of turbulent emotion through the formal properties and structures of art" (219). She also associates the dream with "The Jolly Corner," but does not view it as related to the autobiographical process. Edel focuses on the specter and identifies it as William, the dominant and older brother (Henry James: A Life 20-24). James Cox, a shrewd reader of autobiography, sees the specter as the present autobiographer aggressive the small boy of the past (244).

10. Freud remarks in his brief 1925 essay, "Negation": "Thus the content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness, on condition that it is negated. Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed; indeed, it is already a lifting of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed."
Chapter 4: Excursus on the Problem of Masculinity

The problem of autobiography, the process that was released by the dream of the Galerie d'Apollon, may be said to resolve into the paired dilemmas of identity and interpretation. One rarely occurs without the other, and each would seem to require the other in certain significant ways. They make a most provocative appearance in the famous and arresting ninth chapter of Henry James's Notes of a Son and Brother (1914). It is the chapter that includes his notorious "Obscure Hurt" passage, his account of an injury he suffered soon after the 1861 attack on Fort Sumter. The injury is related in important ways to James's lack of service in the Civil War and to his choice of a career, although the nature of the relationship is unexplained. The "obscure hurt" passage itself has attracted more comment than any other moment in James's autobiography, perhaps most for its extraordinary combination of portentous incident and maddeningly evasive narrative. It is an especially important chapter for this study because nowhere else does James seem so plainly to display anxiety and the effect of anxiety on his narrative purpose. I argue that autobiography is a matter of process just as much as reference, and that it reveals the present moment of composition as much as it recovers the historical moment. James has made it clear throughout his proto-autobiographical material that the affective content of
memory remains alive for him, that the feelings once a part of the experience are animated anew whenever he revisits the moment. This study is interested, therefore, in the ways in which the affective content of memory seems to shape narrative intent and achievement, and where better to find that process than in James's most famous fusion of portent and evasion?

The chapter is not at all what it might seem—not, that is, an act of narrative that has been misshapen or deranged by anxiety. It is, in fact, a highly achieved design and has been carefully wrought; rather than witnessing James overwhelmed by anxiety, we see him erect an elaborate tripartite structure to contain anxiety. The subject of the chapter is the process by which James leaves the shelter of the father's house and takes his place in the company of men. James presents this as the year and the chapter in which he steps into manhood. It includes what must be recognized as his claim of masculinity; it is a muted claim but an important one, for it is expressed as a claim of professional mastery and includes a statement of personal worth. The mastery of the chapter cannot hide all the anxiety that it seems intended to obscure, and the anxiety that is visible seems principally attached to questions of interpretation. Interpretation is the crucial problem for the professional writer, but this interpretation concerns what James is, or, more to the point, what he may be
thought to be. The anxiety seems to be aroused by matters of masculine identity, and James's intent seems to be to achieve that identity with this chapter. The chapter claims masculinity, obscures the circumstances of his failure to serve in the war, and attacks those who suspect homosexual purpose in homosocial contacts.

Just what was this masculinity that James was claiming? A claim, largely. Then and now, masculinity has been something to claim. In action or assertion, masculinity is expressed as a claim. In James's case, it may seem an empty claim, only a matter of assertion. He lacks so many of the cultural markers and conventions by which we identify the male today that we really need to say what James had in mind, what made the claim necessary, and to what degree it was within the norms of male self-definition.

I treat masculinity as a social artifact, a collection of associated verbal and physical gestures and the negotiations and mediations necessary to enact them. There are parts of masculinity and maleness that are rooted in the relatively unvarying necessities of the species--aggressive sexuality, for example--but it is the expression of those unvarying elements that is often what is being negotiated. In fact, masculinity and manhood seem to vary significantly according to time and place, and even according to social class and economic necessity. Anthony Rotundo's recent study, American Manhood, shows that what
we are talking about when we speak of manhood has been altogether adaptable. Rotundo finds that as social and political conditions changed in America, what we meant to manage by invocations of manhood changed, too. Life in Colonial America was such that manhood was spoken of as being active in communal and domestic achievement; with the rise of industrialism in the Nineteenth Century, we spoke of the competitive needs of the workplace when we mentioned manhood; and in the Twentieth Century, manhood has become passionate and has added combativeness and sexual desire.

Anthropology gives us a somewhat more stable sense of manhood, one that is performative and organized by the sexual division of labor. David D. Gilmore's anthropological study, *Manhood in the Making*, describes a "ubiquitous" sense of manhood committed to three injunctions conventionally associated with masculinity: to sire children, to protect dependents from danger, and to provide materially for the family.¹

Gilmore's notion of the generally performative nature of manhood and the second of his injunctions are important for this study, since they inform so many of the invocations of manhood heard among the James men during the war years. As we shall see, those calls to action are usually coercive, are intended to control behavior, and are uttered in crisis. By the end of the century, the memory of the Civil War, which was receding into the deeper past,
began to give the public characterization of manhood a military and nostalgic cast. Rotundo notices that James's older brother William, who also did not serve, is proposing in his 1910 essay "The Moral Equivalent of War" that the nation's too soft youth be toughened by arduous physical labor organized for public service. This will aid in the recovery of the "martial virtues," which he enumerates as "intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of the private interest, obedience to command" (quoted in Rotundo 233). By the time Henry James was writing his autobiography, that is, the cultural conventions of manhood were informed by the memory of the Civil War, an experience he did not have and could not claim to have. His claim to masculinity, his so necessary claim, would have to use some other field of action, and that was the field in which he claimed the title of Master: writing.

He makes the claim while speaking of his purpose in leaving home and going to college in the second year of the war: "I am not sure whether I yet made bold to say it, but I should surely be good for nothing, all my days, if not for projecting into the concrete, by hook or by crook--that is my imagination shamelessly aiding--some show of (again) mere life" (NS 411). A few years before, he had ended his final preface, to The Golden Bowl, describing artists as those "who passionately cultivate the image of life" and their art to be the act "of projecting it" (PR 1333). What
followed from that was his fullest and proudest statement of his artistry. Here is the artist as achiever and moral exemplar:

Thus if he is always doing he can scarce, by his own measure, ever have done. All of which means for him conduct with a vengeance, since it is conduct minutely and publicly attested. ... But on all the ground to which the pretension of performance by a series of exquisite laws may apply [that is, writing] there reigns one sovereign truth—which decrees that, as art is nothing if not exemplary, care nothing if not active, finish nothing if not consistent, the proved error is the base apologetic deed, the helpless regret is the barren commentary, and "connexions" are employable for finer purposes than mere gaping contrition. (PR 1340-41)

James's masculine call of artistic mastery also invokes a literary tradition by which creativity, especially creativity in writing, was identified as manly. In that tradition, masculinity was asserted in the domination of the processes of artistic creation, or, as Gilmore describes it, "the process of purposive construction" (Gilmore 113). That tradition was expressed commonly enough in James's day, and it can be best witnessed in a passage from Walter Pater's Plato and Platonism (1893). Pater was, with Oscar Wilde, a leading exponent of British Aestheticism and James's contemporary and acquaintance:

Manliness in art, what can it be, as distinct from that which in opposition to it must be called the feminine quality there,—what but a full consciousness of what one does, of art itself in the work of art, tenacity of intuition and of consequent purpose, the spirit of construction as opposed to what is literally incoherent or ready to fall to pieces, and, in opposition to what is hysteric or works at random, maintenance of a standard. To use Plato's own expression there will be here no ... "negligences," to feminine forgetfulness of
one's self, nothing in the work of art unconformed to
the leading intention of the artist, who will but
increase his power by reserve. (280-81)

James's claim of masculinity is not a sexualized claim;
it has nothing to do with James's sexual identity. So far
as I know (so far as anyone knows), James had no sexual
identity other than as a celibate. This was his word, which
in its day meant unmarried. He expresses homoerotic desire
in his private letters, but there are no signs of
consummation. The desire he put on public display was
heterosexual, and it was done in the safety of fiction that
was for sale; his fiction seems to have grown more
eroticized as he aged, but its terms and images seem
significantly dependent on conventions of written
representation rather than on felt experience. In general,
it is fair to say that throughout his writing career, James
was averse to displaying signs of sexual activity, whether
heterosexual or homosexual. The question is not whether he
was homosexual or heterosexual, but whether he was sexual,
and he seems clearly to me to have been profoundly asexual.
I interpret James as having lived a life of sexual self-
completion.

That is what I take to be the deep lesson of his musing
about the erotic visit from his alter ego. He did not find
his source of affirmation outside himself but deep within;
he creates his own source of affirmation in his mon bon. In
his notebook entry for March 29th, 1905, he records a
working moment at Coronado Beach, California. He is now seven months on the continent. He invokes the spirit as "my familiar demon of patience" and in eroticized terms invokes the sustaining power of his own recollective faculty.

I sit here, after long weeks, at any rate, in front of my arrears, with an inward accumulation of material of which I feel the wealth, and as to which I can only invoke my familiar demon of patience, who always comes, doesn't he?, when I call. He is here with me in front of this green Pacific—he sits close and I feel his soft breath, which cools and steadies and inspires, on my cheek. Everything sinks in: nothing is lost; everything abides and fertilizes and renews its golden promise, making me think with closed eyes of deep and grateful longing when, in the full summer days of L[amb] H[ouse], my long dusty adventure over, I shall be able to [plunge] my hand, my arm, in, deep and far, and up to the shoulder—into the heavy bag of remembrance—of suggestion—of imagination—of art—and fish out every little figure and felicity, every little fact and fancy that can be to my purpose. These things are all packed away, now, thicker than I can penetrate, deeper than I can fathom, and there let them rest for the present, in their sacred cool darkness, till I shall let in upon them the mild still light of dear old L[amb] H[ouse]—in which they will begin to gleam and glitter and take form like the gold and jewels of a mine. x x x x x (NO 237)

If any of the caressingly erotic statements in his late letters reflect consummation, the partner was too much removed in age and authority to give the master the necessary affirmation that sexual intimacy can confer; I mean the affirmation that comes when we are so intimately exposed, when the beloved sees us as we see ourselves, gives us back our vision of ourselves. This affirmation James never received. James was lonely, lonely to a degree and in ways difficult to imagine.
James's lived identity was ambiguously gendered, and even here in his autobiography, where he controls his own presentation, it seems to include both masculine and feminine markers. In his relation to his art, it is well to remember that James was a toweringly masculine figure—aggressive, confident, possessive, endurably resolute.

His claim of masculinity, then, has nothing to do with sexual activity and everything to do with professional mastery of language. That professional mastery was aggressively displayed in his 1905 commencement address at Bryn Mawr, when he lectured the young ladies about the corruption of their language. It enacts many of the common associations of masculinity—power, domination, mastery of means of production—and perfectly exemplifies the terms Pierre Bourdieu develops for the struggle for linguistic authority in his *Language and Symbolic Power*. It was part of what Bourdieu recognized as an exercise of power, and the power is derived from the "unequal distribution of linguistic capital." By appropriating to the speaker the authority over language, James's speech also reserves to him the control over the others' means of linguistic production. He achieves "a power over language and thereby over the ordinary users of language, as well as over their capital." He also pursues his own interest in hoping to perpetuate the market for his own production; he is legitimating his own language, making himself into an
educating institution while speaking within another, each of which has the purpose of producing "the need for its own services and its own products" (57-61).

As a matter of faith and belief, he was devoted to the programmatic superiority of the masculine. His claim of masculinity reflects the family mythology and rhetoric of manhood, and so shows important commitments to his place in the family and a need to satisfy familial expectations. For James, masculinism was social orthodoxy. A sense of male superiority lay at the heart of his sense of social order. Although it would not be like him to apply words like "masculine" or "manly" to himself, he was nevertheless committed to the dominance of the masculine over the feminine. That is clear enough from his Bryn Mawr address, but it is even more stark in a series of four essays that appeared in Harper's Bazar in 1907, "The Manners of American Women." He found those manners in severe decline on his 1904-1905 trip to America, and he believes the decline happened because men have failed to maintain their authority:

\[\text{Men have treacherously abjured the manly part of real appreciation--letting, in the guise of generosity, the whole question of responsibility, of manly competence and control, example, expectation, go by the board. ... In societies other than ours the male privilege of correction springs, and quite logically, from the social fact that the male is the member of society primarily acting and administering and primarily listened to--whereby his education, his speech, his tone, his standards and connections, his general 'competence,' as I have called it, color the whole air,}\]
react upon his companion and establish for her the principal relation she recognizes. (MA 649-50)

His most conventionally masculine assertion of self may have been his image of himself as a warrior doing battle to protect the language against the violations of the immigrants: "For that honour, the honour that sits astride of the consecrated English tradition, to his mind, quite as old knighthood astride its caparisoned charger, the dragon most rousing, over the land, the proper spirit of St. George, is just this immensity of the alien presence climbing higher and higher, climbing itself into the very light of publicity" (AS 470). A less mythic encounter was the celebrated dispute with H. G. Wells, who had insulted and parodied James's style and content in Boon (1915). The exchange is notable for many things, but especially because it is a rare instance of James fighting back. In fact, it was highly unusual for James to be insulted or for his art to be treated shabbily. His fundamental decency, personal gravity, and mandarin cultural air made such an incident improbable. Yet it happened, and here he is, in his letter of 10 July 1915, all forceful in assertion, all elegance in closing: "It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, for our consideration and application of these things, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process [Wells had said James's art missed life]. If I were Boon I should say that any pretence
of such a substitute is helpless and hopeless humbug; but I wouldn't be Boon for the world, and am only yours faithfully / Henry James" (HJL IV 766-70).

His most courageous moment, possibly, was the time in 1895 when his five-year effort to write successfully for the stage was dashed by the public humiliation of being booed from the theater; his self-respect, deeply and publicly battered on that January 5, endured and asserted itself in his return to fiction, attested by his notebook entry for January 23: "I take up my old pen again--the pen of all my old unforgettable efforts and sacred struggles. To myself--today, I need say no more. Large and full and high the future still opens. It is now indeed that I may do the work of my life. And I will" (NO 109).

The Jamesian claim of masculinity would be scorned by the working class. The markers of manhood vary significantly according to class; the working class would probably not recognize and surely not value the work that James did and would see no affirming worth in it. It would look elsewhere for the markers of his maleness and not find the credentials it honored. The privileges of the aristocracy always include exemption from many of the cultural prohibitions of the lower orders, chief among which are some of the standards of sexual self-expression. This is part of what Bourdieu has in mind when he remarks in his masterly Distinction that "the whole set of socially
constituted differences between the sexes tends to weaken as one moves up the social hierarchy" (382). Exhortations to honor the codes of manhood are often coercive, a means of controlling behavior, of making one stay within type or class. If one inherits power and cultural position, one is proof against such coercion.

The James family was part of an American social aristocracy, the Brahmin caste of New England. Their social world at the start of the 1860s was precisely the caste that Oliver Wendell Holmes named and defined just as the war was gathering and breaking. When he wrote "The Brahmin Caste of New England," Holmes pretended to be speaking of the difference between cultural types as scholars, but he is also claiming a position of mastery by which an inherited intellectual and cultural acuity dominates the intellect of the one "bred to bodily labor." He contrasts their "youthful manhood" and finds the Brahmin youth to be "commonly slender,—his face is smooth, and apt to be pallid,—his features are regular and of a certain delicacy,—his eye is bright and quick,—his lips play over the thought he utters as a pianist's fingers dance over their music,—and his whole air, though it may be timid, and even awkward, has nothing clownish." The scholar of the other class may be more robust but is also common, uncouth, even coarse and unformed. Although the other class may produce a fine scholar occasionally, the dominance and
mastery here are all with the brahmin. The variability of the social forms and roles of masterful authority is reflected in Holmes's other writing. This is the patriarch who, in the first of a series of collections of cultural essays and other writing, enshrined autocracy at the seat of domesticity, the breakfast table (The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table [1858]), then transformed that figure of conventional authority into the culturally more aristocratic professor (The Professor at the Breakfast-Table [1860]) and finally claimed him as a poet (The Poet at the Breakfast-Table [1872]). Holmes makes the dominant authority of the brahmin caste domestic, professorial, and linguistically productive.

Holmes reminds us, then, how much the standards of the aristocracy's maleness may vary from those of other classes, and we do well to recall other ways in which James was free of such cultural expectations. He achieved a good deal of freedom of personal behavior by moving to Europe and removing himself from familial and patriarchal domination. He achieved an even more significant liberation from cultural masculine expectations by entering the calling of letters and practicing it in an intellectualized manner. He made himself into the Master, entering a sort of professional aristocracy. This is to say that physical distance, birth, calling, and performance all freed James from needing to claim his masculinity. Perhaps that is why,
when the context required him to claim it, he was so clumsy at it.

James's claim of masculinity in the obscure hurt chapter signifies in context, just as it and most claims of masculinity are responses to context. Its context is the narrative of his entry into the order of manhood. It is a product of the experience of recollecting those memories, and it is shaped by a tradition of representation of artistic creativity. The claim can hardly be said to overwhelm or obscure all the suggestions of the feminine that have shown themselves in his proto-autobiographies. Instead, the claim witnesses to how adaptable, variable, and evolving these qualities are. Its context is the family and the history of the day.

Notes

1. Gilmore is unwilling to reduce manhood and masculinity simply to an expression of culture, as some critics have done. He points out that aggressive sexuality is an important component of the "impregnate-protect-provide" paradigm of manhood performatives and argues that therefore we cannot theorize manhood and gender identities simply as social constructions without reference to nature (223). He also emphasizes the real risks and dangers that manhood arouses, a recognition that Leverenz repeats in his study of the American Renaissance. Leverenz points out that male rivalry is a more basic source of male anxiety, more likely anyway than the fears of women and mothering that some psychoanalytic feminist critics have proposed. Leverenz concedes that women writers experience and portray manhood as patriarchy but that men know it as "a rivalry for dominance" (4).

2. James was not particularly warm to Pater, but their relationship attracts study. For James's engagement with Pater's writing and its influence, see especially St. Armand, and Tintner ("Pater" and "Germ"). Savoy and Ellman also make strong cases for their affiliation. Savoy argues
that the relationship is organized by homosexual desire and panic, and Ellman asserts without demonstration that both were homosexual. The question of homosexuality is beside the point for my purposes, since anyone, homosexual or not, could and would make the claim of masculinity advanced by both men.

Chapter 5: The Civil War and the Family James

When the Jameses crossed the Atlantic in September 1860, it was the last time they would do so as a family. The children--four teenage boys and a daughter, the youngest--would soon become the adults they were then imagining. In the future, when they left the family unit and crossed their oceans they would usually do so alone. This time they were returning from twelve months abroad, and it was the third time their father had taken his young family to Europe. They had been in Geneva since October 1859, and the country to which they were returning was about to be convulsed by the decisive fratricidal war that is still the defining episode in its history.

The family that returned to Newport, Rhode Island, had a great deal to lose; they were, on the whole, comfortably wealthy, although the family finances had suffered in the crash of 1857. The father, who remained independent of the necessities of business all his life, has been called an eccentric religious philosopher. He was a friend of many of the intellectuals of his day--Emerson, Thoreau, Thackeray, Carlyle--and achieved a certain prominence for his advocacy of various public issues, most pertinently the abolition of slavery. In fact, he would deliver the local Independence Day oration on the next Fourth of July. Slavery was his sort of issue. The contemporary events that were given significant form in his household were those that were
marked by moral contest, and the father's public advocacies deeply colored the children's understanding of the larger world. They followed his enthusiasms, and so they understood the larger world to be the arena of real moral choices and heavy moral judgments. The influence of the father's attitudes toward slavery was persistent and still shaped the son's recollection fifty years later. He recalled how the abolitionist congressman, Charles Sumner, visited the family and their friends in Paris in 1857 as he recovered from a caning on the floor of the House of Representatives. Sumner he recalled as a "statesman," but the attacker was merely "the South Carolina ruffian" (NS 31).

At forty-nine, the patriarch returned from this third remove to Europe with a household especially exposed to the uncertainties that the war would bring. There were two women, his wife, Mary Walsh James, fifty, the mother of his children, and her younger unmarried sister, Catherine Walsh, called Aunt Kate, forty-eight. There was the youngest child, Alice, aged twelve. And there were the boys. William, called Willy or Bill, was the oldest at eighteen. The second son, our Henry, called Harry, was seventeen. The third son, Garth Wilkinson, called Wilky, was fifteen, and the youngest son, Robertson, called Bob or Robby, was fourteen. William was a talented young artist although his father intended him for science; in Geneva, he
had studied art at the Academy, which later became the University of Geneva, and in Newport he studied in the studio of William Morris Hunt. In a year's time, though, the father had his way when William decided to change his course and went off to Harvard and the Lawrence Scientific School. Henry was generally quieter and more reserved than the others and was sometimes teased for reading so much. He was regarded as his mother's favorite and as the "angel" of the house. His future course was uncertain; in Geneva he had started out in a preparatory school for engineers and architects. He was uncomfortable there and was finally able to win paternal permission to change to liberal studies in language at his brother's school. In Newport, he also studied art like his big brother, and then followed his brother out of the home a year later by going to Harvard to Law School. The two youngest boys, Wilky and Bob, had been placed in a boarding school outside Geneva, and when the family arrived in Rhode Island they were enrolled in a co-educational academy at Concord, Massachusetts, that was supported by the Concord intelligentsia, the father's friends. The family was returning to the small, the local, the comfortable, and the familiar. Tidy Newport was a small old town with graceful sea-captain's mansions and other signs of affluence and tradition. It had not yet become famous as the summer resort of the New York barons of industry, but there was a certain custom of comfort about
the town. In the preceding century it had been one apex of the triangular slave trading route. Captives purchased in West Africa were taken to the Caribbean and exchanged for molasses that was brought to Newport and converted to rum for money that was used to buy more people in Africa.

The family seems to have sensed the coming upheaval not at all. There is almost no mention of the war in their letters from these years. In 1860, it seemed to the family that if there were to be a war, it would be in Europe. Writing from Geneva, Henry told his Newport friend, Thomas Sergeant Perry, on 27 March 1860, "I suppose you have heard even in your uncivilized parts about the annexation of Savoy to France [from Italy]. ... I don't suppose there will be any fighting on the subject although Switzerland has begun to marshall her troops. During yesterday and to day these streets have filled with Soldiers" (HJL I 16). Henry's chat of war here likely echoes household conversation, for the father was writing in a similar way to a close friend from Newport and Paris early in April: "[W]e may be in Europe a good while yet, always providing that war keep smooth his wrinkled front and allow us quiet newspapers. They must fight in Italy for some time to come, but between England and France is the main point. If they can hold aloof from tearing each other we shall manage; otherwise we go home at once, to escape the universal spatter that must then ensue" (quoted NS 374).
After they returned and "the universal spatter" had begun for real, the American war still is rarely mentioned in Henry's letters, even though the younger brothers enlisted. An exception is his letter of 6 June 1862 to Perry, where he writes, "Meanwhile I shall go hence unto Cambridge on Monday next. I shall, belike, stop at Readville to see Robby on the way" (HJL I 42-43). (Robertson was in Army camp at Readville, Massachusetts.) The verbal posturing, so characteristic of the correspondence of a young man, may reflect a need to find a socialized way of speaking of something so troubling. The father seems to have done that in his letter when he hopes that war could "keep smooth his wrinkled front"; he started the next paragraph with a rhetorical flourish and an allusion to scripture: "What is the meaning of all these wars and rumours of wars?" (quoted NS 374).

Henry's letter of 1 November 1863 to "Sargy" refers in an offhand way to the Emancipation Proclamation, and on 28 October 1864 his letter to "dear Sarge" mentions Cambridge plans for a "grand funeral" for "Colonel Lowell," but neither those nor any others speak of personal sorrow and loss, which had already visited his family. Two cousins, William Temple and Gus Barker, had been killed and his brother Wilky seriously wounded. For his part, William, the eldest, had been first to leave the home when he went to Harvard in the war's first year. He left the country
altogether on April 1, 1865, on a scientific expedition to Brazil. His first surviving letter to Henry from Rio de Janeiro, dated 3 May 1865, has one sentence about the war. After several pages of personal news, he begins the lengthy familial process of sending "oceans of love" to relatives, then adds, "You've no idea how I pine for war news" (CWJ I 8). Perhaps he means the letters from Wilky, which had been filled with fascinating details of combat, the sort of vicarious experience he might well pine for. Indeed, William had no idea what he had missed, for, since he left the country, Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9 and Lincoln had been fatally shot April 14 and had died the next morning.¹

Incomplete as the record of the brothers' letters may be, it seems fair to say that they reflect a need to find a way of speaking about the war. Each mention of the war sounds self-conscious and verbally postured. In general, these young men are still casting about for their own mature voice in reference to all that they encounter, but the verbal attitudinizing is most obvious in references to the war, which are always awkwardly conventionalized. They are still looking for their own place within the conventions of reference and are worried about how to write about the war, not how to serve in it or survive it. We might let the matter rest there were it not that one of the
brothers, Henry, has written so arrestingly about the war in his autobiography.

He handles his memories of the Civil War with trepidation; the subject, so unmentioned at the time, figures far larger in recollection. No fewer than three sections of *Notes of a Son and Brother* are devoted to the Civil War. In each section, the elder writer associates behavior, his own or others' behavior, with the highly conventionalized codes of masculinity. Masculinity is at the center of all three sections, even though it is never mentioned or even acknowledged. In each section on the war, he calls to memory the young men who did answer the call and images them arrayed in a body. It is the elder autobiographer's complex project to find his young man's representable relation to that phalanx. Indeed, he seems interested in entering those ranks.

In his account, James leaves unstated many of the significant circumstances that are certain to have shaped his recollective anxieties and his autobiographical purposes. The most significant, surely, is that James was actually drafted and was granted what amounted to a medical exemption. Nowhere has James ever mentioned being drafted, and all his biographers and all the autobiography theoreticians who have been drawn to his "obscure hurt" passage have overlooked or not used what was disclosed in the Newport newspapers just after Gettysburg. Until that
draft announcement was reported by historians in 1989, it could be supposed that James's curious narrative confusion in the "obscure hurt" was merely curious, perhaps just another instance of the late Jamesian delphism or an older writer's simple loss of control. We had no way of understanding the origin or the force of the anxiety. Now, however, we know that the anxiety was associated with the memory of not answering the call to stand in the company of other males in the role so commonly taken to signify masculinity, the aggressive warrior.2

The draft that was decreed in March 1863 was not the sort of universal institution that we know today; for one thing, it allowed a draftee to buy an exemption for $300 or to hire someone to serve in his stead. The payment, called a commutation, applied only to a single draft call, and there were four in all. A substitute, once obtained, satisfied the draftee's obligation for the duration. The latter caused a great deal of fraud, and the commutation aroused so much anger that it was abolished in February 1864 for all but conscientious objectors. Only about a tenth of the Rhode Island men called in the 1863 draft actually served.3

The documents concerning James's decision of whether to serve in the war are unusually contradictory. There is the question of whether at the time James himself wanted to serve. He speaks twice in Chapter IX of having wanted
something else, of wanting to be "just literary" (NS 413) and of having been "still so young and so meant for better things" (NS 415). On the other hand, the whole effort of the autobiography speaks of his regret for what was lost by missing this order of experience. In fact, a piece of the father's correspondence says that both of the older brothers were clamoring to enlist in the early stages of the war. Contradiction also marks the father's treatment of the sons' wishes to serve. Although he had forbade his Willy and Harry to enlist, his public address from the period calls publicly for the sort of radical democracy that national military service would express. Moreover, the father did allow his two younger sons to do what he could not allow for the older boys. Willy enlisted in late summer 1862 and Bob in 1863, and in both cases they did so with the father's emphatic sanction. He went with Willy when he enlisted, and he even permitted the underage Bob to lie about his age. Henry felt the younger brothers' service to reverse his priority in the family, as if they were moved closer to the father, and Willy remarked later in life that in going to war he was honoring the father's moral commitments. Both younger sons carried their father's notions of radical democracy even further by volunteering to serve with the first black units formed for the Union cause, the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments. Willy was wounded in one of the more ill-advised of the 54th's
ventures, but he returned to his unit. His letters, so filled with vivid battle details, are used extensively by Henry in his autobiography. Bob's letters, on the other hand, do not appear to have survived but to have been filled with the wish to quit his unit and to leave the field. What have survived are the father's letters of response to Bob, and they are filled with exhortation to meet his commitments. The paternal urging invokes the standards of manhood and manly behavior that Henry never had to hear, or never had a chance to hear. In short, it seems that in wartime, the father announced a standard of behavior for his sons and for the world at large that did not extend to his second son.

The father's standard of behavior for the world may be most pertinently displayed in his Independence Day oration of 1861, for through it we gain access to his moral and political universe at a crucial moment in the second son's life. The speech, which he published later that year as "The Social Significance of Our Institutions," was uttered before the moral and military dimensions of the war had been clarified. It was not until seventeen days later, when Union forces were ignominiously driven from the field in northern Virginia at the first battle of Bull Run, that his audience would have had evidence of how devastating the war was to be. As the father spoke, the question of how vigorously to prosecute the war was very much in dispute,
and his audience, in quiet and affluent Newport, was certain to include those who believed in the economic value of an early peace. To that part of his audience he spoke directly and with a good measure of political courage: "Men whose most cherished treasure can be buttoned up in their breeches pocket, and whose heart, of course, is with their treasure, are doubtless panting to convince the country that we have already done enough for honor, and the sooner a sham peace is hurried up the better" (116). Bull Run brought the Union closer to seeing the war more clearly as a test of military resolve and even national manhood. That was how the father had seen it even before Bull Run. He declared the present crisis to be a "transition from youth to manhood" (117) and he argued that the challenge be undertaken with high purpose: "[W]e must not hesitate for a moment to fight it manfully out to its smiling blissful end" (117).

The father's speech becomes troubling when he turns to his belief in the sort of radical democracy that can erase class distinctions. He is expressing here the impulses that lie behind his opposition to slavery and his moral commitment to fighting a war in the interest of the oppressed. He images the world as deeply hierarchized, and he urges action to bridge the defining cultural gaps that create that hierarchy, but it is important to recognize which he treats as real and which ideal. When he speaks, he
leaves the gulf of privilege as a material fact and offers the chance of altering that fact only as an idealized potential. Moreover, he never directly acknowledges his own possession of privilege but seems to disown or discount it. This is nowhere more clear than when he declares: "What is the joy we feel when we see the gifted man, the man of genius, the man of high conventional place of whatever sort, come down to the recognition of the lowliest social obligations,—what is it but a testimony that the purest personal worth is then most pure when it denies itself, when it leaps over the privileged interval which separates it from the common life, and comes down to identify itself with the commonest?" (110-11). Hierarchy and privilege are the material facts here and transcending them only an idealized possibility. It is clear enough which the speaker believes in, just as it is clear that he wants the audience to believe in the other. His next sentence carries further the abstraction of the unity of humanity, for he speaks of the "sentiment of human unity, of the sole original sacredness of man and the purely derivative sanctity of persons" (111). This is to mystify and abstract value beyond the level of action in the material world. What remains material are the separations that enable privilege, which also attach to the speaker; in his words "the privileged interval which separates it [personal worth] from the common life" there is a verbal gesture toward the
physical interval between his own privileged position on
the speaker's platform, an elevation all decorated with
red, white, and blue bunting for the holiday, and the
"common life" listening to his thereby elevated discourse.
His succeeding topic includes the disclosure of a form of
personal privilege: "I lived, recently, nearly a year in
St. John's Wood in London, and was daily in the habit of
riding down to the city, etc." (111). This is a "privileged
interval" of oceanic dimensions.

The father goes from placing himself advantageously to
placing himself surreptitiously in the hierarchical pattern
he has invoked. When he speaks here of the possibility of
the "man of high conventional place of whatever sort"
acting in a way that "denies" his own position, he is
describing precisely what he has done much earlier in the
speech. At that introductory position, he declared: "I
never felt proud of my country for what many seem to
consider her prime distinction, namely, her ability to
foster the rapid accumulation of private wealth" (106).
This disclaimer of pride obscures his own willful
accumulation of wealth. His father, William of Albany,
accumulated one of the largest fortunes in America in the
first three decades of the century but at his death shut
the speaker out of his will. The father had to sue in court
to break the will before he could claim his own
inheritance.
This is to say that the father's speech clearly works at cross purposes. Despite its calls for the effacement of privilege, it leaves his own privilege present and obvious even though it is alternately unclaimed, unstated, and even denied. The speaker occupies a material world, but his audience is encouraged to believe in a sanctified world of moral possibilities. If the inconsistency of the speech is conscious, then it is also hypocritical and part of the sort of culturally general and persistent hypocrisy that, in my own lifetime, was still sending men off to unnecessary war. If the inconsistency is not conscious but unconscious, the speech remains what it is in any case, a very damaging vehicle for the burden of the son. This father could not have imagined what his words might say about military service by his sons, and his moral design was overwhelmed by history. The child often finds that the father's moral designs, the structure of his moral universe, have little to do with the universe the child discovers. The consequences can be severe if the children believe in the father's moral designs even as they struggle to make them fit the universe they have inherited. In the case of young Henry, not permitted or required to be part of the great national familial combat and yet compelled to live with a moral system that called him to act, the consequences would have been formative.
Whatever the father thought of military service for others, he did not think it fit for his own elder sons. In a letter from this period he says William and Henry want to go to war but that he will not allow it. Only a single page of the letter survives, so the date and correspondent are not certain. The page is in the private collection of Henry James Vaux, the grandson of Robertson.

Affectionate old papas like me are scudding all over the country to apprehend their patriotic offspring and restore them to the harmless embraces of their mamas. I have had a firm grasp for three days past upon the coat tails of my Willy & Harry, who both vituperate me beyond measure because I won't let them go. The coats are a very staunch material, or the tails must have been off two days ago, the scamps pull so hard. The Virginia news is reassuring however, and I hope I may sleep to-night without putting their pantaloons under my pillow. The way I excuse my paternal interference to them is, to tell them, first, that no existing government, nor indeed any now possible government, is worth an honest human life and a clean one like theirs, especially if that government is like ours in danger of bringing back slavery again under one banner: than which consummation I would rather see chaos itself come again. Secondly, I tell them that no young American should put himself in the way of death, until he has realized something of the good of life: until he has found some charming conjugal Elizabeth or other to whisper his devotion to, and assume the task if need be of keeping his memory green.

This may mean less than it seems to say. The father's account is so conventionalized that it is difficult to know how serious the brothers' application to their father was. The father's words smack a bit of self-satisfaction ("affectionate old papas") and conventional affection ("scamps"), so this page may show us more of the father's need to strike a paternal pose than it reveals about the
life of the brothers. In any case, the gendered nature of
the dispute is important; the will of the patriarch is
dominant, the wishes of the child are ignored, and the
sheltering alternative to combat is represented as "the
harmless embraces of their mamas." Henry's autobiographical
accounts of the issues attached to war service are
uniformly and conventionally gendered, and that coloration
precisely continues the father's usage here and in the
speech. However this dispute was actually played out in
life, the page from the letter makes it clear that the
father is pleased that the brothers want to serve—he takes
great pleasure and pride in saying that they are so
conventional and even normative. This piece of a letter
reveals little about the historical event and everything
about the manner and sources of representation. It is a
package of behavioral and linguistic convention. Whatever
else Henry was told by this episode, it would tell him that
such conventional male behavior had the sanction of
paternal approval but that he would not serve. The first of
the father's reasons for the refusal sounds much like the
conclusion of his speech, which warns of the consequences
if Lincoln and his secretary of state, William Seward, make
"further concession to the obscene demon of Slavery" (120).
Henry's first signed story, "The Story of a Year,"
published in the March 1865 Atlantic, concerns a young
husband who goes off to serve in the war, service that
eventually takes his life. The name the young writer assigned to the wife was the very name his father had selected here, Elizabeth.

That the paternal war rhetoric had its effect on the boys is certain; there is the testimony of the first of the brothers to enlist, Wilky, who many years later described his service specifically as an enactment of the parents' principles.

I had been brought up in the belief that slavery was a monstrous wrong, its destruction worthy of a man's best effort, even unto the laying down of life. ... To me, in my boyish fancy, to go to the war seemed glorious indeed, to my parents it seemed a stern duty, a sacrifice worth any cost. Not for glory's sake, nor for the vantage of a fleeting satisfaction then, did they give me to the cause, but altogether for the reverse of these, from the sad necessities of a direful evil, from which the alarmed conscience of the North was smiting her children into line for the defense of the country's life.

Wilky's recollection was first uttered as an address to Union army officers, and so might be colored by some of the rhetoric of duty and service appropriate to the occasion. Even the idea of enacting the father's will is conventional; nevertheless, there is nothing here or elsewhere to suggest that the father opposed his service, or ever considered withholding Wilky. Quite the contrary, for Wilky quickly says: "My father accompanied me to the recruiting station, witnessed the enrollment, and gave me, as his willing mite, to the cause he had so much at heart" (quoted in Maher 25). It is certain that Wilky and Bob were
exposed to various additional forms of pressure to enlist as the war built in intensity, and large among those pressures would be the influence of Franklin B. Sanborn, the founder of the private academy in Concord, Massachusetts, that they attended. After John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859, Sanborn was identified as one of six New England abolitionists who had helped Brown organize and finance his attempt to start a slave rebellion. Sanborn fled to Canada for a while, and there was even some thought given to abducting him and making him appear before a Senate investigating committee. Eventually he returned when it was safe, and he was in Concord when the James boys entered his academy.6

Bob was sixteen when he enlisted on May 21, 1863, although the minimum age was seventeen. James gets the ages wrong but he is clear that the family blessed Bob's service: "We didn't in the least weep, however—we smiled as over the interest of childhood at its highest bloom. ... Our ingenious Robertson was but seventeen years old, but I suspect his ingenuity in having, in so good a cause, anticipated his next birthday by a few months" (MS 458).7 The father wrote with pride to a family friend, Elizabeth Peabody, on the day Bob left to join his unit, July 22, 1863, saying that he left "in good spirits." Considering the role the father played in countenancing the boy's misrepresentation of his age, he may seem disingenuous in
adding that "it cost me a heartbreak to part with one so young." He also makes it clear that he may be parting with him for good: "I still had the courage, spiritually, to bid him put all his heart in his living or dying, that so whether he lived or died he might be fully adopted of that Divine spirit of liberty which is at last renewing all things in its own image" (quoted in Maher 24, 26).

There is no real accounting for how differently the father treated the question of his sons' war service—why what was denied the older sons was encouraged for the younger sons. There is historical precedent, perhaps even tradition, for propertied families to send younger sons off to military service and consolidate the patrimony in the elder son. That custom of familial investment in the elder son was reflected in the exemptions offered for the Union draft; one was allowed for the eldest son in large families of young children. The tradition was European, of course, and the exemption does not apply in the James case, but the father surely was not varying from normative values significantly if he deliberately estimated his sons differently. It would be paternally normative, of course, to be inconsistent in the treatment of the sons; if this father is exposing his different valuation of the worth of his children, he would not be the first father to do so.

In any case, there is no trace of the father having explained his change of heart. Surely chronology must have
a good deal to do with it. By the time Wilky went to war, the Union's position had grown progressively dire, and after the first two years of the war, withholding sons from combat must have seemed progressively inappropriate. By September 1862, William had been away from home and living in Cambridge for a year, and the family had decided that Henry was to join him that month. Wilky and Bob were still very much of the home. Bob had not returned to Sanborn's school in Concord in the fall of 1861 and so had been home in Newport for a year; Wilky had returned to Massachusetts for a second year but had been home for the whole of the summer of 1862. Wilky was eager to join and had been talking to his friends that summer about doing so. As Edel points out, Wilky and Bob were in need of the affirmation and familial advancement that younger sons conventionally achieve by military service. Their familial sequence made them the ones to need this war in ways their brothers did not, and their proximity to the father that summer would have meant that he became their first military campaign.\(^9\)

A common suggestion by historians and biographers has been that the Emancipation Proclamation made the father more willing to accept a son's service; his July Fourth address and the letter in which he restrains William and Henry would seem to demand the sort of alignment of national and moral purposes that the Proclamation achieved. It was not promulgated until 22 September, ten days later
than our most specific date for Wilky's enlistment, but it had been publicly discussed a good deal; Lincoln had asked governors to act on their own to free the slaves within their own territory. In fact, a friend of the James family, Ellen Emerson, the daughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote to her brother Edward on August 29, 1862, reminding him that their mother will not permit him to enlist until emancipation is proclaimed, and her sense is that it is quite possibly due to happen soon. She also says in that letter and in earlier August letters, however, that Wilky had already enlisted. The Emerson children were, like the younger Jameses, students at Sanborn's academy, and she was visiting friends in Newport that summer and stayed with the Jameses for about ten days. In a letter to a teacher at the academy, she describes her visit as "Paradise": "Envy me, Miss Waterman! I have seen the James Family at home." In three letters—August 14, August 26, and August 29—she says Wilky has enlisted; she even knows the battalion and company he has been assigned (I 293, 295, 296, 298). She cannot be mistaken about Wilky's having taken some steps to enlist in August; her command of detail is too strong to believe otherwise. If Wilky's specific battalion and company were known then, clearly the state had taken some formal action on his application. Her letters make rather tenuous the possibility that the father's inconsistency has a basis in national or moral policy. If it was known in
August that Lincoln was preparing to issue the Proclamation, it must also have been known that he was awaiting a significant Union victory. He seized on Antietam, which climaxed September 17, the bloodiest day of the war, and issued the Proclamation five days later. Biographers seem to have followed James in saying Wilky enlisted in September; Maher says the date was 12 September (33). If the father made his consent contingent on the Proclamation, it was highly speculative of him.

If the reasons for the difference in paternal attention and attitude remain obscure, the fact of that difference remains, and it must have consequences. The father's prohibition denied to the first and second sons an order of experience that his own public rhetoric of the Independence Day address had suggested stood for the democratic unity of mankind; his prohibition argued separate categories of mankind, and it placed two of his sons in a highly special and even privileged category. He thereby denied them an order of experience that he made available to his other sons. That experience, to judge from his letters to his son Bob, consisted of a test of personal resolution and determination, a willingness to bear one's fate with dignity. He expressed the test as a contest with all the conventional issues of masculinity. Bob's letters home had reported concerns that greatly troubled the father, whose responses admonished Bob to remain with his unit and to
honor his commitments. On 29 August 1864, the father wrote in a letter of fifteen hundred words: "Cheer up then my dear boy, and be a man, where you stand. Keep yourself from vices that are in vogue about you ... this is all you want to evince you an infinitely better manhood than you could acquire at home in a hundred years." Two days later the father was writing again, expressing a little more alarm over a more recent letter: "I hope you will not be so insane. I conjure you to be a man and force yourself like a man to do your whole duty. At this moment of all others when the rebellion is caving in for want of men, and Government is calling every one to the field, it will be considered and will be very dishonorable in you to resist." He concludes by admonishing Bob to remain "manfully at your tracks."

Such frantic invocation of manhood would not have been the norm; it is the language of crisis and is resorted to in order to prevent disaster. This note differs, that is, from the characteristic sound of the rhetoric of manhood heard about the house. Something closer to that can be caught in William's letter to a cousin, Katherine James Prince, of 12 September 1863: "I heard from home day before yesterday that 'Wilky was improving daily.' I hope he is, poor fellow. His wound is a very large and bad one and he will be confined to his bed a long time. He bears it like a man. He is the best abolitionist you ever saw, and makes a
common one, as we are, feel very small and shabby" (Letters I 44). A comparable note was struck by the father in describing Wilky in a letter of 1 August 1863 to Samuel G. Ward, saying the wounded son was "manly and exalted in the tone of his mind ... It is really quite incomprehensible to me to see so much manhood so suddenly achieved" (quoted in Strouse 76).

Re-reading the brothers' war letters gave the elder autobiographer a sense of what he lost, and at first it is only visual experience: "[T]he single sense of what I missed, compared to what the authors of our bulletins gained, in wondrous opportunity of vision, that is appreciation of the thing seen... I longed to live by my eyes...in greater measure than I then had help to" (NS 460). As he continues, however, the sense of loss of visual experience is replaced by the sorrow of loss itself, the loss of the full range of sentient experience, and of being moved to the periphery by that loss. His relation to what they could report was one of "seeing, sharing, envying, applauding, pitying, all from too far-off, and with the queer sense that, whether or no they would prove to have had the time of their lives, it seemed that the only time that I should have had would stand or fall by theirs" (NS 461). The time of our life: the precise moment that defines us.
James had occasion elsewhere to speak of comparable loss. He was writing then about autobiography and the recovery of past experience and about the nature of what was to be recovered. He had been given a two-volume autobiography, The Story of a Soldier's Life, by a military hero, Viscount Garnet Wolseley, and he wrote on 7 December 1903 to express his enthusiastic pleasure with it. After describing himself as both "a poor worm of peace and quiet" and a "dabbler in the spectacle of life," he confesses himself fascinated by the chance of "communicating so with the military temper and type ... the brilliant man of action." He adds that what "I most envy you is your infinite acquaintance, from the first, with superlative men, and your having been able so to gather them in, and make them pass before you, for you to handle and use them." He is speaking of the act of writing and recollection; as usual with James, the loss of easy masculine companionship seems to be regretted as much for what it cost him in writing as in life. There appears next a new note, the suggestion of a new motive for autobiography, as if writing through the memory of younger years is a way to stay young: "To have done and seen it all, and still be young and write young, and read young--well, that is to lead many lives, as I say. It has all been to me a piece of intimate (and rather humiliating) experience. I would give all I have (including Lamb House!) for an hour of your retrospective
consciousness, one of your more crowded memories" (HJL IV, 297-98). 12

What I think James is beginning to recognize here in 1903 is what he achieved a decade later by inspecting and recapturing his past. He is toying with the idea of living one's life over again, of achieving through autobiography a living repetition and reanimation of the past. He claimed precisely that effect several times when he came to write his autobiography, but never any more interestingly than in the same passage just cited in which Wilky's letters had suggested something of what he had lost. Reading them again in 1913 returned to him his experience of having read them the first time, just after they had been written during the war. What is recovered and repeated in 1913 is not Wilky's experience, however, but his own, not the content of the written text but the content of his own lived experience of reading them. He knows them "with their liveliest present action to recompose for me not by any means so much the scenes and circumstances, the passages of history concerned, as to make me know again and reinhabit the places, the hours, the stilled or stirred conditions through which I took them in" (NS 460). It is well to remember that for James, reading and writing are acts of present consciousness, and in performing them the mind is in contact with its own needs to formulate and revise and understand in the present moment. Autobiography, which is
what James is writing in 1913 and writing about in 1903, is
to a degree a revelation, and never more than when it
reveals the present moment.

Notes

1. The epistolary record is incomplete, of course; the
voluminous correspondence of both older brothers has never
been collected and published. The critical edition of
William James's correspondence issued by the University
Press of Virginia has now completed in three volumes the
correspondence exchanged by the two elder brothers. The
rest of that edition, which has not appeared, will be
restricted to William's letters alone and will not include
the replies of his correspondents. William James's letters
were previously edited and published by his son, Henry, in
two volumes in 1926, after a famous dispute with his uncle
and namesake concerning the novelist's insistence on
editing and revising the letters he included in his
autobiography, Notes of a Son and Brother (1914).

Henry James's correspondence is even more extensive
than William's and has a more complicated history. Letters
were first published in two volumes in 1920, edited by
Percy Lubbock. Leon Edel edited a one-volume selection in
1955, and his four-volume edition of 1974-1984 is now the
nearest approach to a complete record. Edel's introduction
to the first volume provides an interesting history of the
archival research on James to 1974. (Edel issued a single-
volume selection from the four-volume edition in 1987.)
There are believed to be between 9,500 and 11,000 James
letters extant, of which about 2,300 have been published. A
calendar of the published letters, compiled by Stephen
Jobe, dominated two issues of volume 11 of the Henry James
Review. An effort to locate and publish the whole of
James's correspondence is now underway, headed by Jobe and
set in motion at the sesquicentennial research conference
on Henry James held in New York in June 1993. New pieces of
his epistolary corpus continue to appear in which, in the
manner of the William James project, Henry's letters are
mated with those of a significant correspondent. Those
exchanged with Edmund Gosse were selected and edited by
Rayburn S. Moore in 1988; the correspondence with Edith
Wharton, edited by Lyall H. Powers, was published in 1990;
and the whole of his correspondence with Henry Adams,

The father's letters are principally available from the
number that Henry selected and revised before using them in
his second autobiographical volume, Notes of a Son and
Brother.
2. James's draft was brought to light in 1969 in an article in the New England Quarterly by Charles and Tess Hoffman. According to the Newport Daily News of 8 July 1863, his was one of eighty-six names drawn by lottery from two hundred eighty-seven in Newport's fifth ward. With others, his case was considered by the Rhode Island Board of Enrollment on August 29, and on 5 September the Newport Mercury reported that he had been granted an exemption for "various complaints," a catch-all, the Hoffmans say, for physical disability.

3. The numbers for Rhode Island are 1,296 drafted and 160 served. Commutations were paid by 458, about 35 percent, and substitutes were provided by 678, about 50 percent. The figures are those of the Hoffmans (529), citing Charles Carroll, Rhode Island: Three Centuries of Democracy. 4 vols. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1932. 2: 610.

4. Quoted in Habegger The Father (430), Edel (I, 171-72), Maher (24), and Feinstein (258-59). The first three have inspected the original, which passed from Robertson's daughter, Mary James Vaux, to her son, Henry James Vaux. Habegger has the complete text, so I have quoted from him. He also suggests that the letter was addressed to Christopher and Elizabeth Cranch in Paris, which would account for the "charming conjugal Elizabeth."

5. Quoted in Maher 25. Wilky's account was first published in the Milwaukee Sentinel in 1883, then republished in 1891 as "The Attack on Fort Wagner" in a four-volume gathering of recollections, War Papers, published by the Commandery of Wisconsin, Loyal Legion, Milwaukee.

6. Much of this material is reviewed in Feinstein 254-58. Feinstein's account of Sanborn's influence is animated and severe. He ends by noting that although Sanborn was "drawn to the idea of war," he did not "answer the call," and that two of his "impressionable young students," the James boys, did.

7. Maher says (24) that the father permitted Robertson to lie about his age.

8. The father's letter to Peabody is in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society. The ease with which the father speaks of the possibility of Bob's death in 1863 may be echoed by the language of the father's 1860 letter describing the boys' beginning at the Sanborn academy. "I buried two of my children yesterday--at Concord, Mass., and feel so heartbroken this morning that I shall need to adopt two more instantly to supply their place" (NS 368).
Feinstein calls this burial an "undefended death wish" and says the need to adopt "matches Robertson's lifelong feeling of being unwanted" (255-56).

9. Edel writes: "By one swift bound they surpassed their older brothers, and the focus of family interest was turned upon them where it had previously treated them as juveniles and attached importance to William's artistic and later scientific career and Henry's bookishness. The younger brothers stepped into the bright and lurid light of war for their brief hour" (I 184).

10. Only one of Bob's wartime letters to the family is known to survive. Maher (57) suggests that the letters may have been destroyed by members of the family. Aunt Kate, the mother's sister, is known to have burned some family letters when the father died in 1882, much as Henry burned many of his own papers in 1910. As a result, we cannot know exactly what Bob was saying to the father, although, as Maher and Feinstein make clear, he was thinking of leaving his unit and had begun to have difficulty mastering his relationship with women and alcohol. Maher says emphatically that he "behaved bravely as a soldier" (57). See Maher 57-76 and Feinstein 259. Maher speaks of descendants' anxiety about her research into Bob and Wilky in her address, "The Other Brothers."

11. The fullest publication of the father's letters to Bob is in Maher 70-76, from which I have quoted. They range far beyond paternal invocations of duty and manhood and include chummy exhortations to buck up, sage advice about caution with women, and philosophical and Swedenborgian theology. The letters are in the possession of Henry James Vaux, Robertson's grandson.

12. James's unrestrained admiration here for the military warrior is unexpected, and just as oddly, it seems to have an echo in the memoir by the aesthete, Walter Pater. That brief third-person self-portrait, "The Child in the House," varies rather little from Pater's boyhood except in one significant detail. Pater's father was a surgeon and died before the boy could have remembered him. In his memoir, Pater gives his alter ego, Florian Deleal, the father he himself never knew. However, he chose to make him a soldier. This imaginary father also dies early, killed in the service in India, but lives long enough for the boy to remember him.
Chapter 6: Manhood, Wounds, and the Rituals of Male Mourning

The elder writer devotes at least three sections of Notes of a Son and Brother to the Civil War. It is the great eruption of history in the life of the family and the unclaimed subject of the book. The first section, Chapter VII, consists largely of the father's letters; the second, Chapter IX, includes the "obscure hurt" episode; and the third, Chapter XI, alternates from personal memory to battlefield letters from Wilky. Each section is notably different in narrative control, but the "obscure hurt" episode, the core of the second of the three, is marked by the sort of narrative deformation we might associate with anxiety. Consequently, it interests us the most. The father is himself a significant part only of the first of the three, and brothers form the significant familial attachment in the other two. The first is documentary, the second is explanatory, and the third is recollected. James's account of his own relation to the war in the first is stated, in the second is anxious, and in the third nostalgic.

We shall want to look at the three sections in sequence, because sequence is especially important in determining the autobiographer's experience in the work of recollection and reanimation. Repetition, one form of sequence, may suggest deep necessity, and it may even alter
the nature of the recollective experience and the content of narrative. Some of its effects may be unconscious, or at least unintended. In any case, James seems also to have something quite deliberate at work in his sequencing scheme, for he seems to be consciously working by triplicates, and more than once he places what would appear to be the most dangerous material in the most secure position, embedded in the middle. The one of the three significant Civil War sections that is marked by radical narrative deformation is the embedded one, the second one, and it includes, at its embedded core, the "obscure hurt" passage. Similarly, the first of the three Civil War sections occurs in a sequence of three chapters of letters by the father; it is the embedded second of the three chapters that concerns the war. And within it is the letter that brings the war home to the family. It describes the wounded Wilky, returned to the family foyer from the faraway battlefield.¹

James's seventh chapter consists of his father's letters to a single correspondent, his good friend and friend of the family, Caroline Sturgis Tappan, wife of William Tappan. The chapter presents the father's performance in a socially gracious epistolary relationship with a woman of social and intellectual substance. Altogether there are eight letters to Caroline Tappan, written from 1860 through 1865, and they range from easy
badinage through the father's philosophy of love to the heavy news of Wilky's wounded state. None of the father's other correspondents are granted a single chapter—not Emerson, not Charles Eliot Norton and his sisters, not the wife of the founder of the literary magazine (The Atlantic) that was so crucial in the autobiographer's early career, not even the autobiographer himself. James starts the succeeding chapter, the eighth, by pointing out that his father had several female correspondents, and in this chapter he pauses more than once to cite the gracious tone of the correspondence and the pleasure they take in each other's ideas. I can't think of another example of a son's autobiography so memorializing the social felicities of the father. Clearly, there was much in the manner and content of the relationship with Caroline Tappan that drew the elder son to this packet of letters. James introduces Caroline Tappan at some length; she and her family had lived in Europe and Newport at much the same time as the Jameses, and it becomes clear that in addition to writing often to her, the father had visited her in London and Paris in the winter of 1860 while the family was in Geneva. The second son praises her as an engaging hostess with a store of intellectual and social experience that included personal familiarity with the Transcendentalists. When Caroline was in her late teens, she and her older sister were drawn to the Emerson circle by his personal magnetism,
and she remained an acolyte of Emerson and contributed to *The Dial*. She went boating with Ellery Channing and from the age of thirteen was a close friend of Margaret Fuller. Her sister Ellen was the mother of Marian Hooper Adams, wife of Henry Adams. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, William James writes in his letters of visiting Caroline Tappan's house for vivacious conversation.

The first letter of the chapter is the one in which the father describes leaving the two youngest boys at Sanborn's school in 1860. The academy was pioneering the idea of co-education, and the father is careful to note that one of "the martyred" John Brown's daughters is a student. She is "tall, erect, long-haired and freckled," and he "kissed her (inwardly) between the eyes." He remarks another student's attractiveness and jokingly worries that his boys may not be able to "pursue their studies." The father's expressions here are highly conventional, of course, and are of interest for what they suggest rather than what they actually say. They are spoken by a middle-aged man in the act of holding the interest of a lively and socially acute female correspondent, and it is surely no accident that he images females here as attractive and as social opportunities. Jesting about the boys finding girls more attractive than studies is a way for the speaker to make clear what he considers socially appropriate, and it may even be a form of acknowledging acceptance of such behavior.
in advance. He appears to give it sanction with his next sentence: "I am only sure of one thing, which is that if I had had such educational advantages as that in my youth I should probably have been now far more nearly ripe for this world's business." He pretends to hope that one of the resident teachers, Miss Waterman, could "put out any too lively spark she might see fall on the expectant tinder of my poor boys' bosoms," only to report with obvious pleasure that she is of "round tender eyes, young, fair and womanly," and that he sees "in her only new danger and no promise of safety." The father, so recently returned to America from Europe, then closes this section with enthusiasm: "Yet I can't but felicitate our native land that such magnificent experiments in education go on among us" (NS 368-69).

The father is simultaneously invoking and enacting codes of masculine behavior. He invokes those appropriate for young men, but he enacts those appropriate for middle-aged men, and the latter are of two sorts: those that define male presentation to females of Caroline Tappan's social station and social meaning, and those that define paternal expectations for sons' behavior. I am especially interested in the last, for they make clear an additional dimension of the cultural mythology that envelops the formative Jamesian environment. Eager and ready courtship of young girls is authorized in the home he remembers and
describes; even more, the end of such courtship may be characterized, as the father does here, as a "general conflagration" and a "total combustion." (In contrast, the son's "obscure hurt" is achieved during what he calls a "shabby conflagration" while he tries to extinguish, not ignite, the sparks [NS 415]). There is little that is truly unexpected in such verbal posturing, of course. Indeed, it is quite regular. Fathers quite conventionally authorize such behavior by their sons, and we are free to imagine what effect it would have on the life-term sense of self held by the son who did not enact these codes of behavior. The more interesting speculation, however, concerns the autobiographical significance of this letter. It opens the chapter that will present the autobiographer's first treatment of the Civil War as an event in the family's life, a treatment that will include his own admission of a feeling of inadequacy for not having shared the risk and experienced the danger. This first letter, that is, establishes certain conventionalized tendencies of action for the men of the family; it regularizes. It makes clear that this family honors the male rituals of courtly behavior, just as later letters will establish the family's service and performance of associated codes of male behavior. What the second son has achieved by selecting this letter at this position is to establish a frame, a paternal and masculine frame, of regularized and
regularizing behavior. The elder autobiographer has chosen to live his life in ways that differ from many masculine norms, and the disclosure of a crucial episode in the formation of that difference is contained within this packet, within this chapter, and within this exchange between father and female companion. His difference is contained.

The succeeding letters are from the family sojourn in Geneva and run a gamut of social news and jest; the father is bothered by tobacco smoke since leaving Paris; the father denies that he has a "barbaric yawp" on the scale of Whitman's; the father expounds on "automatic writing" as a communication with the dead; to his "Dear Queen Caroline," the father protests "Don't scold a fellow so!" The next of the group, from June 1860, addressed to "My Dear Carolina--Neither North nor South, but an eminently free State," expresses some of the father's philosophy of love and marriage. "No human being can afford to commit his happiness to another's keeping." He confesses that he "tumbled" into passion "from my boyhood up to my marriage; since which great disillusioning--yes!--I feel that the only lovable person is one who will never permit himself to be loved." He closes by sending his love to her husband, "honest William," and adding, "My wife admires and loves you" (No. 374-81).3
The penultimate letter is the one that interests us. James introduces it by admitting that he "jumps considerably forward" from the family in Europe in 1860 to the return of the wounded Wilky in mid-August 1863. Wilky had been wounded July 18 in the side and ankle as he helped lead the 54th Massachusetts' assault on Fort Wagner, a heavily fortified part of the defense of Charleston Harbor. He was saved by the father of his close friend, Cabot Russel, who was seeking his own son in the Union medical encampment where Wilky lay. When Russel was unable to find Cabot, who died of his injuries while in Confederate hands, he brought Wilky home to his family. Wilky's father's answer to Caroline Tappan's inquiry about his condition is factual, concerned, proud, and attentive. It is, in this, unlike any other letter in this chapter. It is the only moment in this chapter, or in fact in Notes of a Son so far, in which a son has the father's so direct and concerned attention. It repeats and reverses the father's experience of gaining paternal attention and concern when he himself had been injured when he was a youth. In that case, Henry James, Sr., had badly burned his right leg by performing bravely in a stable fire in Albany; he underwent an amputation, perhaps two, above the knee and was confined to his bed for years. The father was the fourth son in the family, and the accident and surgery that cost him his leg were the only occasion when he found himself the object of
William of Albany's tender concern (Edel, I 24-26). When the father writes to Caroline Tappan about Wilky's wound, he is repeating his own experience but shifting his position from the bed to the bedside. Considered as a moment in the son's autobiography, it is the first expression of paternal approbation for what is presented as an act of fully fledged maleness. As the father closes the part of the letter that is reproduced, he says, "Poor Wilky cries aloud for his friends gone and missing, and I could hardly have supposed he might be educated so suddenly up to serious manhood altogether as he appears to have been" (NS 381-82).

James, lingering over the historical moment, points out that he is digressing from the purpose of this chapter. He turns to his own encounter with this brush with the war and to the difference between the way he feels about it now and the way he felt about it then. He reveals little about what was done or not done at the time; instead his attention is on the present retrospective moment and the process of seeing the past as past. His remarks are notable, as well, for the full narrative control and mastery; the sort of anxiety that so deforms the "obscure hurt" material is missing here. That is remarkable, for we have known James to insist that recollection of memory reanimates feelings as well. The war presented "tremendous possibilities of violence," and James almost strikes a melancholic note in
remarking, "I had, under stress, to content myself with knowing it in a more indirect and muffled fashion than might easily have been." He characterizes his experience of the war years in a rather typical way, with a remark of high sentence but little referential precision; it was "a more constituted and sustained act of living" than any period he can recall. Nevertheless, his life course then was different from that of others; he distinguishes between the inward (or contemplative and imaginative) life and the outward (or physical and violent) life, and his experience was all in the inward mode. He says he is sure that at the time, limitation to the inward range of experience was to him "a sore and troubled, a mixed and oppressive thing," whereas that has quite changed by now. He can leave those memories aside with equanimity, "as I should restore tenderly to the shelf any odd rococo object that might have slipped from a reliquary." His image associates those memories with the enshrined, the memorial, and even the sacred. To claim any "'relation to' the War"--those are his apologetic quotation marks on relation to--for himself is to risk the appearance of fatuity, he concedes, but he does claim the relation, and defines it and distances it as a thing enshrined in the most immaterial of traditional literary forms: it is, he says, "a thing exquisite to me, a thing of the last refinement of romance." He concludes this rumination on the effect and place of these memories by
imagining the faces of Cabot Russell and the "other young figures of the fallen." They are approached, he imagines, by memory and fancy, and he sees them "set as upright and clear-faced as may be, each in his sacred niche. They have each to such a degree, so ranged, the strange property or privilege--one scarce knows what to call it--of exquisitely, for all our time, facing us out, quite blandly ignoring us, looking through us or straight over us at something they partake of together but that we mayn't pretend to know. We walk thus, I think, rather ruefully before them--those of us at least who didn't at the time share more happily their risk" (NS 382-84).

This is James's summary of his relationship with his memories of those years, and the memory of his own absence from the field. He will speak of that absence again, but not with such control and equanimity. It is notable that three times he enshrines those memories in images of, precisely, memorial shrines, and in the first and last instances he speaks of objects being placed in a sacred spot among other objects. The mastery and self-control of the writing may be related to the use of such traditional, even ritualized, associations. It may also be related to the presence of the father; it is his own father's handwriting that is before him and his father's words that have given us the presence of Wilky's wounds. There is, as well, another father present. He is Cabot Russell's father,
and he is memorialized here as a figure of great dignity and self-control, a man bereft—James repeats the word—bereft of his only son. He sits "erect and dry-eyed at the guarded feast of our relief" (NS 383). He has sacrificed—his son has died—but he has saved another son. The fathers by their example authorize a certain containment of feeling; we might say that their example establishes what is appropriate behavior. There is a shrine here, the fathers are present, there is a "feast," perhaps a holy feast. The fathers carry themselves with dignity and a sense of the importance of the moment. Emotion is contained, loss is borne, pain and injury are endured. This is a tableau of the solemn ritual of male mourning.

In this time of mourning, it is notable that there is so little sense of loss. The injured Wilky suffers, but he shall recover; he has, in any case, gained, not lost, in his father's estimate. The elder Russel is so quiet that James must imagine his sense of loss, must "impute [it] to his grave steady gentleness." The only one present who speaks as if there has been a loss is the autobiographer himself, and that loss, too, is borne with quiet dignity and stated with self-control. He mentions his loss three times. He strikes the early melancholic note when he says "I had, under stress to content myself" with indirect knowledge of the war. With an "alas" appended, he speaks a bit later of having lived inwardly, then explains that the
sad "alas" attaches entirely to the original experience, not to his present sense of those years. The regret, he says, has left. And finally, as the faces of the fallen stare from their sacred niches he walks ruefully before them because one "didn't at the time share more happily their risk." The autobiographer's design for this ritual of male mourning has included certain standards of behavior, which he honors by his own containment of regret. His loss is considerable, of course. Remember his father's refusal to let him volunteer in the early stages of the war, and his father's ready acceptance of Wilky's and Bob's service. Remember, too, the paternal and familial readiness to invest war service with the identifying codes of masculine identity. What was held within that "alas"--the appended and repeated and explained "alas"--was weighty and consequential, then. It is important that James behaves in this passage in accord with the codes of this ritual of male mourning. Just as the participants in the ritual express no feeling over their suffering and loss, just so does the autobiographer bear his loss, his so great loss, with stoic dignity. He honors the importance of the loss by designing the ritual, and he honors its codes of behavior by repeating the fathers' example. James is soldiering through, too.

A final letter closes the chapter. After the digression to consider matter most threatening, James returns his
attention to the subject that opened the chapter, his father's courtly epistolary relationship with Caroline Tappan. The war, its wounds, its suffering, and the tableau of male mourning and endurance had been introduced and preceded by the father's gallant performance of male regularity. Now they are contained and framed as the father's performance is resumed. Writing in the fall of 1865, after the family had moved to Boston, the father seeks to persuade "My Dear Carry" to come to town from Lenox. His brain is tired, he complains, and so "I can't write what I want to say." She has provoked him with a question and he is "eager always to make a conquest of you." He praises her gifts: "It's a delight to know a person of your sense and depth" (NS 384-85).

The letter about Wilky and its positioning have enabled James to manage successfully what could be the most troubling of memories. The question of his own absence from the field of masculine contest has been attached to a brother's experience. His own story, that is, is liberated by the introduction of the brother's. It is a sequence that began his autobiographical project, of course; the family book that became his conscious autobiography began as brother William's memorial. It was fraternal and familial necessity that was the foundation of his autobiographical enterprise; James's eternally resident anxieties of autobiographical disclosure were overwhelmed by his
brother's death. In comparable fashion, anxieties and reluctances about specific kinds of autobiographical disclosure were released by another brother's wounding and were managed by male ritual, which was presided over and authorized by the fathers. James's father and his letters occupy the autobiographer for another chapter, and then he seems to disappear.

What appears is the haunted Chapter IX, the chapter of the "obscure hurt." It is written without documentation; the appeal is not to letters but to memory, and it is marked by the agony of present recollection. In place of the father, who has dropped aside, there is the brother, William, for James tries to make the thematic cord of the chapter his leaving Newport and joining William at Harvard. His thematic obsession is his relation with an alternative fraternal figure, the collective wartime social body of America. The chapter is marked by a number of anxieties, to which he returns repeatedly. He is concerned about self-worth, and about how it has been expressed through the course of his life. He is anxious about the figure he adopts and about how he is to be interpreted, and his anxiety attaches to interpretation at three points: the historical moment of the event, the moment of present recollection, and the reader's moment of reclamation. In fact, no chapter of his autobiography is quite so significantly aware of those three phases of time, the then
of experience, the now of composition, and the future of interpretation. He is insistent in claiming that the episodes of this chapter shall signify throughout the course of his life, as if the subjective consciousness has habitually returned to them and played over them in the intervening half century. Despite the unusual richness of episode, the chapter is not so clearly grounded in the past as one would expect. Part of the explanation is that the recollective present is so vivid, extensive, and agonizing that the past is obscured. Really, though, obscurity is very much part of his purpose. He is eager to take shelter in the possibility of vagueness and ambiguity; indeed, he calls vagueness a "saving virtue" at one point. The "obscure hurt" passage itself is a crescendo of obscurity. About that passage in particular and about the chapter in general, there seems a compulsion to disclose but a necessity to withhold. James says as much when he remarks as he closes the chapter: "There are memories in truth too fine or too peculiar for notation, too intensely individual and supersubtle--call them what one will; yet which one may thus no more give up confusedly than one may insist on them vainly. Their kind is nothing ever to a present purpose unless they are in a manner statable, but is at the same time ruefully aware of threatened ridicule if they are overstated" (NS 426). Any "memories in truth" are troubling, and the agony is to make them "in a manner
statable." The wonder is that he mentions such incidents at all. Why, one wonders, reanimate a memory that is so troubling? The answer to a question of motive may be elusive, but the effect of revealing things "in a manner statable" is to achieve a certain perpetual presence. By withholding clarity, he withholds something of the memory. To withhold clarity is to prevent transparency; James will not disappear. He insists on remaining part of the eternal interpretive present. James's presence is always part of our experience of the "obscure hurt." He insists on not staying in the past, on not receding into the background, into the years of the war (1863). The obscurity is the mark of the recollective present (1913), but to experience it is to recall James to our own present (1995). His presence lives eternally in the perpetual reactivation of the memory he left for us of himself as the recollective writer. The memorial record of the far past is incomplete, but the writer's present moment is enacted for us in the withholding, and the incompleteness of the far past is what gives the possibility of perpetual life to the autobiographer.

The passage itself has puzzled and intrigued interpreters more than any other part of James's account of himself. The chief reason for the fascination, one supposes, has been the possibility of lurid sexual discovery. Quite early in the interpretive history it was
nominated as the site where James buried the secret of his sexual life, and, indeed, it would be the place to start looking if one could believe, as those early diggers did, that James was castrated. His lifetime celibacy, the patterns of his social life, and the infrequency of sexual activity in his fiction are not what those readers thought, however. He was neither passionless nor passive. Concerning things that mattered to him—chiefly his art, his worth, his family, and his memories—James carried himself with such fully-fledged confidence, aggressive assertion, and imperious will that it is silly to believe he was a hormonal midget. As Edel says, quite aptly, "Henry James himself, we suspect, would not have used the word eunuch so freely, as he did on occasion, to describe bad and unproductive writers, had he been physically one himself" (I 183).

The history of the interpretation is reviewed best by Eakin ("Obscure Hurt" 677) and Edel (I 176). Early critics, such as Rebecca West in 1916, and Van Wyck Brooks and Pelham Edgar in the 1920s, made little of the episode, or accepted it as what kept James from participating in the Civil War. There was, of course, Hemingway's slur in The Sun Also Rises (1926) when his own castrato, Jake Barnes, chats with a friend who speaks darkly of "Henry's bicycle" as the mysterious cause of impotence. In the 1930s, Glenway Wescott and Stephen Spender aided and strengthened the
speculation that the episode involved castration. That strain persisted through some of the mid-century landmarks of James commentary, including F. O. Matthiessen's *The James Family* (1947), R. P. Blackmur's essay on James in *The Literary History of the United States* (1948), and Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination* (1950).

It was the wartime essay of Saul Rosenzweig that shifted the focus to the subjective nature of the hurt and to its psychological rather than biographical truth. To that point, it had been assumed that his account was of interest for its reference to a historically fixed and biographically verifiable event. Rosenzweig quite brilliantly sees the obscure hurt as a reference to an event in the life of the father, the barn fire that took his leg. Its truth then would be a matter of the son's psychological compulsion to repeat the father, to claim a comparably distinctive physical incapacity. This was, in its day, an altogether unlooked for insight, as were Rosenzweig's suggestions that the obscure hurt was directly related to significant woundings in his fiction—the Civil War injuries and death of the hero of his first signed story, "The Story of a Year," and the missing fingers of the specter that Spencer Brydon stirs up in "The Jolly Corner." Nevertheless, Rosenzweig misunderstands the nature of autobiographical truth, for he treats the obscure hurt as a historical event that "crystallized a sense of
impotence from which he never fully recovered" (440). Not only is it unclear that the autobiographer is referring to an actual event in James's history, but also it is difficult to discern much impotence in James's career of dominating and mastering his material. It is, to say the least, impractical and unproductive to imagine that autobiography can be a transparent and perfect account of an event if we also believe that it has distorted the emotional life of the autobiographer for fifty years. Rosenzweig says the impotence is found in "an implicit attitude of combined guilt and inferiority," as if that guilt could permit a transparent account of its own origin to be recorded. It is far closer to human and autobiographical necessity to suggest that the obscure hurt is a late construction to answer or resolve guilt and inferiority which originates elsewhere.

Although it is now somewhat dated in its approach, Rosenzweig's essay has been one of the most influential in the course of Jamesian interpretation. In shaping some of Edel's thinking, its influence has endured to this day. For instance, Edel adopts Rosenzweig's insight about the repetition of the father's injury, but then extends it by noting that the son's characterization of it as a "vast visitation" reminds us irresistibly of the father's "vastation," that defining moment of the father's spiritual panic and resolution; Edel manages to make the obscure hurt
thereby doubly a repetition of the father (I 180-81). I would never quarrel with any suggestion that doubles the son's repetition of the father's experience, especially those that mark and that give pain. I do suggest, however, that both Rosenzweig and Edel have overlooked the nearer and more appropriate antecedent for James's obscure hurt. I mean Wilky's wound. The reason for this oversight is simple, I think; once again, autobiography has not been read as an act with a living present. Severing the obscure hurt's ties to its own living moment makes it impossible to understand it. In this instance, what has been overlooked is the physical (and presumably chronological) proximity of the two passages. James's obscure hurt is the focus of Chapter IX, and Wilky's injury is the centerpiece of Chapter VII; all that intervenes is more of the father's letters in Chapter VIII—thirty-three pages altogether. The prior experience of recollecting Wilky's injury and composing the response to it, painful as it was, could not have disappeared from memory. Making Wilky's wound part of his own autobiography has changed the memory, of course, by giving it a new time, place, and nature. The wound is now closer to James's present; it would be distant by a matter of perhaps weeks, not by a half-century, and it is now in memory in the form of action that has defined and expressed James's entire adult life, as writing. That trace of Wilky's wound would be far more vivid, one would think,
than a psychological compulsion to repeat the father. Indeed, James tries to cast his obscure hurt as his own version of war wounds to the general social body, albeit without mentioning his younger brother as the signal instance of the proximity of those wounds. Missing the association between the brothers' injuries also means that all three injuries are not understood as the succession they are.

The father's letter to Caroline Tappan concerning Wilky's wounds, which is the textual memory to which James's obscure hurt refers, is itself a repetition of the father's experience as a youth, when his leg was amputated. All three injuries are occasions of paternal concern, moments that remain in memory as demonstrations of parental affection. Edel very smartly recovered the father's account from an unexpected source, a partly fictional memoir elusively titled, "Immortal Life: Illustrated in a Brief Autobiographic Sketch of the Late Stephen Dewhurst." In that posthumously published memoir, the name is changed, of course, and the wound is altered from a burn of the right leg to a gunshot wound of the arm. What remains are the father, the injured son, and the agony of enduring the years of bedridden pain. If we recognize what Edel and others have not, the triple succession, we will also deepen our recognition of the shadowy presence of the paternal concern aroused by the obscure hurt. The question we may
ask of our autobiographer is just what the obscure hurt helped him get from his father.

The most recent treatments of the obscure hurt are Cox's and Eakin's. Cox properly sees the hurt as related to James's choice of vocation, writing, but he claims that the hurt is comparable to St. Augustine's conversion to Christianity in his *Confessions*. This seems a bit forced; the only comparability is that the turning points come in the ninth chapters in thirteen-chapter autobiographies. Otherwise, Cox's interpretation seems quite sharp--sharp in insight and sharp in its bite. He seizes on the Jamesian repetition of "interest" in what is clearly a self-interested narrative, and he expresses considerable skepticism about James's motives and sincerity. James attached to the obscure hurt passage an account of ministering to wounded soldiers, and his suggestion of having "perhaps positively anticipated dear old Walt" (NS 424) makes Cox shudder. He cites James for "alarming treachery" in this, pointing out that in 1865 James had attacked Whitman as a fraud when he reviewed *Drum Taps* (249).

Eakin's essay has had a formative influence on my own methodology. Noting the obscurity of James's account and its variance from documentary fact, he suggests that James's obscurity and temporal confusion may be closer to "the psychological heart of the episode" than is the
clarity of contemporary accounts. If we are asked "What happened?" he urges answering by referring not to past history but rather to James's writing present. Doing so may let us recognize that "autobiography is not merely a source of biographical facts, it is such a fact itself" (679). That is, autobiography gives order to the writer's past and thereby simultaneously orders his present notion of himself, which is an expression of that past. Eakin's emphasis here on the autobiographer's very complicated present is the origin of my own belief, previously presented, that autobiography cannot be understood without reference to its alteration by all the human needs in force at the moment of composition. Edel had painstakingly made a case for the obscure hurt being a bad back, but Eakin quickly and neatly severs the two. There are occasional traces of a bad back (actually, they are rare) in James's letters, but those are nothing—nothing—compared to the complications of this obscure hurt. The hurt was never a matter of any importance in James's life until 1913, until he came to write about himself. The obscure hurt, that is, is a phenomenon of autobiography and the act of writing, not the process of living. It reflects the necessities at play at the present moment of writing.

From there, however, Eakin moves in directions I will not follow. He recapitulates here, in his 1988 essay, the argument he first advanced in 1984 to the effect that
writing the obscure hurt material had given the elder autobiographer strength to master the crises of his late life. There were crises, to be sure, and James appears to have mastered them, or to have endured them. Eakin mentions the financial failure of the New York Edition, his episodes of poor health, his fear that he could no longer write fiction, and the death of his brother. Surely another view is possible; surely these could be taken for proof of strength, not a sign that a missing strength need be supplied. Moreover, it was the death of William that freed the autobiographical stream, which was past midpoint by the time it reached the obscure hurt. Eakin works hard to discern what James meant by this passage and what it means to say. I don't think clarification lies that way. I take autobiographical truth here to be not what James was trying to say, but what he is trying to keep from saying. He seems to be hiding something; it is what he is compelled not to hide, but must manage still to withhold. It is something unmentionable that he cannot fail to mention. The Boston doctor tells him, notably enough, that there was "nothing to speak of the matter with me" (NS 417).

We are reminded here of what has already been pointed out, that James makes precisely this point as he closes the "obscure hurt" chapter. It has dealt with memories that are "too peculiar for notation." One must be cautious of such memories; they expose the teller to "ridicule if they are
overstated" and yet they must be "in a manner statable" (NS 426). "In a manner." The genius will not be in the details. It will be in the manner.

Notes

1. Todorov has observed that James's sentences are structured by the same process of embedding. In an essay largely devoted to the structure of James's tales, he notes that the embedding process is part of the writing style so characteristic of James's late period. The large enveloping part of the sentence may be banal or unimportant and the matter that is of interest may be secreted at its heart, within such secondary structures as dependent clauses or even prepositional phrases (82).

2. The letters presumably were turned over to the Jameses as a unit, and James speaks of them as a "small group" (NS 384), but James remains imperiously responsible for everything in his autobiography and the sequence of its elements. In this chapter, he introduces the letter about Wilky, the one that interests us, by admitting that it breaks chronology, the same admission with which he introduces the chapter itself and the one that follows. The family letters were turned over to James because, in the family's grief after William died, a written family record was wanted and James was the sole surviving voice. The dispute caused by his willful appropriation of a familial project to his own purpose has been documented in Carol Holly's brief but important paper, "The Family Politics of the 'Family Book." And, of course, James quite famously edited these documents of his family's past. His nephew Harry, William's son, complained about the changes in his father's letters; their exchanges are described by Edel (V 457). Harry soon edited his father's letters himself, and in his Preface he comments pointedly about his uncle Henry's occasional inaccuracy; he advances his own claim to have printed the letters verbatim (ix). In the case of Minny Temple's letters, which fill the final chapter of Notes of a Son and Brother, the deletions and emendations were considerable, as Habegger ("Rewriting") makes clear.

3. On the father's radical and public statements about marriage see "The Lessons of the Father: Henry James, Sr., on Sexual Difference," Chapter 2 of Habegger's Henry James and the "Woman Business." He shows that the father was persistently hostile to matrimony, and argues that the son was embarrassed by the father's written excesses and bitterly resented journalists' attacks on his father;
indeed, James came to believe that journalism existed solely to attack privacy. Habegger maintains, for example, that *The Bostonians* was meant to avenge the father and "to vindicate his ideas on woman" (61).

4. Alfred Habegger's *The Father* (1994) enormously expands our understanding of this trauma. He establishes a date for at least one amputation, May 6, 1628, when Henry, Sr., would have been a month shy of seventeen, not thirteen as his son William had said. Habegger also opens up the possibility that the boy was abed with his diseased and infected limb, in an age before painkillers, for four years or more, not two. On this incident and the father's life in general, Habegger is now the standard. See "Morbidity" (66-82).

5. No biography of the family members doubts that "Immortal Life" is the father's life under a different name; the consensus is that although some facts may vary, the emotional content and psychological relationships are authentic. The most extensive consideration of its autobiographical claim and content is by Nadelman. The memoir was first published in *The Atlantic* in 1884. When William James included it that same year in *The Literary Remains of the Late Henry James, Sr.*, he designated "Stephen Dewhurst" a pseudonym and "corrected" a few dates and places. Nadelman says "the merging of autobiography and fiction was a James family tradition" (248).
Chapter 7: The Obscure Hurt

The chapter is James's triumph. As an act of compromised disclosure, it is a piece of brilliance. What is disclosed is not clear, because the purpose is to withhold. What is disclosed is the act of withholding. This is the signature passage of autobiographical anxiety, the place in which the autobiographer signs his work, leaves his most characteristic trace. The symptoms of anxiety mean that this is the felt and lived experience of the writer; this touches him, the writer. There is something of the obsessive or the fascinated about the resolve with which James proceeds with the material. The simple presence of the memories in their compromised state suggests that the speaker feels some compulsion to speak; it is as if the fitness of things would be violated if all trace of the memories were absent. It never seems to have occurred to James that he could have been silent about this. The possibility of silence certainly occurred to his friend and correspondent, Henry Adams, who wrote his own autobiography a few years before James wrote his. Adams left out twenty years, effacing all mention of his marriage. James's memories are the sort that will not rest. James may not state directly why the memories will not rest, but the anxieties plainly concern what he was not (a soldier) and what he was (a writer). This is the chapter in which his life takes its most important turn toward the meaning,
course, and content that it would achieve. Remarkably enough, he does not say that. James does not narrate his life. This chapter makes it clear that James's life is not narrated or plotted—arranged along a skein of incidents given significant and stated relation; it is, instead, recollected and episodic. Often enough throughout the autobiography and in particular in this chapter, episodes form their significant attachment not to the past but to the present. That is, causal relation between incidents is often enough not stated, and what is given life is not the course of events in the past but the dramatization of the recollective act in the present.

We know or may fairly infer what James is not saying. He is speaking about what he is, or what identity he chose then. By choosing not to be a soldier, he loses the company of a certain order of men and a certain order of male experience that conventionally signifies the heart of masculinity. If a man chooses not to be a warrior, what kind of man is he? In this war, we latter-day observers can say, he was near the norm, if we judge by the numbers. The question lingers, of course, and one way of looking at a life that follows from a decision not to serve in war might be considered an attempt to answer the question, what kind of man is he? James makes it clear that the "obscure hurt" had consequences throughout his life, so it is certain that the meaning of what he is remembering in this chapter has
life-long duration and that questions left unanswered at the time have persisted to this moment. The answer to what kind of man he is, we might say, is quite clear; he is a creative writer. Just at the opening of this chapter, James answers the question of what he chose to be back then. It is, by its stated content, a claim to the creative faculty and to human worth; it is, by literary tradition and unacknowledged but obvious context, a claim of masculinity as well.

It seems at first call so unlike what we think of as an invocation of the masculine that it might be fairer to James's way of thinking to call it a performative claim of male self-worth. James never applied the word "masculine" to himself, and it is difficult to recognize much of what is conventionally figured as masculine in his claim here. What our culture has chosen to call masculine has varied, however; it has been shown to vary in response to changes in time, place, class, and career, and those are precisely the conditions by which we differ from James. So if it is fair to say that James does not call himself masculine, it would also be fair to remember that a performative claim of male self-worth is nothing if not masculine. James writes: "I am not sure whether I yet made bold to say it, but I should surely be good for nothing, all my days, if not for projecting into the concrete, by hook or by crook—that is my imagination shamelessly aiding—some show of (again)
"mere life" (NS 411). It is a claim, as I have argued, that has nothing to do with sexual activity and everything to do with professional mastery of language. As I have reviewed, he formulated it more fully elsewhere, most especially in the conclusion to the Preface to The Golden Bowl. An elegant formulation of aesthetic manliness is not possible for James at this point, but it is what he means. The contrast between this artistic sort of mastery and the bare, naked maleness of the warrior is too extreme; he is outfaced, just as he had been earlier when the statues of the fallen heroes looked "through us or straight over us at something they partake of together but that we mayn't pretend to know."

What was undeclared at the time, a life of writing, is uttered circumspectly and even evasively by the autobiographer now, and it is marked by the wish to avoid being taken forever as worthless. It is the first appearance of the theme that runs throughout this chapter, the sense that the events and choices it tells will control how he will be understood the rest of his life. The emblem of his choice of a life career is next imagined as a flag that is hidden in his pocket. Quite remarkably, he does not reach into that pocket until he closes the chapter, and then it is to give something to injured soldiers. First he strikes his colors and puts them in his pocket:

This impression [his undeclared intention to write] was not in the least the flag I publicly brandished; in
fact I must have come as near as possible to brandishing none whatever, a sound instinct always hinting to me, I gather, that the time for such a performance was much more after than before—before the perfect place had been found for the real planting of the standard and the giving of its folds to the air. No such happy spot had been marked, decidedly, at that period, to my inquiring eye; in consequence of which the emblazoned morsel (hoisted sooner or later by all of us, I think, somehow and somewhere), might have passed for the hour as a light extravagant bandanna rolled into the tight ball that fits it for hiding in the pocket. (NS 411)

The time would come for displaying the colors, for standing one's ground and brandishing the blazon, one's defining emblem—for announcing what one was. That time had not yet come when, at the end of the chapter, James describes his ministrations to the war's injured.

I recover that, strolling about with honest and so superior fellow-citizens, or sitting with them by the improvised couches of their languid rest, I drew from each his troubled tale, listened to his plaint on his special hard case—taking form, this, in what seemed to me the very poetry of the esoteric vernacular—and sealed the beautiful tie, the responsive sympathy, by an earnest offer, in no instance waved away, of such pecuniary solace as I might at brief notice draw on my poor pocket for. (NS 424)

What goes into his pocket, his literary intentions in the image of a military flag, comes out as a payment to the military wounded. This is another form of the $300 draft commutation, and both expenditures express cultural dominance and mastery. What he puts in his pocket is his masculinizing self-expression, and it stays there as he adopts the feminized role of nurse and nurturing attendant. What he takes out of the pocket ends the presentation of
the feminized nurturer and returns him to the position he customarily holds and has claimed for himself throughout his life: the master of his domain. What signifies the return of masculinity is the emblem of social dominance and mastery, money. Hard currency, cold cash, coin of the realm—this is what enables social transformation and class elevation. In fact, possession of it freed one in those years from the necessity of answering the draft. Money, that is, signified more mightily than soldiering, and here the bedside visitor exploits all of its potency by taking that mightier masculinity out of his pocket and presenting it to the injured soldier. As he does so, he claims all the differences between the whole and hale James and the injured, beaten, maimed, and crippled—the one who, at a blow, had been left less complete.

Other forms of mastery are available to the elder professional writer, of course, and he now finds it necessary to exercise one. There is the memory of another writer, his contemporary and an American who stayed at home to declare his Americanness throughout the land. Recalling a visit to Civil War bedsides must recall as well Walt Whitman, another American bachelor whose writing had spoken far more directly than James's about homoerotic pleasures and homosocial episodes. Whitman's proximity has already been reflected in James's description of the soldiers' speech as "what seemed to me the very poetry of the
esoteric vernacular." In the sentence that immediately follows the emptied pocket, James turns to the necessity of contesting and answering the memory of Whitman: "Yet again, as I indulge this memory, do I feel that I might if pushed a little, rejoice in having to such an extent coincided with, not to say positively anticipated, dear old Walt—even if I hadn't come armed like him with oranges and peppermints" (NS 424). This sentence exceeds "dear old Walt"—how insincerely that rings—even as it suggests a continuity in their paired gifts to the soldiers. What James put into his own pocket at the start of the chapter was a bit oddly named an "emblazoned morsel," a designation that might seem now to anticipate Whitman's comestibles more than James's coin. So Walt and Henry drew from the same pocket, in a manner of speaking. The comparability is more extensive; he asserts equivalent sentiment (his word), equivalent Americanism (his word), and equivalent "authority" (his word and his quotation marks). The comparability and proximity are severe; important, then, to distinguish, as James does: "I ministered much more summarily, though possibly in proportion to the time and thanks to my better luck more pecuniarily" (NS 424).

Proximity to Whitman, to a feminized activity, and to the injured men causes James's concern to slip from the act of nurturing to the interpretation of nurturing. He speaks of changes in how the larger community has come to
understand homosocial communities and homosocial experience, "sojourns wherever homogeneity and its entailed fraternity, its easy contacts, still may be seen to work" (NS 425). He writes with considerable delicacy and circumspection, so we may fairly infer the anxiety that attaches to the issue. The visit to the wounded soldiers is conducted within an institution he calls "our common Americanism," which is marked by a "disclosed freshness" that may have disappeared:

> What holds me now indeed is that such an institution might have exemplified then almost nothing but the aspects strictly native to our social and seasonal air; so simply and easily conceivable to the kindly mind were at that time these reciprocities, so great the freedom and pleasure of them compared with the restrictions imposed on directness of sympathy [which he had given the soldiers] by the awful admixtures of today, those which offer to the would-be participant among us ... the strange shock of such amenities declined on any terms. (NS 425)

One wonders what sort of experience gave rise to the shock of having such amenities declined, and when such a result of modern "admixtures" to the social amennities actually might have occurred. Clearly enough it did happen, though, and it seems to have "blighted" what he calls, with emphasis, "the consecrated association." Precisely what happened is unclear, but it is clear that James was exposed to an effect of the sort of suspicion or gossip that, so ironically, was to attach to the obscure hurt passage itself. At some point, James's offer of sympathy or affection was rebuffed as being inappropriate for a man to
make to another man; at some point, James heard the talk of impotence or sexual difference, or homosexuality. Or perhaps he only suspected that was the reason for the rebuff, suspected that was what he heard. He resumes now, speaking pointedly of the unassuming way in which he undertook the ministrations with the soldiers and bitterly of the way in which those attitudes are misunderstood now: "Which remarks may reinforce the note of my unconsciousness of any difficulty for knowing in the old, the comparatively brothering, conditions what an American at least was. Absurd thus, no doubt, that the scant experience over which I perversely linger insists on figuring to me as quite a revel of the right confidence" (NS 425).

Circumspect and evasive as James is here, he would have been understood by his readers, and especially by older bachelors and single men. It is James at a very human and even courageous moment. What he does is also aggressive, be it noted, and perhaps foolhardy. How human, though, to object to the suspicions, and how discreetly he presents his case. The circumlocutions that are so typical and frustrating in late Jamesian writing are here part of his very subject; it is the nature of this suspicion (or perhaps the nature of all suspicion) to avoid full formulation or clear statement. Suspicion, of course, should not be uttered; it is not good manners, good politics, good policy, or good art. And so James's defense,
or objection, never names his object but leaves it as unstated as the nature of what may be suspected. What he defends is the gesture of concern and its interpretation. His tactic is to place what has been questioned in the shelter of the unquestionable: Americaniness, and even a sacredly "consecrated association." He places the episode even deeper in the unquestionable by so nostalgically invoking the simplicity of the past and insisting that the simplicity has made interpretation of identity accurate: "knowing in the old, the comparatively brothering, conditions what an American at least was."

What he is considering here are his public acts and their interpretation. Not here or elsewhere does he speak of private acts. He is defending not the acts of his privacy but the fact of that privacy. Here and throughout the autobiography, he creates a privacy by discretion and the act of withholding. That process is continued by the second part of his effort here, his insistence on the meaning and interpretation of his public, observed acts and gestures of affection. Quite willfully, he reserves to himself the control of his own life and its interpretation, as autobiographers are said to do. In his nostalgic retrospection, he insists not on what the American was, only that it was plainly and commonly known what he was. He is speaking of himself, of course, and he means to say that
he is what he always was, which is what he declared at the start of the chapter: masculine.

He had started the chapter speaking of his decision to leave home to enter the male institution of Harvard Law School, a step that he recalls as having been "one of the oddest errands ... I could possibly have undertaken" (NS 411). The question of why he went appears to fascinate him. He devotes fully four pages of the chapter, the first four, to playing over the circumstances of his departure and his reasons, but he never really manages to come to a clear statement, which would look something like this: He went for two reasons: the war mobilization made it necessary that he at least leave home, and going to school would at least gain him the independence that could lead to a literary career. He had to leave because the war had put a new cast on the question of male activity; "just staying at home when everyone was on the move couldn't in any degree show the right mark." If one were unable to show an interest in going to war, one felt the need of what James recalls as "the positive saving virtue of vagueness," and to be "properly and perfectly vague one had to be vague about something; mere inaction quite lacked the note" (NS 412). He was going "with no design that I could honourably exhibit," perhaps because honor was felt then to be all on the side of the soldier and the national martial purpose. What he wanted to do with his life he was not ready to
exhibit; this is the flag and bandanna that he was hiding in his pocket earlier. "What I 'wanted to want' to be was, all intimately, just literary" (NS 413). The odd repetition ("wanted to want") is a form of deferral (active wanting must wait), and the delay that is part of that deferral echoes the gesture of pocketing his intentions. In any case, leaving for school would achieve independence; he uses the word twice. Independence would enable him to cultivate "the life of the imagination" and to do so "under the rich cover of obscurity" (NS 414).

There is something of the flavor of deliverance in this account, as if what really mattered was the chance to be away from home. The study of the law is not what attracted him; he almost scoffs at that, and later he describes his embarrassments in law school. Nor does he speak with pleasure of scholarship in a general sense; he means something else by the "life of the imagination." He had wanted to leave the previous year and had been refused. When he speaks of his father having "depreciated the 'college course' with such emphasis," he almost seems to be describing the same dispute his father referred to in his "proud papas" letter, in which the father claimed to have refused permission for Henry and William to go to war. Both accounts by father and son describe a contest of wills about the decision to leave the house of the father. It is a formative and sometimes defining moment in the life of
every young man. Whatever had been the content of the 1861 dispute or disputes, the form and purpose is the same in both accounts. In form, each is a repetition of the ancient contest between father and son over the time and manner of the son's entrance into manhood; in purpose, each announces the triumph of the father's will and the extension of the son's bondage. In James's memory, then, the ambition of entering manhood would have been marked by the father's prohibition and the possibility that he did not have his father's confidence.

We are on the very lip of the obscure hurt passage, and we do well just now to muse thus over the conflation of the two disputes. Although James represents the effect of the obscure hurt as being directly related to his choice of school, he images the experience of the hurt itself as his own wounding in service. The hurt, that is, both forms his own sense of personal life course but also testifies to his own service in a volunteer male corps defending the community. In some sense, that night of the fire stands for his military service. The obscure hurt, that is, is personal mythology, a signifying event in the memory of how Henry became James.

Two things and more had come up—the biggest of which, and very wondrous as bearing on any circumstance of mine, as having a grain of weight to spare for it, was the breaking out of the War. The other, the infinitely small affair in comparison, was a passage of personal history the most entirely personal, but between which, as a private catastrophe or difficulty, bristling with embarrassments, and the great public convulsion that
announced itself in bigger terms each day, I felt from the very first an association of the closest, yet withal, I fear, almost the least clearly expressible. Scarce at all to be stated, to begin with, the queer fusion or confusion established in my consciousness during the soft spring of '61 by the firing on Fort Sumter, Mr. Lincoln's instant first call for volunteers and a physical mishap, already referred to as having overtaken me at the same dark hour, and the effects of which were to draw themselves out incalculably and intolerably. Beyond all present notation the interlaced, undivided way in which what had happened to me, by a turn of fortune's hand, in twenty odious minutes, kept company of the most unnatural--I can call it nothing less--with my view of what was happening, with the question of what might still happen, to everyone about me, to the country at large: it so made of these marked disparities a single vast visitation. One had the sense, I mean, of a huge comprehensive ache, and there were hours at which one could scarce have told whether it came most from one's own poor organism, still so young and so meant for better things, but which had suffered particular wrong, or from the enclosing social body, a body rent with a thousand wounds and that thus treated one to the honour of a sort of tragic fellowship. The twenty minutes had sufficed, at all events, to establish a relation--a relation to everything occurring round me not only for the next four years but for long afterward--that was at once extraordinarily intimate and quite awkwardly irrelevant. I must have felt in some befooled way in presence of a crisis--the smoke of Charleston Bay still so acrid in the air--at which the likely young should be up and doing or, as familiarly put, lend a hand much wanted; the willing youths, all round, were mostly starting to their feet, and to have trumped up a lameness at such a juncture could be made to pass in no light for graceful. Jammed into the acute angle between two high fences, where the rhythmic play of my arms, in tune with that of several other pairs, but at a dire disadvantage of position, induced a rural, a rusty, a quasi-extemporised old engine to work and a saving stream to flow, I had done myself, in face of a shabby conflagration, a horrid even if an obscure hurt; and what was interesting from the first was my not doubting in the least its duration--though what seemed equally clear was that I needn't as a matter of course adopt and appropriate it, so to speak, or place it for increase of interest on exhibition. The interest of it, I very presently knew, would certainly be of the greatest, would even in conditions as simple as I might make them become little less than absorbing. The
shortest account of what was to follow for a long time after is therefore to plead that the interest never did fail. It was naturally what is called a painful one, but it consistently declined, as an influence at play, to drop for a single instant. Circumstances, by a wonderful chance, overwhelmingly favoured it—as an interest, an inexhaustible, I mean; since I also felt in the whole enveloping tonic atmosphere a force promoting its growth. Interest, the interest of life and death, of our national existence, of the fate of those, the vastly numerous, whom it closely concerned, the interest of the extending War, in fine, the hurrying troops, the transfigured scene, formed a cover for every sort of intensity, made tension itself in fact contagious—so that almost any tension would do, would serve for one's share. (NS 412-14)

The first thing that strikes me about this account is the great distance between the recollective present and the historical past; it is uttered as the memory of the older man, not as the experience of the young man. The ones who are to answer the call to arms are "the likely young" and "the willing youths"; they would not seem such to their equal, their companion, or their contemporary. The one who is speaking in this distant, even old and awkward reference is the latter-day James. There is comparable distance and awkwardness in his description of the work of making the old pump work; that man with his hand on the handle is old now, and he left this place long ago. It is the account of one who is no longer familiar with the apparatus. James is as uncomfortable here as he was, in a passage previously quoted, when he described his visit with the injured troops and spoke so incongruously of the "improvised couches of their languid rest" (NS 424).
There is also a striking lack of real explanation. The chief purpose of the passage seems to be to create some relation between the hurt and the war, but James never says what that relation is. He introduces the two as paired and treats them throughout as paired, yet he repeatedly shrouds the relationship in mystification. He would have us believe that the relationship is beyond the reach and command of words, as if it were on the order of religious truth. It is alternately "the least clearly expressible," "scarce at all to be stated," and even "beyond all present notation." Religion aside, we would be closer to the truth if we simply assumed that James is willfully withholding an explanation; in fact, now we know exactly what he is not telling us— that he was drafted. Even more to the point, though, this is a failure of the sort of mastery and command of language that underlay James's earlier claim of masculinity. The failure is not real, of course, but only the pretense of failure; James knows full well what he is doing. He surrenders his command and mastery of language just at that point when it would compel him to explain how he failed to enter the military rank. It is a feminizing pretense, or a pretense to a feminized lack of mastery. And it is adopted just at the moment when it can obscure his decision not to step into the fierce order of manhood.

The ranks he entered this night were not the conventional military but a sort of demi-military, a
volunteer fire company. The Hoffmans remark that the fire
companies' experience with discipline and service in a
crisis meant that their members were "the next best pool
for potential recruits" (533) for the war after the Newport
Artillery Company, which was largely a gentleman's militia.
In fact, this episode of the hurt stands for James's
military service. It is imaged as his service in the ranks
of the "willing youths" in defense of the community.
Several times he speaks of himself as part of a larger body
of men. He speaks of "the enclosing social body, a body
rent with a thousand wounds." He recalls wondering about
"the question of what might still happen, to everyone about
me, to the country at large." Indeed, he speaks (perhaps
wishfully) of the possibility of conflating the war's
wounds (injuries such as Wilky's, perhaps), with his own
service injury: "One had the sense, I mean, of a huge
comprehensive ache, and there were hours at which one could
scarce have told whether it came most from one's own poor
organism" or from the larger social body "rent with a
thousand wounds."

What flows from James's conflation of his own hurt with
war wounds is his improbable claim of being "thus treated
... to the honour of a sort of tragic fellowship." This is
James at his most grotesquely fatuous, and it is painful to
read. The other moments of awkwardness are only awkward,
but there is a moral confusion here that is puzzling. This
is the foolishness of the elderly; it signifies deep yearning for what has been lost. What was lost is the knowledge of war, and it is important chiefly to those who lack it. It is often taken for granted or even hated by those who acquire it. The loss of control and judgment is even more striking when we recall how honorably James had spoken of this earlier. The memory of Wilky's injury as recorded in his father's letter had led him to imagine the dead and fallen as being arrayed as statues in their niches, "facing us out, quite blandly ignoring us, looking through us or straight over us at something they partake of together but that we mayn't pretend to know." Notable it is that in the obscure hurt chapter James is forced to do precisely what he had proscribed so soon before—-he is pretending to know what he does not know, pretending to share what he did not have. He has lost the humility he had then: "We walk thus, I think, rather ruefully before them—those of us at least who didn't at the time share more happily their risk" (NS 382-84). The loss of control may have something to do with the formal circumstances under which he writes each section. In the earlier instance, he is in the presence of the father; the father's words sit before him as he writes, and what he writes has the demeanor appropriate to the ritual of male mourning. In this latter instance, he is leaving the house of the father
and is on his own; what he writes displays the anxieties of one who fears the past and its absences.

James deepens the conflation of far-off war and local fire by speaking of the smoke from Fort Sumter as if it were present in Newport: "I must have felt in some befuddled way in presence of a crisis—the smoke of Charleston Bay still so acrid in the air—at which the likely young should be up and doing or, as familiarly put, lend a hand much wanted." In this single sentence he also invokes the moral authorization of two of the brahmins of New England culture, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Edward Everett Hale, by the use of familiar phrases associated with each of the quite popular writers. The expression "up and doing" recalls Longfellow's "The Psalm of Life" of 1839, one of the most widely read of American didactic poems. It rises, through what are by now hackneyed calls to morally purposive action, to its concluding stanza: "Let us now be up and doing, / With a heart for any fate; / Still achieving, still pursuing, / Learn to labor and to wait." James, like the rest of America, was familiar with Longfellow; earlier in Notes of a Son and Brother he had remarked that Longfellow's most characteristic work had appeared by the time the Jameses returned to Newport in 1860 (NS 279). Even more interesting are the words "as familiarly put, lend a hand much wanted." That phrase was indeed familiar in the years after the war; Hale, a Boston
Unitarian minister, published two books soon after the war, *Ten Times One is Ten* (1871) and *In His Name* (1873), that had created what was called the Lend-a-Hand movement, with a motto of "look up and not down, look forward and not back, look out and not in, lend a hand," and had led to the widespread formation of local clubs dedicated to organized good will. Hale is more enduringly remembered for his story "The Man Without a Country," which was published in late 1863 with the purpose of influencing patriotism and the coming election. It depicts the exile and moral collapse of a man who renounces America. James invests his young man injured at the fire with all the moral earnestness of Longfellow and the patriotic dedication of Hale; just as surely, they are not available to the elder writer recollecting his own absence from the war.

James's fears that the absence of moral and patriotic purposiveness might be detected would explain why, when he does assert moral purpose, he does so in such a peculiarly compromised fashion. Just when the "willing youths" were starting to battle the fire, he interjects without explanation that "to have trumped up a lameness at such a juncture could be made to pass in no light for graceful." This is another version of the figure he cut only a couple pages earlier when, while discussing the need to leave home, he says "just staying at home when everyone was on the move couldn't in any degree show the right mark." Both
are compromised assertions; rather than claim moral or patriotic purpose, they deny its absence. Each witnesses the return of the repressed in negated form. Each is, in fact, a veiled confession. James had been "staying at home" for two years when he left for Cambridge; comparably, to have "trumped up a lameness" is precisely what it appears that James has done. We know now of James's draft and his exemption, historical events that he never mentioned, and this anxious denial of having "trumped up a lameness" creates the most painful sort of interpretive dilemma. James has left us no sure revelation of history, but only the record of the enduring pain and anxiety of recollection. It is quite impossible to be sure what happened in the 1861 fire or in the subsequent visit to a doctor; what we can be sure of is the anxiety and fears that deform the actions undertaken in 1913 in the moment of composition. We cannot ignore the suspicions that now overhang this narrative. But what the passage means is not what James did then but what has bothered him ever since and what concerns him in the writing present.

James makes it very clear that the event has bothered him ever since. He is clearer about the duration of the consequences than he is about the event itself. He says that from the first he did not doubt "in the least its duration," and that the effects "were to draw themselves out incalculably and intolerably." James is at his most
delphic, though, when attempting to speak of the relation between the consequences and the rest of his life. He can only bring himself to say that they were important, and he wraps the rest in mystification: "The twenty minutes had sufficed, at all events, to establish a relation—a relation to everything occurring round me not only for the next four years but for long afterward—that was at once extraordinarily intimate and quite awkwardly irrelevant."

Or again:

The interest of it, I very presently knew, would certainly be of the greatest, would even in conditions as simple as I might make them become little less than absorbing. The shortest account of what was to follow for a long time after is therefore to plead that the interest never did fail. It was naturally what is called a painful one, but it consistently declined, as an influence at play, to drop for a single instant. Circumstances, by a wonderful chance, overwhelmingly favoured it—as an interest, an inexhaustible, I mean; since I also felt in the whole enveloping tonic atmosphere a force promoting its growth.

Any sure knowledge of what this means died with James, but one possibility is that he means to make obscure and vague what would be most painful if revealed. It seems likely that the pain of the memory causes his extreme evasiveness, and so surely it is significant that he is most evasive when considering the hurt's influence on the rest of his life. Whatever happened or did not happen in 1861 has been a continuing source of pain; the pain, like the interest, has been inexhaustible. The curiosity is that the pain was so rarely expressed in his life. There were instances of
back trouble, to be sure, but they were rare, and the pain he speaks of here is life-term and constant. It is also inexpressible; the lifetime pain cannot be mentioned or named. What is meant is not a bad back; we may speak of our bad backs. What is meant is anguish, a phenomenon of Jamesian consciousness, and it seems most likely to be attached to what I have called an anxious denial and a veiled confession: "to have trumped up a lameness at such a juncture could be made to pass in no light for graceful."

However we choose to understand the obscure hurt, the historical facts make it impossible to understand it apart from the question of the unanswered draft call. We cannot overlook that he associates deceit and lameness by speaking of them simultaneously. Nor should we fear to transfer that denial from the fire to the war; he makes it clear that the fire was his military service and that the fire brigade was his military unit, after all. Nor can we overlook the lifetime of anxiety that James insists he suffered and even demonstrates by the disordered narrative.

James quickly turns to the effort to validate the injury, the trip to Boston "that summer" to consult a surgeon. This was a "great surgeon, the head of his profession there," although James does not name him. More important to James than the surgeon's name is his association with his father; he mentions his father twice. He made the trip to the doctor "under my father's care" and
the surgeon is "a guaranteed friend of my father's." He never indicates what sort of guarantee is meant, but it is impossible to miss the sense of disappointment. Every time he saw the doctor's house thereafter he was struck by its "ironic smug symbolism of its action on my fate. That action had come from the complete failure of our approached oracle either to warn, to comfort or to command--to do anything but make quite unassistingly light of the bewilderment exposed to him" (NS 416). There is a lingering bitterness in this account--"I have little forgotten how I felt myself ... treated but to a comparative pooh-pooh" (NS 416)--and the oddity is that neither the doctor nor James can say what was the matter with him. Some sort of avowal seems to have been what he had wanted from the surgeon, however, for the meaning of the pooh-pooh is "the strange fact of there being nothing to speak of the matter with me" (NS 417). James himself can never manage "to speak of the matter," so he seems to be asking the doctor to do what he himself is unwilling to do. James never says what the hurt was, where he was hurt, or what his symptoms were. The hurt could only be an injury that is intensely private or that never happened. If the doctor had granted his wish "to speak of the matter," James could never have divulged it.

This episode exists only to signify that interpretation is impossible. What James is unwilling to do and what the doctor cannot do is impossible as well for the reader. As
readers, we can only take from this a renewed sense that the writer is the master of his own interpretation. James is withholding a great deal of information—the draft, the exemption, the place and nature of his hurt—and in so doing he is controlling our interpretation. And his act of withholding is a repetition of his own instruction. It is, in a manner of speaking, how he was raised, or how he remembers being raised. The visit to the doctor repeats a pattern that runs throughout James's autobiography, for here as elsewhere he presents himself as the one who is denied explanation, the one from whom interpretation and meaning are withheld.

What actually happened during the war is not recoverable. Perhaps James was hurt, and if he was, perhaps the father took him to a Boston doctor. Perhaps they assumed that prior acquaintance guaranteed them a friendly diagnosis. Perhaps they went three or four months after the hurt (as James says), which would be the summer of 1861, or perhaps they went in the summer of 1862 (as James also says); in either case, it would have been well before James was actually drafted in July 1863. On the other hand, perhaps James is wrong or misleading about the date and they went in the summer of 1863, after he was drafted, in hopes of getting a full medical pass rather than having to resort to the "various complaints" exemption that was usually but loosely a medical catch-all. Or perhaps, if
they went in 1862, they were hoping to keep James's name off the draft rolls altogether. Or perhaps they even went in 1863 and the doctor did just what the Jameses thought was guaranteed to a friend, and his word was the basis of the "various complaints" exemption.

Two things are certain. It is not possible that both the obscure hurt and the surgeon are entirely inventions; it is sure that something did happen. The anxiety-riddled narrative is certain proof of that. It is also certain that whatever happened, it did not happen the way James tells it; no event is both portentous and eternally unknown. The best we can do, if we insist on finding actuality and the actual, is the anxiety that is active in the present moment of composition. I think the anxiety that deforms his narrative here is aroused by a fear of discovery and the publication of the secret of his Civil War service. That secret has more to do with the manner in which he did not serve, not the fact of not serving. We always knew that he was not a soldier; what he has withheld is his refusal. That refusal was an act of privilege; being born into a family and class of privilege gives one the opportunity of choice, and in this case James had the choice of what rank in the order of manhood to enter. He chose to enter not the rank of the soldier but the rank of the literary master. He answered a different call. In doing so, he assumed the responsibilities of an entirely different sort of
masculinity. The expression of masculinity varies by class, and the conventions of masculine performance as a creative writer have little to do with democracy and much to do with privilege. The productivity that any masculinity claims is not, in the case of a creative writer, a collective enterprise but an intensely solitary one. So James, when he returned to his memory of refusing service, was returning to his choice of a different order of masculinity. He found himself in the very awkward position of speaking of one order of masculinity in the inappropriate language of the other. In a manner of speaking, James's narrative is deformed not so much by confusion of gender as by confusion of class. What he has withheld is not his choice of a different or ambiguous gender but his choice of the privileges of class. The great American guilty secret, after all, is the persistence of class.

I think he is compelled to speak of these things by the existence of historical records—his name in draft lists printed in local newspapers, for example—and the memory of men still living. When he starts to speak of the trip to the doctor, his focus seems to be held captive by the possibility of discovery. His hurt had been noticed, he says, and so had aroused "sympathies, supports and reassurances" and "communications ... recognitions and admissions." All that even involved "a degree of publication" (NS 416). I would suggest, too, that he would
want to speak of the obscure hurt and the doctor because doing so is important for reasons of autobiography. To compose autobiography is to order our sense of ourself, to compose ourself, and the moment and method of entering the order of manhood would be for the elder man a signifying event in his own mythology of becoming. Quite against the popular suggestion, the obscure hurt passage is not the site of a castration; it is the site at which he is not castrated. He would have been castrated had he cut this moment out of his account.

Rebuffed in Boston, James buries himself in reading in "that summer of '62." Twice he speaks of being "supine" and is thankful for the "fine plausibility" of lying down, book in hand, which attitude "was at least a negative of combat, an organised, not a loose and empty one, something definitely and firmly parallel to action in the tented field" (NS 417). The gratitude for being obviously incapable of service is echoed by gratitude for finding himself that fall in the assembled ranks of another manhood; "the bristling horde of my Law School comrades fairly produced the illusion of a mustered army." Implausible as that illusion may seem, he insists on conceiving of his position in Cambridge in military terms, just as he had done with the fire brigade. The campus is a "tented field"—his second use of the term—"tented field enough for a conscript starting so compromised."
Presumably, calling himself a conscript is meant to echo his earlier characterization of himself as a "forensic recruit," but a conscript is a draftee, one whose service is compelled, not offered. There is no sense in which his presence at Harvard has been compelled, and it is difficult to imagine in what sense he might think of his student status as having been "compromised." This is nothing other than a careless reference to the draft he has so carefully refrained from mentioning. It is important that, as he continues this sentence, it becomes clear that he has ceased imagining the other students as a "mustered army" and now is thinking of them as (to use his earlier term) the "negative of combat": "[O]ne had still fine fierce young men, in great numbers, for company, there being at the worst so many such who hadn't flown to arms" (NS 417). That is, his focus obviously has shifted from fancying himself as a soldier to accepting himself as not a soldier, and the shift seems to have occurred at the slip of calling himself a "conscript."

James runs out the obscure hurt chapter with generalized reflections on the social experience of Boston as a young man, and he pauses for a particularized moment only when his memory alights on the visit to Portsmouth Grove. This visit, which we have ourselves already witnessed in order to watch James empty his pockets for the soldiers, was his "first and all but sole vision of the
American soldier in his multitude" (NS 422). He closes out that visit by remembering himself remembering—he calls to mind the memory of himself sitting against the bulwark of the steamship from the encampment recalling that "little adventure of sympathy and wonder," and what he felt then was the comparability of injuries suffered: "[A] realisation, as we nowadays put it, that, measuring wounds against wounds, or the compromised, the particular taxed condition [that is, his own], at the least, against all the rest of the debt then so generally and enormously due, one was no less exaltedly than wastefully engaged in the common fact of endurance" (NS 426). He ends the chapter where he started it, obsessively fascinated by his own body, by male bodies, and by the violence done to them. This chapter, sheltering the most obsessively withheld secret embedded at its core, is the embedded second of three chapters fascinated by the Civil War. The first was the seventh, organized by the father's embedded letter concerning Wilky's injury. The second was the embedded ninth with the obscure hurt itself so safely sheltered. The third is the concluding eleventh, which is James's extended look at Wilky's war service and what it meant to him.

It begins with a second claim of masculinity. What James showed so fleetingly at the start of the obscure hurt chapter is broadened and extended here. In the earlier case, the claim of literary mastery could not be made at
the time but had to be hidden in the pocket, only to be taken out and displayed later as economic domination of the injured soldiers. Here the claim is given its fullest expression, and, significantly, it is his claim of mastery over himself and his life history. This is his "personal history of the imagination" passage, which we have earlier noted as James's fullest statement of autobiographical purpose. Now we must recognize it as his fullest claim of masculinity. It is an extended celebration of male performance, and of performance in the act of creation. He celebrates both his own powers of creativity and his own worthiness as the object of creation. By accepting his own attraction to himself, James completes the circle of his own curious creative impulses and achieves his narcissistic fullness. He speaks of the thought of writing such a personal history of the imagination as an attractive one, regardless of the subject. It had always seemed to be a subject that might attract "a teller of tales"—such a charming piece of homespun; James is a teller of tales the way Frank Lloyd Wright is a drawer of houses. The folksy self-characterization seems purposeful and not fanciful, for it comports with the more masculine attributes James now assigns to the writer, who is more aggressive and passionate than James has ever made him out to be. James's artist would rejoice in this project, "his advance through it conceivably causing at every step some rich
precipitation—unless it be rather that the play of strong imaginative passion, passion strong enough to be, for its subject or victim, the very interest of life, constitutes in itself an endless crisis" (NS 454). James means that the passion for creativity would be both what drives the writer and the object he desires to capture. The process would be fed "by every contact and every apprehension" and would in turn feed "every motion and every act" (NS 454-55). This is all to describe James himself; eventually, he says, he accepts that he is his own suitable subject: "What was I thus, within and essentially, what had I ever been and could I ever be but a man of imagination at the active pitch?" (NS 455).

This remarkable assertion of self-interested creativity and self-focused mastery repeats, answers, enlarges, and clarifies the claim of masculinity that opened the previous Civil War chapter. It also serves James's interest by enabling him to establish himself more largely at the head of the chapter in which he records his own supersession by younger siblings. He speaks next of his visit to Wilky's training encampment at Readville near Boston, and the recollection is marked first of all by the memory of how "his juniority gave way, for me, on the spot, to immensities of superior difference." It seemed almost impossible, he recalls: "[S]uch a fairy-tale seemed it, and withal such a flat revolution, that this soft companion of
my childhood should have such romantic chances and should have mastered, by the mere aid of his native gaiety and sociability, such mysteries, such engines, such arts" (NS 456). James speaks of gaping in admiration and even in desperation at the scene and at Wilky's suddenly superior status relative to him: "immensities that were at the same time intensities, varieties, supremacies, of the enviable in the all-difficult and the delightful in the impossible" (NS 456).

One of the things he gaped at was all the handsome young men. They are recollected here in another of James's late-life homoerotic passages. Like the others, it could only have been written at age and is enabled by the distance of time. It seems to express not homosexual desire but the elder's nostalgia for the vitality of youth: the "laughing, welcoming, sunburnt young men, who seemed mainly to bristle, through their welcome, with Boston genealogies, and who had all alike turned handsome, only less handsome than their tawny-bearded Colonel" (NS 456).³

James felt surpassed and profoundly jealous of his brothers. His young man is aware that the brothers are embarked on great hazard, but he is also aware that whatever befalls them shall be of a different order of experience, a life more intense, than he will ever know. What they will see and do he will only read about, and he will read about them in their letters. What he says is
filled with the same regret that marked his 1903 letter to Viscount Garnet Wolseley, whose autobiography, The Story of a Soldier's Life, made James willing, he said, to part with "all I have (including Lamb House!) for an hour of your retrospective consciousness, one of your more crowded memories." In speaking now of his brothers, he seems saddened by the knowledge that all he could learn of the war would be vicariously gained; he would be reduced to "seeing, sharing, envying, applauding, pitying, all from too far-off, and with the queer sense that, whether or no they would prove to have had the time of their lives, it seemed that the only time I should have would stand or fall by theirs" (NS 461).

Notes

1. James was not always entirely accurate about details, but he appears to have been correct about the date of the fire. Fort Sumter was attacked April 12, and James turned eighteen April 15, the same day Lincoln called for volunteers. The Hoffmans show (531-32) that the Newport Artillery Company was ordered to the local armory that day, the 15th, that it boarded a steamer to Providence on the 17th, and that the fire occurred that night, five days after Sumter, much as James had recollected. For many years it had been supposed that James confused the date of the fire, chiefly because Edel identified it as a stable fire of 28 October 1861. Edel cited a letter from James's friend, Thomas Sergeant Perry, that mentions that fire while "alluding directly" to the obscure hurt passage. James climbed mountains in July, which Edel concluded was improbable if he had already hurt his back (I 177).

2. Feinstein says without documentation that the surgeon was Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School (198 and n). Eakin reports that when he asked Feinstein for his source, Feinstein told him that James himself identifies Bigelow in his autobiography ("Obscure Hurt" 690 n7).
3. Contrast James's highly charged account of meeting soldiers with Ellen Emerson's account. After boating with Wilky and Bob in July 1862, she and some female friends, including Alice James, were forced by high winds to walk back and reached Portsmouth Grove. "Everywhere soldiers, everywhere good and interesting faces, everywhere all we wanted to know and no means natural and proper of getting at it. 'Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink" (I 288–89). Emerson's is the report of a contemporary, not a reminiscential elder, and it is marked by the discretions required by the dynamics of heterosexuality and socially acknowledgeable desire. James's accounts of Readville and Portsmouth are recollected as memory and exhibit the yearning of nostalgia, the fondness for what has been lost, and the frankness made possible by the separation of time.
Chapter 8: The Business of Mrs. Cannon, and the Business of Autobiography

The process of autobiography as practiced by James has been found to be marked by certain significant phenomena of consciousness, some of which have been the mastery of the past, the will to control interpretation, and the necessity of revision as an act of life. All of those may be said to express the imperious will of the autobiographer. We have also identified some social anxieties necessarily involved in the process of autobiography. We might call these the anxieties of discovery, for they are attached to the act of withholding information, an act that will invite public interpretation. In my latest chapters, that interpretation has been directed to matters of sexual and gender identity. Jamesian autobiography also pursues certain political and thematic interests that we can describe as the dedication to family and father. There remain two active principles that shape Jamesian autobiographical narrative: the dramatization of recollection and the persistence of feeling. The dramatization of the agonized retrieval of memory makes James especially valuable for autobiographical inquiry, and with the persistence of feeling, it forms the focal point of the remainder of what I hope to show. I have occasionally noted the survival of feelings attached to incidents and their reanimation in the gathering of memory, but they will now be significant organizational processes.
This chapter focuses on James's achievement in dramatizing the assemblage of memories into a sequence and a narrative. The process of assemblage and selection, the existence of memories in an undifferentiated form until reanimated, and their arrangement in clusters are characteristics of recollection that he acknowledged late in *Notes of a Son and Brother*:

A dry desert, one must suppose, the life in which, for memory and appreciation made one, certain single hours or compressed groups of hours have found their reason for standing out through everything, for insistently living on, in the cabinet of infinite reference, the museum, as it were, of the soul's curiosities—where doubtless at the same time an exhibition of them to mere other eyes or ears or questioning logical minds may effect itself in no plain terms. We recognise such occasions more and more as we go on, and are surely, as a general thing, glad when, for the interest of memory—which it's such a business to keep interesting—they constitute something of a cluster. (*NS* 423)

In the early stages of *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), the clusters of memory present James's account of growth within the shelter of the family and his discovery of the meaning and company of the father. An especially crucial parade of memory is organized by James's recollection of his father taking him to Mathew Brady's studio for the famous portrait of father and son. To that memory have condensed other memories that trouble the significance of the portrait, and James assembles a parade of memory that is determined by the meaning of the portrait and by the nature of the troubling memories.
I propose that James's parade of memory is designed to regularize the meaning of the father and make it consistent with the culturally dominant modes of masculine self-expression and identity. I am drawn to this parade of memory by the assumption that in any autobiographical narrative of the self, the representation of the father may be especially illuminating. James makes this point himself when he represents his method of selecting memories: "I keep picking out at hazard those passages of our earliest age that help to reconstruct for me even by tiny touches the experience of our parents, any shade of which seems somehow to signify" (SB 41).

One of the memories condensed to the portrait is James's account of accompanying his father on a visit to Mrs. Cannon's house at a young age. (James says twelve, but he would have been eleven in the year he mentions, 1854.) James cannot say explicitly what Mrs. Cannon's business is; in fact, he emphasizes that her business was for others to know but quite plainly not for him. This is the primal scene of withheld information; all other instances in which James is found ill-suited or unsuited for an explanation are repetitions of this moment. As James describes it, Mrs. Cannon's is the scene of social and commercial exchange in a world of sexual difference, an exchange that he felt forbidden to know. Whatever Mrs. Cannon's was and is in biography, in autobiography it is a whorehouse, an elegant
and gracious brothel, or, in the parlance of the day, "a house of assignation."

I believe that James's account of Mrs. Cannon's business and his family's patronage is an assertion of sexual regularism, and that his account is offered as an act of filial loyalty designed to respond to memories that have condensed to the father-son portrait. Those memories, as arranged and retold by James, trouble the loyal son's confidence in the paternal donation; they become suggestions that others may believe there is something other than normative sexual behavior at the heart of family tradition.

The clusters of memory present the phases of James's narrative of becoming and follow him up to the defining daguerreotype. If we treat the parade of memory as a succession of coherent clusters, we should also be able to recover his story, find continuity where there seems only discontinuity, and see patterns of both acknowledged and implicit content. Here are the clusters as they seem to me:

Overture: the shelter of family taste and myth SB 23-30

Fallen authority: a sense of history and the state SB 31-35

The father as gatekeeper: the path to experience and the world SB 36-41

Interlude: the daguerreotype SB 41

The father resumed: plenitude and edenism SB 41-43
Filial obligations: narrative and the ancient order  
SB 44-50

Sitting for the daguerreotype  
SB 50-51

Subversion: the joker suggests something is not regular  
SB 52

The subverter subverted: it takes one to know one  
SB 53

The brothel  
SB 54-56

The neighborhood: A safe place to play  
SB 56-58

Overture: the shelter of family taste and myth--It starts with the family and the sense of taste. When James recalls "our earlier American scene," it is a world in which, more often than not, "forms and civilities lapsed beyond repair." This is by now a familiar characterization, made in similar form in Hawthorne (1879), in "The Aspern Papers" (1888), and in The American Scene (1907). Here the family is imagined as having been raised above the tide of general mediocrity:

It meanwhile fairly overtakes and arrests me here as a contributive truth that our general medium of life in the situation I speak of was such as to make a large defensive verandah, which seems to have very stoutly and completely surrounded us, play more or less the part of a raft of rescue in too high a tide--too high a tide there beneath us, as I recover it, of the ugly and the graceless. ... I read into the great hooded and guarded resource in question an evidential force: as if it must really have played for us, so far as its narrowness and its exposure permitted, the part of a buffer state against the wilderness immediately near, that of the empty, the unlovely, and the mean. (SB 23)

As James moves forward, the father becomes the source of family mythologies, which have the force and role of moral
exempla. He recalls the children insisting that the father "tell us stories of the world of his youth," and the hero of each one of them, "in spite of brilliant promise and romantic charm, ended badly" (SB 29). These tales give the children to understand that youth has but two courses, a life of business or alcohol.

Fallen authority: A sense of history and the state—Here is a curious progression of men of political importance—Daniel Webster, Charles Sumner, and Winfield Scott. Webster serves as a boundary between memory clusters. James recalls him as one of three political classes—"the busy, the tipsy, and Daniel Webster" (SB 30) —thereby repeating notions from the preceding cluster of family and narrative and introducing these memories of state and history. The other two political figures are presented to us as beaten men. Sumner, the abolitionist senator, is encountered in Europe where he is recovering from injuries suffered in the famous attack in the Senate chamber. Scott is first mentioned as the loser in a presidential election, and when James then recalls the memory of having met him while walking with his father, he quickly adds that "the Civil War was so soon and with so little ceremony to extinguish" Scott (SB 31). (Scott retired from the military in 1861 and died in 1866.) The sequence of images for the three men is so tortured chronologically that the precedence given to injuries must
be significant; the father is, as usual, the presenter and introducer of the world, and he was, of course, a maimed man. The beaten quality serves to bring them within the order and imagined scale of the parent.

James's recollective faculty leaps a chapter boundary to present the next associated image. It is an uncle in Mexican War plumage, and he supplies James's "earliest glimpse of any circumstance of the public order" (SB 32). He was Robert Temple, father of Minnie Temple, and he was to die in a few years, though James does not mention that here. A report of the collapse of another authority, the overthrow of Louis Philippe of France in 1848, is recollected here as James's "positive initiation into History" (SB 33). The one authority left standing in this cluster is very erect indeed, the Colonne Vendôme. It is very phallic, it is Napoleonic, and it is, James says, his earliest memory. It remains as an image within the frame of the carriage window through which he glimpsed it, making it a portrait like so many of James's organizers of memory. He recalls that the news of John Brown's raid reminded him that he was "in a political order" (SB 34), just as the war that followed was to cause his "sense of the State...infinitely to quicken" (SB 35).

If the first memory cluster established James's place within family, this second cluster has concerned his place within the larger community, the political and historical
order. In both, the father introduces the little boy to the mythic, in narrative and in person, and in both clusters the mythic order is unstable, threatening, or unreliable. The young heroes of Albany tales all come to ruin; all the bearers of the dignity of statecraft are temporary, maimed, injured, doomed.

The father as gatekeeper: The path to experience and the world—James's memories of discovering the world with the father begin with a catalogue of some of the artists who happened to "haunt our friendly fireside." A memory of Washington Irving is marked by one of James's narrative organizers, a picture—this one is of Margaret Fuller. An oddly supplemental picture also seems to mark the succeeding account of his (very) painful visits to the dentist. He has always carried the image of Phiz's caricature of Joe Bagstock in Dickens's Dombey and Son as part of his memory of Dr. Parkhurst, who is treating the second generation of the family. The pain of those visits preoccupies James, but he speaks of it jokingly, in a way that invokes the playful rituals of family badinage. (The pain has been inflicted on the younger generation by the older as compensation for their own pain. O, how musical were his brother's groans!) James's appeal here is to familiarity, not estrangement; the pain is sanctioned by family, is actually constitutive of family. The pain of the dental visits is not associated with the father; he is not
figured here as their guide and, in fact, is explicitly separated from the memory of "shocks or penalties" (SB 40).

James finds the father "again and again accompanied in public by his small second son: so many young impressions come back to me as gathered at his side and in his personal haunts" (SB 41). What has survived in memory are the occasions when he was his father's exclusive companion; he cannot recall times when he had to share his father's company with William. He is sure the father and older brother shared "many a mild adventure of which the secret--I like to put it so--perished with him" (SB 41). The significance of that word for revelation from the father, "secret," which he emphasizes here, is magnified when he speaks of the brother's experience of the father as "impressions I sometimes wished, as with a retracing jealousy, or at least envy, that I might also have fallen direct heir to" (SB 41). As he reconstructs memory, he seeks "the experience of our parents, any shade of which seems somehow to signify" (SB 41).

Interlude: the daguerreotype--The primal portrait is mentioned here only briefly, but not without a fair statement of its importance: "I cherish, to the extent of here reproducing, an old daguerreotype all the circumstances of the taking of which I intensely recall--though as I was lately turned twelve when I figured for it the feat of memory is perhaps not remarkable. It documents
for me in so welcome and so definite a manner my father's
cultivation of my company" (SB 41). That is, it offers a
visible and outward sign of an inward and secret knowledge,
paternal acceptance. In a life organized by the imaginative
representation of the visual and by the visual expression
of the imagined, this would seem to signify before all
else.

When James says he reproduces the portrait, his "here"
gives it a doubled presence, for it both sits before him as
he composes this passage and it sits at the front of the
entire volume as a defining frontispiece. The reader would
have already seen it, the small boy standing somewhat
uncomfortably at the father's left elbow. The boy's right
hand rests on the father's left shoulder without claiming
its position; the weight rests on the wrist and the fingers
dangle forward, holding nothing. The face is
expressionless, the brow full, and the mouth unshaped. The
eyes are full and neither trusting nor wary, simply
observing; there is much white visible below the iris, and
the boy looks levelly ahead. Typically, James's gaze is
level in portraits. The boy's left hand holds a white hat
by its rolled brim, much the same style hat he holds in
much the same manner in the 1900 portrait with his brother
William. In that portrait, it is the older William touching
the younger Henry, his right arm across the back and his
right hand holding the right shoulder. In the father-son
portrait, the father sits stolid and expressionless, his hands folded atop his cane, which stands erect between his legs. The father's crippled condition is otherwise almost undetectable. His good left leg extends straight forward, perpendicular to the frontal plane of the trunk, but the amputated right leg is shifted slightly to the right, to help carry the weight more effectively. One has to look for this trace of the injury, and so we may be sure that he carries himself with strength.

The portrait is one instance of a genre of autobiographical portraits. I mean that it is self-referential. It really refers to nothing other than itself; it records no thing, it refers to no event or episode. It is its own occasion, which it creates by itself. It means only what it shows, father and son pausing in their lives to look out at the world, and to do so together. Such is, of course, the whole of its significance to the son and to the writer he became. The favor of this occasion does not seem to have been granted to the other children. If the father ever sat for a comparable photograph with another child, it has not been published in the standard biographies of the family. There is a late-life photo of the father with an infant grandchild, presumably William's Henry III on the baptismal day. (It is reproduced in Habegger, The Father, between 406 and 407.)
The significance of the father-son portrait to the autobiographer is such that it has organized the meaning of the preceding clusters of memory. Its significance is now marked by narrative deferment. Two more memory clusters intervene to prepare for the actual event.

The father resumed: plenitude and edenism—Immediately after James recognizes the daguerreotype on the far horizon, he is flooded by memories celebrating the wondrous variety of produce on the streets and wharves of New York. They are triggered by the memory of the trip to Mathew Brady's shop, and all of them evoke the discoveries made while accompanying the father. The characterization goes on at length; one may pick and choose as one will:

...groceries indeed largely of the "green" order... that bristled, in glorious defiance of traffic, with the overflow of their wares and implements. Carts and barrows and boxes, sprawling or stacked... some vast succulent cornucopia. What did the stacked boxes and baskets of our youth represent but the boundless fruitage of that more bucolic age of the American world, and what was after all of so strong an assault as the rankness of such a harvest? Where is that fruitage now, where in particular are the peaches d'antan? where the mounds of Isabella grapes and Seckel pears in the sticky sweetness of which our childhood seems to have been steeped? ... We ate everything in those days by the bushel and the barrel, as from stores that were infinite; we handled watermelons as freely as cocoanuts, and the amount of stomach-ache involved was negligible in the general Eden-like consciousness.

(SB 41-42)

The abundance in the street is echoed by the effect of the father's return to the house, which aroused a comparably abundant and joyful spillage of pleasure. "As he was
nothing if not expressive, whatever happened to him for inward intensity happened abundantly to us for pity and terror, as it were, as well as for an ease for and a quality of amusement" (SB 43).

**Filial obligations: narrative and the ancient order**—James discovers the world of writing with his father in this cluster. He recapitulates his father's taking him to the New York *Tribune*, and he includes their visits to a bookstore and the father's purchasing him a subscription to an English magazine. A book by a *Tribune* staff member, Solon Robinson, had achieved great popularity in 1854, and a copy was handed to the father as the small boy watched. The book, *Hot Corn*, concerns street-corner sales of popcorn by abandoned and exploited young girls. Their degradation includes prostitution, and the book describes a visit to one of their houses. The small boy of James's memory is not allowed to read *Hot Corn*, and the smart of that denial stayed with James all his life: "The pang occasioned by this warning has scarcely yet died out for me." Moreover, the terms in which he draws the meaning of the denial are highly significant: "the question, in my breast, of why, if it was to be so right for others, it was only to be wrong for me. I remember the soreness of the thought that it was I rather who was wrong for the book" (SB 45). He is directed instead to alternative reading, matter that violates no "platitude of the bourgeois" (SB 46). This
moment anticipates the visit to Mrs. Cannon, where the boy is also excluded from knowledge of the adult world of sexual difference. This episode would also be related to the father's refusal of Civil War service for his second son. The Hot Corn incident invites a perhaps unanswerable question—whether it causes James to associate unworthiness and sexual expression. We may wonder, too, whether it told James that sexual experience was to be available to him in writing but not in life.

He begins to identify something English and antique in books and reading. The Bookstore, the "fondest of my father's haunts," is "overwhelmingly and irresistibly English," and he comes to anticipate eagerly a book's "strong smell of paper and printer's ink" and to think of that as "the English smell" (SB 48). The father gives him a subscription to an English magazine, The Charm, which exhales that aromatic pleasure "in a peculiar degree" (SB 49). The oddity of the smell is unimportant; it is the association of privileged writing with a prior authority that is sustaining. What James is getting at, although he uses other words, is writing's appeal to earlier, originary authority, its perpetual invocation of the canonical, its existence within a hierarchy of tradition and quality. "I saw my parents homesick, as I conceived, for the ancient order" (SB 50), an order threatened by modernity. He means the yearning for the peace that is granted by cultural
return to the sheltering, shaping values that were always already in history. Their lesson, as he understands it, is that "success in life" is dependent on renewing "the quest of the ancient." This becomes the content of his lifelong grail quest: "I never found myself deterred from this fond view, which was implied in every question I asked, every answer I got, and every plan I formed" (SB 50). What follows immediately is said from another time, renewing the vow in an older voice: "Those are great words for the daydreams of infant ignorance, yet if success in life may be perhaps best defined as the performance in age of some intention arrested in youth I may frankly put in a claim to it" (SB 50).

This memory cluster had begun with the father leading James into the world of writing and values. At that point, he seems puzzled by the difficulty of knowing what his role is to be. "My part may indeed but have been to surround his part with a thick imaginative aura; but that constituted for me an activity than which I could dream of none braver or wilder" (SB 44). He means, I think, to tell the father's story. If I am correct, this moment is a premonition, and what it looks forward to is a responsibility the terms of which he is able to define only at the end of the cluster: the father's taste, the prior culture, and the ancient order. If that responsibility is defined at the end of the cluster, it is not until a good deal later in the
autobiography that its acceptance is represented. That acceptance comes in London, and is represented as part of the experience of the paintings of B. R. Haydon, and by one of his works in particular, "The Banishment of Aristides." The painting shows a father being expelled from a city by the municipal elders; he is escorted to the city gates and attended by wife and son. James's writing consciousness is captured still by his memory of the "foreshortened boy picking up stones to shy at the all-too-just" (SB 177). Because William and Henry were so fond of Haydon, the father gave them the autobiography of "the hapless artist," who had committed suicide. So the small boy of autobiography would remember always the small boy of the picture and his defense of the father. The professional writer would associate a threat to the father (as in the picture) with the death of the artist. That death could come in any of a variety of forms--spiritual, inward, the loss of creative force, perhaps--but always the threat to the father would be experienced as a threat, also, to the things the father stood for: the ancient order of values, the paternal order, the cultural order, the order of art. The autobiographical assertion of self and soul of artistry, with its attendant representation of the father, would become simultaneously a defense of the father against any suggestion of irregularity. James says his small boy is attracted to Haydon's art because it makes it possible to
believe "that we might perhaps in some happy future [one in which the artist survives] emulate his big bravery" (SB 177). Bravery it is indeed to resist threat to life and culture. Bravery is what he had seen, long before, in the opportunity of surrounding the father's actions "with a thick imaginative aura," of narrating his place, that is, within the order of ancient value.

_Sitting for the daguerreotype_--"I repaired with my father on an August day to the great Broadway establishment of Mr. Brady, supreme in that then beautiful art, and it is my impression ... that though we had come up by the Staten Island boat for the purpose we were to keep the affair secret till the charming consequence should break, at home, upon my mother" (SB 51). The portrait, which is to document the father's "cultivation of my company," is marked with other significances. Quite apart from all the life-defining secrets that acceptance by the father might contain, the fact of the portraiture is itself to be a secret, and as such it places the small boy at the center of a family ritual that is often enacted when the father returns to the house. The father's custom was regularly to arrange with the mother for a surprise for the children, only to prod them to force the secret from him with guesses. The discovery was, then, a ritualized celebration of paternal favor and providence, and James seems certain that the same happened with their secret, "for no tradition had a
brighter household life with us than that of our father's headlong impatience. He moved in a cloud, if not rather in a high radiance, of precipitation and divulgation, a chartered rebel against cold reserves. The good news in his hand refused under any persuasion to grow stale, the sense of communicable pleasure in his breast was positively explosive" (SB 51). In history perhaps and in narrative in any case, the small boy stands here in the center of family ritual and revelation. The memory of the one, the portrait, calls the memory of the other to the presence of narrative and is marked by the significance of the defining family ritual.

Subversion: The joker suggests something is not regular--The memory of felicity is contaminated by the jacket he wore and the ridicule it had occasioned "but a short time before." It was a "little sheath-like jacket, tight to the body, closed at the neck and adorned in front with a single row of brass buttons" (SB 51). (Nine buttons, in fact; James does not count them, but we can.) The memory is "compromised ... by a strange ironic light from an unforgotten source," William Makepeace Thackeray. The authority of the source is heavy, considering what have been the terms for authority James has assembled. Thackeray is, first of all, "the great Mr. Thackeray" (SB 51-52). As a writer, he has always been a cultural and professional precursor for the writer now recollecting him. As a visitor
in the paternal sanctum of domestic library, he announces his judgment from the privileged position of guest and with the authorization of paternal affirmation. As a visitor from England, he speaks as an envoy and exemplar of the distant prior culture. As a memory in a succession of arranged memories, he echoes other encounters with greatness in the father's company—Winfield Scott, Washington Irving. He seems "enormously big" (SB 52), much as Scott was remembered and Webster imagined. What he says is, "Come here, little boy, and show me your extraordinary jacket!" He adds that in England, "I should be addressed as 'Buttons'" (SB 52). The visitor is obviously greatly "amused," and the effect is to make James's "sense of the jacket ... a heavy one," which he next terms "my native costume."

James was never able to forget the embarrassment of the "Buttons" encounter. When he recalled it for Elizabeth Jordan, an editor at Harper's Bazar, he told it a bit differently. She recalls his saying, when he was in his sixties, how much he had admired his jacket, which she describes as a new suit "decorated" with brass buttons. "They covered me as stars cover the sky. I was dazzled by them. I expected Mr. Thackeray to be dazzled, too. But my buttons amused him, and he laughed. It was a terrible experience for me. I have never forgotten it—for in that moment I experienced my first sense of disillusionment"
(212). So keen was the chagrin of the Thackeray jest that James had both icons of embarrassment, the father-son portrait and the very jacket itself, before him as he dictated the Thackeray episode (Edel V 464).²

If the immediate effect of meeting Thackeray was to make James's "sense of the jacket ... a heavy one," as he said, the intermediate effect was to contaminate the pleasure of sitting (actually standing) for the daguerreotype. The life-term effect was to challenge, or question, the content of the familial and paternal inheritance.

To this point, we have had visible and acknowledged phenomena to deal with. We must now look at the language of the unacknowledged and the irregular. The matter here is not so explicit as it has been, which James suggests by calling the Thackerayan contamination "a strange ironic light." Thackeray's profession is, we may say, to find unexpected and entertaining meaning where others have not. He is a "humourist," and he is in America to lecture on "The English Humourists." James's language is explicit enough in remembering the suggestion of an irregularity, a destabilizing unconventionality, but he leaves the precise nature of that irregularity vague. That absence of detail suggests deep significance and frees us to follow the implication that James considers the suggested irregularity to be sexual. Three times in the brief account of Thackeray
James uses words connoting sexual irregularity. The "Buttons" remark "revealed to me thus in a flash that we were somehow queer" (his emphasis). He quickly remembers another incident that "bears again on the play of his [Thackeray's] humour over our perversities of dress." That occasion occurs three years later in Paris and concerns his sister's fashion: "He suddenly laid his hand on her little flounced person and exclaimed with ludicrous horror: 'Crinoline!--I was suspecting it! So young and so depraved!'" (SB 52).

Consider what is here signified. Before James began these last two clusters on the daguerreotype and Thackeray (it was only two pages back), he had recalled his parents' yearning for an ancient order of values and had taken a pledge of loyalty to what is, in effect, the paternal order. What his narrative then dramatizes is an accusation of familial irregularity; it is "we" who may be queer, just as it is "our" perversities of dress. Dress is, of course, an expression of the person within, and taste is an acquired quality that speaks first for one's community. Recall now how these memory clusters began: with the family secured on a verandah above a sea of ugliness. Taste, so much a part of the sense of history and priority and culture, is what distinguishes the family as remembered and as here dramatized. So what James has made of this memory of Thackeray is enormous: it questions the family's meaning
and the quality of what was bequeathed to the professional writer now writing. There is something missing from such a reading, though, and that is an accounting for the vagueness of the threat of irregularity. By accepting the verbal gesture of "queer," "perversity," and "depravity," we recognize what is otherwise unacknowledged: a fear that homosexual activity may be read into family taste and behavior.³

If we are reading this text correctly, we may expect that the parade of memory would now devise an answer to the accusation of irregularity. A first step would be to counter-accuse the accuser, to suggest that he's one, too, that he is intimate with the effete and the irregular.

The subverter subverted: it takes one to know one--Just here memory presents Mr. Eyre Crowe, a portraitist for the father. The occasion is in England, and it is "a happy example again of my parent's positive cultivation of my society" (SB 53). The painter is a delicate sort; James calls him "the gentle, very gentle, portraitist," the "quiet Mr. Crowe," and even "the mild aspirant." He lacks force, and his canvas lacks force: the father's portrait "fell below its general possibilities." If we see here an answering caricature, we should be ready for James to take it further. Crowe is secretary to Thackeray, who has recommended his artistry to the father. Thackeray is Crowe's "protector," Crowe is Thackeray's "protege." The
"great humourist," then, has personal, professional and judgmental associations with the effete painter. What would it mean of Thackeray's judgment if Mr. Crowe should be less than successful? In fact, James recalls with satisfaction that Crowe is "known to my observation long afterwards, in the London years, as the most touchingly resigned of the children of disappointment." It is not only a matter of association, though; this is Thackeray's creature: "Not only by association was he a Thackerayan figure, but much as if the master's hand had stamped him." The caricature continues, relentless and devastating. That master's hand has left Crowe, "as after the long futility, seated in a quiet way, very long too, for the end." Although Thackeray's creature was a failure by fortune's standard, "what was that when he was one of Thackeray's own successes?" He is in "the minor line," as if he were "some dim second cousin to Colonel Newcome" (SB 53), another Thackeray creature, one who was made a failure by the hand of his maker.

The brothel—The parade of memory has reached Mrs. Cannon's. The sense of sexual irregularity that had condensed to the daguerreotype has by now been devastatingly answered. What remains is to assert the regularity of family sexuality. It is a family issue, of course; Thackeray's suspicion had included our dress, and the names of the three customers, "Mr. John and Mr. Edward
Mr. Howard," are suggested by the names of three uncles (Edel I 34).

The day of the daguerreotype, the August afternoon, what was it if not one of the days when we went to Union Square for luncheon and for more ice-cream and more peaches and even more, even most, enjoyment of ease accompanied by stimulation of wonder? It may have been indeed that a visit to Mrs. Cannon rather than that occasion engaged us—memory selects a little confusedly from such a wealth of experience. For the wonder was the experience, and that was everywhere, even if I didn't so much find it as take it with me, to be sure of not falling short. Mrs. Cannon lurked near Fourth Street--that I abundantly grasp, not more definitely placing her than in what seemed to me a labyrinth of grave bye-streets westwardly "back of" Broadway, yet at no great distance from it, where she must have occupied a house at a corner, since we reached her not by steps that went up to a front door but by others that went slightly down and formed clearly an independent side access, a feature that affected me as rich and strange. What the steps went down to was a spacious room, light and friendly, so that it couldn't have been compromised by an "area," which offered the brave mystification, amid other mystifications, of being at once a parlour and a shop, a shop in particular for the relief of gentlemen in want of pocket-handkerchiefs, neckties, collars, umbrellas and straw-covered bottles of the essence known in old New York as "Cullone"—with a very long and big O. Mrs. Cannon was always seated at some delicate white or other needlework, as if she herself made the collars and the neckties and hemmed the pocket-handkerchiefs, though the air of this conflicts with the sense of importation from remoter centres of fashion breathed by some of the more thrilling of the remarks I heard exchanged, at the same time that it quickened the oddity of the place. For the oddity was in many things--above all perhaps in there being no counter, no rows of shelves and no vulgar till for Mrs. Cannon's commerce; the parlour clearly dissimulated the shop--and positively to that extent that I might uncannily have wondered what the shop dissimulated. It represented, honestly, I made out in the course of visits that seem to me to have been delightfully repeated, the more informal of the approaches to our friend's brave background or hinterland, the realm of her main industry, the array of the furnished apartments for gentlemen—gentlemen largely for whom she imported the Eau de Cologne and the neckties and who struck me as principally consisting of the ever
remarkable Uncles, desirous at times, on their restless returns from Albany or wherever, of an intimacy of comfort that the New York Hotel couldn't yield. Fascinating thus the implications of Mrs. Cannon's establishment, where the talk took the turn, in particular, of Mr. John and Mr. Edward and Mr. Howard, and where Miss Maggie or Miss Susie, who were on the spot in other rocking chairs and with other poised needles, made their points as well as the rest of us. The interest of the place was that the uncles were somehow always under discussion—as to where they at the moment might be, or as to when they were expected, or above all as to how (the "how" was the great matter and the fine emphasis) they had last appeared and might be conceived as carrying themselves; and that their consumption of neckties and Eau de Cologne was somehow inordinate: I might have been judging it in my innocence as their only consommation. I refer to those sources, I say, the charm of the scene, the finer part of which must yet have been that it didn't, as it regularly lapsed, dispose of all mystifications. If I didn't understand, the beauty was that Mrs. Cannon understood (that was what she did most of all, even more than hem pockethandkerchiefs and collars) and my father understood, and each understood that the other did, Miss Maggie and Miss Susie being no whit behind. It was only I who didn't understand—save in so far as I understood that, which was a kind of pale joy; and meanwhile there would be more to come from uncles so attachingly, so almost portentously, discussable. The vision at any rate was to stick by me as through its old-world friendly grace, its light on the elder amenity; the prettier manners, the tender personal note in the good lady's importations and anxieties, that of the hand-made fabric and the discriminating service. Fit to figure as a value anywhere—by which I meant in the right corner of any social picture, I afterwards said to myself—that refined and composed significance of Mrs. Cannon's scene.

(SE 54-56; all italics are James's)

What goes on at Mrs. Cannon's house cannot be simply stated. James could not do so at the time, and he still cannot fifty years later; all that is clear is that he was mystified and was not admitted to the knowledge. What contemporary records say of Mrs. Cannon is a matter of
record: She appears on City Directories as selling "made linen" and offering "boarding" (Habegger Father 358). From the evidence James can recall, she would seem to be a purveyor of (at least) umbrellas, ties, and intimacy to uncles from out of town. Just as clearly James believes that she provides much more than that, and if we are to read his autobiography, we must start by believing what he believes.

James starts by associating an excess of sensual pleasure with the memory of Mrs. Cannon and concludes with a satisfied sense of social acceptability. The supply of pleasure, which had been recalled before on excursions abroad with the father and on his return home, almost overflows the words here: "one of the days when we went to Union Square for luncheon and for more ice-cream and more peaches and even more, even most, enjoyment of ease accompanied by stimulation of wonder." The conclusion is a notable statement of social regularization: "The vision at any rate was to stick by me as through its old-world friendly grace, its light on the elder amenity; the prettier manners, the tender personal note .... Fit to figure as a value anywhere--by which I meant in the right corner of any social picture, I afterwards said to myself--that refined and composed significance of Mrs. Cannon's scene" (SR 56).
Despite starting in pleasure and ending in social regularism, his account of the place is rife with a sense of the peculiar. The place "lurks," it is in "grave bye-streets," one enters something other than the main entrance, and it is strange, mystifying, and odd. Part of the oddity, too, is that its real purpose is doubly hidden. It appears to be both parlor and shop, but the parlor tries to obscure the shop and the shop tries to obscure what must be the house's real purpose, "our friend's brave background or hinterland, the realm of her main industry, the array of the furnished apartments for gentlemen." The meaning of the house is obscured from him, as well, for the only thing he knows is his own ignorance, the "pale joy" of knowing that adults know what he does not. What most marks Mrs. Cannon is not the economic production that is obvious but rather her knowledge of something that cannot be disclosed to him, yet seems to go without saying among the adults. And the adults consist of two very obvious sorts, women and men. The women all work in the house and the men patronize the house. There is commerce in this house, it is transacted between the men and the women in furnished apartments, and it cannot be spoken of to the small boy. We might not be the first to think this a whorehouse.

Part of the meaning of the episode is that it makes the family men members of the male elect; they are part of the number who have participated in the rituals of compromised
vows. The small boy remains innocent throughout; it is not entirely clear that the one whose consciousness is presumed to be continuous with the small boy's— I mean the narrator— is also complicit, among the male elect. The narrative is knowing, it is complicit, to be sure; but the scene is never designated, claimed, acknowledged by the narrator. He never says what he knows, and so it remains unclear how knowing he is.

Another way of thinking about this problem of complicity is to remember the terms of that complicity: they prohibit disclosure. What the narrative has done is demonstrate knowledge of secret rituals, and by not explicitly naming the ritual it has honored the prohibition against disclosure.

It is what it seems, but it only seems, in other words.

The narrative has used the conventions of ambiguity, euphemism, and double entendre, a language that is understood by other members of the elect but may not be understood by the non-elect. That conventional language— for example, "Mr. John," or "consommation"— announces the possibility of something, but only the possibility; what is asserted must be known to some degree, even if the assertion is only of possibility.

It is what it seems, but it only seems, in other words.

The neighborhood: a safe place to play— The memory parade closes with a recollection of the old neighborhood,
but first the narrative has to get past Union Square, much as the small boy and father had to pass it on the way home from Mrs. Cannon's, from Fourth and Broadway to West Fourteenth. James can "perfectly recall" his first acquaintance with the neighborhood—he was with the father on a social call. The recollective faculty can look back in comfort and with fondness, now that the contamination of accusation has been dispelled. The recollective faculty is at peace: "There were bigger boys ... [but] I at any rate think of the small one I can speak for as constantly wading through an Indian summer of these disjecta, fascinated by the leaf-kicking process, the joy of lonely trudges.... These were the joys of the nobler neighborhood" (SB 58).

James has made a single sequence of the visit of Thackeray, the daguerreotype, and the visit to Mrs. Cannon. He says the latter occurred in 1854 when he was twelve, but he would have been eleven. Thackeray visited America on his speaking tour in 1852, when James would have been only nine. Some people think James looks more like nine in the portrait than like eleven or twelve, and in any case boys usually grow a lot from nine to twelve. If the jacket was snug at nine, could he have still been wearing it at twelve? James seems to have rearranged events according to his own necessity. Memory makes what it can of the past, and one of the things it must give us is order and significant form.
Considering James to have achieved his own sense of order, then, let us turn to history not for verification, for it will not give us that, but rather for a deepened sense of the plausibility of this moment at Mrs. Cannon's house. Two of the finest of Jamesian biographers suggest that sexual relations between James's parents ended in 1848, after the birth of Alice, the fifth and last child. Leon Edel suggested in 1989 that "Mama James read a prohibition" to the father at that point ("James Family" 92). Alfred Habegger concludes that sexual relations did cease at about that time, but because Mary James almost died of a hemorrhage in a lost pregnancy soon after Alice. "The endearments of the body were forcibly proscribed even as Henry proclaimed to the world that love was too heavenly to be boxed up in marriage" (Father 291). The father's anti-matrimonialism and his philosophical advocacy of what was called by some "free love" became especially notable in the years after Alice's birth. The father was an incautious man, and these writings caused him, his sons, and the family considerable embarrassment. He was also personally enthusiastic and naturally flirtatious, which sometimes was misunderstood.6

A contemporary report on the spread of vice in Manhattan makes it clear that prostitution was common, a part of the commerce of respectable neighborhoods. The Sanger report was conducted in the mid-1850s and describes
a "house of assignation" in just the terms that James supplies for Mrs. Cannon's. "[I]t may be confidently asserted that even Fifth Avenue and Union Square [the Jameses' neighborhood] are not exempt from these resorts. ... The recently avowed sentiments, or rather the resuscitation of sentiments which were proclaimed years ago respecting the obligations of marriage and the theory of 'free love,' have doubtless increased the patrons of houses of assignation" (567)

History cannot confirm, and it cannot contradict. But James's argument has little to do with history and more to do with internal coherence. My own argument has concerned, not what was the historical fact, but what James has needed to make of the history he was given.

History and biography have claimed Mrs. Cannon's as a boarding house and purveyor of objects needed by the traveling gentleman. James would have his own reasons for making what he did of such a house. He recalls discovering early in life that "women might live for pleasure, pleasure always, pleasure alone" (SB 25). Life was understood by his small boy as being either business or pleasure, and each had its place. "[W]hatever wasn't business, or exactly an office or a 'store,' places in which people sat close and made money, was just simply pleasure, sought, and sought only, in places in which people got tipsy" (SB 30). He associates men with business, of course; "disaster" could
"overtake young men" who were exposed, by which he meant "immediately launched in business" (SB 30). So the autobiographer recalls forming a sense of the world around the polarities of business and pleasure, which repeat the polarities of man and woman. Men provide the money and women provide the pleasure. That understanding would surely shape a special view of a boarding house, if Mrs. Cannon's was a boarding house. In any case, that understanding explicitly shaped and defined his presentation of the grandest of temporary residences, the Waldorf-Astoria. He encountered that new Manhattan hotel on his return to America in 1904 and 1905, and he wrote about it in his travel memoir, *The American Scene* (1907).

It and Mrs. Cannon's house condense the same associations of discreet rest and recreation in a world of sexual difference. In the case of the Waldorf-Astoria, the markers of gender and the suggestiveness of sexual difference are far more explicit. The highly gendered characterization is metaphorical and takes its origin, I suggest, in Mrs. Cannon's place. The boarding house is a primal scene for his suggestion of the Waldorf-Astoria as a world of sexual adventure. Each place carries associations of promiscuity, amplitude of lap, and generosity of extended arms. In each place, James returns to the same internal site of anxiety.
The two are held together in one of the strongest of rhetorical figures, a chiasmus, in which a pair of items is repeated in reverse order. In this case, the experiences are not converted to writing in the order in which they are experienced. That conventional order is reversed, twice. The last to be experienced is written first, and the first to be experienced is written last.\(^8\)

James's visit to the Waldorf is worth lingering over. He presents it with elaborately sexualized suggestiveness as well as finding it a shrine to feminized luxury and a palace of new world imitation. In the end, it becomes an overwhelming and unwelcoming palace that James must leave. He likes to call it the "caravansary," thereby draping it in the exotic luxury commonly associated with the Mideast and calling to mind his account of a seraglio in the Preface to The Spoils of Poynton (see above, 63-65). Before he can even arrive, he complains of the "original sin" of Manhattan's grid-like street design. The activity outside is violently active, but there is a promise of peace within. The street outside is phallic and vaginal.

One of the things that helplessly are, for instance, is just this assault of the street, as I have called it, upon any direct dealing with our caravansary. The electric cars, with their double track, are everywhere almost as tight a fit in the narrow channel of the roadway as the projectile in the bore of the gun; so that the Waldorf-Astoria, sitting by this absent margin for life with her open lap and arms, is reduced to confessing, with a strained smile, across the traffic and the danger, how little, outside her mere swing-door, she can do for you. (AS 439-40)
The attempt to enter this feminine shelter is a dangerous and threatening quest but said to be worth the dare. This is not gentle romance being imagined; notice the animalism of "get at her": "She seems to admit that the attempt to get at her may cost you your safety, but reminds you at the same time that any good American, and even any good inquiring stranger, is supposed willing to risk that boon for her" (AS 440).

James believes it necessary that women who come here be respectable; he stands for the proper governance of the opportunity of female "pleasure."

It [the hotel] is an expression of the gregarious state breaking down every barrier but two—one of which, the barrier consisting of the high pecuniary tax, is the immediately obvious. The other, the rather more subtle, is the condition, for any member of the flock, that he or she—in other words especially she—be presumably 'respectable,' be, that is, not discoverably anything else. The rigour with which any appearance of pursued or desired adventure is kept down—adventure in the florid sense of the word, the sense in which it remains an euphemism—is not the least interesting note of the whole immense promiscuity. Protected at those two points the promiscuity carries, through the rest of the range, everything before it. (AS 441)

The promiscuity goes on parade:

It sat there, it walked and talked, and ate and drank, and listened and danced to music, and otherwise revelled and roamed, and bought and sold, and came and went there, all on its own splendid terms and with an encompassing material splendor, a wealth and variety of constituted picture and background, that might well feed it with the finest illusions about itself. It paraded through halls and saloons in which art and history, in masquerading dress, muffled almost to suffocation as in the gold brocade of their pretended majesties and their conciliatory graces, stood smirking on its passage with the last cynicism of hypocrisy. The exhibition is wonderful for that, for the suggested
sense of a promiscuity which manages to be at the same
time an inordinate untampered monotony....

(The 441-42)
The visit has taken a turn away from pleasure here.
Promiscuity has achieved its inevitable end in a Cannon-
like commodification. The ancient order of art and history,
the sense of the "elder amenity" that James held after he
left Cannon's, is here "muffled almost to suffocation."
He shifts the metaphorical range from the sexual to the
orchestral, and then he departs: "Such was my impression of
the perfection of the concert that, for fear of its being
spoiled by some chance false note, I never went into the
place again" (AS 444).

The finality of the statement is startling: "I never
went into the place again." This is a wish for the prior
culture, the ancient order. It is also a wish to keep
memory (Mrs. Cannon) as a completed artifact. As he said
elsewhere, there are things in the past not to be
disturbed, which rest in memory at precarious balance. That
balance has been achieved only after considerable
arrangement and selection, his own orchestration and
revision of the memory of his own past, his own
construction of consciousness.

It may be that to re-enter this palace is to reanimate
the past and memories of other sites of sexualized
pleasure. It is always possible to inquire too searchingly
into those rituals of the past which define us in the
present. Such was the meaning of *The Sense of the Past* and "The Jolly Corner." What James refuses to do here is just what was to be made possible in a few years by the dream of the Galerie d'Apollon. We might think of the Waldorf-Astoria and all its imitative luxury as a derivative American version of the French gallery and all its cultural glory. We should note which cultural corridor James chooses.

**Notes**

1. Elsewhere James says that no one in the family—not the father, nor many of the father's generation, nor many of the writer's generation—were ever "guilty of a stroke of business" (SB 109). Nevertheless, James was himself a successful capitalist and, with considerable pride, lived on what he earned as a writer.

2. James dictated this portion of *A Small Boy* to Lois Barker while he was at Lamb House. Edel's account is based on notes of Barker's recollections supplied by Simon Nowell-Smith.

   The "Buttons" episode was eerily repeated with James in the role of Thackeray. Muriel Draper recalls James frightening her three-year-old son. The boy had been looking at James's second volume of autobiography—she calls it *Letters of a Son and Brother*—and had fallen asleep with his finger in the book at a photograph. When he was presented to James, he was wearing a frilled white shirt fastened at the shoulders to suspenders "by a huge pearl button." James, as was his style, lumbered and paused and thought his way through: "Ah! my boy. So here you come, faithfully—as it were, into view—with buttons, yes, buttons. Buttons, that are, er—that are—er—buttons that have been—er [shouting in triumph] jettes-D, as it were, yes, jettes-d [queting] jettes-d so rightly, so needfully, just there, my child." He pointed at the child's shoulder. The boy, however, fled at the first jettes-d, and James said sadly, "Would I had remained a photograph" (90).

3. Citations in the second edition of the OED establish moral content in the meaning of "depraved" by 1594 and sexual content in the meaning of "pervert" by 1897. The OED citations for "queer" are outdated. I have been able to find obvious sexual content for "queer" as early as the
first years of this century in The Blue Book, a guide to the houses of Storyville, as New Orleans' quasi-legal red-light district was known. The preface to one edition provisionally dated at 1902 speaks of the area as "the 'Queer Zone'--Tenderloin." A later edition, provisionally dated at 1906, says that if one cannot find satisfaction at Sapho, a house at 1510 Iberville, he must be of "a queer nature." James uses the word a great deal in varied contexts, most of them with no obvious sexual content, but that cannot be said of the discussion of "The Passionate Pilgrim" in the Preface for the thirteenth volume of the New York Edition. In that instance, as I have already noted (59-61), he speaks of the fruit "of the tree of knowledge" being forced into his mouth; three times he speaks of poison, and three times he uses the word "queer" (PR 1205-1206).

For another view of the meaning of "queer" in the Thackeray episode, see Habegger's suggestion in The Father that it may have been meant not as stigma but as "a sign of rare privilege" (306). In regard to the repressed fear of the discovery of male sexual activity, see Sedgwick.

4. The earliest use of "John" for a prostitute's customer in the second edition of the OED is 1911, and 1914 in Partridge. The use of "John" and "Jack" with sexual meaning has a long history, however. "John Thomas," a word for the penis, is recorded by the OED and by John S. Farmer and W. E. Henley, Slang and Its Analogues (1890-1904). Henke, Ross and Thompson each shows "John" as a favored name for characters or acts in bawdy lines and songs from Chaucer through the Seventeenth Century.

James uses two foreign words, cologne and consommation, the first in a peculiarly low adaptation and the second carefully rendered as French but with hard-to-dismiss low connotations. I find it inviting to think of French as a language of repression for James, a way of bringing some forbidden ideas to linguistic expression but still keeping them at distance. In The French Side of Henry James, Edwin Fussell uses the term "the Magic Land of Elsewhere" to describe the possibilities of French for James and says the language seems to represent "a complex of human desires" (6). In French, consommation means consumption of drink, but James's invocation of the vulgarization of the earlier word raises interesting possibilities, chief among them being the sexual initiation of a marriage, a sense that in English dates to 1540, according to the OED.

5. Elizabeth Jordan, who heard the "Buttons" story from James when he was in his sixties and therefore in his autobiographical phase, recalls him as having said he was only six. Her book was published in 1938, perhaps three decades later.
6. Habegger, a brilliant reader of archival evidence, caught Henry the novelist discreetly editing his father's letter to Caroline Tappan to soften the effect of the father's disparagement of his own marriage. The father had written that his marriage had been a "great disillusioning," and when the son included the letter in *Notes of a Son and Brother*, he added "--yes!--" just after "disillusioning," implying, as Habegger says, "that the father at once sensed and sought to overcome the anticipated protest of his correspondent" (*The Father* 290). Habegger's chapter, "Erotic Liberty: 1848-50," is illuminating.

Habegger, a biographer and historian, does not believe that Mrs. Cannon ran a brothel. A few years ago, he wrote to me in the margins of an earlier version of this study, "I should probably say here that I'm quite skeptical of the interpretation that Mrs. Cannon was a brothel-keeper. ... Also, I know of no good evidence for seeing HJSr as actively unfaithful to Mary. His chronic flirtatiousness & the free-love tendency of his thought were quite misleading, to my mind."

7. For a brilliant use of these polarities to argue James's knowledge that gender is socially constructed, see Veeder. Veeder notes that most of the family men were not actively engaged in business and were therefore, as James says twice, "exposed." Veeder recognizes the word in psychoanalytic terms to mean menaced by castration. "Castration here means being cut off from business, being exposed to the dangers of pleasure" (99). Edel, referring to the wounds of the James family, goes even further when he remarks, "Any maiming of the body is in reality a castration" ("James Family" 93).

8. For an extensive treatment of the significance of chiasmus in James, see Norrman. He considers it "an abstract model whose influence permeates James's entire fictional world and dominates his thinking" (138).
Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recapitulation

What we have seen in play in the parade of memory is a process that may underlie any act of memorial reconstruction. By the arrangement of memory, James has sought to silence associated feelings. His act of arranging may be seen plainly in his variation from verifiable fact, which is sometimes not disclosed in the parade of memory but is often confessed elsewhere, as, for instance, when he assigns a date for an episode: it "may well have been the October glamour--if October it was, and if it was not it ought to have been" (NS 303). In his process of arranging we can see other stories being enacted in the present moment of composition. There are at least two, one voiced and the other unvoiced. The voiced story, the one that is acknowledged by the act of arrangement itself, is about the urgency of autobiography, the necessity of giving coherence and significant form to the past. That story, I suggest, surely must underlie any act of memorial recollection.

The other story, the unvoiced story, concerns the admiration and anguish of being a son, and in particular the son of this father. Some version of that story also must figure in many other autobiographies, and perhaps even more tellingly in those than in James's. James emphasizes several times the father's significance for his account of his own origins, and that significance is summarized and
emblematized by the father-son portrait. Small wonder that the image would have to be clarified.

The significance he accorded the portrait and the role he assigned it in his reading of his own past was authorized by the process of composing the proto-autobiographies. In that material, in which James is struggling toward a narratological relationship with his past, he accumulates significant gravity for the role and meaning of the father. He achieves, one might say, an ideology of the father. In the Preface to The Golden Bowl, he defends himself against complaints about his revising his writing by invoking the authority of the father's process of superintending the continuity of generational succession and transmission of meaning (PR 1333; see above, 41-43). In "The Question of Our Speech," he images the threat to language as the jeopardy experienced by an unsponsored and unfathered young girl, and he finds the transmission of meaning endangered by loss of control in linguistic and matrimonial ritual (QS 46-47; see above, 20-24).

The proto-autobiographies also witness James's struggle against the inevitability of the genre that was to summarize his life and crown his career. When he wrote the Preface to The Ambassadors he still regarded the craftsmanship and invention required by third-person narrative as artistry of a higher order than first-person
narrative. He called the latter the "romantic privilege" and even "the darkest abyss of romance." He sought to denigrate it as "the large ease of 'autobiography'" (note the stigma of quotation marks) because it required that "certain precious discriminations" be sacrificed (PR 1315, 1316). First-person narrative is not always the same thing as autobiography (though it may be what James meant by the stigmatized "autobiography"), and perhaps it is significant that James most clearly modeled the process and agony of reanimation of a past self in a fiction, "The Jolly Corner," that is so tentatively executed in the first person. (There are two instances of "I" on JC 327.) It was not until the dream of the Apollo Gallery that James could dare autobiography. That dream, as James presents it without fully acknowledging or understanding it, meant that his own unconscious had moved him into the position of the specter that Brydon had hunted. That is, his unconscious had placed him in the position of the subject of narrative and the abandoned American self. James remained himself, then, but was no longer crippled by bifurcation and was capable of autobiography.

What so many others have taken to be the great promise of autobiography, self-definition, may have seemed to James to be a curse. He shows every sign of having preferred ambiguity to definition. Characteristically, he used his genius for metaphoricity to take shelter from the danger of
direct statement. In fact, the preference for third-person narrative that he announces in the Preface to *The Ambassadors* announces also a resentment of direct statement. As a result, as an autobiographer James presents himself in the most awkward of postures, trying to disclose even as he withholds. Nowhere is that ambiguity more rampant than in the gender of the James that James presents. Consider the acquisitive masculinity that is invoked in James's recollection of his first stroll through London as a solitary man, and contrast it with the yearning femininity of early letters to his friend, Thomas Sergeant Perry. In the latter case, he ends his letter of 25 March 1864 eagerly awaiting Perry with the words, "Oh laggard time! Come! Come! Come to your H.J." In the margin of his April 18th letter to Perry he writes, "In a fortnight from now I shall throw myself on yr. neck" (quoted in Harlow 274, 275). In notable contrast is his shopping stroll along the Strand, taken in 1869 but written about in his 1888 essay, "London." He describes himself as having been seduced into an act of aggressive heterosexuality. He starts the paragraph speaking of the "commencement of my passion" to acquire many of the items in the shops. He smells again the fragrance of Mr. Rimmer's shop, and he hears again the voice of the "slim young lady" who waited on him; what he purchased was some erotically suggestive "hair-wash," the aroma of which is "sacred" to him still.
He lingers before the apparition of a vaginal-looking portico that is "narrow and wedge-like." He finishes the paragraph with a memory of "a rush I made into a glover's," and ends by saying, "Keen within me was a sense of the importance of deflowering, of despoiling the shop" (LO 16-18).

Far less ambiguous than his gender is the affection and admiration with which James regarded his father. The matter that expresses his ideology of the father underlies much of James's sense of the structure of social meaning, whereas his sense of his own father is individual and local. One of his most admiring and extended characterizations of his father's thinking and personal values occurs in the Caroline Tappan chapter of Notes of a Son and Brother. "As these [the elements of his father's character] were extraordinary forces of sympathy and generosity, and that yet knew how to be such without falsifying any minutest measure, the structure raised upon them might well, it would seem, and even to the uppermost sublime reaches, be as valid as it was beautiful." The father never "sentimentalised" the "actual," and instead his philosophy kept account of the transcendent as well as the material, and so his character, as it was expressed in intercourse, was "fascinating" (NS 373).

The degree to which James considered his small boy to have taken his sense of identity from the father is
suggested in his frustrations with the father's calling. He recalls with amusement that it was "tasteless and even humiliating" that the children could not claim their father to be "in business"; what was wanted was a single word that summarized their father's identity, and therewith their own. What was needed were "credentials" that would "prove us respectable." The only designations that the father could suggest the children apply to him when their friends challenged them were indistinct and vague: student, philosopher, "seeker for truth," and even "lover of my kind." Consequently, James was outfaced because "my friend Simpson" could claim that "the author of his being" was a stevedore (NS 278). James was jealous of a dock worker.

Entertained as James was by the memory of that young dependency on the father's identity, there was nothing entertaining about his own resentment of having been a mere junior. He ceased using the "Jr." in his letter signatures almost as soon as his father died. His first to William after the father's death still carries it, but two days later, 28 December 1882, it is gone (HJL II 396-97). On 8 January 1883, it is half there, by force of habit (HJL II 399-400). On 19 April 1883, he instructed his publisher, Macmillan, to drop the "Jr." from his title pages and advertisements (HJL II 410-12). He expressed his resentment of the junior tag in a 1913 letter to his nephew Bill, the son of William the psychologist. Bill, who was himself a
junior, was planning to name his first son "William, Jr." and his uncle regarded the step as a serious mistake. His resentment of never having had a name to himself, an identity specifically his own, fairly spills from the letter of 13 May 1913. "I can't but feel sorry that you are embarking afresh on the unfortunate mere Junior. I have a right to speak of that appendage--I carried it about for forty years" (IV 673). He goes on to suggest that his father be honored in another way: that the child carry his father's name in the middle and that the first name be Henry.

That one epistolary gesture summarizes so much of James's autobiography. It memorializes the family and the father even as it advances his own name to prominence over his brother's. It repeats every child's struggle to reconcile repetition and separation, and it is allied with his own struggle with the autobiographical dilemma of reconciling disclosure and privacy.
Works Cited


Vita

Paul S. Nielsen was born August 30, 1940, in Durham, N.C. His parents, the late Walter M. and Katherine T. Nielsen, were both from Minnesota. His father, a physics professor at Duke University, was Danish and the mother was of English and Irish parents. Nielsen's sister, Karen, and brother, Peter, are retired. Nielsen has two children, a son, Charles, and a daughter, Penny, both of whom live in California.

Nielsen is a 1958 graduate of the Hill School in Pottstown, PA, and a 1962 graduate of Duke University in Durham. He taught English at St. Margaret's, a private girls' preparatory school in Waterbury, CT, from 1962 to 1964. In addition, he has undertaken baccalaureate study at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, in 1963 and at Pennsylvania University in Philadelphia in 1987-89. He moved to Baton Rouge, LA, to pursue a Ph.D. in 1989.

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DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Paul S. Nielsen

Major Field: English

Title of Dissertation: Henry James and the Process of Autobiography

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

April 7, 1995