Abstract

NAMING AND IDENTITY IN HENRY JAMES’S

THE AMBASSADORS

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In Henry James’s novel The Ambassadors, James uses axiological language in tropes and in substantives, periphrastically replacing proper names. He also includes valuations in miscellaneous data contained in such differences as the one he makes in The Ambassadors between "Europe" (place) and "'Europe'" (concept). As well, James puts adjectival assessments of people and situations in the midst of these constructions and in the mouths of his characters, assessments which vary from those which contradict the value systems posited in the novel by various characters, through those which seem quizzical or ambiguous, to those whose meaning seems obvious under the circumstances. The argument of this critical work is that these attempts at naming tie in fundamentally with the ways in which James means for readers to interpret the identities of the characters and the events and are not merely ornamental.

Even when James says that a character "didn’t know what to call" someone or something or when "identity" or a verbal equation for identity occurs in an odd context, James answers his own implied rhetorical question; he is not as problematic to read as is
sometimes suggested. Our own valuations are encouraged to be close to the experience of Lambert Strether. Leading the reader through the maze of Strether’s experience, James gives many clear signals from the simplest elements of his complicated language even into the fabrication of his complex metaphors that he, though an explorer of the moral universe, is no relativistic iconoclast.

In the examination of these issues, a choice has been made to draw eclectically upon various sources and techniques, from traditional “humanistic” modes of interpretation, rhetorical studies, structuralist and deconstructionist remarks, to existentialism, narratology, and identity studies. This choice is the result of an intention to access as many different "voices" as possible, in the attempt to be comprehensive about the voices of James and The Ambassadors.
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INTRODUCTION

Though in Figures in Literary Discourse Genette charges the pleonasm (redundancy), with being a "bad sign" because it is "bloated," his description of a sign which "wants to be true...both a sign and a thing" (36), Henry James’s periphrasis, sometimes seen as unnecessary or a redundancy, partakes of the negative quality of this desire only from a partial perspective. Though like Genette’s "bad sign" James’s auctorial signature may "try to deceive by adding to [its] conventional value the oblique power of natural evocation," I argue that it does so out of a generosity of spirit and a desire to thoroughly involve the reader, to implicate, entangle and entrap the reader, so that the reader’s easy moral assumptions are challenged and thus the reader is driven in turn towards generosity of spirit. This generosity seems lacking in labelling signs "bad" and "good" (in a distortion of Sartre’s "bad faith"\(^1\) which are supposedly so remote from moral issues per se, and then affiliating them, as Genette says Barthes does, with "the naturalization of culture, and therefore of history...the major sin of petty-bourgeois ideology" (FLD 36). This is simply to prefer one aesthetic—the extirpation of "expression" from art (FLD 37-38)—to another, and to tie it to a political agendrum with which it may not actually be connected. Readers and writers and their opinions and preferences are various, and in

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\(^1\) Though Sartre warns that the attempt to be sincere will almost willy-nilly result in bad faith, at the same time he suggests that we must accept the doubleness of our state. In his famous example of the waiter in Being and Nothingness, the waiter must not only accept his "objectification" by others—though Sartre would perhaps not use that word. As a waiter qua waiter this is his "being-in-itself." He must also strive to achieve his freedom as an individual other than that contained in the selective role of waiter (his "being-for-itself"). Sartre indicates that this dichotomy must be accepted, striven for even, in both its parts, or at least that the dichotomy is inevitable in the human situation (Sartre qtd. in Guignon and Pereboom 309-322). What Genette (as derived from Barthes) seems to do is to reject the "expressive" value of the individual sign and value only the other half of the dichotomy, the "arbitrary" value of the sign qua sign. If Sartre is correct, then both the expressive value and the arbitrary value of the sign have their place, and it is not accurate to label one half a "bad" sign because it is expressive and the other a "good" sign because it is arbitrary. Calling the expressive value (the redundancy, or "pleonasm," as Genette names it in FLD) "vulgar" and "petty-bourgeois" by this explanation seems like just so much posturing.
order not to reduce James’s overall pyrotechnics only to the question of non-demotic language, one must still read for meaning, even sometimes for moral perspective.

James’s aesthetic reaches toward the ideal expressed poetically in Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*: "Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive,/And virtues which are merciful nor weave/Snares for the failing…" (114.161-63). He seeks "words which are things" not in the sense of the disagreement over referentiality, but in the sense of paring down the "bloated" quality itself insofar as it ever referred to the Romantic, a quality that James perhaps justly may be seen as guilty of in some of his early works. (Though I am aware that a quote from *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* is automatically suspect from the point of view of introducing a seemingly typical evocation of “expression,” it is well to remember that though that poem lacks the full development of the more classical, "cleaner," less "bloated" spirit of *Don Juan*, in a reduced backward perspective from the latter it is still a rhetorical work, sharing like elements of balance, contrast and antithesis.) One is thus in search in *The Ambassadors* for the quintessential and at the same time barest possible claim that can be made for the morality, aesthetics, and axiology used to reveal the characters' identities.

James's late style is characterized by periphrasis from extended antonomasia, from tropes, from other texts, from recurring miscellaneous words and expressions, and from the particular adjectival combinations which occur in the antonomasia, tropes, and expressions his characters use. These incidents of periphrasis contain, name, and express James's axiological, ethical concerns in the text, particularly as the ethical is met and interacted with by the aesthetic. The blossoming forth of James's periphrasis is in fact the aesthetic of a search for adequate and comprehensive moral ground.
Accordingly, with my view of James’s most frequent or indicative forms of periphrasis, I must test the reader’s patience by repeating examples as I layer the analytical discussion of rhetorical effects, just as James layered his revisions from edition to edition originally (Rosenbaum 361); presumably the most authoritative version appears in the 1994 Norton Critical Edition of the New York Edition of The Ambassadors. Such a reading of the book is in this case a step toward methodology if not toward theory. Though it is debatable whether one can get at these last for James by the example of this one literary text (as Genette does for Proust so notably in Narrative Discourse), it is at the same time true that this one work is an example of James’s late style par excellence, especially with reference to periphrasis related to naming and identity and how it affects other items, such as point of view and metaphor.

In addition to this sometimes repetitive, close, layered analysis, some space must be dedicated for the appeal to various styles and sources of literary analysis: a certain eclecticism of procedure, drawing now from one critical agendum, now from another seems apropos, if only to honor in spirit, if not in slavish adherence to the methodological letter, the preference Genette gives, again quoting Barthes, to "'peaceful coexistence'' of approaches and a ""parametric" criticism" to suit the work (Barthes qtd. in FLD 28).

For Genette and Barthes, the "fundamental 'ideological principles'' concerned in parametric criticism are those of "existentialism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, [and] structuralism" (FLD 28). I propose to borrow the term "parametric" not with an emphasis on its role as a limit or boundary of these particular perspectives, however, but with an

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2 Though Genette and Barthes are consistent in their statements of this principle and Barthes was previous in his statement of it, I reference Genette because his discussion follows up an idea formulated in Barthes's works in general. See in particular Roland Barthes, Critical Essays, Richard Howard tr. (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern UP, 1972).
acknowledgement to them for the expression of a felt need for a catholic approach using a varied range of critical/theoretical perspectives. Among them in my case are traditional humanistic interpretation and formalism, rhetorical and identity studies, structuralist, deconstructionist, and narratological approaches, and some psychology. After all, as Bakhtin says of a world dominated by heteroglossia, "The dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is, of course, a property of any discourse. It is the natural orientation of any living discourse. On its various routes toward the object, in all its directions, the word encounters an alien word and cannot help encountering it in a living, tension-filled interaction" (The Dialogic Imagination 279). In this case, I hope to construct a "parametric" criticism to suit different aspects of the one work, drawing upon both traditional and contemporary critical methods, each key point having a particular kind of analysis which suits it best.

In Chapter One, I examine periphrasis in its relationship with considerations of style, voice, and mimesis especially, while isolating for close analysis the naming antonomastic/periphrastic expressions upon which more extended analysis of identities depends. This chapter should help focus the reader's attention upon the vital interaction of all these elements, previously unexamined in this light.

Chapter Two sketches out in detail the connections among Strether's "quest," the significant language attached thereto, and the notion of identity. The language of the quest has been noticed before, but never to my knowledge taken seriously as a composing structural/metaphorical element in the examination of the characters' specific psychologies and goals.
Initiating an in-depth examination of metaphor, Chapter Three shows how metaphor can be seen as a kind of periphrasis. It also exposes the identity dichotomy of knight versus burgher as two aspects of a three-pronged metaphorical concern with social penalty and status, the third prong being the metaphorical as it is concerned with the "image schemata" relative to sight (Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner). These schemata mediate the social situation of conflict and contact between the other two aspects in the book's analysis of visual imperialism, the axiology of which is at the comic core of the novel. Though several writers have commented on the appearance of knightly language (as previously noted), and Laurence Holland has commented upon mercantile and "cost-factor" language in its connection with vision in the metaphorical sense, they have not been elsewhere combined, especially not with the other contributing texts in the chapter concerned. I refer in particular to the works, together and apart, of George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Mark Turner, which inspire many of my considerations of metaphor. (An Appendix on metaphorical usage in The Ambassadors, of significance mainly to Jamesians, is intended to supplement Chapter III, and details the breakdown of the remaining kinds of supporting metaphors in the novel into eight main categories, accompanied by an attached Table. Briefly, the clichéd metaphors of daily use are its first subsidiary subject under "miscellaneous," and James reanimates them in such a way that they become a guide to the parameters of the periphrastic constructs, both those of the old, established European social identities represented by Paris and those of the American visitors. These metaphors aid the reader, who is working out the opposing cultural views, by adding something familiar from which to navigate. Though Robert Gale has noted the occasional cliché, no one has yet provided this kind of focus on the
clichéd metaphors and what they do as a form of periphrasis. The second part of the Appendix continues to refer to metaphorical periphrasis and briefly follows its path through Strether's pursuit of "truth" about naming and identity as it can be traced through other miscellaneous metaphors. The third part of the Appendix deals with the seven remaining subcategories of more conventional metaphors which reveal the periphrastic framework. This focus on figurative language should make clear the extent to which *The Ambassadors* relies on figuration in its exploration of naming and identity issues; traditionally, only the other late novels have been seen to use it extensively.

Chapter Four details those items of James's language which either refer explicitly to naming, identity, and type or involve those concepts as they connect with the character development/plot resolution. There are other studies focusing on naming in James as it relates to proper names and types after Thackeray or Trollope, and studies of other kinds of identity, but none delineating social/personal identity in the terms I have chosen.

In Chapter Five, I compare the conclusions of my study up to this point in their implications for naming and identity with recent and groundbreaking examinations of the different categories of identity structuring. As in other chapters, I look at physical identity/psychological identity, nationality and culture, alterity as a narrative concept, and romance and the picturesque as they impinge on issues of identity.

My Conclusion reintegrates all these concerns with periphrasis, identity and naming, and the moral/aesthetic poles of the work with the very Jamesian topic of dishonesty and "bad faith"; though James himself predated the major twentieth-century philosophical statement of this concern, it was his characteristic subject before it was Sartre's.
I am also assuming a certain transparency of intention not usually credited to James, subsisting between the “implied author” and “the narrator” as they are described by Seymour Chatman in *Story and Discourse* (151). To be perfectly honest is an ideal condition for the best, even assuming that the truth is known, and Henry James the "actual" author had his communicative faults even as they do. In the intentions expressed and followed through in the *praxis* of his "implied author" and through him of "the narrator," however, I would like to argue in my work for this transparency (at least in this late work *The Ambassadors*).

As Leon Edel remarked in his 1953 edition of *The Sacred Fount*, "[James] believed in the novelist as an historian, and accordingly a realist, and all his fiction was addressed to the demonstration of this fundamental truth" (vi). In pursuit of this goal, James’s narrator enunciates, and his implied author puts the stamp of qualified approval on, a kind of visual imperialism—tied to the novel’s epistemology—on behalf of Strether, the main character. Richard Hocks notes in his study of the intellectual interactions of William and Henry James that both believed in the validity of sense impressions (*Henry James and Pragmatistic Thought* 82-84). As we see in *The Ambassadors*, however, the character Strether has an experience of attenuated or modulated perceptual support: some of the things he derives from his vision turn out to be as real as it is possible for him tactfully to verify, others not, and learning to "discriminate" is a key concept, as it is the key word of the "Paris as Babylon" passage.

Again in reference to realism or at least to the realistic illusion, the mention or drawing together of such disparate commentators may seem unwieldy. But to include more variety of commentary is to practice a sort of realistic, pragmatic technique of
interpretation, which includes several perspectives and thus shares perhaps the illusion of realism with the work itself in a sort of conceptual mimesis (Bakhtin's several voices). That Strether’s vision is the one overwhelmingly articulated by the narrator does not change the fact that he as a character is prey to the "several voices" of self-doubt and self-confidence, which between them cover various rhetorical angles. Thus, the book will receive a kind of critical treatment which seems most likely to expose its rhetorical stances in their interaction.

Taking all these considerations in mind, it is to be hoped that this work will bring together both older and newer perspectives on identity in good, though not necessarily chronological order, while maintaining respect for the primary text, its author, and its other interpreters, and finding, one always hopes, a few new things to say.
I—ANTONOMASIA/P ERPHRASIS IN CONNECTION WITH STYLE, 
VOICE, AND MIMESIS

As Ian Watt says in "The First Paragraph of The Ambassadors: An Explication," James uses "a certain amount of elegant variation to avoid piling up personal pronouns and adjectives such as 'he', 'his' and 'him'" (EC 255). This is partly because "[r]eported rather than direct speech also increases the pressure toward elegant variation" (EC 258). There are additional reasons for James's periphrastic habits with subjects, objects, objects of prepositions in sentences, and other fragments, however. Watt mentions further that in one instance "the epithet also gives James an opportunity for underlining the ironic distance and detachment with which we are invited to view his dedicated 'inquirer', Strether" (EC 258-59). He notes also James's tendency to preserve the "primarily mental continuum" by "present[ing] characters and actions on a plane of abstract categorisation..." (EC 259). Since we are capable of regarding our own lives with a degree of "distance and detachment," this irony Watt mentions does not disturb the closeness with which we are encouraged to view Strether's identity. There are moments of exception. Because we are witnessing a man observing other people and events, filtered, to use Chatman’s terms, through a "narrator" and involving the implicit collaboration of the "implied author" (SD 147-151), readers are naturally more suspicious than Strether is on his own behalf, without losing sympathy for him. To what extent James’s metaphors and other figurative language invoke a "primary mental continuum" and to what extent they help sketch out this "plane of abstract categorisation" are matters for contention. It is a more complicated matter than Watt finds it. Essentially in The Ambassadors, James is focusing on questions of naming and identity, and supplements his examination of Lambert Strether's consciousness with an examination of
how Strether's society as a whole—both his original society of Woollett and his new, Parisian society—affects his evaluation of the situation he is sent to control, his conformity to, and adaptation and rejection of certain names for people and things, and his vision of others' identities.

In order to implicate the reader in a search for comprehensive moral ground, James uses various forms of periphrasis, from short antonomastic labels to long and complex metaphorical webs. To mention here only one example, as he pursues the names and seeks for the identities which will make sense of his developing moral stance, Strether, James's main character, relies on visual imperialism and the metaphor of sight as a "natural" form of the condensing, elisive power of periphrasis. A picture is worth a thousand words, but this condensation works in the verbal reverse too, and a short periphrasis expands into a complicated picture. Condensation and expansion, either of words or "pictures," varied with long passages of meditative significance, construct the fullest impression for James's desired quality of "intensity."

In the examination of James's use of periphrasis, it is best to begin with the smallest units which are still significant, the short antonomastic bursts of labelling periphrasis, because other namings develop from these basic ones are they are first set forth. (See Table I, Below.)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
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<th>Extended Antonomasia (Simple Periphrasis)</th>
<th>Literary References (Periphrasis Taking Forms of Condensation/ Expansion ** from Aforegoing Narrative)***</th>
<th>Simile/Metaphor (Periphrasis Taking Forms of Condensation/ Expansion** from Poetical/ Rhetorical Models)</th>
<th>Types (Periphrasis Taking Forms of Abstractions From Character Types)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lambert Strether</td>
<td>[a traveller]</td>
<td>&quot;the most newly disembarked of the two men&quot; (p. 17)</td>
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<td>&quot;….[S]he had made their friend fare…as Major Pendennis would have fared at the Megatherium. She had made him breakfast like a gentleman….&quot; (p. 36)— (Expansion)</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Strether is not usually treated as a type, however:] travelling American</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lambert Strether</td>
<td>&quot;the enquirer&quot; (p.17)</td>
<td>&quot;the enquirer at the office&quot; (p. 17)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>[As Mme. de Vionnet’s friend:] &quot;….[I]t was amazing what could still come up without reference to what had been going on between them. It might have been…nothing more than Shakespeare and the musical glasses…..&quot; (p. 306)— (Condensation)</td>
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(Table I Continued )
Lambert Strether | [an older man] | "[Waymarsh's] friend of fifty-five" (p. 201) | [an older man is like a winter apple— ]— simile (Expansion) | 
| | | "[Strether was]…the most withered of the winter apples…."— metaphor (Condensation) (p. 250) | "[Strether was]…'youth for the trip to Europe.'" (p. 199) |

*[Descriptive phrase for proper name….Or, proper name for quality associated with it…." (Lanham, A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms 17)]. Some overlapping between antonomasia and periphrasis is inevitable, given the nature of sentence structure. As well, short word combinations such as "the young men" or "our friend," which have an overarching or symbolic significance in the text can be seen as periphrastic, though technically antonomastic.

**The relations between literary references and types are evident, as the two works referred to [Thackeray's The Newcomes (36) and Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield (306)] are comedic in force and contain types.

***The terms "condensation" and "expansion" in relation to the literary references arise in this sense: the expansion in the first example comes about when the condensed reference to a longer foregoing history or tale fits into this novel as periphrastic content of this book's images, because of the attached explanation of its significance. The condensation in the second example, "Shakespeare and the musical glasses," refers to something which the reader is expected to know or to want to know, and to bring back into the novel itself and re-expand for comparison purposes. In reference to similes and metaphors, it is often remarked (as in some of the critical texts later canvassed in this paper, in Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria, notably) that metaphor is a shortened form of simile.

This table is not meant to imply that there are no other types of periphrasis in the novel, only that these are the major significant substantives. Special attention may also be focused, for example, on mostly verbal non-substantive forms of periphrasis, as in James's verbal construction consisting of combinations of verbs and verbal modifiers.
In the case of antonomastic/periphrastic labels such as "his friend," "his companion," "his interlocutor," etc., James alternates from one pole of our awareness to another, regarding how close Lambert Strether and the other characters actually are to each other within the bounds of the fiction itself (not for the moment considering Miss Gostrey as "ficelle," as James referred to her in the Preface, but seeing her as she is for Strether). Such terms as "his friend" may stress intimacy, according to the surrounding text: it can be taken literally in its first occurrence in the text, in respect to Waymarsh. But as Watt notes, James rings changes in the first paragraph on Strether's emotional commitment to the experience of seeing Waymarsh again: he is ambivalent. At other times, a label acknowledges an intimacy of recent date, but one which we are invited to believe is well-grounded because of innate sympathy, as when we read of Strether and Maria Gostrey, "…they were left together as if over the mere laid table of conversation….Their attitude remained, none the less, that of not forsaking the board; and the effect of this in turn was to give them the appearance of having accepted each other with an absence of preliminaries practically complete" (19).

Soon after, Miss Gostrey is spoken of not as Strether's "interlocutress," one of James's emotionally remote terms, nor by her name, nor more accurately as "Strether's new acquaintance," but as "Strether's companion." Maria's role as a protector of Strether's sensibilities, including her comedic force of personality, is further stressed by the replacement of "with his new friend" immediately after this with "under this unsought protection" (19) of the New York Edition (Rosenbaum 349). In support of Watt's contention of irony, or at least of the "detachment" of humor—"unsought" therefore
reverses the periphrasis and marks "distance" again, though here it is not only our distance observing Strether but Strether's also, regarding Maria.

Because she is "the dispenser of such good assurances," Maria becomes the source and encouragement of Strether's loss "of avoidance and of caution." She is spoken of as "his hostess" (20), and only as the remote "other party to Strether's appointment" when there is a necessity to stress objectivity, as in the paragraph describing what "an attentive observer" (Maria Gostrey) would have "seen catalogued" in Strether (20). The same remoteness occurs in the physical description of Maria herself when we are told what a "spectator" might see (21). She is spoken of as "this lady" when it is appropriate to stress her "perfect plain propriety, [her] expensive subdued suitability..." (20). She then is named "his friend" (21), and one of the bases of their quick friendship is stated in the parenthetical "familiar compatriot as she was." There is an ironic flirtation on the narrator's part with the word "familiar" here, because Maria instigates a quick friendship.

Immediately, in an extended figure we are told that Strether does not have, like Maria Gostrey, "a hundred cases of categories, receptacles of the mind, subdivisions for convenience, in which, from a full experience, she pigeon-holed her fellow mortals with a hand as free as that of a compositor scattering type" (21). We see that he "had a sort of sense of what she knew. He had…the sense that she knew things he didn't..." (22). She is named "his guide," an initiator into a world of knowledge and experience.

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3 As is obvious here, instances of periphrasis/antonomasia regularly merge into extended figures such as metaphor and simile, metaphor upon metaphor, metaphor and simile used together, etc. As Robert L. Gale pointed out in 1975, James's "imagery habitually paints setting, foreshadows, implements plot, and reinforces theme" (CI 4). All these functions serve to help name and identify James's concerns on their respective levels, though most of my discussion centers around the naming and identification of characters and their motivations.
Later, she self-deprecatingly tells him she is but "a general guide" (26) and a
"superior 'courier-maid,'" a "companion at large," after he has expressed guilt and
discomfort. He makes physical contact with her as she offers him reassurances, "passing
his hand into her arm in the manner of a benign dependent paternal old person who
wishes to be 'nice' to a younger one" (27). James then coyly suggests that Strether's
reason for withdrawing his hand as they reached the inn "may have been" because
Strether "readjusted" his view of their relative experience, if not of their relative age.
Using "may have been" rather than a more assertive stance allows the narrative voice to
define a certain fear on Strether's part of being discovered in something not quite
"regular," Strether and Maria's rapid and public intimacy, to which "a certain person"
(23), Mrs. Newsome, might object. (It is symbolic of Waymarsh's later identity as Mrs.
Newsome's deputy that he is regarding them as they approach the inn.)

In Chapter Two, from Waymarsh's perspective this time, we see Maria Gostrey as
"this original woman" who has "all knowledge" on her side about their mutual
acquaintance and her original knowledge of him through them (27). When the two men
are above in Waymarsh's chamber, Waymarsh becomes simply "his friend" and the lady
"their fashionable friend" (28), this latter from Waymarsh's perspective again. This usage
marks a difference between Waymarsh and Miss Gostrey which justifies Strether's
"conviction that Waymarsh would quite fail...to profit by her" (28). We later see the
same suspiciousness of the fashionable on Waymarsh's part directed toward Strether's
interest in showy neckties and in purchasing gloves; this suspiciousness of élan defines
Waymarsh's identity.
When situations are described in general, as when Waymarsh is depicted in his meetings with people, the vague and indefinite terms "his auditor" or "his observer" (29) are used, just as "an attentive observer" "saw" Strether, and "a spectator" viewed Maria on the "narratee’s" behalf. (For "narratee" see SD 147-151.) These vaguer terms help determine the distance between the narratee and the narrator and between the physical appearance of the character and the important tendency in James to "subordinat[e] concrete events [and appearances] to their mental reflection," as Watt says (EC 259).

Among the most commonly occurring periphrastics in the book are "friend," "companion," and "comrade." Often used interchangeably, there are still times when distinctions among their meanings are made. Sometimes distinctions are made by the addition of one or so other words, such as when Miss Barrace's "actual friends" are spoken of (126). This may stand in contrast to her immediately previous mention of "my visitors" to indicate a closer degree of intimacy. Both Bilham and Strether are spoken of as her "actual friends," and Strether is a friend of recent date whom she "quizzes" and to whom she sometimes refuses to commit herself—note in contrast the ease with which Miss Gostrey befriends Strether. "Actual friends" may also mean her friends who are "being, existing, or acting at the present moment" ("Actual," American Heritage Dictionary 2006): it may refer to the ones currently before us and/or to the lightness of Miss Barrace's attachments. Similarly, Waymarsh is spoken of when he is actually with Strether as Strether's "actual comrade" (71), a label which hints at his later dereliction. He is here opposed to Bilham, who though young and untried is called Strether's "new friend." In a related way, Maria Gostrey is spoken of as Strether's and Waymarsh's "constant counsellor" with a play of words on the meanings of "constant": perpetual, and
also faithful (42). The fluctuating estimations of friends’ identities are thus signaled. These identities react upon the self, as Norbert Wiley notes. In Wiley’s explanation of his “trialogic” self (composed of a "past 'Me',' a "present 'I,'" and a "future 'You,'"), "Wiley introduces the notion of temporary or permanent 'visitors' as further internalised others….such as] God, parents, friends past and present, spouses, children, novel heroes, movie characters."  

Indeed, such varied terms about Waymarsh may be juxtaposed within a few sentences with such a relatively impersonal term as "his visitor" (29), describing Strether as confronted with a restless, sleepless Waymarsh after Miss Gostrey has retired. Strether becomes "the visitor," the quintessential distraction, as he himself is uncomfortably aware of Waymarsh's "wilfully uncomfortable" manner about Europe. Strether here assumes a more remote rôle, merely a function: to be a source of relief for insomnia. This changes again at the point at which "poor Waymarsh’s" marital history is recounted in the narrative, when Strether's sympathetic memories about the man cause Waymarsh to be recalled as "his friend" and "his companion" (30).

Maria Gostrey and Waymarsh are not the only characters labelled sometimes as friends and sometimes more remotely. After meeting Bilham, Strether describes the encounter to Waymarsh:

The mention to his companion of the sacrifice [of "a rarer opportunity"] was moreover exactly what introduced his recital—or, as he would have called it with more confidence in his interlocutor, his confession. His confession was that he had been captured and that one of the features of the affair had just failed to be his engaging himself on the spot to dinner….The person was a young man whose acquaintance he had made but that afternoon in the course of rather a hindered enquiry for

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another person—an enquiry his new friend had just prevented in fact from being vain….He was affected after a minute, face to face with his actual comrade, by the impulse to overcolour. (70-71)

The shift from calling Waymarsh "his companion" to "his interlocutor" reflects a paralleling of Strether's recital/interlocutor vs. confession/companion: because he lacks "confidence" in Waymarsh, he describes his meeting with Bilham in slightly different terms, so that "[i]f Waymarsh thought them bad he should at least have his reason for his discomfort; so Strether showed them as worse. Still, he was now, in his way, sincerely perplexed" (71). The term "his actual comrade" is applied next to Waymarsh—here used in both of the possible senses of the word "actual," "current" and also "true." We have seen before the application of the word "actual" to Miss Barrace's friends, but if Waymarsh is stolid, no one can doubt his intent to be Strether's "true" friend. Bilham is also here described in the concierge's words, as "a friend of the tenant of the troisieme" (72), not "Mr. Bilham, a friend of the tenant of the troisieme." This not only stresses that Chad's name and Bilham's name are not uppermost in the concierge's awareness, as Chad's is in Strether's, but also that the withholding of Bilham's actual name in the narrative until after he has been spoken of as "the young man" twice and "Chad's friend" once focuses sharply the "experiment" Strether thinks he performs in questioning Bilham without Chad's "knowledge."

Strether is "our friend" (29) throughout the book when his private opinions of people are in question, especially when they are at odds or have private differences of opinion. This indicates that Strether is our main interest on the first "layer" of the story, with always James's "story of one's story" lurking in the background. Strether is also "our hero" (84).
"Our friend" occurs also when Strether is said to be engaged in what is one of the central pursuits of the book: finding the right name to match the identity of someone/something accurately. Mary Cross points to this role of Strether's when she says, in her chapter about The Ambassadors entitled "Adventures of the Signifier," "The Ambassadors is a story of signifiers, a narrative of the process of denomination by which words categorise the world. The names for things…give Strether of Woollett great trouble, trapped as he is in his own lexicon. It is his triumph…to 'find the names', only to discover that they do not settle anything" (Contingencies of Style 100). She goes on to overstate her case in taking James as an exemplar of postmodernism, but she points out, interestingly, that Strether does "learn[] to understand language as difference [except for his own choices and principles which he endeavors to make an exception of], to note its most subtle plays with difference, and to recognise that knowing the names is not enough to halt the supplemental nature of language." She also remarks that the "plot winds up and winds down on this movement [of a narrative of deconstruction]" (CS 100). I would differ in pointing out that though Strether finds various understandings disintegrating around him, he strikes both a verbal and an emotional resolution with Maria, and an agreement of sorts about what things mean. The book ends with an agreement about matching names to moral and aesthetic issues, and Strether uses that phrase often repeated throughout the book previously in less finally satisfactory situations, "'Then there we are!'" (347). The situation and wording of it are complete, though the sentence may cause the reader to ask questions. (One should not underestimate the persuasiveness of Cross's argument, however. To some extent, the persuasiveness of a postmodern argument depends on how strongly one emphasizes the favorite catchwords of New
Criticism: paradox, irony, paronomasia, and ambiguity. This is because taken together these considerations lead straight to deconstruction, though in the history of criticism formalism and deconstruction are opposed. All four of these considerations depend on a doubleness, or a multiplicity of meanings, so favored by postmodern analysis.)

An example of the importance of naming and of Strether's role in it occurs just after Strether and Maria Gostrey discuss Waymarsh's "sacred rage"—though it occurs in relation to some object he purchases, which, like the manufactured object of Woollett, is never named. We are told "our friend had meanwhile to find names for many other matters" (41). When he seeks names in relation to moments of perception, thoughts and feelings, we are told, for example: "Our friend....saw [Chad] in a flash as the young man marked out by women..." (98). Again, when he has to define the nature of a social situation, about which he has doubts, he is aligned with "us": "The lady on his left [Miss Barrace]...was a very marked person, a person who had much to do with our friend's asking himself if the occasion weren't in its essence the most baited, the most gilded of traps" (76).

Strether is most literally "our friend," just as Maria Gostrey is usually a ficelle, when he is eliciting the answers which will allow us to go on with our own "adventure" of the text, James's "demonstration of [the] process of vision" in his "man of imagination" (Preface 2-3) and our observation of "the charm...of adventure transposed--the thrilling ups and downs, the intricate ins and outs of the compositional problem..." (Preface 9). When Strether is pumping Bilham for conversation about Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, the text reads, "....[A]fter a few steps in the outer air they had turned the next corner. There our friend had kept it up. 'Why isn't he free if he's good?' Little Bilham looked
him full in the face. 'Because it's a virtuous attachment'' (112). This is one of the examples also of misdirection, when our "adventure" is augmented by a detour, Strether's being side-tracked into believing the attachment is "virtuous" in the Woollett sense: that is, sexless. We still rely on him here, but our views may diverge, the more bewildered or falsely rewarded by an easy answer he seems.

In at least one instance, "our friend" is used when Strether has to choose between thinking about Chad and thinking about himself at Gloriani's garden party. "Strether noted…that [Chad] was…on terms with illustrious spirits, and also that—yes, distinctly—he hadn't in the least swaggered about it. Our friend hadn't come there only for this figure of Abel Newsome's son, but that presence threatened to affect the observant mind as positively central" (121). Nevertheless, Strether characteristically resolves this mental dilemma by wondering whether he himself has "passed the test" of Gloriani's gaze, talking of his own social discomforts with Bilham. After speaking to Bilham and Miss Barrace and meeting Mme. de Vionnet he resolves the dilemma by comparing himself to Bilham and Chad in his much remarked upon speech about youth (132) and says he should enjoy being like Chad (133). Later, Chad's lesser proximity to us makes him only one of "our visitors"; Strether is still "our friend" (145).

"Our friend" is used in dialogue also, when Strether himself refers to Chad with Mme. de Vionnet (151). He is asking her if Jeanne is in love with "our friend," (Chad); it marks an attempt on Strether's part to close the social distance and increase the social understanding between Mme. de Vionnet and himself by its appeal. In one instance, Gloriani's phrase regarding Chad, "our young friend." from two earlier editions (Rosenbaum 351) has been changed in the New York Edition to the more Continental and
impartial "notre jeune homme" (155), reflecting the fellowship of age between Gloriani and Strether in comparison to Chad's youth. Yet, the difference that exists between Strether and Gloriani is manifested within a few sentences, in their respectively hesitant and sure identifications of a picture (155).

Later, Strether names Chad and Marie de Vionnet as "our friends" when he considers them, speaking with Miss Barrace. He is assessing whether they will ever be able to marry. By calling them simply "our friends" he places himself on equal status with Miss Barrace and at the same time imposes order on disorderly things like extramarital passion and unanswered questions (157). He reiterates his attempt to control identities later when Miss Barrace either pretends or actually misunderstands him to be talking about herself and Waymarsh; he is actually referring to the other two. "'At all events,' he roundly brought out, 'the attachment's an innocent one.' 'Mine and his? Ah,' she laughed, 'don't rob it of all interest!' 'I mean our friend's here—to the lady we've been speaking of'" (158). Thus, James has allowed some continuity between the expressive habits of periphrasis in the (clarifying) narrative voice and in the character Strether's own voice. This is one speaking habit they share, though not exclusively.5

5 David Smit says the similarity of all the late novels and tales may be more than "the mental life of the characters: the style may be simply the narrator's voice. Whether in first- or third-person, that voice is the one which James adopted late in his career as a public voice, a voice that we need not necessarily associate with James himself or his personality but which dominates the novels and stories in spite of the fact that we cannot associate it with any particular personality...." Smit does not "hear" the characters' voices. "So when I read about the thoughts of James' characters in these books, I am...aware that I am reading the words of a person some distance from the action, viewing it, describing it...creating it...as he goes along and what I am reading is the narrator's interpretation of these thoughts. In those rare cases when I do become aware of Free Indirect Thought, I am so conscious of how the narrator is imposing his language on the thought of the characters that I have great difficulty realizing how the transcription could be even an approximation of what the characters are thinking" (The Language of a Master 105-06).

Nevertheless, that "person some distance from the action," as Smit puts it, is Strether here, who in a very special sense "creates" the action by shaping it in his observations. As to the voice and tone which distract Smit from this emphasis on observation as action in itself, as James very coyly put it in a letter to Jocelyn Persse, there is, even to his perception, "a vague resemblance...to yours always Henry James" (Rosenbaum 407). James’s remark would be important as textual history whether one deals with the issue of the
Mme. de Vionnet also identifies Chad as "our friend" to bring him closer to her and to Strether in their discussion (162), and to bring Strether closer in sympathy to the two lovers. She does the same again later (180, 183). It also has the effect of conveying a lie in English but a truth or half-truth in French: by calling Chad "our friend" in English, she is deceiving Strether about their closer relationship (even in 1969, the term was fairly literal in English, but by 2006, the *New American Heritage Dictionary* carried the previous French meaning of "friend" as "lover" also).

Farther on, we are included in Strether's gentle plot of deceit against Waymarsh. This is heralded by the phrase "our friend" when he hides from Waymarsh his suspicion that Waymarsh has brought the Pocock deputation across. At the same time, he plays on Waymarsh's feelings: "'I shall look to you, you know, immensely,' our friend had said, 'to help me with them,' and he had been quite conscious of the effect of the remark and of others of the same sort, on his comrade's sombre sensibility....Strether had woven this web of cheerfulness while they waited in the court for Chad..." (204). James's altered quote of Scott's "tangled web" is a comment both upon Waymarsh's "deceit" at having

"implied author" or is disposed in a more naïve way to view it as referring to the "actual" James. As well, for Smit to use this sort of authorial aside to suggest that intellectual Strether, and others of a more verbose and perhaps more literate era than our own, could not have spoken or thought thus, is to disallow James what he elsewhere claimed was paramount, an author's right to his subject, in his case his "super-subtle fry." It also ignores the fact that, as in many a painting, there is a layering of textual surfaces, the earlier layers being more literal, the later or superimposed layers including the one in which Strether is himself like a ficelle for the "story of [the] story" concept. Just as Miss Gostrey is called "Strether's narrator" (139), so the narrative voice is a double one, with both objective and subjective narrative mannerisms, as one of our "narrators" in the non-literal way indicated by Wayne Booth in his breakdown analysis of the narrative voice in *The Ambassadors* (*The Rhetoric of Fiction* 150-51), to which Smit objects. Genette also objects to Booth's breakdown of the narrative voice. Bakhtin says of "double-voiced discourse," "It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author" (*DI* 324). Of the doubleness which can result in something like James's "story of the story," Bakhtin remarks: "We might put it as follows: before us are two events—the event that is narrated in the work and the event of narration itself (we ourselves participate in the latter, as listeners or readers); these events take place in different times...and in different places, but at the same time these two events are indissolubly united in a single but complex event that we might call the work in the totality of all its events" (*DI* 255).
acted behind Strether's back, and upon Strether's good-humoured attempt to make him uncomfortable.

"Our friend" is reiterated by "our friend's" occurring in the same sentence once, which is not any kind of variation, elegant or otherwise; instead it is a curiously insistent repetition. It occurs when Jim is first introduced, coming from the station in the cab. Strether is comparing himself to Jim and obviously assessing his chances of escaping a similar fate in terms of personal lack of development: ".[T]he most a leading Woollett business-man could hope to achieve socially, and for that matter industrially, was a certain freedom to play into [the] general glamour. The impression he made on our friend was another of the things that marked our friend's road" (215). The lead-in to the above quote is a strange passage in which Strether is all but reading Jim's mind or character, since it is unlikely that Jim previously had literally "frankly and serenely confessed, as he sat there with Strether, that he felt his type hang far in the rear of his wife's...." Jim is not the type to know he is a type. Rather, his type confesses itself without words to Strether's discerning awareness. "Our friend" doubled in the latter part of the quote isolates Strether for our observation, stressing yet again his perspective/identity.

There is emphasis placed on Strether's role as our interpreter of events, even if we are meant sometimes to doubt his interpretation or see past him. Strether himself, "our friend," explains his view of Jim to Mme. de Vionnet [Jim will "counteract Sarah's spell" (224)] and uses the expression in ironic amusement at Woollett's expense, because Woollett imagines it can re-make Chad to be more like Jim: "'I drove him about for his first hour, and do you know what—all beautifully unconscious—he most put before me?
Why that something like that is at bottom, as an improvement to his present state...what they think it may not be too late to make of our friend" (235).

Mme. de Vionnet calls her future son-in-law "our young friend" as well, in such glowing terms that Strether is not at first sure she is not speaking of Chad. "[Jeanne] has been perfectly free, and he—our young friend—is really a combination. I quite adore him.' Strether just made sure. 'You mean your future son-in-law?"' He receives a cautious affirmative. This passage emphasizes how young a mother-in-law Mme. de Vionnet is and to what degree she uses confusing language, all charm and grace. Strether and she have only just been referring to Chad as "our friend" (240, 239).

In one instance at least, there is an emphasis on "our friend" which points to embellishments upon our knowledge of Strether's character, versus how "real people" might react to Waymarsh's meddling, as in Mieke Bal’s view of homology (Narratology: An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative 176):

"Don't do anything you'll be sorry for [," said Waymarsh.]
It was an attenuation, Strether guessed, of something else that had been on his lips; it was a sudden drop to directness, and was thereby the note of sincerity. He had fallen to the supplicating note, and that immediately, for our friend [but perhaps not for us as a critical audience?], made a difference and reinstated him. (275).

Though on one layer of text we are seeing through Strether's eyes, the insertion here of the phrase "for our friend" indicates where it would be possible to have divergence of opinion, and causes us to notice the moral generosity of Strether's character. In at least one instance, "our poor friend" (127) is used of Strether, similarly from us to Strether as "poor Waymarsh" is from him to Waymarsh; it marks the depth of his bewilderment or dis-ease, and our superior vantage point.
The final usage of "our friend" is Strether's, occurs in the dialogue, and refers to Mme. de Vionnet; it has some of the "strange irony" that Strether senses when discussing Chad and her:

"I've done," Strether said, "what I could—one can't do more. He protests his devotion and his horror. But I'm not sure I've saved him. He protests too much. He asks how one can dream of his being tired. But he has all life before him."

Maria saw what he meant. "He's formed to please."

"And it's our friend who has formed him." Strether felt in it the strange irony. (346)

Though Strether is not deliberately ironic in calling Mme. de Vionnet "our friend," there is situational irony in that she has so changed places for him regarding what he came out expecting to find, and yet has done herself a disservice through helping Chad: she has made Chad socially smoother, but has not changed his basic identity. He is "none the less only Chad" (234).

My argument is that these not solely ornamental periphrastic labels, in addition to the other language forms examined herein, constitute some forms of relatively unironic naming and indication of identity which are not undercut by other admittedly ironic elements in the novel, though James treats identity with complexity, showing the multiplicity of the concept. As in the case of the particular label relating to Chad and Bilham, "the young man," which recurs constantly throughout the text, they even point to characteristics of individuals which are central to the whole meaning or identity of the story itself.

For example, the youth of the two young men is stressed because youth is generally a time of relative inexperience. Yet for these two young men it is an indication less of inexperience than of the stark meaning of the word itself, young in years, giving one the
life span and opportunity to enjoy sophisticated qualities and experiences. But rather than focus on the irony or lack thereof relating to these two characters, we are meant to focus on the whole question of experience as it relates to the meaning of the novel itself, not only with reference to the young therein, but also and more pertinently in relation to Strether. Even Mme. de Vionnet, at her first appearance, is spoken of as "a young woman" (127). This is qualified a few sentences later by the phrase "her air of youth," but she is much younger than Strether, who is identified as fifty-five (20). What is ironic is that the social expertise of the young in this novel, except for that of Jeanne and Mamie, is more pronounced than that of Strether, who learns to judge both Parisian and American standards only by virtue of a hard learning experience. And though James is ironic or ambiguous at times, it is my contention that he means to be understood as he said, by his version of the ideal reader. He mentions this in his Atlantic Monthly review of George Eliot, October 1866 (EL 922). He would make the reader into one of his "super-subtle fry." I quote: "In every novel the work is divided between the writer and the reader; but the writer makes the reader very much as he makes his characters. When he makes him ill, that is, makes him indifferent, he does no work; the writer does it all. When he makes him well…then the reader does quite half the labor." As Booth says, "James is not thinking here simply of giving the reader a sense of his own cleverness. He is making his readers by forcing them onto a level of alertness that will allow for his most subtle effects" (RF 302). James's vision is whole and complete: he introduces the ironic view inclusively, not to undermine the overall vision, comic though it may be.

The periphrastic methods he uses institute the key concept of discrimination (in the neutral sense), so important in any effort to name and identify people or things. And the
effort to discriminate, on both Strether's and the readers' parts, is a truly Jamesian challenge. Ruth Bernard Yeazell, for example, sees the world of *The Ambassadors* as being "like those optical illusions whose figure and ground continually shift, [where, like Paris,] 'parts were not to be discriminated nor differences comfortably marked....and what seemed all surface one moment seemed all depth the next'" (*Language and Knowledge* 8). Though she sees *The Ambassadors* as the least metaphoric of the late novels (*LK* 54-59), she characterizes the verbal strategies therein, including metaphors, as showing a "fear of naming" on the part of the characters which is hidden in their own "psyches."

Strether and his dilemma, both aided and deterred as he is by the "help" of the other characters, are comic precisely because of a split, a doubleness, the shift between his fear of naming and his necessity of naming and identifying in order to satisfy his inner tribunal of vision.

As the text reads when Strether is first trying to decipher the language of Miss Barrace, that verbal avatar of Paris,

> If Strether had been sure at each juncture of what...she talked about, he might have traced others and winced at them...but he was in fact so often at sea that his sense of the range of reference was merely general and...he on several different occasions guessed and interpreted only to doubt. He wondered what they meant, but there were things he scarce thought they could be supposed to mean, and "Oh no—not that!" was at the end of most of his ventures. (78).

In Kenneth Burke's terms, Strether acquires a more complex "perspective" through his imaginative exercise of the metaphorical and the other language forms I examine, through Burke’s "analogical extensions," which Strether is able to construct from all the
dialogical forms he is offered. As Burke says, "[A] world without metaphor would be a world without purpose" (Permanence and Change 194). To quote again from Burke,

> It is customary to think that objective reality is dissolved by such relativity of terms as we get through the shifting of perspectives (the perception of one character in terms of many diverse characters)....[O]n the contrary, it is by the approach through a variety of perspectives that we establish a character's reality. If we are in doubt as to what an object is...we deliberately try to consider it in as many different terms as its nature permits...." (A Grammar of Motives 507)

This is clearly self-awareness through awareness of the identity of others. Though there is only one Strether and we do not see him through the perspective of the other characters usually, we watch him try, through the "glasses" of the other characters, to "see" what Chad and what Mme. de Vionnet are. His efforts help reveal him. By the end he seems to "see" also what his own frame of reference was, and what Mrs. Newsome's still is. James's ubiquitous use of the "vision as understanding" metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson Metaphors We Live By; Lakoff and Turner More Than Cool Reason 94) has instructed both Strether and us. As Burke goes on to say, "By deliberate coaching and criticism of the perspective process, characters can be considered tentatively, in terms of other characters, for experimental or heuristic purposes" (GM 524).

The question of perspective and mimetic truth occurs fairly early on, before Strether has had a chance to get his later more complex view of the relationship between Chad and Marie. Though later we bifurcate the relationship as both an ordinary affair (on Chad's part) and a "virtuous attachment" (perhaps on Marie's), at the beginning of the novel the two views are reversed. From Woollett's perspective, Chad is seen as misled and the unknown woman as an ordinary member of the *demimonde*, and this has
something to do with the previous "vain appearances" (66) of studying art which Chad offered them as an explanation of his lingering in Paris. These turn out to be vain in two senses, both an overestimation of his own powers and empty assurances. When Strether comes to Paris to call Chad to a sense of his duty, one of the first things Bilham does is to "commend" to him "the vain appearance." In addition, Miss Barrace says to him, "I dare say...that we all do here...run too much to mere eye. But how can it be helped? We're all looking at each other—and in the light of Paris one sees what things resemble. That's what the light of Paris always seems to show." One of the things Strether asks her after this is: "'Does Madame de Vionnet do that? I mean really show for what she is?'" Miss Barrace responds ambiguously, "'She's charming. She's perfect!'" which Strether takes as an answer to his question (126-27). They are speaking two different languages, however, she of "mere eye," or surface appearance and "what things resemble," he of a one-to-one correspondence between surface and depth, mimetically speaking. He helps himself out of his quandary in temporary terms, by use of the idea of people as types, as _objets d'arts_, of ladies as _femmes du monde_. This idea of types is more exaggerated in comedy, where isolated characteristics are abstracted to form the surface "reality." Part of what appalls Strether later, during his dark night of the soul after meeting Mme. de Vionnet and Chad in the country, is that his early idea that even Mrs. Newsome could be considered a _femme du monde_ is not accurate by Parisian standards, where a woman may conduct an illicit affair. His reunification of the two layers, surface and depth, occurs when he tries to consider Mme. de Vionnet still "wonderful" in spite of the illicit liaison.

Because the antonomastic fragments (a form of periphrasis) occur in both the narrative and the dialogue, it is necessary to comment briefly on narrative voice versus Strether’s
voice, upon mimesis in the text, and upon James’s style of narration and rhetoric. Genette analyzes the extent to which narrative, or what is usually thought of as *diegesis*, and *mimesis*, or imitation, overlap, due to the differences between Plato’s and Aristotle’s views (*FLD* 127-44). For the purposes of my discussion, however, a simpler set of considerations will serve, in general. I have chosen to contrast two opinions on these issues for purposes of clarifying my own, with supplements of other critical texts as well.

David Smit and Ian Watt, for example, do not agree about Strether’s voice. Watt says "dear Waymarsh" in sentence four of *The Ambassadors* is "a verbatim quotation of Strether's mind" (*EC* 262), and though Smit admits this phrase to be in Strether's voice, he contests Watt’s assumption that the negatives in the passage signal the Free Indirect Thought of Strether "so that every negative is an example of Strether’s consciousness at work." He says that sentence three, "which contains so many negatives is just as clearly in Narrative Report, and the negatives reflect the speech of the narrator" (*LM* 125). [The terms "Free Indirect Thought" and "Narrative Report" in his work (88-89) are taken from Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short, *Style in Fiction*. He borrows their characterization of Free Indirect Thought as "'Did she still love him?'" and Narrative Report as "'He wondered about her love for him.'"] It seems to me that Smit is overly suspicious of the participation of the narrator, and that there is here a confluence of Strether's voice and the narrator's, as Watt himself maintained.

There is no need to comment further here on Watt's remarks on the phrase "dear old Waymarsh" (17), except to point out that phrases like "poor dear Waymarsh," "poor old Waymarsh," and "poor Strether" belong more to the comic tone of the novel than to any actual note of desperation or despair. As previously noted, Ruth Bernard Yeazell
contends that The Ambassadors is a comic novel. She says the book does "frequently" have a "detached...and ironic tone" but calls it "the most comic of the three late novels" (LK 53). Also, Yeazell says "The Preface offers a comic image—a vision of the poor 'commentator' struggling to catch up with the consequences of his story…” (LK 32). She maintains that this is what happens to the characters as well.

David Smit also argues that mimetic theories of style do not apply to James's work, and are in fact erroneous. He says "The most popular justification for James' late style is that the abstract diction and complicated syntax imitate the mind at work, that the style is a metaphor of mental process" (LM 84). He says further, considering the work of several critics on the subject, that one must distinguish, for example, whether one means that what is imitated is the thought of the characters, the thought of the narrator, the "life of the mind in general," or "the mental activity of readers as they read James' prose." He points out that the last two possibilities "require evidence from outside the text," which makes them suspect, whereas the first two do not: "the claim is only that style is a metaphor for the artist's vision of mental life which is embodied in the text" (LM 85-86). Going from here to an involved discussion of how James uses the various forms of Free Indirect Thought, Narrative Report, etc., and quoting at length from Leech and Short, he concludes, "There is clearly no correlation between the complicated syntax and abstract diction of the late style and the thought of the characters; the idiosyncracies of the late style are in the language of the narrator, not in the thought of the characters. These idiosyncracies cannot be justified by an appeal to imitation" (LM 92).

Smit decides that the word "coatless," in the recognition scene in The Ambassadors as applied to Chad, is something we already knew, and focuses also on the words James
uses to point up the astounding meeting, "a chance in a million." He suggests that the purpose of both these items "is to build the sentence to a climax. The repetition [of the idea of Chad's being "coatless"] strikes me as a rhetorical device, plain and simple, and because of its length, in one sense at least, as far from an imitation of an instantaneous impression as language can get" (LM 115).

But this disproves his other point, that James is not mimetic, because if a “rhetorical device,” or persuasion is involved, so is acting, or imitation, mimesis. Even if we disallow the voice to be Strether's breaking through, then James's narrator is "acting" as if to him too it is "a marvel, a chance in a million" for the purpose of emphasizing this to the reader. No one would seriously suggest that it was a real surprise to the narrator. Therefore, even though Smit's point were to hold true about much or most of the voice being that of the narrator, the mimetic element is still present in the narrative voice, which mimics Strether's. Note that one of the instances of "poor Strether" (148) occurs in the narrator's voice, to be shifted a few sentences later to Strether's voice, when he sees Mme. de Vionnet as "the poor lady." And for Genette, after he has gone through his analysis of diegesis and mimesis, the conclusion is that “mimesis is diegesis" (FLD 133).

After all, the point is not that the narrator is or is not imitating the thought of the characters, though even Smit (LM 125) is willing to admit that there is something of Strether's thought here (for example in the opening paragraph of The Ambassadors, where "dear old Waymarsh" occurs). The point is that the narrator, in practicing his rhetoric (RF 57-9), is being mimetic in the storytelling function itself, with the storytelling voice itself. Smit has said "simply the way James wrote...in the great novels of the late period...[is more than] the mental life of the characters: the style may be
simply the narrator’s voice” (LM 105). By contrast, Booth refers to James's plans for the novel by linking mimetic intent with rhetoric: "Speaking of his reasons for inventing Waymarsh and Maria Gostrey in The Ambassadors, James admits that his efforts to make everything dramatic require the invention of carefully dissimulated rhetoric" (RF 102). Rhetoric is mimetic because it causes the hearer or reader—or following Chatman, "narratee," an internal hearer or reader—to posit a character speaking, a character who may be at variance with the actual producer, "implied author," "narrator." Booth says, "just as one's personal letters imply different versions of oneself, depending on the differing relationships with each correspondent and the purpose of each letter, so the writer sets himself out with a different air depending on the needs of particular works" (RF 71). The implications for identity, narrator's or character's, are manifest. Booth further says, under the chapter "Types of Narration," "...[T]he effect of The Ambassadors is much closer to that of the great first-person novels, since Strether in large part "narrates" his own story, even though he is always referred to in the third person” (RF 150-51). Genette points out that Norman Friedman makes this assessment of the narration also, that it reads as if it were written in first person. Genette calls this statement "a clumsy formula that evidently refers to the focalized narrative, told by a narrator who is not one of the characters but who adopts the point of view of one” (ND 168). He sees it as a confusion on Friedman’s part—and thus on Booth’s—between Genette’s own two categories of "mood" and "voice" (ND 188). It need not trouble us here if we consider that in that particular sentence quoted from Booth, Booth is considering the "effect" upon the reader (or upon the "narratee"), not for the moment the technique per se. Were Booth using this idea naively or were he unaware of the seeming
contradiction in grouping first- and third-person narration into one form wherein characters "tell" their own stories, he would not have put quotation marks around the word "narrates," which he clearly uses to mark the complexity of the narration in *The Ambassadors*. Nor would he himself point out the waning effectiveness of the distinction between first and third person, as he clearly does. The further worth of Booth’s still noteworthy statement is that it initiates the transition to Genette’s own work. About narrative "summary" on James's part, Booth says, "he became more and more determined to find a way to make summary itself dramatic—whether as description, narration, or moral and psychological evaluation" (RF 173).

To put the dispute in another way, Sheila Teahan says, "The Jamesian reflector" is "doubly rhetorical" in that it has both "suasion" and "figuration." "The 'ironic centre'…is a virtual oxymoron that names the irremediable disjunction between the reflector's status as narrative ground and the ironic self-suspension or self-negation...opened by figurative language within that grounding" (Rhetorical Logic 17). There is a problem here with her own language, in that an "oxymoron" does not name an "irremediable disjunction," an oxymoron being a sort of paradox in language which yet names something both whole despite its division and real or true, thus not irremediably disjoined. Figuration is a type of suasion, *pace* Aristotle, for whom its use should be restrained ("Art" of Rhetoric III iii 3-4, 365). It *is* true that James often constructs the "internal" scene with revealing metaphors and the supposedly "external" scene with less figurative description, except in the sense in which all description of something apparently beyond the bounds of the consciousness of a "centre of consciousness" is a metaphor for that mind's inner
workings. In this sense, metaphor and *mimesis* are analogous, and help establish the character's identity.

A crossed form of picture and scene arises in Book XI, Chapters III and IV, where the actions and suppressed conversations of the (other) characters are followed so closely that the illusion of dialogue takes place (especially if one adheres to the "third-person-as-disguised-first-person" notion previously discussed). The "picture painted" by James through his "centre of consciousness" then becomes a "stage" with a "text" or "drama" to be played thereon. This is true even though, as Teahan notes—speaking of James's joining in the text of what he calls "picture" and "scene,"—"The scenic method is indeed usually understood as antithetical to the center of consciousness.…" ([RL](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/40066/40066-h/40066-h.htm#page-123)).

Thus, such sentences as "He looked as if he considerably doubted" (295), and to a lesser degree "And Strether paused as if for his own expression of it he could add no touch to that picture" (301) have a very odd effect, occurring long after we have had our initial description of Strether's appearance in the beginning to Miss Gostrey or to a putative "attentive observer" (with its excuse of being introductory of our main character). This is perpetuated mainly by the "as if" in each case, and the extent to which the distinctions seem to be from outside Strether’s "centre of consciousness." However tenuous the figurative language in the first sentence, and however hackneyed that of the other (301), they share a similar quality to that which Jonathan Culler in *Structuralist Poetics*, quoting Barthes's (apparently reversed) explanation of "personal" and "a-personal" narration from Benveniste, suggests as the kind which "implies a schizophrenic narrator." Culler paraphrases Barthes as pointing out, as Booth did too, that "there are tales or sequences written in the third person which are 'really manifestations of the first
person'." (I do not intend to refer to Barthes versus Benveniste in depth, mainly being interested in Culler's concluding remark.) "Thus," Culler continues his paraphrase,"'he entered a tobacco shop' can be re-written as 'I entered a tobacco shop',..." He notes by contrast that "'he seemed pleased at the distinguished air his uniform gave him' becomes an incongruous 'I seemed pleased at the distinguished air my uniform gave me', which implies a schizophrenic narrator" (Structuralist Poetics 199). To settle the question of the reversal of the terms "personal" and "a-personal" in the description of the two types of sentences, Culler remarks, "What prevents a sentence from being rewritten in the first person is the presence of elements which implicitly identify the narrator as someone other than the character mentioned in the sentence, and thus the marking of the narrator becomes, by a curious paradox, the criterion for an 'a-personal' mode of discourse" (SP 199-200). Genette says of narratives of "internal focalization" like The Ambassadors, or Barthes’s "personal" mode of discourse, that internal focalization "is rarely applied in a totally rigorous way" (ND 192). He also notes Barthes’s discussion about the possibility of rewriting third-person statement into first-person, and mentions Barthes’s analysis of the “obvious semantic incongruity” of occasional intrusive externally focalized segments. Perhaps in The Ambassadors, "schizophrenic" sentences like those debated above are meant to indicate some disorientation of Strether's identity.

Thus, too, the paradox inherent in the whole question of the metaphor of vision as understanding, which Teahan tangles with elsewhere in her book, objecting to the treatment of James as visually oriented, both literally and figuratively. I find the metaphor accurate for James the implied author and for Strether, the particular character he mentioned as most like himself (for James, as Booth suggested in his view of letter
writers in general, is an implied author in his letters as in his fiction). To give just one example, a famous one which manifests the difference between inner and outer awareness, in *The Ambassadors* Strether tells Miss Gostrey about Mrs. Newsome constituting a "'whole moral and intellectual being or block, that Sarah brought me over to take or to leave'" (300). Miss Gostrey replies, "'Fancy having to take at the point of the bayonet a whole moral and intellectual being or block!'" Strether explains, "'It was in fact...what, at home I had done. But somehow over there I didn't quite know it.'" Miss Gostrey answers,

"One never does, I suppose...realise in advance, in such a case, the size, as you may say, of the block. Little by little it looms up. It has been looming for you more and more till at last you see it all."
"I see it all," he absently echoed, while his eyes might have been fixing some particularly large iceberg in a cool blue northern sea. (300)

The paradox here is that while he was actually close, literally, to Mrs. Newsome, in sight of her in Woollett, his outer vision worked, his inner vision did not "quite." Now that he is farther away in time and space, thus not able to see her literally, he sees her more accurately (figuratively), and it is in figurative terms that his "vision" is expressed. The linking term here which holds the paradox together is the word "fixing," a word which ministers to both types of seeing. Note as well the quality most often described as impersonal in the clause "while his eyes *might have been* fixing..."[emphasis mine].

Thus in this example we see elements both of picture and scene as the words were used by James, of both "suasion" and "figuration" (though the two are hard to separate here), and of both kinds of vision, both literal vision (remembered) and figurative vision.
Finally, about "impersonal narration," Booth says, "[w]ith commentary ruled out, hundreds of devices remain for revealing judgment and molding responses. Patterns of imagery and symbol are as effective in modern fiction as they have always been in poetry in controlling our evaluation of details" (RF 272). Thus, whether as Smit allows grudgingly, "style is a metaphor for the artist's vision of mental life" and though we are confronted with metaphor upon metaphor, the rhetoric which he points to as opposed to mimetic qualities is still there, and the two are intimately connected.

As James points out in the Preface, in addition to telling, in one layer, the story of his hero, Strether, he is also telling "the story of [the] story." On one level Strether is the main character; on another level he as well as Miss Gostrey is a sort of "ficelle" or reader's "friend" to help us not only with the convolutions of vision and insight, but also with the structure of the story, which bodies forth the issues of naming and identity. Smit is emphasizing the passages which seem to evade Strether's control, Booth is emphasizing the basic unity of intent behind the entire manuscript, which seems preferable because it is more complete.

To return with this discussion of style, voice, mimesis and rhetoric to some related periphrastic language, we look at Strether’s relationship with others before Maria Gostrey. As a prelude to one of Strether's close conversations with her, we are given a bit of his history, not full enough of a present tense to be called a flashback, but more like a summary. We are told of the "grey middle desert of the two deaths" of "his wife" and "his boy" (43). The naming is dry in tone, simply a possessive adjective followed by a noun; "the grey middle desert" emphasizes the emotional loss. Gale mentions, "More than fifty desert images appear in [James's] fiction" (35). The simple possessives used
with no specific names point out their relation to Strether rather than their independent identities; "desert" indicates mourning. Also, "the great desert of the years" is mentioned (63).

By contrast with the simple sense of loss which the summary conveys, the novel increasingly makes use of a more complicated verbal structure, even in its most heightened moments of emotion. As Strother B. Purdy says, in his article "Henry James, Gustave Flaubert, and the Ideal Style,"

As the thematic complexity and the emotional exploration of his novels increased, from The Portrait of a Lady (1881) to The Golden Bowl (1904), he took...two directions to overcome the representational inadequacy of ["the almost deliberately vacuous game-language of the drawing-room"]: an emphasis on what is not said... and an instillation of complex meaning into ordinary words, along with an emphasis on the associated meanings of such words. [James also uses metaphors and other language "complex" in a slightly different sense to make "associations" which point to the namings and identities he wishes to evoke.]

By "ordinary" words I mean here words of medium to high frequency, like "real," "wonderful," "clever," "tone," words that have in everyday speech several different meanings. They occurred naturally in the conversations James heard among the people he knew and used as a basis for his fictional characters...[A]s James became a past master in the ways of London society, these words start to bear such a heavy weight of meaning that they can be called, in William Empson's term, complex words. (LS 176)

Also, Yeazell calls such words “a secret code—an esoteric vocabulary understood only by the members of a closed social world...” (LK 73). (She notes that David Lodge in The Language of Fiction, Joseph Warren Beach in The Method of Henry James, and Dorothea Krook in The Ordeal of Consciousness have also found it so.) James, however, seems to be trying in The Ambassadors to reveal the significance of the "secret code" to a
more "demotic" audience. It is in this sense that too much stress on the "mandarin" in his work leaves the issue incomplete, as I consider in Chapter V of my work.\textsuperscript{6}

An excellent example of the extent to which Strether is a sort of natural adept at Jamesian conversation occurs in the phrase concerning Mrs. Newsome (60). He considers "his wonderful friend at home." This "wonderful" is clearly more than a thought of praise and thankfulness for her sending him to recover himself in Paris, being one of James's "complex words." There are hints in the paragraph that Strether is as divided in his mind towards her, even in the beginning, as he was towards Waymarsh in the first paragraph of the book.

It is the morning when Strether has gone to get his mail. We are told in \textit{The Ambassadors}, "much as he had desired his budget [of letters], the growth of restlessness might have been marked in him from the moment he had assured himself of the superscription of most of the missives it contained" (58). The bundle of letters is from Mrs. Newsome. Then, we read that (since he had left the ship a week before) "[m]ore than once, during the time, he had regarded himself as admonished; but the admonition this morning was formidably sharp" (59). He is dealing with "the question of what he was doing with such an extraordinary sense of escape." Next, it seems that he had hoped to hear from her sooner, a swing in the other direction: "If he had begun yesterday with a small grievance [at not having heard from her] he had therefore an opportunity to begin to-day with its opposite" (59). Then, there's the ambiguous passage,

\begin{quote}
by insisting that he should thoroughly intermit and break she had so provided for his freedom that she would, as it were, have only herself to thank. Strether could not at
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{6} The terms "demotic" and "mandarin" together are drawn from Jeremy Scott's work \textit{The Demotic Voice in Contemporary British Fiction}. J. Scott's book is valuable to the study of voice in general for the distinctions it makes.
As a sort of compromise of the two directions he's pulled in, "he at last lighted on a form that was happy." He decides to think that he is "tired" and that it is because of his "fatigue" that she "had so felt for him and so contrived...." Once again, just when the compromise is established, "It seemed to him somehow at these instants that, could he only maintain with sufficient firmness his grasp of that truth, it might become in a manner his compass and his helm" (60-61). Strether seems to be trying hard here; the rhetoric is very forced. After, the delicate Jamesian narrative says, "What he wanted most was some idea that would simplify, and nothing would do this so much as the fact that he was done for and finished" (61). We have read first that he is considering a "form," then a "ground," then a "truth," then an "idea," then a "fact," then, baldly, "his convenience." Here, there is a direct connection between his sense of escape and freedom, his fatigue, and his relationship with Mrs. Newsome, who is doubly "wonderful" for contriving his escape herself and being partially what he escapes from, for which she will have "only herself to thank."

Waymarsh's periphrastic difficulties in the book begin immediately. In discussing Chad, Waymarsh refers to Strether as "his mother's husband" whereas Strether calls Mrs. Newsome "my future wife." The difference is that Waymarsh's language presents the marriage as a fait accompli, while Strether's restores it to the presumed future, where it belongs according to what has been agreed upon (75). Strether says that if he can lure Chad back, Chad will be "our own man" in the family business. This Ironically leads
Waymarsh to refer to Chad also as "your own man"; he has made the assumption that Strether is the stronger party in the couple, for he refers to the possibility that "the business can be made to boom on certain lines that you've laid down," even though Strether has already told him "I naturally want what my future wife wants," and denies having "laid lines down." Nevertheless, Strether indicates his own willingness to rebel a little later by saying that he is leaving himself open, in seeing Chad anew, to "being influenced in a sense counter to Mrs. Newsome's own feelings." As Waymarsh points out, he is trying to be free and captive at the same time, trying to fall in with Mrs. Newsome, and yet trying to be his own man while assessing Chad and the unknown woman. Strether unsatisfactorily "resolves" the issue by assuring Waymarsh that he does Mrs. Newsome an "injustice" if he does not think she is capable of evaluating whether or not Strether himself is "spoiled," which will ring ironically in light of the way the novel ends.

At the theatre, Strether gets his first opportunity to see the "new" Chad (89). Strether, Waymarsh, and Maria discuss how the two young men, Chad and Bilham, have "been arranging....every move in the game" with Strether. Maria Gostrey comes up with a number of prophetic sentences, the last culminating in her pointed reference to Chad, "the unannounced visitor," who has stepped into the box. From being an "unannounced visitor," unheralded, transient, and as ephemeral as all of Strether's theories about him have been thus far, in a short space Chad becomes "the solid stranger," which signals his strangeness.

"Identity" is an all-important word in this novel. It occurs at least fifty-six times in itself or in identity-related terms (sometimes using a copula). It follows in the next
paragraph where "[Strether's] perception of the young man's identity" appears. Strether's "bewilderment" and his desire not to show it are described. A further questioning of Chad's identity occurs, when Strether is said to have "faced every contingency but that Chad should not be Chad..." (90). Following this, "the sharp rupture of [Chad's] identity" is mentioned, and the word "rupture" is repeated in a request for Chad to come home to New England (95).

The identities of Bilham and his friends (all of whom are Americans), described as "quaint and queer and dear and droll," were earlier named "ingenuous compatriots" four times in a row (84), though if Bilham is an example, their "ingenuousness" is in question. We are also told they "wove round the occasion a spell to which our hero [italics mine] unreservedly surrendered. They "shared a candour, he thought, surpassing even the candour of Woollett...." Their candour is different in kind from that of Woollett, not in degree, so that the narrator is in effect commenting slyly upon "our hero's" lack of insight or lack of honesty with himself about what Woollett might think of these keen young expatriates. That Strether is drawn to them himself is signified by the choice of the word "compatriot," which shares the same prefix as "comrade" or "companion." The compatriots walk a "path" which falls for Strether between citizens of Woollett and Parisians. Later, the extent to which Bilham in particular is not exactly "ingenuous" or full of open "candour" will be evidenced by his questionable use of the term "a virtuous attachment." We see here the intertwining of the story of James's hero, where one of the questions is whether there is an adulterous affair or not, and the story of James's story, where one of the questions is whether it looks like an adultery or not. A moral question emerging from the extrapolation of James's periphrasis is thus does it matter if no one
acknowledges it as a wrong, and the entwined aesthetic question is does it matter for aesthetic clarity if it resembles two things at once? There are suggestions both early and late that James made the story like the jewel image of Paris, "all surface one moment, all depth the next."

The aesthetic and the moral views of life clash and then combine and then separate again in many places in the novel, each placing its own rhetorical stance through the periphrasis containing or demonstrating it. One of the other questions arising is whether or not the two views of life need be separate. In some ways, this whole question hinges on Strether's final evaluation of Mme. de Vionnet. He will see that she judges herself, which to some degree attenuates the harshness of his judgement of her.

Early, we see that Strether is to Chad "his mother's ambassador" (102), then "his prospective stepfather" (103). On the surface, Chad allows greater and greater degrees of intimacy and welcome, and as Strether is aware, makes it hard for Strether to clarify. We are told Strether cannot be sure "he was sufficiently disagreeable" in order to be "sufficiently thorough" (103). While it is Waymarsh who is described as Strether's "splendid encumbrance" (110), it is Strether who is so from Chad's point of view.

Though Chad is often referred to as "the young man," there are instances in which he is referred to quite formally, as when Strether (seated by Bilham) watches "the fat gentleman immersed in dominoes" and thinks of Chad as "their host of the previous hour." He asks Bilham, "What game under the sun is he playing?...Where do you see him coming out?" (110). James's emphasis on Strether's switch from the literal game of dominoes which is before his eyes to a quasi-metaphorical game of societal maneuvers indicates what will be demanded of Strether before he leaves Paris: he must learn to
think on a more complicated level. Simple periphrasis may not stand alone.

Metaphorical thinking is one example of more complicated thinking, as is societal awareness of social graces, such as those Chad unexpectedly displays.

Bilham's answer to Strether's question is a question which hits the nail on the head, though Strether fails to see it. When Bilham asks, "Don't you like it over here?" (110) his "kindness" is "almost paternal," not only because he too in his milder way is an accomplished jeune homme, but also because he sees what Strether, in his "indiscretion," ignores: Strether is interrogating the wrong person, Chad's friend. Strether misunderstands the term "virtuous attachment," for several days, before he begins to speculate again. He asks, "Is the creature...honest?" Bilham toys with the question and assures him that Chad is much improved. Once again, they are talking at cross purposes. When Bilham asks, “What creature do you mean?” they have a “mute interchange,” and seeming uncertain now himself of whom he meant, or having changed his mind about whom, Chad or the mysterious woman, Strether’s “coherence lapse[s].” Bilham uses two adjectives, "not free" and "good" to describe Chad, before calling it a "virtuous attachment," which could figure as some of Empson's "complex words." He merely tells Strether something that allows us to see their two different sets of assumptions about identity ranged against each other; Bilham is more aware of the opposition than Strether.

When Chad refers to Mme. de Vionnet with Strether, it is in company with her daughter; Strether tells Maria that Chad has "two particular friends" (113), "the best friends he has in the world," and later Strether thinks of them as "[Chad's] good friends from the South" (118). Thus Strether, without separating the mother from the daughter, tells Maria Gostrey "they're the virtuous attachment." To which she replies in amusement
(with more insight into Parisian society than Strether), "An attachment to them both then would, I suppose, almost necessarily be innocent" (114). Strether himself brings up the question again as to whether or not it's the mother with whom Chad's "on good terms."

Even then, his idea doesn't encompass the true state of things. He continues to speculate, with Maria's help, on which, mother or daughter, is the appropriate age for Chad; whether the mother is a "charming young widow" (116); and whether Bilham "has lied..." (117).

Next there is a series of rapidly occurring periphrases (extended antonomasia) for the artist Gloriani. He is first "the celebrated sculptor " (118) who has "at-homes" on Sunday afternoons, then is called "Chad's host" (119). The first merely defines him, since one may neither know nor remember him from Roderick Hudson. For our purposes he is first "Chad's host" because by that means he becomes Strether's host. In rapid succession he is "the distinguished sculptor " (120), and "the great artist" (120, 121). By contrast, Strether becomes Chad's "obscure compatriot" (121) and Chad himself "Abel Newsome's son" (121), with an emphasis on his American identity. We read that Bilham is present, as "easy" as Chad or Gloriani, and that Strether is beginning to notice in the other people there "types tremendously...alien to Woollett." This resorting to a theory of types is one of his first tentative approaches to the study of identities.

All of this emphasis on art, on people as art (types), and on the setting of Gloriani's home is a preparation, not so much for assessing Gloriani himself, as for assessing Mme. de Vionnet and her daughter Jeanne, two of the "types" presented for Strether's aesthetic and moral appreciation. Bilham promptly identifies for Strether the women present as the type "femmes du monde," and Strether "sees for himself" in this scene. Even on the first reading experience, Bilham's response to Strether's question of whether or not the de
Vionnets are the "virtuous attachment" is odd: "I can only tell you that it's what they pass for….What more than a vain appearance does the wisest of us know?" (124).

Strether recognizes Mme. de Vionnet first as "a young woman" (127) and "a lady" (128); he tries to place her in a conclusive category. He finds out that she already knows Maria Gostrey and "on the basis of the evidence" is eager to talk with Maria. Intending to be "perfectly plain" and "go perfectly straight," the moment Mme. de Vionnet smiles at him, he must "ask himself if he weren't already going crooked" (128). He tries to judge her by comparison with an imaginary "good lady at Woollett," and then accepts the "unfamiliar phenomenon of the femme du monde" (129).

In this scene, "one of the ambassadors" draws away "our friend's companion," Mme. de Vionnet. Just as the scene in which Strether and Bilham watching the dominoes player mirrored the discussion of Chad's metaphorical "game," so also this scene and its characters mirror Strether as ambassador from Woollett: these people, real ambassadors and otherwise, constitute the ambassadorial force of Mme. de Vionnet's world. The introduction of Strether to this world is one of Chad's answers to Strether and to Woollett itself. Woollett itself answers back by sending the Pococks, and even Waymarsh becomes a (showier) ambassador from home when he announces Sarah's upcoming visit to Strether (271).

Strether next meets Jeanne de Vionnet, and the periphrastic labels here seem intended to emphasize the difference between Jeanne's protection by her mother, "the good mother, the good French one," as Maria Gostrey says, and the lack of protection from "a brute of a husband, M. de Vionnet" (137), "a high distinguished polished impertinent reprobate, the product of a mysterious order" (138) whom Mme. de Vionnet's own
"mother full of dark personal motive" (138) afforded her. The periphrases about Jeanne, Chad, and Mme. de Vionnet in this section of the text also mark the ambiguity of their relations for Strether, and help us see how he becomes confused as to who is "with" whom. Jeanne is "a young girl" (133), in Chad's words "a good little friend of mine" (134), "the child" (136), and "that beautiful child" (136). Chad, in terms which emphasize his youth and thus his nearness in age to Jeanne, is "the handsome young man" (133), "that rare youth" (133), and "the young man" (134, 135). In the very moment of deciding that he would like to be like Chad, Strether simultaneously sees Jeanne and Chad together, and assumes they are courting. Chad and Jeanne are portrayed as "the young people" (135); Jeanne is "[Chad's] companion" (135); Chad speaks "as if already of the family" (135); and Chad is proud to introduce Jeanne. This pride is obvious to Strether, yet if we are alert, we can see James gently hinting that there is more to it than this: "What was in the girl was indeed too soft, too unknown for direct dealing; so that one could only gaze at it as at a picture, quite staying one's own hand. But with Chad he was now on ground—Chad he could meet….There was the whole of a story in his tone to his companion…" (134-35). Thus, the young girl's contribution to Strether's awareness is one art form, silent like a picture, but Chad's, which later seems to have been misleading if not outright duplicitous, is like another art form, a story, "verbal" in nature, therefore something in which Strether has confidence. But the question regards whether Chad is going to "trust" Mme. de Vionnet with "the affair," if it will be "after all with one of his 'lady-friends' that his mother's missionary should be condemned to deal…" (135). Even in Strether's exultant frame of mind at thinking he finally knows "the truth," "lady-friend" is ambiguous as a term, and why is he suddenly Chad's
mother's "missionary" instead of "emissary" or "ambassador"? The reason goes beyond "elegant variation": he suddenly perceives that he will have to be still more earnest, religiously so, in order to persuade Chad home even with a foreign bride.

We are told by means of the periphrastic labels that Marie was a "school-mate and good girl-friend" of Maria's (137). She is also "a prospective mother-in-law," "of all mothers-in-law the most charming" (137), and "the lady in question...a Countess" (138). She once was "the charming girl," "the girl of the Genevese school," "an isolated interesting attaching creature," "the daughter of a French father and an English mother" (138), and "the person to whom Chad owed it that he could positively turn out such a comfort to other persons" (142-43). Some of these labels hint at her identity as Chad's lover, others obscure it. Maria Gostrey relates how, after Marie's marriage, she became "another person from the small child of nature at the Geneva school" and "a little person quite made over...by marriage" (139). This (deceptively) points to Maria Gostrey's and "the child's mother[s]'" (136) being of a near age and Jeanne's being closer to Chad's age. Still, "Strether's counsellor" (136), his "narrator" Maria (139), who has an awareness of the complexity in identity, asks not to be involved except as his sounding board. An emphasis is placed on the foreignness of Mme. de Vionnet and Jeanne de Vionnet by their twice being labelled ces dames (135, 136), and then again when Maria Gostrey says of the two elder de Vionnets to Strether, "Ces gens-la don't divorce, you know, any more than they emigrate or abjure—they think it impious and vulgar..." (138).

Soon (141), Strether's "first impression" of Chad as "the happy young Pagan" returns, when he insistently asks if he's engaged to be married to Jeanne. Chad's answer is transparent, but deceptively transparent because it blocks Strether's understanding of
what is really "going on." Chad's rhetoric in this section is that of someone openly admitting something which is a liability to him when he says that Mme. de Vionnet is "herself [his] hitch" (142); yet, his air of openness is misleading, since he also takes care to counter any wayward suspicions of Strether's by his "'But in a sense ...that you'll quite make out for yourself.'" This causes Strether to think that he himself has been unduly suspicious. In the comic language of a more prosaic metaphor, he wonders if Chad is "indebted for alterations," as if Mme. de Vionnet were a tailor or carpenter (142).

When Strether goes to see her with Chad, they are visitors together (145) as opposed to a further reference to Strether as "our friend," who at this point may or may not be persuaded (though he is already slipping). In this section, which later includes a dinner at Chad's, Marie begins by being "their hostess," and "his hostess" twice (144, 145). Then she is "the mistress of the scene before him" when Strether sees her lovely home and surroundings. She is "the poor lady" twice when he perceives that she intends to confide some of her "trouble" to him; and in her own words "the woman [Chad] likes." She is "one of the rare women" (150) who makes him feel "the simplicity of his original impression of Miss Gostrey." He pictures Marie as a "mother" several times (151); the "Countess" (153); and one of "our friends" twice, which term of Strether's to Miss Barrace also includes Chad (157, 158). She is an example of a "femme du monde" (160); "a woman of genius" (160); "an obscure person, a muffled person...a showy person, an uncovered person" (160); and finally, on backing Strether into yet another corner verbally, "his interlocutress." In the last instance her place in the dialogue form is stressed. Her "infinite variety," which has already been displayed by what Strether learns of her from Maria in Gloriani's garden, is once again on display, this time directly for
Strether and not from hearsay. The comparison to Cleopatra is made outright in the narrative by a reference to Shakespeare (Rosenbaum 160).

Following Jung, Bettina Knapp sees Mme. de Vionnet and to a lesser extent her daughter Jeanne as two parts of Strether's anima figure, and by extension, of James's own identity projections (Word/Image/Psyche 101-25). She notes that Mme. de Vionnet at first resembles the shadow, or destructive quality, and then cites evidence to support her contention that Mme. de Vionnet gradually moves into the anima category, following such items as the figures to which she is compared, the colors of her clothing, and the metals with which she is associated. Knapp feels that "[t]hese portraits...as filtered through Strether and projected into the narrative at appropriate moments, determine the relationships between the characters" (WIP 105). If Jungian thought is pertinent, it also speaks to Strether's identity. Knapp believes "[f]or the most part, and until the very end of The Ambassadors—[James] banished the fugitive world of altering phenomena by framing and fixing form through word, image, and idea" (WIP 105). This is also what Strether tries to do. One may point to such other (admittedly minor) characters as Mamie, who describes herself as a "battered, blowsy" young woman and is thought of as "bridal" by Strether—and who thus occupies a middle position between Mme. de Vionnet and her daughter, the two extremes of the anima which Knapp treats (the mother/lover/mature woman and the inarticulate virgin). One could emphasize thus that the "fugitive world of altering phenomena" is not actually left out. There is clearly a major difference, however, in the portraiture of the two de Vionnets, with Mme. de Vionnet occupying the main position as the anima through most of the novel.7

7 As well, Strether's final scene with Maria Gostrey, in its ultimate position, emphasizes the conclusion and seals off by a sort of pragmatic fiat the "world of altering phenomena," at least between those two.
Jeanne and "little" Bilham, whom Strether sees as her possible suitor, are kept simple in their periphrastic labels in the sense that all of their labels refer to youth or the colors and qualities of youth. Their qualities befit youth and (with Jeanne) inexperience. Jeanne is "little Jeanne," and "the dear thing" in her mother's words (151); "the jeune fille" in Chad's words, a type (152); and "a little foreign girl" twice (154), though one of these occurrences contains her own denial that she is so. She is compared here to Strether, who in his own view is "a stranger" (151); "the vague gentleman" (154); and the "gentleman whom she must think of as very, very old, a gentleman with eye-glasses, wrinkles, a long grizzled moustache" (154). He is better acquainted with the opposing type of "little Americans" (154) which, she says, her mother wants her to resemble. She is someone whom Strether perceives that he cannot question about Chad, her hypothetical crush, as he would do "a maid-servant" about her "follower" (154). He visualizes her as a "faint pastel in an oval frame...the portrait of a small old-time princess of whom nothing was known but that she had died young" (154). In Strether's words, she's "the sweetest little thing" (164), and in Bilham's response she is "the real thing" (164). Strether calls her "a little countess" (165). Many of the terms applied, such as "pastel," are usually associated with young ladies, and even though she is seen as a princess and a countess (stressing her proper behavior), she is given the diminutives "small" or "little" which make her grandeur (and her identity) different sorts than her mother's. Knapp sees evidence in the comparison of Jeanne with a princess who died young that Jeanne is an image of the symbolic virgin to be sacrificed—to selfish considerations on Mme. de Vionnet's and Chad's parts (121).
"Little" Bilham is simpler still here: Strether casts him as "a young fellow of …spirit" (164) and he is Strether's conversational "companion" (164). He is counselled in the belief that he is "a young man worthy of…advice…" (164), who will in Strether's whimsical imagination be offering for Jeanne's hand. In all, Bilham is "the young man" at least four times and "[Strether's] companion" four times, though he uses some duplicitous language in examining Strether's speculations about Chad and Mme. de Vionnet (166-69). In this section, he is still closer to being candid with Strether than Strether understands, and is thus a better companion. Bilham, like Chad, is identified both as youth—when Strether thinks of a possible courtship for him—and experienced—when he handles Strether's questions.

Chad by comparison receives some similar stresses and some which are more mysterious. First, as with Bilham, he is called "the young man" in this section at least twice (144, 150); this again stresses the youth element in the Paris situation. He is also called "Mr. Chad" in the narration (139) as if to stress that his assumption of adulthood might possibly be a bit premature, and then by his full first name, "Chadwick," by Strether in one of Strether's tête-à-têtes with Mme. de Vionnet, as a parent might call a child by his full name in reproof (147). In any event, it is a nominal usage which seems formal and quaint, though not more formal than what he is called in Mme. de Vionnet's response: "Mr. Newsome" restores his adult status and, though proper under the overt circumstances, helps mislead Strether as to the inner circumstances.

With others in this section there are few changes from before in the general tone applied to them. Gloriani is featured as "the high celebrity in question," "the artist," and "the famous sculptor" (155). Miss Barrace is "this picturesque and original lady" (156), a
title she has already earned by this point. Waymarsh, however, "her own good friend," is rather jocularly treated by the characters (and by James's narrator) as a clumsy flirtation of Miss Barrace's. The inappropriateness of Waymarsh's conduct in this Paris scenario is stressed by having Miss Barrace twice call him "Sitting Bull" (158, 159), emphasizing his immobility of mien, demeanor, and mental attitude by comparing him, presumably, to a stoic photograph of Sitting Bull.

These are the starting periphrastic labels and their developments as they can be sketched out in their simplest forms. All of the basic rhetorical stances of the book are demonstrated in them, as well as some more complicated ones, which together interact as the identifying "genes" pulling Strether's attempted namings this way and that as he "grows" into his final sense of identities at the end.
II—THE LABELLING OF ANTonomasia/PERIPHRASIS AS IT EXTENDS INTO THE METAPHOR OF THE Quest AND BEYOND

Mme. de Vionnet, "the charming woman," as she is styled in many places in the book, becomes overtly "the lady of [Strether's] quest" when he goes to see her and finds her out of Paris (203). This is not an instance of simple periphrasis standing alone, however; it is one that also reaches forward and back, establishing a metaphor that resounds throughout the book, from the first use of the word "adventure" to Strether's first private meeting with her, and continuing.8 Even earlier (143), Strether says to Chad, "'Have I your word of honour that if I surrender myself to Madame de Vionnet you'll surrender yourself to me?" The terms are those of courtly battle, such as those between Launcelot and his foes described in Bulfinch's Mythology, where Launcelot makes similar terms with those whom he bests to surrender themselves to Queen Guenever (319-22). The Ambassadors is a case in which a continuing metaphorical reference to medieval and later romance is made fairly explicit. The most important parallel here is that Chad is the apparently admirable knight, like Sir Launcelot, who yet suffers a moral or spiritual taint, while Strether, though not an object of fun to the same degree as Sir Kay, is nonetheless "poor Strether" in a comical tone in several places in the book. Chad places his hand on Strether's and answers, "'My dear man, you have [my word of honour]," which he ironically keeps by allowing Strether to bear the brunt of the situation.

Another piece of extended periphrasis (they grow longer as the book does, often becoming basic metaphor) shows Strether confronting the asceticism sometimes imposed

8 As Gale remarks, "James peppers his fiction with many routine bookish war images, concerning spears and battlements, helmets and flags of truce, knights and shining armor, and the like...[H]e poignantly shows ill-equipped women, often courageous but essentially frail, struggling to do battle against awesome odds..." (CI 99). To what degree Mme. de Vionnet is "ill-equipped" or "essentially frail" is less significant than the word "bookish" and the phrase "knights and shining armor."
on knights by their quests, and by their tendency to frequent hermits' retreats and make pilgrimages. While in Notre Dame, Strether sees himself as "a man who by this time struck himself as living almost disgracefully from hand to mouth" (172). Metaphorically, he is both morally and aesthetically forced by his own limits of identity here to take only what Chad and Mme. de Vionnet "give" him. He is unable to live by the aesthetic glow which is so tempting to him in Paris, the glow cast round about Mme. de Vionnet. Speaking morally, he asks Chad, "'Is her life without reproach?'" (144). Chad answers aesthetically, "'Absolutely without reproach. A beautiful life. _Allez donc voir!'"

Strether, with the inconsistency of the true romantic knight, who embarks upon a second adventure or spiritual endeavor before the first is finished, leaves Notre Dame cathedral with Mme. de Vionnet in quest of an eatery with which he is familiar and she is not. This also is described as an adventure to "a place of pilgrimage for the knowing" (177). Of the motif of meetings, Bakhtin says, "A meeting is one of the most ancient devices for structuring a plot in the epic (and even more so in the novel)." He notes, "Of special importance is the close link between the motif of meetings and such motifs as _parting, escape, acquisition, loss, marriage_, and so forth, which are similar to the motif of meeting in their unity of space and time markers" (DI 98). All these motifs occur in some connection or other in _The Ambassadors_, in relation to Strether's or the other characters' identities and adventures. Not only is this meeting with Mme. de Vionnet an unexpected meeting, but it is the least startling of the two startling ones between her and Strether in the book, the second being the river scene. Though Strether is the hero of the "drama" in the book and Chad the hero of the "idyll" (the second being closer to medieval romance in spirit), Strether is still a hero of chivalric romance, albeit a comical one, in
one important respect. Bakhtin states of this hero, "....[F]or him, the world exists exclusively under the sign of the miraculous "suddenly"; it is the normal condition of his world. He is an adventurer, but a disinterested one..." (DI 152). (This "sign" is continued in Romantic and Victorian romances as well, with which James was more than passingly familiar.) The meeting in Notre Dame is unusual, but by the time the river scene occurs, the signs "miracle" and "suddenly" are well-grounded. The periphrases containing all the "courtly romance" and the "mysterious meeting" words thus establish the Parisian boundaries of Strether's world.

Earlier, after speaking to Chad about Mme. de Vionnet, Strether visits her in her "den." He finds her surrounded by "hereditary cherished charming" possessions (145). He guessed at intense little preferences and sharp little exclusions, a deep suspicion of the vulgar and a personal view of the right. The general result of this was something for which he had no name on the spot quite ready, but something he would come nearest to naming in speaking of it as the air of supreme respectability, the consciousness, small, still, reserved, but none the less distinct and diffused, of private honour. (146) [emphasis mine]

Thus, that word "honour" occurs again, as it does in places throughout the text. He has asked Chad about her and interrogated her surroundings, which, however reviewed in moral terms, are aesthetically pleasing.

When he says he does not "get on" with her, delicate about why he is there, she asks him "'Will you consent to go on with me a little—provisionally—as if you did?'' (147). She raises her "beautiful suppliant eyes." But he insists that he does not understand her request, which she says is different from Chad's (148). As in Arthurian romance, a supplicant may ask for a "boon," which is unidentified until after the knight has already agreed to grant it. Then he is caught in a trap regarding his honor, and he must grant the
boon. Arthur himself receives his sword from the Lady of the Lake under similar terms, promising an unidentified gift somewhere in the unforeseeable future (M 308-310). The same is true of King Mark's asking a boon of Tristram, "who readily granted it" (M 333), which King Mark then identifies as obtaining "the fair Isoude" for himself as a bride. As Scott says, "'Good faith was the very cornerstone of chivalry. Whenever a knight's word was pledged (it mattered not how rashly), it was to be redeemed at any price. Hence the sacred obligation of the boon granted by a knight to his suppliant'…('Scott—note of Sir Tristram,'" qtd. by Bulfinch M 333n1). As Strether says to Mme. de Vionnet, he feels he has not met her "request." He says, "'I don't understand it.'" She responds, setting the conversational trap mentioned above, "'It isn't at all necessary you should understand it; it will do quite well enough if you simply remember it''" (148). She says she "trusts" him mainly for "civility," a characteristic of knights, and immediately is named "the poor lady" twice in the next paragraph "because clearly she had some trouble, and her appeal to him could only mean that her trouble was deep. He couldn't help it; it wasn't his fault; he had done nothing [was passive in the presence of a "lady perilous"]; but by a turn of the hand [like a sorceress?] she had somehow made their encounter a relation" (148). He continues to "fence" with her verbally, yet his gallantry, curiosity, and sense of duty have the upper hand: he has already lost the contest. Two pages later, we read: "It had been all very well to think at moments that he was holding her nose down [like a lively horse's?] and that he had coerced her: what had he by this time done but let her practically see that he accepted their relation? What was their relation moreover…but whatever she might choose to make it?" (150). She is one of the "rare women he had so often heard of, read of, thought of, but never met, whose very presence, look, voice, the
mere contemporaneous fact of whom, from the moment it was at all presented, made a relation of mere recognition" (150). She is an "enchantress." James explains in the “Project” of his novel for Harper’s Magazine that Strether has been “tired…[and]…disenchanted without having [previously] known any great…enchantresses…” (Rosenbaum 378). By the end of the chapter, Strether stops resisting her appeal outright and says, "I'll save you if I can" (152).

In spite of his courtliness, when he discovers that Waymarsh constantly sends Miss Barrace flowers, Strether feels enviously that "he's much more in the real tradition than I" (159), only to consider a moment later that "the sacred rage" is possible for Waymarsh because he has no "Mrs. Waymarsh in the least to consider, whereas Lambert Strether ha[s] constantly, in the inmost honour of his thoughts, to consider Mrs. Newsome" (159) [emphasis mine]. He says to Miss Barrace, "I seem to have a life only for other people.'" She suggests to him that he has a life with Miss Gostrey, but he rejects this idea, and his rejection of it here is tied to his eventual rejection of Miss Gostrey at the end when he refuses her "offer of exquisite service, of lightened care" (346). This is the true knightly ideal. Miss Gostrey indicates that he will have had a [knightly] adventure by saying "But with your wonderful impressions you'll have got a great deal.'" He agrees, but feels that accepting her herself would make him "wrong" (346-47). Some knights in literature did accept personal rewards, but Strether decides on the most stringent asceticism. He accepts only his romantic and picturesque impressions as a knightly prize, though "seeing" the identities of others in these terms has its own perils for the conscience, as we will find. Putting the knightly tradition in the forefront metaphorically makes the ending
less arbitrary, and this interpretation is supported through much of the text by such
evidence as has occurred just in the nouns and their modifiers discussed as periphrasis.

Bilham's remarks to Strether, that the relationship between Mme. de Vionnet and
Chad is "virtuous" (165), and his agreement that the relationship is not "vulgar or
course," (166), that it is "the very finest thing I ever saw in my life, and the most
distinguished," thus hang on the interpretation of the adjective "virtuous," and its relation
to the courtly tradition. The older meaning was "manly" or "characterized by strength
and capacity," traits which are not synonymous necessarily with the worth of the identity
in the modern sense, though the courtly tradition did much to help develop that sense.
This underlines the degree to which Strether is originally lost in an older civilization that
makes different discriminations, even sometimes in those it adopts like Bilham and Chad.

To reiterate briefly, Strether makes a "pilgrimage" (172) which is an "adventure" to
Notre Dame, where he finds "a refuge from the obsession of his problem." He is "trying
to escape" from himself (173), and appropriately enough, he meets "the lady of his
quest" there. Like a knight, he even feels the influence of "the hand of fate itself" in the
meeting (179). First, however, we read:

The great church had no altar for his worship, no direct
voice for his soul [he is Protestant]; but it was none the
less soothing even to sanctity; for he could feel while
there what he couldn't elsewhere, that he was a plain
tired man taking the holiday he had earned. He was tired,
but he wasn't plain—that was the pity and the trouble of
it; he was able, however, to drop his problem at the door
very much as if it had been the copper piece that he de-
posited, on the threshold, in the receptacle of the in-
veterate blind beggar....[T]he mighty monument laid
upon him its spell....[T]his form of sacrifice did at any
rate for the occasion as well as another. (173)
That Strether is not "plain" but "imaginative" is already clear. This is evident by contrast with Mrs. Newsome and her son Chad, whom Strether and Miss Gostrey discuss as having no imagination, but still being able to make people "feel" their influence.

In his dilemma, Strether believes he can understand how in this sanctuary "those who were fleeing from justice" would appreciate the way "the things of the world...fell into abeyance" (173). Disturbingly, we are told that justice and injustice are both "absent...from the air of the long aisles and the brightness of the many altars." This shows the degree to which, for Strether, the experience is less one of the perception of heavenly mercy and more one of aesthetic moment, like that experienced by "a student under the charm of a museum" which we were told Strether would like to have been.

One also notes the words "spell" and "charm" in this description of the church's atmosphere, words which have strayed from the fairy-tale world of courtly romance. Thus, Strether's identity as a knight comes not from a purely moralistic universe, nor from a purely aesthetic universe, but from a crossed form which Strether, by his final act of renunciation, can only at the end try to resolve into something having both moral content and aesthetic form. His renunciation is moral in the sense that he wants to be "right" and "square," and aesthetic in the sense that it is partially based upon an appreciation of how Mme. de Vionnet can "make deception right," and "present things 'with an art of her own'" (Holland The Expense of Vision 273-74). His "double consciousness" by the end will have played over the whole.

The encounter with Mme. de Vionnet "deeply stir[s Strether's] imagination." He sees her first as one of many, a "fellow visitant." She appears to him as "a lady whose supreme stillness...he had two or three times noticed" (174). She is not "prostrate" but
"strangely fixed." This characterization, "not in any degree bowed," but "strangely fixed" in a broader sense, needing aid yet not really humble, describes his "suppliant" when she is not aware of being watched by "the Other." In that sense, this scene parallels the later discovery scene when Strether sees her with Chad on the river, because in that case, he also evaluates her before he knows her identity, and in that scene, when she sees him she seems to consider "cutting" him, not a humble thing to do.

To whatever degree her humility exists, it appears in their final scene together, when she is so sincerely grieved by Strether's departure and by what will be her eventual loss of Chad. Here, by contrast, he sees her as "some fine firm concentrated heroine of an old story...renewing her courage, renewing her clearness, in splendidly-protected meditation" (174). In the same passage we are told that "his impression absolutely required that she should be young and interesting." Already in this book we are in the confused land of Strether's motives, which turn up later when her physical identity becomes clear and he asks her to lunch with him. His motives have become triply confused now, not just doubly, because he is torn not only between Mrs. Newsome and Mme. de Vionnet, but also between an impartial assessment of Mme. de Vionnet and the courtly tradition, which demands that he be a little enamored of her himself, in however tangential or platonic a way. In "Project of Novel by Henry James," included in the edition's critical supplement (Rosenbaum 385), James's summary to H. M. Alden reads: "...[I]t's not in the least that [Strether] has fallen in love with [Mme. de Vionnet], or is at all likely to do so." I believe this statement to be disingenuous or at least one which James reworked, in the sense that Strether is clearly fascinated, though not literally in love. As the novel says, "She was romantic for him...beyond what she could have guessed..." (176).
He recognizes her as she pauses by him; "he knew her for the person he had lately been observing. She was the lurking figure of the dim chapel..." (175). He casts back in his mind, comparing his previous impressions with his new knowledge: she is "the person whose attitude before the glimmering altar had so impressed him" (176). This impression makes him stick to his resolve to think of her as "[u]nassailably innocent" because of the way she "carries herself": "If it wasn't innocent why did she haunt the churches?—into which, given the woman he could believe he made out, she would never have come to flaunt an insolence of guilt. She haunted them for continued help, for strength, for peace...." There is a flaw in his logic: he overlooks the fact that just previously both justice and injustice had seemed to him to dwell outside the church, and that a church is as much for sinners as it is for saints. She appears to him as a heroine from a story. The image of her suggests fiction, not fact, and stirs his imagination, not his analytical abilities. (One such work of imagination incorporating a chastened lady and a church is Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, familiar to James, in which Guenever's recourse to the nunnery at the end of Arthur's reign occurs; though Strether does not think specifically of this, James may have had it in mind.)

Strether privately reaffirms his commitment to help her, and decides to give her a sign. "The sign would be that—though it was her own affair—he understood; the sign would be that—though it was her own affair—she was free to clutch. Since she took him for a firm object—much as he might to his own sense appear to rock—he would do his best to be one" (177). He takes her to lunch where he assumes she has been "initiated" only to find she has never been there, to "a place of pilgrimage for the knowing...who came, for its great renown, the homage of restless days, from the other end of the town." This
"pilgrimage" is one that, as "their human questions" come up over lunch, gives Strether "the sense that the situation was running away with him" which "had never been so sharp as now" (178). One pilgrimage, on the surface a "holy" one, leads to another of a secular variety, with the link between them Mme. de Vionnet. We read that the "runaway" of the "horse and carriage" begins when Strether allows himself to discuss Jeanne and her possible affection for Chad with Mme. de Vionnet. He feels that Mme. de Vionnet is subtle, and that "the hand of fate itself" is "fight[ing] on her side" (179). The "success of his proposal" that "she should breakfast with him" is thus "the smash in which a regular runaway properly ends" (179).9 In his thoughts, she is thus "a person in…universal possession," and yet one needing his help. The irony is that she is a "poor lady" who is in "trouble" (148), yet later she implies to him, regarding Miss Gostrey's absence, that he is "a man in trouble" (179). It is certain by now that, because of Mme. de Vionnet herself, he is thoroughly embroiled in the whole affair, and at this point it is his choice. Yet he does not like to think of his identity as one "[w]oundable by Chad's lady...."

Strether is already bound by her to do his best for her and Chad. Once again, she prompts him for his "word of honour" that if Chad goes back to visit his mother as evidence of personal improvement that Mrs. Newsome will not "do her best to marry him" (182). After some debate between the two of them about presumable results, Mme. de Vionnet says, "'You can't in honour not see me through...because you can't in honour not see him' (183) [emphasis mine]. It seems that unable even this early to rely absolutely on Chad's knightly "honour," she is trying to bind Strether with his stronger

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9 Gale says, "Images having to do with runaways and falls from horses [occur often in James]; they generate enough feeling to make one suspect that they are based in part upon experience or at least observation….Persons caught up in circumstances of a powerful and an emotional nature are thus often described by runaway-horse imagery" (CI 64).
moral fiber to her. That she is aware of him in this way is taken up again when they are discussing renunciation and she says to him, "'I don't pretend you feel yourself victimised, for this evidently is the way you live, and it's what—we've agreed—is the best way'" (323).

Unlike Strether, who thus far has been described as a (knightly) pilgrim to somewhere, Waymarsh is generally described as a pilgrim from somewhere; that is, with reference to his point of origin. He is "the pilgrim from Milrose." This indicates that his identity basically has not changed. Even when he becomes more courtly, it is not in a foreign manner. Waymarsh buys Miss Barrace flowers, a courtly gesture from Strether's point of view, but Waymarsh ends by summoning the Pococks, as far as Strether knows or can guess, and approves of their presence, going so far as to make friends with Sarah Pocock especially. If he is any kind of knight at all, he is an ambassadorial knight attached to Sarah's very American court.

The question of cultural identities, knightly or demotic, is clearly in the offing for Strether in his next scene with Chad (186). We are told that Chad practices "careless and competent criticism...wherever he [goes]," and in this early morning visit to Strether, there is no exception. As he watches Strether finish dressing, he tells Strether that he, Strether, is "safe" to go home now, having got "all [his] good." He continues, "'You're looking, this morning, as fit as a flea.'" He here encourages Strether to view physical identity as a clue to his internal state, just as Strether, upon first seeing Chad himself in the theatre box, did Chad's. Strether turns to the mirror, "consulting that witness moreover on this last opinion." The phrase "that witness" sets up an opposition with the phrase "this witness" spoken of Waymarsh later (204). Waymarsh, at least in Strether's
view, bears witness to the very opposite claim that Strether is in a state of moral collapse; Waymarsh focuses on ethical identity. Intuition of others and ethical identity are connected with the demotic, external appearance with the mandarin, Strether as knight partaking of both.  

When Chad compliments him about his appearance (186), Strether doubts because "he had felt himself for hours rather in pieces." He nevertheless accepts Chad's "judgement" and believes himself to be "firmer." In an echo of the passage at Gloriani's (133), however, when he tells Bilham that he would enjoy being like Chad, there is an opposition between an external "pageant" identity and a middle-class or demotic pragmatic identity pointed up here too:

His firmness indeed was slightly compromised, as he faced about to his friend [Chad], by the way this very personage looked—though the case would of course have been worse hadn't the secret of personal magnificence been at every hour Chad's unfailing possession. There he was in all the pleasant morning freshness of it—strong and sleek and gay, easy and fragrant and fathomless, with happy health in his colour, and pleasant silver in his thick young hair, and the right word for everything on the lips that his clear brownness caused to show as red. He had never struck Strether as personally such a success; it was as if now, for all his definite surrender, he had gathered himself vividly together. (186)

Chad is "his friend" and a "personage" in this scene, where he acts as a "mirroring" witness for Strether, unlike Waymarsh, who mirrors what makes Strether uncomfortable, and has now become only "his fellow traveller" while they wait for Chad. (It is Waymarsh, by contrast with Chad, who becomes a "personage" (205) when he is spoken

10 The extent to which the Modernist tendency to integrate bodily and psychological/metaphysical cultural identities developed away from the early nineteenth century habit of treating the body as a "machine" is examined by Laura L. Behling in Gross Anatomies: Fictions of the Physical in American Literature 13, 15-16.
of as having affinities with Mrs. Newsome. Their alignments are clearly stressed thus, Chad's with Mme. de Vionnet, Waymarsh's with Mrs. Newsome.) It is not that Waymarsh will never afterwards be described in more intimate terms, but that in close proximity to the description of his supposed perfidy and his status being described as that of a "witness," the tone cools from calling him Strether's "companion" to "his fellow traveller." On the very next page, which involves consideration of the American group together as a whole, Waymarsh is spoke of as "their friend," Strether's and Chad's, though the text says, "....Strether felt indeed how much it would be stamped all over him…for Sarah Pocock's eyes[] that he was as much on Chad's 'side' as Waymarsh had probably described him" (205).

That Strether is trying to imitate Chad's air of the world and indifference to influence by the Pococks is stressed by the phrase "my dear man." Chad twice uses this to Strether himself (186, 187), when they are mentioning Mrs. Newsome's illness and when Strether begins a discussion of Chad's duty to Mme. de Vionnet. Thus in two different conversations in which Strether is discussing Chad's and his own knightly duty to women in their lives, which Strether sees "over his companion's head," Chad takes a condescending tone towards Strether, an older man, as he has several times before. Strether echoes this tone in his thoughts about Waymarsh at the beginning of Book VIII, Chapter I, when he is supposedly much freer than Waymarsh and is trying to place what he sees as Waymarsh's betrayal in a non-threatening, even an "amusing," light. All these twistings and turnings in the picture of Strether's character, Waymarsh's possible treachery, and Chad's hero-like appearance, which later seems empty of substance, are so many speculations on the nature of identity and imitation of others, and are strangely like
chivalric fictionalizations on this very topic as they occur in the romance: Strether is the bemused and bewitched knight who "grows" or profits spiritually through his experience, and Chad is the younger hero of lesser stature. He even has "red lips," which are a sign in European literature in general of passionate, sometimes vicious qualities in a man, just as Tadzio's "blue teeth" in "Death in Venice" are a sign of moral culpability. Waymarsh is the traitorous friend or companion, not fully realized. (Bakhtin speaks to this purpose as well regarding chivalric romance, saying that it is often "...a [ ] complex play with the issue of identity, such as the two Isoldes...in Tristan" (DI 151). As we also see, there is a similar issue of name and identity which develops between the two women in Strether's main orbit in Paris: the two "Isoldes," Maria Gostrey and Marie de Vionnet, the one willing, the other someone else's.

That Strether does feel himself restricted in identity is contained in the end of the same paragraph as the extended one above, when we are told,

> It was all very funny, he knew, and but the difference...of tweedledum and tweedledee—an emancipation so purely comparative that it was like the advance of the door-mat on the scraper; yet the present crisis was happily to profit by it and the pilgrim from Milrose [again this reference to Waymarsh's point of origin and perspective] to know himself more than ever in the right. (201)

Strether feels himself changed under Chad's influence and that of Paris, which is evidenced by his thoughts on the way back from the station where the Pococks are picked up: "He had before this had many moments of wondering if he himself weren't perhaps changed even as Chad was changed. Only what in Chad was conspicuous improvement—well, he had no name ready for the working, in his own organism, of his own more timid dose" (213). Previous to this in Book VII, Chapter II, Chad has spoken of himself as "the
lone exile" from his family in Paris, which is the very position Strether will find himself in finally, since Chad will presumably end up with Mamie or another young woman. The unity of the two men in some kind of composite identity as regards Mrs. Newsome's awesome influence over their lives is shown in such instances as that in which Chad says, "Remember how long it is since I've seen Mother" ("Mother" as a proper name); Strether follows up with "How much do you want to see Mother?" [not "your mother," but as if, Strether's verbal irony aside for the moment, he names her thus also (191)].

Alliances are again stressed, as well as breaches, when we are told that Waymarsh, "[a]s if to make up to his comrade for the stroke by which he had played providence…now conspicuously ignored his movements, withdrew himself from the pretension to share them, stiffened up his sensibility to neglect,…[and] clearly looked to another quarter for justice" (202). Their breach is emphasized by the next paragraph: "This made for independence on Strether's part, and he had in truth at no moment of his stay been so free to go or come. The early summer brushed the picture over and blurred everything but the near; it made a vast warm fragrant medium in which the elements floated together on the best of terms" (202). Yet, in reaction to a lapse of "consistency" brought on by a fear of "a single hour of Sarah Pocock," Strether seeks to see Mme. de Vionnet, "the charming associate of his adventure" (203). As previously noted, this sounds much like "the lady of his quest," being chivalric in origin in this context, given the recurrence of "adventure."

From his stance regarding Mme. de Vionnet, Waymarsh, Chad, and those in Paris, Strether begins to shift at this point in the text to figure to himself what his identity (and theirs) will be to the Pococks. He puts people into nearly stereotypical categories. For
Strether (speaking to Chad), Sarah is "your mother's representative" and "[the] appointed successor" to himself, "the outgoing ambassador" (205). Yet, he cannot think of how to present Chad's new and changed qualities, particularly to Sarah. He thinks of Chad as "urbane," yet asks himself "by what name" he can call Chad's "difference," aware that urbanity is not enough, that he needs a better substantive. As we have seen, the oppositions of rôles and different qualities of Strether, Chad, and Waymarsh as “knights” have been pointed up already by this time. But Strether is aware that the names of “knights” and “ladies” on the European models of identity are not going to "charm" the approaching Americans as present-day explanation.

A somewhat stereotypical naming continues for several pages. For example, Strether, despite his apprehensions about Sarah and what the text relates about her occasional "unpleasantness," is twice called "the valued friend of her family" (210). Mamie is "a pretty girl," "a young lady of twenty-two"; in a possibly prophetic vein she is "the happy bride," "the bride after the church and just before going away," and as someone having the appearance of "[Chad's] young wife—the wife of a honeymoon." Jim is "a leading Woollett business-man" and that he is representative of his class is evidenced by the remark, "He seemed to say that there was a whole side of life on which the perfectly usual was for leading Woollett business-men to be out of the question" (215). The surrounding text continues the idea of men's subordination where matters of family and match-making are concerned when Strether asks himself, "Should he ever know himself as much out of the question for Mrs. Newsome as Jim knew himself—in a dim way—for Mrs. Jim?" (215). A paragraph later, when Strether is reassuring himself that he is different, Jim is "poor Jim," as he is a page later (216), and then he is "poor Pocock"
(218), clearly not a knight, as none of the Pococks are, Sarah's championing of her mother's interests momentarily aside.

Increasingly, names are forsaken for the identifying mention of familial relationships (213-20). This stress points up the difference between the close family structure of the Pococks, their expectations, and the other more courtly relationships in which Strether is immersed in Paris. There are such periphrastic labels as "her brother," "his sister," "her husband and her husband's sister," "his relatives," "her brother," "her husband," "his father's," "his mother's," "your wife," "her mother," "his brother-in-law's" and "my brother."

That the situation requires diplomacy and contains a kind of verbal fencing is shown by the next set of personal periphrases. Here, defending family honor is the point at which the two worlds coincide. Strether has the evening before seen "all his old friends together," setting up one side of the ambassadorial contest (219). When he arrives the next day to see Sarah, Mme. de Vionnet is already there, "a good friend of Chad's," as she has presented herself, setting up the other side. Sarah rebuts Mme. de Vionnet's claim to be a tour guide to Paris by pointing out that she "knows" Paris and moreover has "these American friends" (her husband, sister-in-law, Waymarsh, and Strether) to help her out. Mme. de Vionnet tries to engage her then as "woman-to-woman," presenting her identity as an ambassador of sorts, "a woman of good will," emphasizing how many men are in Sarah's avowed company. Strether next sees Mme. de Vionnet's visiting card on the table, "her coronet and her 'Comtesse'" (220) and thinks of her, briefly, as a "specimen of that class," a stereotype of another sort which he had meant to "play on" Sarah Pocock. They are thus "partners" in a sort of metaphorical card game. While Marie is also Sarah's
"visitor" (224), a page earlier she is "her invader," the two very different nouns stressing the tension of the meeting. Diplomacy and card games as metaphors neatly mesh with a general vocabulary stressing the world of knighthood, as they are part of history reaching back to the time of knights and beyond.

Other noun phrases which are counters of personal identity also refer to diplomacy and ambassadorial concerns: Strether notices "the suggestive sameness [to that of the morning at Notre Dame] of [Mme. de Vionnet's] discreet and delicate dress" (221). He thinks that he and Maria Gostrey have escaped Sarah Pocock's scrutiny by "their common wisdom" and "timely prudence." Mme. de Vionnet, when addressing Sarah (223), speaks of the Boulevard Malesherbes as "common ground" and "the best prospect I see for the pleasure of meeting you again," both of which emphasize an apparent desire for alliance.

Marie's desire for alliance, if not for the actual defeat of Sarah's mission to affect Chad, is then shown by her insistence on family language of her own. She never mentions her husband or other alliances—as it would really be socially impossible to do at this point—but mentions, in a deliberately disarming way, "my little daughter," "my poor girl," "my child." That Mme. de Vionnet deprecates her surroundings as well as her child to make them smaller or less threatening in their fineness is signified by what she says: when Strether tells her that his American friends including Mrs. Newsome should see her home, she speaks of it as "my shabby old place" and "my poor place" (238). He sees her, by contrast, as part of "a wonderful story" which he has told Mrs. Newsome, and her home as the "noble old apartment,...high melancholy and sweet—full, once more, of dim historic shades, of the faint far-away cannon-roar of the great Empire" (238). This reference, though not to earlier knighthood, does refer to an imperial cultural identity.
Strether thinks that Mme. de Vionnet must be wondering "how, with such elements, Sarah could still have no charm" (231); he resolves the identity issue for himself thus: "How could a woman think Sarah had charm who struck one as having arrived at it herself by such different roads?" (232). Later (236), Mme. de Vionnet asks about her apparent rival, Mamie, "Is she really quite charming?" and Strether half-demurs. Again (249), when Strether goes to visit Sarah, he finds Mamie instead, "quite another person, a person presented...by a charming back." And when Mamie finally meets Jeanne, she lets Strether know that she finds her "a real little monster of charm" (253), though whether the word "monster" is hers or Strether's is unclear, because the conversation is reported, not direct [the first English edition of The Ambassadors has "miracle"—Rosenbaum (352)]. The word "monster" seems exaggerated, though a knightly tale without a "monster" of some kind would be flat. Here, it is people’s qualities of personal identity which "threaten" and cast "charms."

Throughout this first major encounter of the two "courts," Strether tries to function smoothly, as a true courtier, cavalier, or ambassador would do. Sometimes, he seems even unctuous or self-satisfied; only being Strether, he is too self-examining for these conditions to persist. It seems at most his fond hope that everything might work out well which makes him temporarily so. After all, how does one reconcile a courtly tradition (and identity) with a mercantile tradition (and identity) so abruptly, without history to do it in?

The section following the arrival of the Pococks and their first encounter with Mme. de Vionnet contains naming labels and other language which picture the collision of the two cultures in concern over their young. As noted, Chad, in social position as well as in
age, serves as the linch-pin between the two camps and the two generations. He is described by Mme. de Vionnet as "a good friend, dear kind man" who aids in keeping her "poor child," her "small shy creature" from being too "benighted" (possibly a pun, "beknighted"), by which she apparently means uninfluenced by the Americans' "wonderful country" and therefore unlike Mamie (229). Still, Strether tells Mme. de Vionnet in their next meeting that the other Americans continue to see the younger man as "'the same old Chad,'" and we observe that Mme. de Vionnet has, for additional support, "pulled [Strether] into her boat" (230). Despite this, he feels it to be "the point of honour and delicacy" not to ask her what her "impression" of Sarah has been. She in turn does not openly mention the impression Strether attributes to her, of Sarah's lack of "charm." But in speaking of Chad to Strether, we are told "[s]he spoke now as if her art were all an innocence, and then again as if her innocence were all an art" (232). Chad is again "the young man" and "the phenomenon so rare" of Mme. de Vionnet's making (233). Her alteration of Chad is thus of the world of magic and artistry, romantic enchantment, though she may have attempted a modern-day struggle to change moral or personal qualities.

Strether tells Marie that Chad is not as influenced by Sarah as she supposes, since Chad has mostly been showing Jim around. Strether teaches Mme. de Vionnet to condescend to Jim, to think of him as non-threatening, or to see him as potentially on their side of the question. Again, Jim is seen as obviously, notoriously unknighthly.

Immediately after Strether presents Jim this way, he and Mme. de Vionnet mention him three times as "'dear Jim,'" Mme. de Vionnet twice and Strether once in affirmation of her

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11 Gale notes that boat images are often used for comic purposes "even in serious contexts" (22), which seems to be accurate given the public scene in Book III among Sarah Pocock, Mme. de Vionnet, and Strether.
He tells her it is her "wickedness and the charms" Jim "associates" with it which make him want to meet her. In explaining Jim's view of the mid-life crises men in Woollett often have, and which he seems to think Strether has had as well, Strether emphasizes the ascendancy of the females in Jim's family by mentioning "his wife and his mother-in-law" (234) instead of using their proper names. He says that they have their own type of "honour" in not tolerating "such phenomena" (the word "phenomena" recalls Chad's younger transformation also). Their sort of preferred "phenomenon" would not be a change toward courtly behavior; as Strether reveals, they would prefer to see Chad more like Jim, the clearly demotic man, who seems a serf in his own household.

Considering next a series of expressions either referring to and placing the younger generation as they are seen by their elders or referring to the elders in their relation to the younger ones, we see that Sarah has been described previously as "deep," with her depth leading down into Mrs. Newsome's "profundity," the metaphor that of an adit into a mine, and Mamie is described as "'a deep little girl,'" keeping her own counsel as to what she thinks of "a deep young man" (Chad). Jeanne, in her courtly feudal-based society, is expected to perform rather than choose. When Mme. de Vionnet says she wants Jeanne to exhibit well for her, Strether calls Jeanne "poor little duck"; Mme. de Vionnet echoes the expression (237). Thus, like the Americans, though in a different key, Mme. de Vionnet has her family connections and her expectations, which she says are "founded on a v i e l l e  s a g e s s e " (241). This difference is that her arrangements include an infidelity with Chad of which her society accepts the tactful existence. A confusion here over the phrase "young man" when she and Strether talk about M. de Montbron and Chad helps show the depth of Strether's bewilderment at this point over Mme. de Vionnet's and Chad's
relationship, based as it is on the European courtly tradition rather than the American "neighborly" one. This is not to suggest that James believes only Europeans commit adultery or breach formal relationships, only that these are the terms he chooses to work with here.

Later, Miss Gostrey and Strether think together about the young in the situation, and how Chad will expect Strether to do his work with Sarah for him. Maria Gostrey asks, "'Mrs. Pocock, with her brother, is trusting only to her general charm?...And the charm's not working?'" They debate that point (246), the word "charm" continuing to hold sway. It is important to note that though a man can be spoken of as “charming,” the word here is only applied to women, sometimes by women, as if emphasizing the courtly tradition of men as strong and valorous, women as perhaps tricky, attractive or not.

Though Mamie is herself an American example of a "charming girl" (251), her description is unlike the portraiture of Jeanne, who is compared to a princess, a member of the aristocratic and knightly world. Mamie, not "shy," but "polysyllabic" (252), is dressed more like an old lady than a young one (251). She, Strether thinks, is capable of taking sides with him, whereas Jeanne, while perfectly polite to him when they meet, is polite within the accepted virginal social boundaries of the knightly world. In the scene with Mamie at her hotel, Strether thinks of them as together in "a quaint community of shipwreck," sharing water. This imagery associated with shipwreck symbolizes the failure of his original mission, at least in his own hands, as well as her lack of success with Chad. Strether is "her old friend," and "her auditor." She is said to think of the de Vionnets as "friends of Chad's, friends special, distinguished, desirable, enviable" (253), and she is "[Strether's] blooming companion." Mme. de Vionnet is by contrast (with an
emphasis on age) "the elder of the ladies of the Rue de Bellechasse," and Jeanne is "a real little monster of charm." Strether describes Jeanne as a "little girl," joking with Mamie also about herself, and she responds that she herself is "a big battered blowsy one" (254). He considers, though Mamie may not keep her attractiveness long, that she will for him always retain her identity as "the person who, at the present sharp hour, had been disinterestedly tender" about Jeanne (254-55). Strether interprets their conversation at the time as meaning that she is "ready to help him," but he is still unclear about what is really happening with Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, so that his view also of what might help him is necessarily affected. This treatment of Mamie as a possible ally points up the difference between the courtly society and the mercantile society as well.

The extent to which Strether is still in the dark is shown by his conversation with Miss Gostrey about Jeanne's marriage and the way that it eliminates Jeanne from consideration as a candidate for Chad's intimate interests. When speaking with Miss Gostrey, he gives Chad credit for planning the match, and for feeling that "'[i]t would be nicer'" to love Jeanne rather than suffer "'the discomfort of an attachment to a person he can never hope, short of a catastrophe, to marry'" (246). He goes on to hint that Chad is maintaining a courtly love relationship, an ideal platonic one, with Mme. de Vionnet, the sort that in fact Strether himself is verging upon, not the adulterous relationship of Launcelot and Guenever. He says, regarding Chad's position vis-à-vis his sister Sarah and Marie, ""...[H]e'll leave it to me, he'll leave everything to me. I "sort of" feel...that the whole thing will come upon me. Yes, I shall have every inch and every ounce of it. I shall be used for it--!...To the last drop of my blood"" (246).
Strether, already believing this about Chad's lack of responsibility, engages in social talk with Bilham and Miss Barrace about four courtships, in varying degrees courtly ones. The first "courtship" referred to by Strether and Bilham at Chad's party for the Pococks is a metaphorical one, that of Sarah by the Parisian world. Here Sarah is Strether's "colleague," or in the first English edition his "fellow-emissary" (Rosenbaum 352), and Strether is familiar with her experience, having had it himself: "Strether, during his own weeks, had gained a sense of knowing Paris; but he saw it afresh…in the form of the knowledge offered to his colleague" (257). That Strether imagines her, like himself, feeling discomfort in her role, striving to be equal to it, is shown by the phrase describing her sense of Mrs. Newsome's likely negative reception of the evening: "...[T]here were moments when she felt the fixed eyes of their admirable absent mother fairly screw into the flat of her back" (257). Just as Strether earlier saw himself as caught in a runaway situation, now he sees Sarah as "a person seated in a runaway vehicle and turning over the question of a possible jump." He believes himself obligated "to receive her entire weight" if she does "jump," just as he sees himself as central to Chad's and Mme. de Vionnet's needs. He therefore sits with Bilham to "learn in talk" more of "a certain moral ease" from him. This moral ease is clearly derived more from the courtly world of Paris on the surface than it is from the earnest moral identity of New England, though Strether's "obligation" to Sarah is both knightly and moral in nature.

He questions Bilham about his opinion of Sarah's reception of the evening; discusses the possibility of Chad and Marie de Vionnet eventually marrying; and ends by trying to match up Bilham with Mamie—the second courtship—not perhaps as much in jest as might appear. He playfully tries to convince Bilham that he is "a stony-hearted little
fiend" if he does not respond to Mamie's supposed infatuation, though this is spoken of as "[Strether's] fancy's flight" (260). This evening is an example of Strether trying his hand at Parisian conversation, and he and Bilham express "amusement." Yet that he is not practiced at it is also shown by the fact that we are told "poor Strether" had "his demonstration" to Bilham "superficially fail" (261). Still, "[h]e had spoken in the tone of talk for talk's sake, and yet with an obscure truth lurking in the loose folds..." (261).

Bilham points out that Mamie, like the others, has come to "save" Chad, and Strether says "'Ah like me, poor thing?''' The "poor thing," though humorously intended, indicates ambiguously both Mamie and Strether, underlining Strether's tendency to try to form at least a mental alliance with everyone in the situation. Bilham comments that Mamie does not want Chad now, because he is "another woman's work," and she wanted him as "her own miracle" (263). This brings up the knightly subject of transformation again, which has already been developed in the novel through Mme. de Vionnet’s seeming transformation of Chad's identity, though the transformation desired in New England would be a more "ethical" than "societal/aesthetic" kind. Thus Chad is spoken of in terms which suggest that he is almost an object, rather more like Jim Pocock, his identity to be shaped and made into something else, which is the way he is partially seen even by Mme. de Vionnet.

Though Bilham leaves Strether without contradicting his insistence upon seeing Bilham as good for Mamie, we are left in doubt: Strether, influenced by "fancy," "irony," and "instinctive snatches at the growing rose of observation," feels free "to believe in anything that from hour to hour keeps him going" (264). This impulsive “freedom” in reference to belief—on the part of such an agent of Victorian-American moral
earnestness otherwise—is similar to the narrative remark about oath-taking from Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan*. It is entirely possible that James read this popular romance while a young man receiving tuition in Germany. In that work, having come up with a “ruse” to disguise their false oath on Christ as a true one, the lovers succeed in deception for the time being, and the narrative remarks “Christ in His great virtue is pliant as a windblown sleeve. He falls into place and clings, whichever way you try him….He is at the beck of every heart for honest deeds or fraud. Be it deadly earnest or a game, He is just as you would have Him” (*Tristan* 248). Both remarks, the medieval and the early twentieth-century one, veer dramatically from the knightly posture of good faith and truthfulness, with others and with oneself that a knight's identity supposedly demands. *The Ambassadors* here expresses Strether's fluidity of belief about belief itself which he has not in the main shown before. It is significant that he considers the source of this attitude not only fancy and irony, but “the growing rose of observation,” as if what he sees is causing him to become acclimated to belief at the service of convenience.

Strether next has a playful but pertinent conversation with Miss Barrace, the "brilliant Miss Barrace," "the genial lady" (264), and "Strether's entertainer" (269). Miss Barrace is the practitioner *par excellence* of verbal dalliance and persiflage (a form of mandarin language and also a courtly art). They too discuss Sarah, not only emphasizing the influence of Paris over her, but also joking about Waymarsh's platonic courtship of her, the third courtship. Waymarsh has turned from his previous social relationship with Miss Barrace to Sarah, and has brought Sarah to meet Miss Barrace. Strether asks if Miss Barrace was "a trophy—one of the spoils of conquest" (266), a direct, jesting reference to a knightly reality.
"Poor Strether" is "the hero of the drama" in Miss Barrace's conversation, even though they are at the time discussing Chad and what he will do. But Miss Barrace, in her common role as an "augur...behind the oracle" with Strether, tells him that he too will "simplify...when [he] must" (267). "He winced at it as at the very voice of prophecy...."

Prophecies play their part in romance, generally with reference to figures like Merlin and his prophecies to those like Vortigern and Gawain, on the eve of or in the midst of battle (M 297, 299). They constitute yet another Jamesian borrowing from romance sources which takes place in the periphrasis. Part of the resolution at the end of The Ambassadors is in fact due to Strether's "simplifying," just as Miss Barrace predicts. For Strether's own part, he identifies Mme. de Vionnet as "the heroine." Thus in this verbal pairing, Strether perhaps expresses an unconscious wish to replace Chad in his courtly rôle, especially since Strether does not yet know how guilty it is (268). Miss Barrace's view of the seriousness of Marie's attachment to Chad refers to the submerged fourth courtship.

Just as Strether had earlier been told by Chad that he looked "fit as a flea," so in Book X does Waymarsh gloriously appear to Strether thus:

He wore a straw hat such as his friend hadn't yet seen in Paris, and he showed a buttonhole freshly adorned with a magnificent rose. Strether read on the instant his story....[Waymarsh] was fairly panting with the pulse of adventure and had been with Mrs. Pocock, unmistakably, to the Marche aux Fleurs. Strether really knew in this vision of him a joy that was akin to envy; so reversed as he stood there now did their old positions seem; so comparatively doleful now showed, by the sharp turn of the wheel, the posture of the pilgrim from Woollett. (270)

The wheel can only be the Wheel of Fortune. The change of positions in attendance upon a "brilliant woman"—in which category Sarah Pocock now seems to fit as well as Miss
Barrace, Miss Gostrey, and above all, Mme. de Vionnet—is underlined by the phrase "the pilgrim from Woollett" emphasizing Strether's origin, whereas previously the term "pilgrim" was applied to Waymarsh's in the phrase "the pilgrim from Milrose." Both the women and the men seem to have changed identifying labels, Sarah now being considered "brilliant" whereas Waymarsh is "so brave and well." Sarah has even apparently bestowed a rose upon her champion, and he "enters the lists" on her behalf, representing her cause to Strether. (From here on, we see the "luck" of the Pococks in the struggle over Chad gradually rise, and that of Mme. de Vionnet gradually fall, particularly after the river scene, in keeping with the suggestion about the Wheel of Fortune and its influence on fate and public identity.)

When Strether tries to speak in terms of what "our adventure...for each of us" has done (275), and attempts to make Waymarsh aware of his own courtly behavior, Waymarsh, responding with "the conscience of Milrose in the very voice of Milrose," says that perhaps he ought not to go with the Pococks on their travels. Whereupon Strether, in an echo of his advice to Bilham at Gloriani's party much earlier, says "'Let yourself, on the contrary, go....Don't have it to say to yourself at Milrose, next winter, that you hadn't courage for [these "precious hours"].'" He tells him to "live up to" Sarah Pocock, still putting things in terms that make Waymarsh uncomfortable with being thus identified. This palavering is a form of mandarin word play, play with words from Strether with which even Bilham was uncomfortable.

All through this section, Strether continues trying to reconcile Waymarsh-past with Waymarsh-present, as if to reverse this particular magic "transformation." Strether is "his old comrade" (272), and Waymarsh is "dear old Waymarsh" (272), "his comrade" (273),
"his friend" twice (273), "the dear man" (276), and "their anxious friend" (277). All of these terms are familiar to Strether regarding Waymarsh. We read, however, "Waymarsh wouldn't be his friend, somehow, without the occasional ornament of the sacred rage, and the right to the sacred rage—inestimably precious for Strether's charity—he also seemed in a manner, and at Mrs. Pocock's elbow, to have forfeited" (273). We read three times that Waymarsh has a "grand manner" (273, 274, 276) which surfaces for just a moment with Strether, but which Waymarsh "had sacrificed...to some other advantage" (276). Thus, Waymarsh, the steady, unimaginative Waymarsh, is now "forcing his fine old natural voice" to chime in with "the lady at home" (Mrs. Newsome), imagining that he is "an independent performer," while he is to Strether "an overstrained accompanist" (274). He still retains, however, the apparent "voice of sincerity," in which he tells Strether not to "do anything you'll be sorry for." This "supplicating note" "reinstates" him with Strether, and restores his identity as a friend, though Waymarsh too has in some small measure been affected by the knightly motive.

They have each been changed by Paris and Strether is interested in putting names to identities regarding these changes. The difference is that Waymarsh reverts to American identity to express his change with. By contrast, Strether keeps chasing the possible will-o'-the-wisp of Parisian relations, only to find at the end that in however glorious a light Chad's and Mme. de Vionnet's relationship is presented, it is almost certainly an adulterous one. Sarah implies this in her interview with him when she refers to "their life" as a thing impossible to "speak of" and asks Strether if he considers Mme. de Vionnet "even an apology for a decent woman" (280). That Strether is able to put a more complex name to the relationship is evidenced by his telling Miss Gostrey near the end
that Bilham's "lie" to him about the relationship being a "virtuous" one was only "technical" and that it was a "gentleman's" lie.

Sarah Pocock in this book is a sort of American Britomart fighting for the honor of "mothers and sisters" (279), for "the lady of Woollett" (280), and for "the most distinguished woman we shall either of us have seen in this world" (280)—Mrs. Newsome—whose sensibilities Strether has incensed by his restrained championing of Mme. de Vionnet. Even nearer the end, Strether is still described as "[Sarah's] friend" and calls her "dear Sarah," though she is keeping him "at his distance" by her outrage. But he insists on "Chad's fortunate development" (281); she names it "hideous"; she abruptly ends their conversation and leaves; and he has to accept from her that "all's at an end" for him. The text calls it "this resolute rupture," and it is significant that their final disagreement about Chad's identity and what to name it uses the same term as "the sharp rupture of an identity" at the beginning. It is also a "rupture" of a translatative ability between Sarah's use of more "demotic" and direct language and Strether's refusal to understand her.

It is with a fresh look at Chad's identity that we experience Book XI, Chapter I. There is some metaphorical suggestion of "sorcery" in the air here, just as there was with Mme. de Vionnet, "the charming associate" of Strether's lunch by the Seine. Strether enters Chad's apartment, and we read "[he] spent an hour in waiting for him—an hour full of strange suggestions, persuasions, recognitions; one of those that he was to recall, at the end of his adventure, as the particular handful that most had counted" (283). This "most" is followed by other superlatives: he is given "[t]he mellowest lamplight and the easiest chair" by "Baptiste, subtlest of servants." He is placed within a "soft circle" of light and
awaits "the witching hour" (283), which is roughly when Chad arrives. The word "adventure" is repeated many times in this book, not only in the narration, but in Strether's actual dialogue. That he is "entranced" by Paris, Chad, and Mme. de Vionnet is obvious. Here he wanders out of the "soft circle" of light (a "magic" circle) and onto the balcony, where he saw Bilham before. In a way, he will later take Bilham's place figuratively, knowing the worst about Chad's and Mme. de Vionnet's relationship, and yet still thinking it partially virtuous.

The word "friend" undergoes a strain in this scene. Strether twice uses the expression "our friends there" to denote the Pococks (290, 291), while Chad calls Mme. de Vionnet "my good friend," and says that "'[I]f they hate my good friend, that comes to the same thing [as hating me]'" (291). Both of them thus express distance from the Pococks, Strether more quietly by using the deictic word "there" as if the Pococks are already gone or far away, Chad by openly bringing up the topic of hatred among a family group. Chad obviously resents interference, even though his empathy for Marie, compared to a "whirlpool (291), is in question. He tells Strether that the Americans are even progressing, Mrs. Newsome included, to hating Strether.

This scene with dialogue between Strether and Chad is similar to Strether's last three dialogues in the book with Maria in that only a few naming labels are used with conversation ("his friend," "his companion," "her friend," and "the young man"). Proper names, "he said," and "she said" are overwhelmingly used. The dialogues move in a rapid give-and-take way and propel the action forward as in a drama. In the scenes with Maria, Strether is "tying up loose ends," as he jestingly evinced a desire to do in his conversation with Bilham at Chad's party for the Pococks. It is not only Strether
speaking but the function of the narrative itself lurking behind him in the "tying up" conversations. Still, the "tying up" is more of the verbal explanatory variety and not so much of the traditional structural variety; the structure achieves resolution only at the end, with the last dialogue.

In the few instances of periphrastic substitution used here to define human identity, Mme. de Vionnet, Miss Gostrey, and Mrs. Newsome so appear. Mme. de Vionnet occurs both as "the wonderful woman" (293) and "our wonderful woman" (298), and men affected by her, like Jim and Strether, are both spoken of as "wonderful" (293). Mme. de Vionnet, says Miss Gostrey to Strether, is also "the person whose confederate you've suffered yourself to become." In the same speech, Miss Gostrey sees herself as "the dreadful creature that I must gruesomely shadow forth for [the Pococks]," the only sustained piece of periphrasis applied by her to herself in these last three scenes with Strether. He sees her in his imaginative way as "an intelligent niece from the country," "the country maiden," and "the intelligent obedient niece" to his "kindly uncle doing the honours of the capital" (327). He also has a view of the two of them as "the Babes in the Wood," before the middle dialogue in Book XII, Chapter III (328). In these instances, Strether believes her youthful and innocent in nature, however intelligent, whereas she mentions herself as being the sort of woman, to the Pococks, more like Mme. de Vionnet (a woman of the world). As noted before, their names are even similar, Marie and Maria, rather like Isoude the Fair and Isoude of the White Hands in the romance of Tristram and Isoude, the first the other party to an illicit affair with Tristram, the second his "lawful" wife (M 346). We see that for Strether too in the second of the two scenes, despite his view of Miss Gostrey's basic decency, "[i]t came out for him more than ever yet that she
had had from the first a knowledge the sharp acquisition of which might be destined to make a difference for him" (330). Just as Isoude of the White Hands is a healer who sometimes withholds healing, so Miss Gostrey has the ability to minister to Strether's stops and starts and simple vanity, but does not always satisfy his curiosity.

Except for these instances of longer periphrasis being applied to Miss Gostrey, the later bareness of reference with regard to her clearly supports James's basic use of her as a ficelle, despite his "dissimulation" in these scenes that she is a possible love interest for Strether. In particular, the tennis-match-like quality of their dialogue shows the extent to which she is, as James says, "the reader's friend" (Preface 12). For Strether, in this first of the last three dialogues, she is "my dear lady" twice and "my dear" once (298), at moments in the dialogue when he believes he is showing his superior knowledge of Mrs. Newsome and the Pococks.

Mrs. Newsome is in the first scene twice "[Chad's] mother" (298), then "the woman herself, as you call her [name her], the whole moral and intellectual being or block" (300), and metaphorically "some particularly large iceberg in a cool blue northern sea" (300). Strether says of this "large iceberg" that now, by contrast with the past, "I see it all" (300), but is not the point about an iceberg's "identity" that one only sees its top above water? Certainly, despite the metaphor he can "see" more than he did before. What he sees of her is increasingly stated in terms of inanimate and immovable objects rather than in courtly identity terms such as those used of Marie.

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12 Gale remarks that "[w]hen an ice image is used to describe a Jamesian character, he is without exception an American –and almost always in America" (33-34). One exception to the rule of the presence of an "icy" American being in America is Sarah Pocock, who, in her manner to Mme. de Vionnet, "expresse[s herself before Strether] with a dry glitter that recall[s] to him a fine Woollett winter morning" (223).
In response to a discussion of who does and does not have "imagination," Strether is told by Miss Gostrey that he has gained from his experience and has a tendency toward "treasures of imagination." Treasure is one of the other objects of knightly quest, though it is especially a Jamesian knight who would feel imaginative treasures sufficient. In his conversations with Miss Gostrey, here in Book XI, Chapter II as well as in other places, Strether has used his imagination to guide him in interpreting unfamiliar phenomena. In the next scene, the recognition scene by the river, he uses his imagination to guide him from a point at which identities and events are familiar to a point which is temporarily puzzling (for example, to the strange familiarity of the couple on the river when he first sees them), and then to a rush of imaginative understanding of the scene.

As he views the "French ruralism" and conceives it as being like a painting by Lambinet, his fancy plays over it and we are told that the French countryside is for him "a land of fancy...the background of fiction, the medium of art, the nursery of letters" (303). He reverts in memory to seeing a similar landscape in an art dealer's in Boston, which is twice described as an "adventure" in "connexion with the purchase of a work of art."

Strether renounced it due to cost and would have "a drop or a shock" if he were to see it again, instead putting in its place a real scene which it resembles. The imaginative for the Jamesian knight does not itself have to be renounced because of price, however, because it is "free" of all but emotional cost.

Strether is musing on meeting the natives of the village, on being ...afraid of Chad and of Maria and of Madame de Vionnet; he had been most of all afraid of Waymarsh, in whose presence, so far as they had mixed together in the light of the town he had never without somehow paying for it aired either his [French] vocabulary or his [French] accent. He usually paid for it by meeting immediately afterwards Waymarsh's eye
He ponders his comfort fancifully now that the Pococks have departed; on having visited Mme. de Vionnet recently; on having lost his "special shyness" with her; on having let himself perhaps "[like] such a woman too much"; and on seeming to urge her not to be "for [him] simply the person [he's] come to know through [his] awkward connexion with Chad" (306). He wonders whether with regard to her and the Pococks he has "lapsed" from "good faith," especially because he and Mme. de Vionnet have not even discussed Chad. Again, he seems to be trying to take Chad's place, at least in the (platonic) courtly tradition. His renewed concern with knightly "good faith"
paradoxically underlines this. He imagines, however, having told her, "'Be for me, please, with all your admirable tact and trust, just whatever I may show you it's a present pleasure to me to think you'" (307). Thus "the person I've come to know through my awkward connexion with Chad," however good, is a periphrasis for a real woman's identity and has a demotic quality; "whatever I may show you it's a present pleasure to me to think you" is a periphrasis for an ideal woman's, which reintroduces an awareness of mandarin "reality," of Mme. de Vionnet as a lady and himself as her knight.

Before they meet, he is roaming alone, considering the recent past: "He really continued in the picture...all the rest of this rambling day" (307). His roving is described as an "adventure," and he "had meanwhile not once overstepped the oblong gilt frame."

We remember his being told by Miss Barrace that he is "the hero of the drama" when we read,

...[T]hough he had been alone all day, he had never yet so struck himself as engaged with others and in midstream of his drama. It might have passed for finished, his drama, with its catastrophe all but reached: it had, however, none
the less been vivid again for him as he thus gave it its fuller chance. He had only had to be at last well out of it to feel it...still going on. For this had been all day at bottom the spell of the picture—that it was essentially more than anything else a scene and a stage, that the very air of the play was in the rustle of the willows and the tone of the sky.

(307-08)

We see that "in these places such things [as feeling oneself in a drama] were, and that if it was in them one elected to move about one had to make one's account with what one lighted on" (308). This is ironic portent, not only because the “picture” has a “spell” to it, but because what he a few minutes later lights upon is not "part of the amusement"—the "fun" is not "harmless": it is not like the strangely colored side of the White Horse (a chivalric-sounding locale). Further portending the "shock" Strether will feel upon seeing Chad and Mme. de Vionnet in the boat is the disclaimer:

[His "confidence"] suffered no shock even on [the "good woman's" mentioning] that she had in fact just laid the cloth for two persons who, unlike Monsieur, had arrived by the river—in a boat of their own, who had asked her, half an hour before, what she could do for them, and had then paddled away to look at something a little further up—from which promenade they would presently return. (308)

The long and involved clausal aside here in fact takes up almost the whole sentence, from "two persons who" to "would presently return," and manages to communicate everything which should make readers a little wary as to what Strether is going to encounter next, given the details. Having temporarily adopted a fanciful identity as a roaming "shepherd" from the world of idyll and romance, Strether is not wary.

What he sees when they first paddle up is two people who are in different ways in command of the boat. Though Chad is "a man who held the paddles" and Mme. de Vionnet is "a lady, at the stern, with a[nn apparently useless] pink parasol," Chad is only in
physical command of their boat, in keeping with the virility of the knighthood tradition.

It is Mme. de Vionnet, however, who as the female figure of inspiration recognizes Strether and who is in "spiritual" or "moral" command of their "boat," much as Strether thought of her hauling him into her boat in their conversation with Sarah Pocock. By the end Chad, to Strether's awareness, seems to be rebelling, so that his place here as "the oarsman" prefigures his gaining control over his own identity (310).

"These figures," as Strether thinks of them, are at first only "the two persons for whom his hostess was already preparing a meal." Then as "their spectator" (309) and later "the spectator on the bank" (314) looks a little more closely, they are "two very happy persons," "a young man in shirt-sleeves, a young woman easy and fair..." (309). They are, in fact, "expert, familiar, frequent" and "idyllic." Mme. de Vionnet, "the lady in the stern"; Chad, "her companion"; and Strether "our friend," are aligned in the oddly triangular scene. Strether becomes "our friend" at the very moment when he becomes aware that "the lady" has directed "the gentleman" to "keep still" (310). In an extended periphrasis, Marie de Vionnet then becomes "the lady whose parasol, shifting as if to hide her face, made so fine a pink point in the shining scene" (310). The "point" she is making is that they should try not to be noticed as who they are. The "point" made in general is that whatever Strether, "the hero of the drama," is capable of, Chad, "the coatless hero of the idyll, who had responded to her start" (310), is clearly capable of having a greater influence over Mme. de Vionnet in the matter of how she disposes of her affections. She is thus "[Chad's] good friend" again, but with a difference for Strether, which he will only be able to consider fully when alone.
Their meeting is "their wonderful accident" (310), "their common ridiculous good fortune," "the charming chance" (four times on page 311), and "the prodigy of their convergence" (312). To Strether, they are still "his friends" (311), even as they try, Mme. de Vionnet in particular, to pretend amazement and to practice social legerdemain before his eyes. "Fortune," "chance," and "prodigy" together point to romance connections; the meeting also partakes of the "miraculous" so common in romance. A "charm" is partly a deceit, and Strether evaluates the "lie in the charming affair" (313) in private. In an echo of Shakespeare, he thinks that his "labour had been lost." Love as a labor lost is for him the societal love of friends and communities, the knightly ambassador's concern, which has come to grief, rather than the specific love of individuals in the knightly model before him.

"His companion" Mme. de Vionnet presents herself as "natural and simple" when he goes to see her afterward, though he considers that if she is manifesting "the perfection of art" no one will know it, "and that [comes] to the same thing...." The word "wonderful" is used again of her variety at different times, variations he insists to himself are not "caprices." She seems "a mild deep person" whereas on the river she had rendered a "performance" of "a person committed to movement and surface and abounding in them" (320), her identity later a direct opposite of what she is to Strether that day, the word "mild" being opposed to "movement" and the word "deep" being opposed to "surface." She is still a sort of sorceress, an enchantress, a figure from romance. He suspects she wants to "see[] for herself" whether or not he is satisfied by the little "comedy" she and Chad have played (322). "Seeing for oneself" is as noted a major theme of the novel, with Strether as the main "seer."
Though she pretends she is not thinking of them and is not afraid of what she may lose, Mme. de Vionnet mentions Chad's other alliances, his "mother...his sister...[and] the girl he may marry," belying her claim. Strether feels then that in spite of her brave words, she is "afraid for [her] life!" He sees her as "a creature so fine" and "a creature so exploited," whereas Chad is "[t]he work...of the strict human order...the companion of mere earthly joys, of comforts, aberrations...within the common experience" who is yet "transcendently prized," "a man ineffably adored" (324). He thinks of Mme. de Vionnet, as she cries, as like "a child," yet older. He sees her "as much as ever the finest and subtlest creature, the happiest apparition...it had been given him, in all his years, to meet," and yet like "a maidservant crying for her young man" (324-25). Thus Mme. de Vionnet, the “sorceress” herself, is not immune from some unwilled identity transformations. While Chad is relatively mundane, even with his apparent changes, Mme. de Vionnet is defined by a series of opposites again, a variety of things, which reiterates the earlier quote comparing her to Cleopatra, another queen fallen on hard times.

Strether uses the word "wonderful" of her twice (325-26), and she objects that she is "old and abject and hideous," or that that is her "doom." She says further that there is not "a grain of certainty" in the situation for her, and that she will be "the loser in the end." He reminds her that for his identity as her "benefactor" this is a gloomy view, and she says rather that she had hoped to be his "friend[]," wanting "everything" (326). Though she seems thus to be contradicting herself by first claiming "doom" or fate, and asserting that she will lose Chad, to say there is not a "grain of certainty" cuts both ways. It does seem, though, that she believes in fate as much as anyone in a romance, and her overall queen-like stature, along with the comparisons made of her, locate her identity thus,
though she cries "demotically," like an ordinary human being. She in fact suffers a
demotion rather like Guenever's, from royal throne to nunnery (in Tennyson's *Idylls of
the King*), and though Strether is not Arthur, he is likewise a figure of worldly order (at
the end of the *Idylls*, Guenever throws herself at Arthur's feet, just as Marie here
beseechingly appeals to Strether).

The next day, Strether reasons to himself that "the young man," Chad, deserves a
chance to make the first move to see him (Book XII, Chapter III). He also considers
himself "[Chad's] mother's messenger" as he waits vainly for Chad to appear, and thinks
of them as "the wonderful pair he protected," rôles which do not merge neatly, indicative
of Strether’s transformation/identity confusion. In fact, Strether has come under a
"spell," though he will make his own independent form of compromise with it.

Strether, in trying to "cause[] his conduct to square," finally goes to see Chad, who has
been away. Strether’s efforts to be “square,” though more modern, parallel the
extraordinary lengths to which courtly heroes sometimes go. Here, however, the
convolutions of identity are intellectually and psychologically based rather than primarily
spiritually. Intermissions of consideration regarding moral and social identity can equally
be found in some medieval romance, and certainly in later "ethical" romance (Scheick
*The Ethos of Romance* 31-41, 75-108).

Chad, seen from below the balcony, has a "solid shape" (335); the word "solid" is
repeated twice, and indicates a shift back toward the "solid citizenry" of Woollett, who,
far from knightly, might have an interest in advertising. The subject of transformation,
particularly as it applies to Chad, is here in the air again: he seems to have reverted to
New England categories of identity, if not of morality.
Nevertheless, Chad appeals to the "gentleman's code," which descends from knightly models, in saying to Strether, "'After all, you understand. I spoke to you originally only as I had to speak. There's only one way—isn't there—about such things'" (337). Strether has already warned him not to leave Marie and has said that he will be "a brute" if he does (337); he warns him also that he will be "a criminal of the deepest dye" (338).

Twice during their confrontation, the term "his companion" is used, once of Strether and once of Chad. Strether is also "his guest." The difference of the two "companion" usages is that Chad's occurs when he is suffering an emotion to be "reflected...in [his] face," Strether's when he is speaking morally. Though this difference can be refined upon too much, Chad judges from and lives by external identity, and has interest in advertising, an art of surfaces for all he claims "infinity" for it, while Strether is finally more interested in the inner man. It is in fact the inner man which courtly models of conduct were intended to affect at last, though many knights in courtly legend, like Chad, availed themselves only of external adherence to a code of conduct.

In this case, Chad gives his "word of honour" that he is not bored or tired of Mme. de Vionnet. "...[T]he way youth could express itself was again and again a wonder....[H]e spoke of being 'tired' of her almost as he might have spoken of being tired of roast mutton for dinner" (339). His word of honor in this case is already belied, though he has yet again adhered to a courtly mode on the surface.

As they depart the building, Chad keeps avowing "a promise...of performance" and treats Strether as "a noble eccentric who appeal[s] to tenderness" (340). This phrase about the "noble eccentric" shows that just as Strether sees Chad's identity as young and irresponsible, Chad sees Strether as older and somewhat incomprehensible, a true knight,
quixotic. Chad then proclaims that advertising is "an art like another, and infinite like all
the arts." He speaks of himself twice as "the right man" for the job, and Strether echoes
this expression questioningly, whereupon Chad says "'Why, what is he but what you
yourself...took me for when you first came out?'" (341). As they continue the
conversation, Strether realizes that Chad may not be able to keep his promise regarding
Mme. de Vionnet; he says evaluatively, "'You're restless.'" To this, Chad merely replies,
"'[Y]ou're exciting,'" shifting the responsibility for his own identity onto someone else
(342). Here the language of business, “the right man for the job,” comes squarely into
conflict with the knightly self of “the good man” that Strether is trying to maintain for
himself and Chad as well. Neither of these two, business language or knightly self, is
part of the demotic voice per se, though oddly enough Strether's otherwise "mandarin"
role as "knight" comes closer to it in its apparent authenticity, putting Chad, the purely
wealthy burgher, out of consideration.

Maria, who offers Strether an abode like the retreat of a tired knight, complete with
attendant maiden, is aware as much as Strether of "the strange irony" of Mme. de
Vionnet's forming for pleasure the identity of Chad, which cannot finally give her
pleasure, but pain. Here the unexpected negative outcome of transformation is heralded.
One of the most interesting exchanges in this chapter occurs when Miss Gostrey asks
Strether if he thinks there was "'some other woman'" in London. He answers, "'Yes. No.
That is I have no ideas. I'm afraid of them. I've done with them....Goodbye'" (346). This
remark is prefigured by something he says to Mme. de Vionnet in his last meeting with
her. She says she is concerned with what he thinks of her since the river debacle
compared with what he thought of her before and he says, "'I didn't think anything. I
never think a step further than I'm obliged to" (326). Considering that the whole book is full of the many ideas Strether has, this sounds like a reassuring lie of the variety Bilham tells when he says the relationship is a "virtuous" one. Mme. de Vionnet charges Strether with falsehood, and says, "At any rate, even so far as it's true, we've thrust on you appearances that you've had to take in and that have therefore made your obligation" (326). In similar fashion, just as loyalty to her and Chad have made him "wrong" in one way for Mrs. Newsome, so he tells Miss Gostrey, staying with her would make him "wrong" in another, related sense. He must, for his own satisfaction and for Miss Gostrey's too, as he insists to her, remain the "ambassador" who by and large has stayed in control of his neutrality of office, however doubly compromised first by his representation of Woollett and then by his representation of Paris. Just as the “trapping” or compromise of a knightly identity is often a source of comedy as well as of moral significance in romance, so it is here in The Ambassadors.

As we have seen, the periphrasis contained in the noun phrases (and their modifiers) used as subjects, objects, and objects of prepositions and in some clauses, particularly those relating to human subjects, but sometimes those referring to things or states as well, can be seen to solicit our attention directly for an interpretation of identity and a reading of the text which, while comic, are ironic only in one of the senses spoken of by Wayne Booth in A Rhetoric of Irony. Booth quotes Edith Wharton from A Backward Glance, in which she points to "a sense of humour or irony" possessed by herself and James in common as something which made them "intimate friends" though they were very
"different" people. Booth comments thus: "Ironic as the key to the tightest bonds of friendship! Real intimacy impossible without it! This is scarcely the same creature that we saw Mr. Frye describing as what leads the writer to 'turn his back on his audience'" (RI 14).

Still, to be fair to Professor Frye, he does say:

The long sentences in the later novels of Henry James are containing sentences: all the qualifications and parentheses are fitted into a pattern, and as one point after another is made, there emerges not a linear process of thought but a simultaneous comprehension. What is explained is turned around and viewed from all aspects, but it is completely there, so to speak, from the beginning. (The Anatomy of Criticism 267)

This "simultaneous comprehension" is inclusive of humor and irony, the result of "viewing" something "from all aspects." The concept of identity is certainly put through its paces in the novel, adding to the overall comic force.

Ian Watt too speaks of the "humorous" as the emphasis of the irony in the book. As he says,

[The] counterpoint of intelligence and bewilderment is, of course, another reason for the split narrative point of view ....[W]e and the narrator are inside Strether's mind, and yet we are also outside it, knowing more about Strether than he knows about himself. This is the classic posture of irony. Yet I think that to insist too exclusively on the ironic function of James's narrative point of view would be mistaken. (EC 266-67)

Thus, even though Watt spends a great deal of time in his essay pointing out both the simple and structural ironies, he too finds the comedy essential. In this novel, "viewing" something "from all aspects" encourages the growth of "discrimination," and it is the

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13 Booth parleys Wharton's comment into a consideration of how well people actually can form a meeting of minds even in irony. For Wharton's entire remark, see A Backward Glance 173. Qtd. by Booth RI 13-14.
periphrasis, in development from introductory phrase through verbal markers of courtly and demotic language concepts, into the conflict between the remains of the European feudal world identity and the modern American world identity, which carries the weight of comic meaning for the reader.
III—GROUNDING THE DICHOTOMY OF KNIGHT VERSUS BURGER IN METAPHORICAL PERIPHRASIS, AND THE METAPHOR OF SIGHT

In The Ambassadors, James is intent upon "facing" his audience and communicating straightforwardly, though much complexity results from the attempt to be exhaustively accurate and complete in portraying Strether's consciousness and "the story of one's story." As James says in his Preface, "[The artist] sows his seed at the risk of too thick a crop….There is the story of one's hero, and then thanks to the intimate connexion of things, the story of one's story itself" (5).

As has been shown partially by the exploration of the knighthood metaphor, another method for full and complete communication is contained in James's figurative language such as metaphors, similes, and related figures. Metaphors are by and large like "gatherings" in sewing parlance, or like Madeleine L'Engel's "wrinkle in time": they bunch or group otherwise "untouching" domains or parts of domains or discourses and make them "touch." The territory covered, the distance travelled between the two previously unrelated parts, can be seen as the periphrastic content of metaphor which proposes a novel identity.

In an invaluable discussion of tropes in The Philosophy of Literary Form (25-26), Kenneth Burke calls synecdoche "the 'basic' figure of speech," and in GM one of "four 'master tropes,'" among which he includes metaphor, metonymy, and irony as well (GM 503-17). Says Lanham, "Each, [Burke] points out, can perform a function considerably wider than its formal rhetorical definition might indicate" (HRT 102). Burke says that he is assigning "a different set of names": "perspective" for "metaphor" and for "synecdoche" "representation," as well as "reduction" for "metonymy" and "dialectic" for "irony" (GM 503).
I continue my examination of metaphor with a look at Burke's terminology because as he says of his own four "master tropes," "Give a man but one of them, tell him to exploit its possibilities, and if he is thorough in doing so, he will come upon the other three" (GM 503). Burke explains in PLF how "the house of the beloved" comes to be "identified" with the loved one (27) and says of this:

Our introduction of the word "identified" suggests also the importance of the name as an important aspect of synecdoche (the name as fetishistic representative of the named, as a very revealing part of the same cluster) ….And you will often find a change of identity signalized by a change of name….Such identification by name has a variant in change of clothes, or a change of surroundings, in general, a change of "environmental clothes."¹⁴

¹⁴ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson define this home-for-person relationship as "metonymy" (MWLB Chapter 8 and p. 234). In "Metaphor, Metonymy, and Ethics in The Portrait of a Lady," Gert Buelens, following Roman Jakobson's discussion of metaphor and metonymy (as paradigmatic and syntagmatic respectively) sees Isabel Archer, in her consideration of her own nature as a sort of garden, to be "strikingly metaphorical..." (Uneasy Alliance 17). By contrast, Mme. Merle is metonymical in her remark to Isabel that "I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear..." (James, The Portrait of a Lady, qtd. in UA 17-18). Buelens's overall purpose in discussing these tropes is "to show how paying due attention to [their] complex operation...enables us to see that freedom and necessity, desire and the law, are not the neatly opposed poles that they might appear to be" (UA 15). Buelens speaks of the "fraught interpenetration of these realms," and says that by the end of the novel, "[r]eaching the insight that a bound condition is unavoidable in social life, Isabel Archer is well on her way towards embracing an ethical attitude that will become...pronounced in later Jamesian novels, such as The Ambassadors and The Wings of the Dove" (UA 27).

To switch to a more technically rhetorical discussion, given the close classical relationship between synecdoche and metonymy, there is an essential relationship between the two concepts, as Burke explicitly notes. He comments that "not only does the dividing line between the figurative and literal usages shift, but also the four tropes [metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony] shade into one another" (cf. the remainder of his remark on this page, and GM 503). His comment is further justified for metaphor and brings it closer to synecdoche and metonymy when one notices that though Quintilian does call metaphor "a shorter form of simile" and also says "there is this further difference, that in [simile] we compare some object to the thing which we wish to describe, whereas in [metaphor] this object is actually substituted for the thing" (IQ Vol. III Bk. VIII vi. 7-10), one need not translate "dicitur" as "substituted" as H. E. Butler does in the Loeb edition throughout this description of metaphor. (Despite the many words Quintilian uses to get at his essential meaning, not one carries a basic meaning of "substituted.")

In A Latin Dictionary by Lewis and Short, ed. 1897, "nomino," "I name" (1214) and "designo," "I describe or designate," sometimes "I represent," are listed as synonyms for "dico"; "dicitur," the form of the verb used by Quintilian, can also be translated as "said" or "meant" (570-71), thus moving further away from the "comparison/substitution" theories of metaphor so hotly disputed and often discarded by scholars, and closer to Burke's definition (cf. Mark Johnson, ed., Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor (passim)). In fact, though "said" or "meant" are closest of all the terms to "substituted," "substitution" suggests that one thing is taken away and another provided, whereas neither "said" nor "meant" necessarily entails this; both the latter and the last could imply something more like Max Black's "interaction view" of
metaphor (Models and Metaphors 38), for which Black gives partial credit also to I. A. Richards in The Philosophy of Rhetoric. As well, the word Quintilian gives for “metaphor,” “translatio” (Lewis and Short 1892), has as one of its literal and primary meanings “a transfer to a figurative signification, a trope, a metaphor,” thus referring to the thing itself directly.

Though “transfer,” a word which Black says has been taken over from Aristotle (MM 36n3), might move a little closer to the idea of substitution, a transfer or “translation” of meaning still suggests the presence of three terms, two words and the meaning which mediates between them, whereas substitution suggests the final presence of only two terms, the meaning and the substitution. Transference also does not preclude change to both parts, tenor and vehicle, for total comprehension of the figure, which is how I understand Black’s interaction theory. (After all, it is only logical to assume that nothing can bear or provoke change without being itself changed.)

Further, “videtur” (LD 1988-89) may be either “be seen” or “seem” (because it is passive), or “comprehended, understood” and the two other passives Quintilian uses in his description of his four kinds of metaphor, “ponitur” (LD 1396-97) and “sumuntur” (LD 1802), may both be interpreted as “employed,” while “ponitur” can also mean “considered” or “represented.” Therefore, “substituted.” Butler’s generality, is only a rough, workaday overall term for all the various words above, from the latter of which the description of metaphor would not have suffered. Thus, in Quintilian’s basic definition of metaphor, somewhat circular though it may seem without its example, the by-now-infamous “He is a lion,” there is more a sense of the shift of meaning we see in the word “perspective” than in “substitution” or “comparison” either one. For example, perspective and representation change from person to person—the first of which, perhaps playfully, Burke in his own words “substitutes” for the word “metaphor.”

To substitute for a substitution, assuming one were taking metaphor, for the sake of argument, as a form of substitution straightforwardly, sincerely taking that view and using the word “perspective,” is to engage the reader in a very complex view of metaphor indeed, an infinite regress, such as a picture of a woman holding a cereal box, with a picture of her on it holding a cereal box, with her picture on it, etc. This idea of metaphor leading into a veritable forest of further metaphor is perhaps what Ted Cohen is speaking of when he says that metaphor is “the language’s intrinsic capacity to surpass its own (putative) limits” (“Figurative Speech and Figurative Acts,” PPM 184).

Burke does say, of course, “Metaphor is a device for seeing something in terms of something else.” But the expression “in terms of” emphasizes the idea of perspective, which he has already mentioned, and “point of view” does not suggest the wiping out of the original view or statement, only the paralleling of it with another term. As he points out (GM 503), “the two realms are never identical.” He also discusses metaphor and incongruity. He says, “[T]he metaphor always has about it...[the] revealing of hitherto unsuspected connectives which we may note in the progression of a dream. It appeals by exemplifying relationships between objects which our customary rational vocabulary has ignored” (PC 90). He later in the section quotes Mrs. Stephen and uses her phrase “substituting metaphors for [facts],” but this is seen as a way of communicating “the facts as they actually are” which is more accurate than description; he also notes that in Henri Bergson’s view of the “intellectual method,” description itself is also a form of substitution, even if it is in “abstract terms” (PC 95).

The “incongruity” which Burke notes in his discussion of metaphor does not become a problem in consideration of a writer like James, who examines issues of naming and identity, because naming itself is a kind of metaphorical activity, and James, in his namings and renaming, continually shifts his approximations until he has both constructed and specified characters, events, and states of mind, and so forth “in as many different terms as...[their]...nature permits” (GM 504).

Therefore, with all these points in mind, in many places I have utilized a fairly classical, fairly standard meaning of the word “metaphor” to pick out specific instances, taking a line through Quintilian and others in my discussion. In others, where appropriate, I have veered closer to Lakoff, M. Johnson, and Turner in their view of metaphor and its nature as at the root of thought, creative and otherwise. There is, after all, no doubt, a metaphor for every occasion, some of which seem to benefit from one type of discussion, some from another. As Wayne Booth says in his 1978 article in Critical Inquiry, “Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation”—rep. in On Metaphor, ed. Sheldon Sacks (47)—“In spite of differences in the scope of our definitions, we all meet everyday certain statements that everyone recognizes as metaphor and calls by that name. We seem to have a kind of common-sense agreement about a fairly narrow definition, one that survives even while our theory expands the original concept beyond recognition” (OM 48-49). While, he says, “I am pretty sure that the many things we call metaphor are not mutually compatible under
In *The Ambassadors*, both Mme. de Vionnet's apartment and also that of Maria Gostrey are seen as "representative" of the ladies themselves, Mme. de Vionnet's conveying "the air of supreme respectability" (146):

> At bottom of it all for [Strether] was the sense of her rare unlikeness to the women he had known. This sense had grown, since the day before, the more he recalled her, and had been above all singularly fed by his talk with Chad in the morning. Everything in fine made her immeasurably new, and nothing so new as the old house and the old objects. (146)

Yet, it is Mrs. Newsome's "supreme respectability" of another clime which so affronts, and is affronted by, Mme. de Vionnet's. By contrast, Miss Gostrey's surroundings are depicted as "a little museum of bargains" (145); she is not, like Mme. de Vionnet, "beautifully passive under the spell of transmission" (146), but instead has practiced a "contemporary method of acquisition" (146), and offers it to Strether at the end of the book as "a haven of rest" (343). He thinks of it as "sacred to pleasant knowledge, to intimate charm, to antique order, to a neatness that was almost august" (342). Thus, whichever "beloved" one sees as more appropriate to Strether's vision, she is represented by her surroundings in a way similar to that discussed in Burke's description of synecdoche.

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a single determinate definition," there are "family resemblances" (OM 51). Furthermore, apropos for my discussion of metaphor, naming, and identity in James, Booth says, "The metaphors we care for most are always embedded in metaphoric structures that finally both depend on and constitute selves and societies…. [Thus] the quality of any culture will in part be measured both by the quality of the metaphors it induces or allows and the quality of the judges of metaphor that it educates and rewards" (OM 61-62). He defines, out of four potential kinds of metaphor to name "studies of metaphor," the best as "a quest for ways to improve [one's] culture and oneself: that is, a search for a cure" (OM 62). This is in fact what Strether's journey is about even from the beginning on some level of his awareness, for both himself and Chad; he thinks often of being tired and seeking to be refreshed. And he does learn, in his use of metaphor, to visualize one society against and then with another, to derive for himself the best possible identity to go forward with that he is capable of.
In reference to James's book *The Spoils of Poynton*, Burke discusses this relationship between people and things and the images of each in his two essays, "Henry James on the Deity of 'Things'" and "'Social Rating' of Images in James" (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 294-298). He quotes passages from James's discussion about the "things," the "material objects," the "furniture," in one of which James compares their beauty to that of Helen of Troy, and says of these passages that they are "a key not only to this particular book, but to James's motivation as a whole" (RM 295). *The Ambassadors* would qualify, as I believe I have shown. This is further true not only in cases of synecdochical relationships but in terms of metaphors such as seeing people as *objets d'art* or as images of the romantic/picturesque, whether the person is Chad, Mme. de Vionnet, or Jeanne de Vionnet. This objectifying of others is a genuine problem for Strether, as he endeavors simultaneously to see people as they are in their own terms.

Also in *The Ambassadors*, more than once parallels are established between a change of "environmental clothes," that is, surroundings, actual clothes, and states of mind or feeling about oneself or others, surely parts of one's identity. A few examples are Strether's early debate about the purchase of gloves and later on in the book, Mme. de Vionnet's pink parasol and light country clothes, not to mention Chad's "coatless" state. In all these examples, the changes of clothes have signaled changes, or differences, of identity. Strether is stretching his imagination to accommodate a more urbane identity. For Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, they show a previously hidden, adulterous, or "country" identity, to use the word "country" in its Shakespearean meaning of "sexual practices," as when Hamlet says to Ophelia, "Do you think I meant country matters?" (*Ham.* 3.2.116). As well, Strether is once again in more sophisticated surroundings than Woollett in
England and in Paris, and though the countryside would normally be considered
(stereotypically, at least) as less "sinful" or "debauched" than Paris, the "Babylon" of
earlier in the book, it is in actual fact the countryside where we have confirmation of the
"country matters" between Chad and Marie de Vionnet.

The resemblances between James's fictional rhetorical structures and what Burke has
to say about identity, hidden or otherwise, can be seen by the following parallels from
The Ambassadors and The Philosophy of Literary Form. As Burke says in Proposition
#4 in "Twelve Propositions on the Relation Between Economics and Psychology" (306),
which he calls an "attempt to codify…ideas on the relation between psychology and
Marxism": “The purely psychological concept for treating relations to symbols of
authority, possession and dispossession, material and spiritual alienation, faith or loss of
faith in the ‘reasonableness’ of a given structure's methods and purposes and values, is
that of identity.” Though neither a Marxist nor properly a Freudian, James
"treats…relations to symbols of authority" in Chad's and Sarah's (and even Strether's and
Jim Pocock's) relations with Mrs. Newsome. "Possession and dispossession" are handled
in the picture of Strether's "outcast state"; Strether again suffers both "material and
spiritual alienation," or at least is prepared to do so at the end of the book; and Strether
loses faith, finally, not in one system in which he has believed, but both in the original
American one and in those of Paris and bohemia as well.

Burke continues,

The individual’s identity is formed by reference to his membership in a group. In the feudal structure, for instance, one was identified mainly by his membership in the Catholic Church. The reigning structure of authority coordinated this "corporate identity" with his identity as member of some economic class and his identity in a
family collectivity. With the rise of the bourgeoisie, such bases of identity were progressively broken, until now we are mainly offered identification by membership in a financial corporation, or identification by membership in a political corporation seeking either to cement or to destroy the business forms of identity. (PLF 306-07)

In Chad's case in The Ambassadors, he is part of such a bourgeoisie, a family corporation, a consolidation of two strands of identity. Both he and Strether "fall in love," each in his own way, with Mme. de Vionnet, an avatar of what remains in Paris of the feudal system. She is "the lady of the quest," or embodies similar concepts, in many places. And though Strether is far from being a demotic revolutionary, as Ross Posnock notes Strether's repeated changes of self-identification with his two social groups in the novel might be termed alternate "revolutions" [The Trial of Curiosity (passim)]. In both groups, his constant use of the picturesque/romantic imagination of "the Others" is often appropriative, a "grasping" middle-class awareness, and thus open to moral question; James makes him by the end a sort of demotic knight chastened by perceptual experience yet retaining a (middle-class) affection for the terms of his "punishment," his "impressions."

Sarah Pocock's indignation with her brother's new lifestyle, his new identity, can be seen as more than just prudery and provincialism, though she has both these qualities in abundance. As Burke says in discussing Hitler in "Freud and the Analysis of Poetry" (PLF 275), "[The] assigning of a new lineage to one's self (as would be necessary, in assigning one's self a new identity) could not be complete were it confined to symbolic patricide. There must also be ingredients of symbolic matricide intermingled here...." As one might note, "Newsome," or "New sum," aside from its mercantile associations, like "New-man," another Jamesian name, is a name for a man who fathers himself, or is his
own origin, a new concept. Nevertheless, when he seems to be becoming "an immense man of business" he is said to be "the son of his father" (343): he is "stepping into his father's shoes." Chad's own father, however, is deceased, so the patricidal symbolism is complete. But the matricidal element comes in with Chad's disobedience to his mother and his neglect of her and his family in America, at least from Sarah Pocock's point of view. As she says to Strether when he tries to defend Chad and what Chad has become, "'You can sacrifice mothers and sisters to [Mme. de Vionnet] without a blush, and can make them cross the ocean on purpose to feel the more, and take from you the straighter, how you do it?'" (279). Thus, the "charming" and "beneficent" qualities of a lady like Mme. de Vionnet are linked in Sarah's mind with Strether's and Chad's becoming traitors not only to their family group, but also to their caste, though she is not fully conscious of the issue in the case of caste. In any case, Sarah reckons Mme. de Vionnet's caste not in European courtly terms, but in American middle-class ones.

These very terms dictate a change in the "identity" of the terminology itself: whereas the "European" terms in the novel incorporate a high aesthetic view of life, to which Strether makes something of an adjustment, it was James's constant complaint throughout his life that "American" life was "thin" and lacked those terms to a great degree. As Burke says in Proposition #7 of "Twelve Propositions" (PLF 308), "The processes of change of identity are most clearly revealed by analyzing formal works of art and applying the results of our analysis to the 'informal art of living' in general." This is clearly one of James's techniques for the analysis of social character in The Ambassadors. Burke continues, "Art works, owing to their high degree of articulateness, are like 'meter readings.'...By studying them, you will discern what forms 'alienation' takes as a factor
in human experience, and what forms likewise arise in the attempt to combat alienation (to 'repossess' one's world)" (PLF 308). It is significant that when it is pondered by Strether whether or not Mme. de Vionnet is "good," the others he asks assess her as a human artefact. Miss Gostrey surmises, with a laugh, that she's "excellent," and when much the same is asked of Chad, he reassures Strether that she has a "beautiful life," not to mention Bilham's famous "virtuous attachment" statement, itself an artistic construction. All of these evaluations lead toward aesthetic things and away from moral things. They all point as well to the different ways that people "possess" their worlds (to vary Burke's term). This leads away from morality and involves us in one of James's circular constructs. As William Gibson notes, James uses metaphors (in particular) "to two [at least] major ends: to dramatize and make vivid key stages in the developing action, and to make increasingly explicit the moral significance of Strether's experience to himself and to the reader" (NEQ 292). We become involved on one level in learning along with Strether how to assess the "beautiful life," how to identify it in all its complexity, and on another level how to assess the morality of regarding things in an aesthetic light. Therefore, the claim can be made, as James with only partial allegiance makes it, for the aesthetic "beautiful life" as a kind of identity.

Burke's Proposition #10 reads, "'Style' is an aspect of identification.” He goes on to say: "Even a materially dispossessed individual may 'own' privilege vicariously by adopting the 'style' (or 'insignia') of some privileged class. Thus did typical poets of the age of Pope vicariously own the privileges of the squirearchy, by embodying in style the ideals that the squirearchy approved of" (PLF 309). This is in fact what Strether,
demotically "dispossessed" at the end, with his "literary" names of "Lewis Lambert,"
began by doing, in editing the magazine supported by Mrs. Newsome. As we see (62),

His name on the green cover, where he had put it for Mrs. Newsome, expressed him doubtless just enough to make the world—the world as distinguished, both for more and for less, from Woollett—ask who he was. He had incurred the ridicule of having to have his explanation explained. He was Lambert Strether because he was on the cover, where-as it should have been, for anything like glory, that he was on the cover because he was Lambert Strether.

In a metaphorical sense, Strether is engaged in a more generous editorial endeavor than the endeavor he undertook for Mrs. Newsome. His "grasping imagination" is both mercantile and artistically noble, "acquisitive" and "creative." As it is described by Austin Warren in his Preface to Rage for Order:

Poetry is a double, a triple, discipline. There is a technical, most specifically a linguistic, training, partly traditional but chiefly self-acquired, a deformation and reformation of the language [Strether learns new uses of language and new meanings in Paris]. There is also a spiritual discipline—of confronting disorder in oneself and the world; of facing existentially, as a total human being living in time, the responsibility of vision and choice [Strether has tried to gain order in the strands of his identity and his opposing rôles and obligations by the end of the novel]. The third discipline…is to unite the spiritual revolution and reconstitution to the linguistic or literary. But this is not a third state. With a writer, the linguistic renaming or renovation and the self-searching and cosmos-confronting go on concurrently or in rapid alternation and reciprocity. (v)

Structurally speaking, Strether proceeds, sometimes aided by other characters, sometimes thinking alone, through two means which Warren discusses as "devices" James borrowed from "the plays of Racine, Maeterlinck, and Ibsen" (RO 144), and "which dominate one's recollection of the later James": "close conversation and the
metaphor," which Warren also calls "dialogue in alternation with narrative," and "dialectic and myth" (RO 145).

Of the dialogue, Warren says: "By the closeness and intensity of the 'dialectic' James commits himself; he really believes in the all but supreme importance of personal relationships; and, because they are so important, the proper interpretation of them becomes important" (RO 146). Regarding metaphors and figurative language, Warren goes on to state:

But then there is another kind of truth to be arrived at not socially, intellectually, or analytically but personally, intuitively, imaginatively—through images and symbols….I conclude that James thinks of all his characters as having an unconscious, as having a world of instinctive, feeling reactions, reactions which in art must express themselves (even if by intermediation of the novelist) in metaphoric terms. (RO 147, 149)

As with James, so with Strether, in this sense at least, that he uses both his dialogic and his intuitive faculties to come to terms with what he observes and senses.

Priscilla Gibson remarks of James's use of imagery,

Although the content of some metaphors is elaborated through repetition, significant changes in their context or their use are what add to the dramatic character of the later novels. Because James's figures are often purposely left ambiguous so as to become ironic, serious, or merely playful as context demands, this drama is less effectively revealed if the critic limits himself merely to tracing the recurrent associations of the imagery. Changing functions of the image in different contexts are what help to dramatize the subtlest movements of the mind….James's habit of employing the same imagery in multiple ways is at once a realistic as well as a dramatic technique. ("The Uses of James's Imagery" PMLA 1076)

Examining the “changing functions of the image in different contexts,” we see that one of the most frequently occurring kinds of figurative language uses arithmetical and
monetary expressions. This occurs sometimes in isolation from the knighthood metaphor, and sometimes in telling juxtaposition with it. As Laurence Holland indicates (EV 237), "the novel's pecuniary vocabulary, the terminology of spending or paying and being paid, ceases to remain merely ornamental and assumes...a definitely structural function, measuring the extent and the limitations of Strether's experience." He points out that Strether's inner conflict is often put in terms of what he "stands to lose," and that he must "save" Chad in order not to "lose "everything"" (EV 237). As well, he points to the fact that the words "indebted," "total," "commerce," "customer" and "bustling traffic" occur in the metaphorical account of Strether's obligation to Miss Gostrey and in an account of her abilities as a guide (263). He further mentions that Chad asks Strether near the end of the book if it's not "'enough'" to "'live on one's accumulations'" (277), and states that "[Strether's] renunciation of marriage with Mrs. Newsome and the advantages that it would bring, and his renunciation of the security and happiness which marriage to Maria [Gostrey] would afford, are a measure of payment for his increment of vision..." (281). By the end of the novel, the main characters' identities have one and all been challenged by "what they stand to lose," and though in a mercenary sense Strether loses much, in another he is seen as being more enriched in identity by his experience than any of the other characters are by theirs.

Strether's first hesitation to meet Waymarsh and his enjoyment of being alone are described thus: "[H]e was like a man who, elatedly finding in his pocket more money than usual, handles it a while and pleasantly chinks it before addressing himself to the business of spending." This comes in at the very beginning of his "adventure" (18). By his day in Notre Dame, he is aware of the situation not only as an "adventure," but as a
"problem." Here, so the metaphor runs, "good moments" are seen as if they were a form of currency and Strether were impoverished: "He was conscious enough that [his relief] was only for the moment, but good moments—if he could call them good—still had their value for a man who by this time struck himself as living almost disgracefully from hand to mouth" (272). From the beginning of Volume I to Volume II, Strether has been "testing the coins on his teeth," a pragmatic, almost demotic activity, while on the surface maintaining a socially courteous belief in others' probity.

It is Miss Gostrey whom Strether finds "expensive," before getting thoroughly in the midst of the situation and finding others more so. He does not refer to the literal costs of treating her. He says, when she asks what she has "cost" him, "'Well, my past. In one great lump. But no matter,' he laughed: 'I'll pay with my last penny.'" Respecting Waymarsh and his "sacred rage" to purchase literal items as transitions to experience, Holland says, "...[T]he close of [Book I]...focuses on Waymarsh's spendthrift purchases in a jewelry shop to establish the act of spending and a monetary vocabulary as the measure for Strether's own experience and obligations" (EV 256). It is telling that this purchase is in a jewelry shop and that Paris is like "a jewel brilliant and hard" to Strether (64), the question being whether it is worth the price. Holland further makes the assertion that despite Strether's great renunciation, "...the payment is paltry when compared to the torment he has witnessed in Marie de Vionnet and the imminent sacrifice to which she consents in their last interview; moreover, the payment is paltry when compared to the lesser but genuine torment in Maria's feelings which echo ...[hers]" (EV 281).
Strether is aware from early on of Maria's generosity and the reciprocity with which others treat her. He is aware of his inability to pay her back in adequate "coin" when she makes her box available to him at the French theatre:

The sense of how she was always paying for something in advance was equalled on Strether's part only by the sense of how she was always being paid, all of which made for his consciousness…of a lively bustling traffic, the exchange of such values as were not for him to handle….It made her constantly beforehand with him and gave him mainly the chance to ask himself how on the day of their settlement their account would stand. (85)

When Strether finds himself seated at rest in the Luxembourg Gardens with Mrs. Newsome's letters, he is caught up in a meditation upon his strange sense of freedom, which is again expressed in arithmetical terms—with an emphasis here on duty and free will, ideas Strether constantly has in the back of his mind:

He felt it in a manner his duty to think out his state, to approve the process, and when he came in fact to trace the steps and add up the items they sufficiently accounted for the sum. He had never expected…again to find himself young, and all the years and other things it had taken to make him so were exactly his present arithmetic….Oh, if he should do the sum no slate would hold the figures! (60, 61)

The green covers of the magazine he edits form the "specious shell" of the "mere rich kernel of economics, politics, ethics," with economics listed first; thus though the American perspective is clearly tinted with the economic motive, it becomes obvious that for Strether economics is a questionable motive, being only a "kernel.” This contrasts with the "lemon-coloured" volumes of fiction (Rosenbaum 63) which are mentioned in organic metaphors and related to Strether's wedding journey, metaphors like "higher culture," "bear[ing] a good harvest," and "[a] handful of seed" (62). Also, a "few germs
had sprouted again under forty-eight hours of Paris, under the influence of "short gusts of speculation [wind]--sudden flights of fancy [birds]...hungry gazes [animals]" (63). These more fruitful, natural and "antique" metaphors refer to an older world view. The green journal is associated not with his youth and early marriage, in relation to which the volumes of fiction were "as fresh as fruit on a tree" (63), or with the sense of youth he feels in the air of Paris, but with the heavy morality/mortality of Mrs. Newsome, America, and the Pococks. That he is affected by the monetary view in spite of aesthetic preferences is continually supported by further metaphors, which show Strether assessing himself and others in Paris. In his last days there, it is still at least in personally advantageous terms that he expresses himself, in a merging of money language and the moral high ground, not wanting, "out of the whole affair, to have got anything for [himself]" (346).

He has got his "wonderful impressions," however, and that they are figured sometimes in monetary terms is obvious even from the beginning of the book, as when he and Waymarsh go to breakfast with Bilham. They are spoken of as "compromised" by "the sharp spell of Paris," which wording also prefigures the language of magic and enchantment occurring later. We are told that "Strether hadn't for years so rich a consciousness of time—a bag of gold into which he constantly dipped for a handful…. [W]hen the little business with Mr. Bilham should be over he would still have shining hours to use absolutely as he liked" (76). The editorial footnote here suggests that the phrase "shining hours" comes from Isaac Watts's poem "Against Idleness and Mischief." It is an ironic usage of the quote: it joins the two metaphoric realms of money and nature, but the surrounding text suggests that idleness is what Strether is
looking forward to, both on this day and when he waits to meet Mme. de Vionnet in Book XII.

Chad, showing up at the French theatre unexpectedly, is spoken of as "setting" Strether a difficult "sum" in the apparent difference in his social grace. As previously remarked, he is a Newsome, who sets Strether a "new sum," a use here of metaphor and paronomasia in one figure. That Strether himself could use a rest from the calculative life, on the metaphorical as well as on the literal level, is signalled by this passage:

> Whether or not he had a grand idea of the lucid, he held that nothing ever was…—for any one else—explained. One went through the vain motions, but it was mostly a waste of life. A personal relation was a relation only so long as people either perfectly understood or, better still, didn't care if they didn't. From the moment they cared if they didn't it was living by the sweat of one's brow, and the sweat of one's brow was just what one might buy one's self off from by keeping the ground free of the wild weed of delusion. It easily grew too fast, and the Atlantic cable now alone could race with it. (92)

Here, the monetary and organic metaphors are again combined in Strether's thoughts, as he contemplates what he can tell those at home to insure their comprehension of the difference in Chad's identity. He ponders how to "buy himself off" from "earning" his former relations without an excess of explanation. While use of the phrase "living by the sweat of one's brow" indicates that trying to make others understand is the common lot,

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15 In "A 'Shade of a Special Sense': Henry James and the Art of Naming," Joyce Tayloe Horrell says that James tried to steer a middle path between what he regarded as "Trollope's tendency to go too far and strain credulity" with apposite names, and not being suggestive at all. "For James, credulity demanded exercising some slight restraint so as to avoid complete burlesque but did not exclude even the blatant of connotative possibilities where the tone of the story sustained the relationship of character to name" (American Literature 203-04). She says he found Thackeray's names "perfect" even when "absolutely jocose," and in a production of the comic scope of The Ambassadors, wherein a capitalistic son of a capitalistic father is to be brought to heel, only to convert his savior, there is adequate testimony to James's own abilities in this line (Abel Newsome/ "Able New-sum" as the father of Chadwick, a less Biblical, more pretentious name).
familiar from the Biblical Eden on, Strether is tired, and wants to rely upon the implicit communication of a shared perspective.

One instance of monetary metaphor which, while blurring Strether’s clear perception, encapsulates what could be Mme. de Vionnet’s point of view for all Strether knows, is the previously quoted assessment of Chad's "debt" to her: "He was indebted for alterations and she was thereby in a position to have sent in her bill for expenses incurred in reconstruction" (142). The suggestion that Mme. de Vionnet might encroach upon Chad or demand something of him is negated by the end of the book, when it is apparent she has decided to take the "high road." This, however, is the early perception of her that Strether has before he responds to her "charm" and beauty. She short-circuits the whole problem he has with whether complete understanding is necessary for a relation in an almost "magical" way, by asking him to be chivalrous, to show her "common civility": "He couldn't help it; it wasn't his fault; he had done nothing; but by a turn of the hand she had somehow made their encounter a relation" (148).

Her plea affects almost all of Strether's other relations also. After enjoying Paris again, with whatever restraints and discomforts his perspective puts him through, Strether practices "charity," or the gift of forgoing indebtedness, towards Waymarsh, in this passage: "...[H]e felt his own holiday so successfully large and free that he was full of allowances and charities in respect to those cabined and confined: his instinct toward a spirit so strapped down as Waymarsh's was to walk round it on tip-toe for fear of waking it up to a sense of losses by this time irretrievable" (201) [emphasis mine]. Strether's image of Waymarsh's identity is that of someone strictly restrained and asleep to the fact that he is bound. Using a personification metaphor (Lakoff et al. comment that the two
can be one combined figure), James tells us, "The early summer brushed the picture over and blurred everything but the near; it made a vast warm fragrant medium in which the elements floated together on the best of terms, in which rewards were immediate and reckonings postponed" (202). Though not perhaps strictly monetary, still the words "best of terms," "rewards," and "reckonings" suggest the language of personal advantage or payment.

Just as Strether is "charitable" by his own lights to Waymarsh, so later on he gets the impression that Waymarsh is doing the same for him.

...[A]s Strether stood there he knew he had but to make a movement to take the attitude of a man gracefully receiving a present. The present was that of the opportunity dear old Waymarsh had flattered himself he had divined in him the slight soreness of not having yet thoroughly enjoyed; so he had brought it to him thus, as on a little silver breakfast-tray, familiarly though delicately—without oppressive pomp; and he was to bend and smile and acknowledge, was to take and use and be grateful. (272)

The ironic interweaving of the two men's—presumed—perspectives here is as "delicately" offered as Waymarsh's "present." Strether, who perhaps flatters himself a little in thinking Waymarsh was "cabined and confined" and he himself "charitable," is presented not only with what he thinks Waymarsh intends to deliver, but also with what he apparently believes a fatuous imitation of himself. Moreover, other changes have taken place in Waymarsh, cast here also in terms of loss and gain. Not only has he "forfeited" the "right to the sacred rage," as Strether thinks of it, but "...the dear man had sacrificed ["the grand manner"] to some other advantage...[H]is improvement in health was really itself grander than any manner it could be conceived as having cost him..." (276).
In Chad's case, business and monetary metaphors for the personal element point backward to his origins and prefigure his later instability of character when he seems to want to switch from his life with Mme. de Vionnet to work in advertising. He appears to value Mme. de Vionnet, but at the same time, "to Strether's ear," he speaks in terms "of confirmed luxury, almost a kind of unconscious insolence of proprietorship." We also see: "What came over [Strether] was the sense of having stupidly failed to profit where profit would have been precious" (207). The terminology is the same, but the attitude of the two men is different: Chad demonstrates "insolent proprietorship" when he is urging Strether to visit Mme. de Vionnet; Strether feels he himself might gain something intangible by knowing her.

As well, Strether considers Sarah, and we read,

...[I]t all came to the question of Sarah's being really bribeable. This idea of his own bribeability set him apart for himself....[H]e was bribeable....[H]e had been effectively bribed. The only difficulty was that he couldn't quite have said with what. It was as if he had sold himself, but hadn't somehow got the cash....It would naturally be his kind of traffic. (208)

Thus, Strether already believes that his sensation of being "squared" and his desire to remain free of dubious motives are making him feel "inconsistent," setting us up for his final decision not to "profit" in any way other than his impressions.

Miss Gostrey too "profits," though she has a "cave of treasures" where "[t]he pure flame of the disinterested burn[s]...as a lamp in a Byzantine vault." She has also a "fine sense" for whom "a near view would have begun to pay" (242). James, when he writes "disinterested," may be thinking more of her function as ficelle than of her role as a character, who, though functioning most often as a sounding board, still increasingly
wants a lifetime commitment of Strether. At the end of the novel her surroundings are "a haunt of ancient peace" and "a haven of rest," but in the early part of the novel we read of them that "the lust of the eye and the pride of life had indeed their temple. It was the innermost nook of the shrine—as brown as a pirate's cave" (80). Perhaps it is James's "dissembling" treatment to suggest that Miss Gostrey is a "pirate." Even this early on we read by the monetary metaphor "at any price" that she has some antagonism toward Mrs. Newsome: "Miss Gostrey...wouldn't let [the assessment of Jim Pocock] depend on anything—wouldn't have it, and wouldn't want him, at any price. 'It suits my book,' she said, 'that he should be impossible; and it suits it still better,' she more imaginatively added, 'that Mrs. Newsome doesn't know he is'" (247).

As to Mrs. Newsome, Strether thinks of her here in questionable terms, which he has sometimes done throughout. He wonders about her letters to Sarah, so many while his have lately been so few, and we read, "there was actually something in the renewal of his interrupted vision of [her handwriting] that played into the so frequent question of whether he weren't already disinherited beyond appeal" (248). The word "disinherited" and its connotations are thus present, the monetary as well as the emotional. It is Chad who stands to be disinherited, but Strether seems to feel the weaker position of a child in relation to Mrs. Newsome (and her wealth) more than the position of a suitor on equal terms with her.

Even Bilham, in Strether's playful analysis, "profits" by knowing a woman. He says to Bilham of Mamie, "'[Y]ou've been with her every day, you've seen her freely, you've liked her greatly—I stick to that—and you've made your profit of it'" (262).
When he considers his "Wheel of Fortune" change with Waymarsh, the meditation leads him into a generalization about his own social identity which also points directly at Chad and Mme. de Vionnet:

It came to him in fact that just here was his usual case: he was for ever missing things through his general genius for missing them, while others were for ever picking them up through a contrary bent. And it was others who looked abstemious and he who looked greedy; it was he somehow who finally paid, and it was others who mainly partook. Yes, he should go to the scaffold yet for he wouldn't know quite whom. He almost...felt on the scaffold now and really quite enjoying it. (271)

His potential "payment," figured melodramatically here as a trip to the scaffold, is on behalf of the two lovers, and though it is not conceived as monetary, the surface metaphor of “payment” is still in the air, almost similar to the sacrifice in *The Tale of Two Cities*. It puts Strether in the same sort of dramatic framework as the one in which he imagines Mme. de Vionnet later, as the historical Mme. Roland, though he loses social identity and status and she does not.

Chad, when faced with the possibility of Strether's "payment," argues with him in what has resonances of a gentlemen's polite quibble over the check. He says: "'You talk about taking the whole thing on your shoulders, but in what light do you regard me that you think me capable of letting you pay?' Strether...seem[ed] to wish to contend that he had the wherewithal; but it was again round this question of purchase and price that the young man's sense of fairness continued to hover" (288-89). Later, after the revelation outside the Cheval Blanc, Mme. de Vionnet tries to insist that Strether stay with them, as if she wants to help make the "payment." Though Chad offers Strether a bed for the night when Strether visits late, there is never any other direct offer, and though Strether
believes there may be, Chad ends by "accepting [Strether's] farewell" (326). He says, just as Bilham had said earlier, "'[W]hat wouldn't I do for you?'" (338), a hollow assurance. This follows from an earlier discussion when Chad seems to be considering Strether's losses, immediately after they have been referring to his possible financial loss in not marrying Mrs. Newsome. "...[T]here was...a pause in which the younger companion might have been taken as weighing again the delicacy of his...promising the elder some provision....This, however, he presumably thought best not to do..." (289). Chad thinks primarily in money terms of Strether's loss, and of money recompense. Another example surfaces during Strether's "magical" night visit before the country trip, when Strether wants to see Sarah a second time and Chad responds, "'[W]hat I don't make out...is what you gain by it'" (292).

By contrast with Chad, when Mme. de Vionnet asks Strether to stay, she is both more graceful and very vague about Strether's material means which might enable him to stay in Paris as she urges. She says, "'Where is your "home" moreover now—what has become of it? I've made a change in your life, I know I have; I've upset everything in your mind as well...'" (323). She seems more concerned about Strether's feelings and state of mind than about his material prospects, though perhaps with a slightly different emphasis one could argue that she is merely less overtly practical than Chad. As Chad says earlier to Strether, "'What it literally comes to for you, if you'll pardon my putting it so, is that you give up money. Possibly a good deal of money'" (289). Soon after, Maria Gostrey suggests to Strether that Chad should "'pay his mother a visit'" (298). After scenes such as the above scene with Strether, even more or less clichéd metaphors such a "paying a visit" have an ironic cast, especially since Chad did not "pay" his mother a
compliment in referring to her merely as "money." Strether responds to Miss Gostrey that in Sarah's visit to Paris "his mother has paid him a visit." This remark points directly to Strether's ability and necessity to see beyond the literal/practical to which Chad had drawn his attention.

Even though Mme. de Vionnet is vague in her attention to practical things, she nevertheless is the one whom Strether thinks of as "paying" through his taking a "stern" attitude toward her. His idea of "stern," though, is comprised by meeting her on a "stone bench in the dusty Tuileries" (a stone seat of justice) "or a penny chair at the back part of the Champs Elysées" (as if she too were cheap). He goes to her home instead, while all the same

…[a]n instinct in him cast about for some form of discipline in which they might meet—some awkwardness they would suffer from, some danger, or at least some grave inconvenience, they would incur. This would give a sense—which the spirit required, rather ached and sighed in the absence of—that somebody was paying something somewhere and somehow, that they were at least not all floating together on the silver stream of impunity. Just instead of that to go and see her late in the evening…as if he were as much in the swim as anybody else: this had as little as possible in common with the penal form. (317)

He ends by lounging around the rest of the day and going to visit her. We are told that he likes it there, that he has an aesthetic appreciation for "the picture that each time squared itself, large and high and clear, around her; every occasion of seeing it was a pleasure of a different shade" (317). That he is even at this stage considering his obligation to suffer with her is evidenced by the use of "they" in the "silver stream of impunity" passage, where "payment" has become "penal" in form.
That Strether feels ill at ease about the "impunity" is shown when he 
…revert[s] in thought to his old tradition, the one he had been brought up on and which even so many years of life had but little worn away; the notion that the state of the wrong-doer, or at least this person's happiness, presented some special difficulty" (318). Though "[w]hat struck him now rather was the ease of it—for nothing in truth appeared easier," and though he whiles away the rest of the day, "giving himself quite up" to leisure—a term of penal surrender—he still responds to the thought of the Pococks as to that of a superego, a projected conscience hence a part of his identity (as he exists in his appreciation of others). He thinks that if they saw him it would be as "demoralised and disreputable" and wonders if he appears that way from the outside. That after such an education in sometimes impenetrable surfaces he could so naively wonder shows that in spite of his apparent moral ease, he is still partially a New England Puritan, who moreover has been schooled by Chad to notice physical identity, a disjuncture with strict moralism's emphasis on spiritual/mental identity. It is interesting also that Sarah could judge unfairly and yet more accurately from appearances, whereas Strether needs to test the whole matter out with his own intuitive intelligence, to "see" for himself. This brings up the question again, in a slightly different way, of his "too interpretive innocence," a phrase originally used about his view of others in the Postes et Télégraphes office. There, we observe, he thinks he is aware of "something more acute in manners, more sinister in morals, more fierce in the national life….H[e] was really amused to think that he] had ranged himself on the side of the fierce, the sinister, the acute" (317).

In these ideas about Parisians and in his belief that he too is caught up in what seems "the typical tale," he finds that "[t]hey were no worse than he, in short, and he no worse
"than they" because he "had settled his hash." “[T]he great settlement was, as he felt, in his preference for seeing his correspondent [Mme. de Vionnet] in her own best conditions, where the picture...each time squared itself” (317). Here there occurs not only “squaring” as of a picture in a frame, but also the term "squared," which usually marks 1) someone being bought off or 2) circumstances made right and morally fitting again. His awareness of the other correspondents in the Postes et Télégraphes office is that they are "performers concocting their messages" with "the dreadful needle-pointed public pen" (317). "Dreadful" is applied to the pen not only because it's sharper, scratchier, and kept in worse repair than one at home, but also because it is "public," and he catches Mme. de Vionnet and Chad out in a lie (a performance) in public. That it is a lie and not just an enchanting or mysterious "tale" of Paris is thus borne in upon Strether by his place in modern Parisian society itself.

Twice the phrase "the pressure of the place" occurs (316, 317) and this pressure is an excuse for his own decision to see Marie de Vionnet and to see her at home. "He was carrying on a correspondence...quite in the key of the Postes et Télégraphes...." He considers of course that "if he saw her at all half the value would be in seeing her where he had already seen her best" (316). "Half the value," sounding monetary, is also aesthetic in nature, indicated by the word "value," a consideration in analyzing paintings, but these are axiological values which leave the "half" of Strether which is moral "out." He is presented as considering that "every occasion of seeing [her at home] was a pleasure of a different shade," but asks himself, "what precisely was he doing with shades of pleasure now, and why hadn't he properly and logically compelled her to commit herself to whatever of disadvantage and penalty the situation might throw up?" (317).
The answer may be that he is finding a way to give her the benefit of the doubt about the worth of her identity which he is only willing to give his own identity in passing.

We saw earlier that unlike the manner in which he often avoided corresponding adequately with Mrs. Newsome, he answers Mme. de Vionnet with "a directness that almost confessed to a fear of the danger of delay" (316). We have then another of James's external, speculative views of Strether: "He might have been thinking that if he didn't [answer] before he could think he wouldn't perhaps [answer] at all" (316).

When he goes to meet Mme. de Vionnet, "....[s]he [can't] produce on the spot...an account of the motive of her note" (322). That the word "account" is not only intended to cover the idea of a story or explanation but also the metaphorical idea of a record of debit and credit is underlined by the fact that she renders up the tale of her woe and her resolutions, which she says “‘you’ll have for your last impression’” (323). This is in exchange, as she tells Strether, for “what we’ve cost you,” by which she means to refer both to his monetary and his personal situation. She strives to render accounts of herself and Chad, mainly of herself; Strether’s (perhaps inflated) view of himself is that he has a value real and beyond price to them as part of their relationship. That he is deflated later, though still a bit self-serious, is shown in his later conversation with Chad, when he says, "'No one in the world...was ever so portentously solemn. There I am....I was made so’" (340).

In the last scene with Mme. de Vionnet, Strether listens to her say that she "hates" herself because "'...one has to take so much, to be happy, out of the lives of others, and...one isn't happy even then. One does it to cheat oneself and to stop one's mouth—but that's only at best for a little'" (323). She then says, "'[T]he only safe thing is to give.
It's what plays you least false." Part of his reply is this: "...I sn't what you've been giving exactly what has brought us together in this way? You've been making, as I've so fully let you know I've felt...the most precious present I've ever seen made, and if you can't sit down peacefully on that performance you are...born to torment yourself" (323).

He uses the word "present," in other words something free of cost or payment, to describe what she has done for Chad, yet at the same time, he uses the somewhat ambiguous word "performance," which occurred several times previously when he was reflecting that there was "a lie in the charming affair." Whether this is some sort of momentary half-conscious dig Strether makes to express his pique at having been the attempted dupe of their deception or whether it is a more genuinely admiring remark upon her behavior, he soon thinks of her as "a creature so fine" and "a creature so exploited" (324) and "yet...as vulgarly troubled...as a maidservant crying for her young man" (325). He sees that she judges herself harshly as a maidservant might not, but this seems to "sink her lower."

Soon after Strether uses the word "performance," Mme. de Vionnet defends herself against it by seeming to acknowledge it and yet making her own claim: "'[I ought] not thrust on you even the wonder and beauty of what I've done; only let you regard our business as over...'" (323). It may be overemphasizing the mercenary motive in language to point out that here, Mme. de Vionnet, who seems above such considerations, uses the word "business," which moreover has not only financial but theatrical overtones, except that she goes on further to say "'I ought to be easy and rest on my work'" (323). The word "work," coming from her, placing her previous comment in a context which she knows is valuable and important in the New World, reads as if she is contemplating allowing Strether to believe her almost ready to "send in her bill" for "alterations," a
metaphor which was used in the narrative much earlier. It is almost a sort of warning that everyone, even Strether perhaps, trades in some kind of currency or other, literal or metaphorical. The tie historically is thus made here to establish a kind of continuity—at least momentarily—between burgher and aristocrat, between a "democratic" if not thoroughly demotic identity and a mandarin one.

Even though Mme. de Vionnet tells Strether he will see her "easy" on this point, and says it will be his "last impression," the text reads immediately after: "He took some time to reply—his…impression was more and more so mixed a one" (324). He reasons to himself, however, that he too had helped, because "his high appreciation had, as it were, consecrated her work," which makes of her work more a thing in the realm of "miracle" or religious dedication. This concept, of making a miraculous work from a human being, occurs not only in reference to Chad, but, in an earlier edition of *The Ambassadors*, to Jeanne de Vionnet, who was also a "work" in her mother's hands. Here Jamesian language is also tied up in assessing human identities as works of art, so it may seem as if Strether, in his final meeting with Marie de Vionnet, is torn between at first thinking of his own "high appreciation" as devotional in nature, and then artistic. As we are told, he realizes that "[t]he work, however admirable, was nevertheless of the strict human order, and in short it was marvelous that the companion of mere earthly joys, of comforts, aberrations (however one classed them) within the common experience, should be so transcendently prized" (324). Strether becomes aware of how much the "improvement" in Chad is due to her "transcendent" "prizing" of him. This firmly locates whatever there is of miracle, even of the aesthetic variety, in her attitude and not in Chad's own identity. Thus, her "piece of work," Chad, is suspended between the mercantile and the aesthetic.
Mme. de Vionnet says to Strether, when he first insists he can do more, "Of course...you're acting...for yourself; and what's for yourself is no more my business—though I may reach out unholy hand so clumsily to touch it..." (325). It is as if she is aware of herself in her identity as "the lady of his quest," who is no longer ideal or "sublime," like the fallen Guenever to Chad's Launcelot. Chad is only Launcelot in the sense that he is "stained" with the sin Mme. de Vionnet shares, not in the sense of Launcelot's later history of becoming a hermit, or of (genuinely) confessing and doing "penance." In fact, so far from having any real sense of the "transcendent," even in another human being, he lacks a "dream vision" like the Sangreal, so to speak, or the "holy," and in its place the "art" of advertising is to him "infinite." By contrast Mme. de Vionnet places blame on herself, and calls her hands "unholy." It is in this respect that the knighthood and chivalry references in The Ambassadors assume an ironic as well as a comic tinge.

In relation to the allusive metaphor, the knight who most protected Launcelot and Guenever was Sir Bohort, his brother, and even when Strether is considering whether or not the two have deceived him again and crept off back to the French countryside to continue their "idyll," they are spoken of as "the wonderful pair he protected." He tells Maria Gostrey "as yet nothing of his late adventure—for as an adventure it now ranked with him; he pushed the whole business temporarily aside..." (327-28). Here, the "adventure" in the French countryside, the idyll, the drama, the catastrophe, is also a "business," and the "business" of knights is to have "adventures." Maria Gostrey leaves "questions unasked" and "[gives] herself up to him." She is a "country maiden," one of the "rustic" maids who soothe the knights in Arthurian romance while not being the
source of their inspiration or romantic interest. She is also seen as an "intelligent niece." We are told that "...the essential freshness of a relation so simple was a cool bath to the soreness produced by other relations. These others appeared to him now horribly complex; they bristled with fine points...points that pricked and drew blood" (328).

Even his previously simple relationship with Chad "also struck him as bristling." The collision of "struck" with "bristling," "fine points" and "drew blood" is, in terms of metaphorical language, suggestive of the battles of knighthood. We are told that Strether also sees his time with Miss Gostrey as a "happy interlude," rather like the ones knights sometimes experience between bouts of battle in romance fiction.

He even meditates upon at least a figurative death:

> It amused him to say to himself that he might for all the world have been going to die—die resignedly; the scene was filled for him with so deep a death-bed hush, so melancholy a charm. That meant the postponement of everything else... and the postponement in especial of the reckoning to come—unless the reckoning to come were to be one and the same thing with extinction. (328-29)

Reckoning, a monetary term, is thus compared to extinction, a real possibility in knightly battles.

He is of course thinking of himself and Miss Gostrey in "his fancy" here as "the Babes in the Wood" who can "trust the merciful elements to let them continue at peace" (328) and thinks that he will "float to" the reckoning, which "face[s] him...over the shoulder of much interposing experience, which also face[s] him" "through these caverns of Kubla Khan" (328, 329). Neither of these allusions is a reference to medieval romance, but they both share elements of the fantastic/romantic with it, and just as James often creatively mixes metaphors when it suits him, so he sometimes switches from one path to another of
allusion, using whatever it takes to fill out his meaning. And like that of a very idealistic knight who is in the process of conquering inner weakness in order better to conquer outer, "the refinement of [Strether's] supreme scruple" is that "...he wished so to leave what he had forfeited out of account,...not to do anything because he had missed something else, because he was sore or sorry or impoverished, because he was maltreated or desperate; he wished to do everything because he was lucid and quiet, just the same for himself on all essential points as he had ever been" (329). "What he had forfeited" is to be left "out of account," drawing the monetary metaphor "account" into the moral realm again as Strether attempts to "close the books" on Chad. "Forfeited" is another interesting choice of word, because it not only speaks to the financial metaphor and to the economic safety and security which Strether gives up, but it also is a word which occurs in battles of various chivalric kinds, where champions enter the lists. In a very important sense, Strether has "forfeited" the battle with the preconceptions of those at home. What he now apprehends as the truth is uncomfortably like what they had preconceived. In a more literal sense, the "forfeiture" is Strether's break with Mrs. Newsome. Miss Gostrey too shows herself closed to advantage:

She had held herself for months with a firm hand; she hadn't interfered on any chance...that she might interfere to her profit. She had turned her back on the dream that Mrs. Newsome's rupture, their friend's forfeiture—the engagement broken beyond all mending—might furnish forth her advantage; and to stay her hand from promoting these things, she had...played strictly fair. (331)

There's an interesting Shakespearean reference in the words "furnish forth" here, and slight though it be, it is significant. As previously mentioned, James often strews Shakespearean allusions/quotes across his works. Periphrastically speaking, James's use
of Shakespeare, like his use of other literature, often stands for a constellation of references to love relationships, both seemly and illicit. Using these two words "furnish forth," James establishes a negative parallel between the advantage Miss Gostrey at this point refuses to take or even ask for, and the advantage Hamlet's uncle does take of the death of his own brother, for which he is responsible. The Shakespearean quote is:

"Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats/ Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables." (Ham. 1.2.180). Part of the problem is, of course, that the word "coldly" not only refers to the literal meats but also to a lack of human warmth, which is at least one reason here why Miss Gostrey waits to offer herself; she wants the acceptance, if it comes, to be warm, not just "thrifty."

Serving Mme. de Vionnet "to the end," Strether lets pass the question of "a more ideal affirmation" (336), of staying in Paris to "promote the good cause " (with the irony firmly entrenched in the use of the word "ideal"), and goes on "with the rest of his business" when he sees Chad. "The rest of his business" is repeated three times, once early when Strether is opposed to Mme. de Vionnet (128), and twice in reference to his urging upon Chad the moral duty to stay with her (337), an ironic twist. Again, the word "business" is from the world of economics and profit and is used is a metaphorical way. It also has a possible connotation of a theatrical identity for Strether, inasmuch as he is "the hero of the drama," who stepped physically inside the dramatic "business" in the countryside.

Chad tells him, "'After all, you understand. I spoke to you originally only as I had to speak. There's only one way—isn't there—about such things...'" (337). Thus, Chad is making the claim, in spite of the fact that any conception of things with Strether "seemed to be possible," that what a man must say to protect a woman's reputation is identical,
regardless of which side of the Atlantic he is upon. There is enough of facile truth in this barely to pass muster, but again it's Chad saying so, who left Mme. de Vionnet to do all the inventing and explaining at the Cheval Blanc. He is also the one who, instead of staying in Paris with her at a crucial juncture, goes off to London without letting her know where he is. He is in the beneficiary's position because he is the younger party, and just after this Strether in fact wonders "What was it that made him at present...so renewedly, so substantially young?...[I]t was that he was younger again than Madame de Vionnet" (337-38). Here there is a switch from his first impression of Chad, which was that he looked older than he had before. This provides a thematic relation to the “vampirish” situations between couples which James explores in The Sacred Fount (Edel Introduction xi).

Chad "g[ives] no further account" of his trip to England, but Strether lets this pass and goes on with his "business," taking advantage of Chad's saying so easily "...[W]hat wouldn't I do for you?" to give an "easy answer" of his own, that Chad's avowal is "a disposition he ha[s] exactly come to profit by" (338).

Chad, with his capitalist heritage/identity and recent interest in advertising, continues the financial metaphor in a way Strether finds troublesome. Strether says, "'Don't leave her before [she has done it all]....But as, for you, from such a woman, there will always be something to be got, my remark's not a wrong to her'" (339). When Strether points out as evidence of her rights that "'Your value has quintupled,'" Chad wonders if it isn't enough "'[i]f one should wish to live on one's accumulations....'" The word "accumulations" has been used before in connection with literal items, such as Strether's books from Paris, and Miss Gostrey's treasures. The use of it by Chad here in a non-
literal context is particularly chilling, as he asks if it is not enough to rest on his laurels, which he has more or less had bestowed on him by Mme. de Vionnet. Chad admits "'I owe her everything,'" but one wonders with Strether if Chad really understands Strether's point when Chad says he is not tired of her.

Strether gets a sort of "vow" from Chad, but still "Chad seemed disposed…to bargain." He is a businessman already in cultural identity, giving assurances and jockeying for position verbally. As to Strether, tired out by their encounter, he "took...all he could get; he had given all he had to give, he was as depleted as if he had spent his last sou..." (341). After assuring Strether of the "infinity" of advertising and its need for "the right man," having claimed how entirely advertising "pays off," Chad then engages in a bit of self-advertising, claiming to Strether that he himself is "the right man." When he speaks of "the money in it" (342) Strether exclaims "'Oh damn the money in it!'" and extracts another (ambiguous) reassurance that Chad will not leave Mme. de Vionnet for it. Chad says "'It's pleasant to a fellow's feelings...to "size-up" the bribe he applies his foot to,'" to which Strether responds, still making his point, "'Oh, then if all you want's a kickable surface the bribe's enormous'" (342). Chad seems to be living up to his "destiny" in adapting himself to his mercantile family identity, wondering what his "bribe" or "price" is.

In his following encounter with her, Strether lets Maria Gostrey know that he himself is not sure of Chad's faithfulness to the less advantageous relationship with Mme. de Vionnet. He seems doubtful and when she asks if there was "some other woman in London" he responds, "'Yes. No. That is I have no ideas. I'm afraid of them. I've done with them'" (346). He does have one idea remaining, however, and that is to do what
Chad has tried to suggest he himself is doing, and resist being "bribed" or "squared" or even getting anything "out of the whole affair...." (346). The difference is that he sees Chad's duty as resisting temptation by staying with Mme. de Vionnet, whereas he sees his own as resisting temptation by not being with a supportive woman. In both instances, the knightly ideal is involved, in the one case supporting a weakened cause, in the other taking the high road of abstemiousness. It is an irony of Strether's situation that his "knightly" identity leads him toward a more demotic, more impoverished situation. From the midst of all the bargaining and maneuvering that goes on in the American world and in a slightly different way in the Parisian world—the betrothal of Jeanne de Vionnet to M. de Montbron, which Strether sees as "ancient and cold," represents the latter—Strether's identity emerges "the same, only different" from what it was before. On the one hand, we are told early that he has never really been a personal success or "played his cards right." On the other, at the beginning of the book, he is conditionally affianced to a wealthy though somewhat overbearing woman, has a distinct middle-class social position connected to her world, and has a family group of friends and acquaintances. It begins to seem as if Strether alone has more or less escaped the "profit" motive, taking only his "wonderful impressions" with him following his own version of knightly behavior. The question one then asks is whether he would ever have taken anything else anyway, a circular speculation on identity which James perhaps meant us to consider. As Strether says in his famous remark to Bilham and as James quotes in the Preface, "'What one loses one loses....Still, we have the illusion of freedom'" (Preface 1). Later, Strether tells Miss Gostrey of his conversation with Sarah that he would "take" all the blame. With a typically Jamesian contrapuntal, paradoxical remark, Miss Gostrey
continues to pursue this idea: "'You'd take it?'" "'Why if he doesn't go.'" "'And who takes it if he does?'" she enquired with a certain grimness of gaiety. "'Well...I think I take, in any event, everything.'" "'By which I suppose you mean...that you definitely understand you now lose everything'" (295-96). James further remarks in the Preface, "'...[Strether] has...missed too much, though perhaps after all constitutionally qualified for a better part...[H]e now at all events sees; so that the business of my tale and the march of my action, not to say the precious moral of everything, is just my demonstration of this process of vision" (Preface 1-2). So far as Strether is maneuvering for anything, it is for a chance to "live," or at least to "see." One could speculate that what makes Strether present his "taking everything" upon himself so dramatically and quixotically is that he is trying to make "seeing" not only into the "adventure" it becomes for him, with its picturesque/romantic dangers, but also into the "living" that he watches others do and feels he has himself missed.

In reference to this point, however, Susan M. Griffin says, in her introduction to The Historical Eye: The Texture of the Visual in Late James, that

...understanding of James remains hampered by the acceptance of two critical commonplaces rooted in [the] modernist sensibility: the idea that his fictional world is structured by a dichotomy between observation and experience and the notion that the Jamesian protagonist is a "passive observer," a cerebral, almost disembodied being, completely detached from the world of experience....For James, character is fictional structure. His narrative strategies are intimately tied to his understanding of his characters' positions as creatures, and creators, of their worlds and their selves, a relation that is spelled out in the visual interactions between the two. (3-4, 117)

She says furthermore that her "emphasis is on the visual over the verbal and in [her] insistence that Jamesian perception is a physical process" (HE 6). The point to be made
about Strether, nonetheless, is perhaps the great emphasis he himself puts upon Griffin's despised dichotomy between observation and experience. There is of course a certain irony, a delicate and pervasive one, in his vacillating awareness of the extent to which he shapes his world by his perceptions, and thus overlooks a way in which he could, in Griffin's eyes at least, be seen as "active," not "passive," "changing" the world identity by what he "sees." One also remembers in connection with these observations James's own presupposition that the making of a fine consciousness is a supremely rewarding endeavor. As Griffin concludes, "…[s]tudying precisely what it is that Strether literally sees, examining the way the process of vision is enacted in the stream of visual perception, reveals how actively Strether engages in the struggle to shape his environment and self" (HE 54). Strether is more of a knight/artisan, partially creating that which is in and around him, than an ordinary middle-class American. It is thus not only the vision of Mme. de Vionnet but also the adventure itself that Strether hopes to have with him as his "loaf on the shelf." Therefore, he too has his "profit" and his "advantage" and his "business," just as James has the "business of [his] tale," though Strether's is the most etherealized commerce of any in the book. And in fact, his commerce seems to be still slanted toward living by his principles, however much he has had to revise the views which inform them due to complicated circumstances and new experiences.

Between the knightly metaphors and the bourgeois mercantile monetary ones, there is thus the class of visual metaphors which actually mediates. As Miss Barrace (who is identified as a lady in spite of her eccentricity) says to Strether, "[W]e all do here…run too much to mere eye…. [O]ne sees what things resemble" (126). To Strether, all but the
background figures are to him ladies and gentlemen, and it is only by a sort of inner "sight" derived from external identities and circumstances that he learns to distinguish kinds, both of people and of circumstances.

There is a mirroring effect vis-à-vis Chad and Strether, evidenced by the way in which Strether is shown as thinking of Miss Gostrey as "a person to whom he should never cease to be indebted" (198) and the way in which Chad makes later admissions to Strether that he himself owes everything to Mme. de Vionnet. There is also a sense in which Strether is the leading soul or intelligence and Chad the body. Later, when Strether partakes too much of the sensuous in his own nature, he is in danger of being misled and is in for a shock. The intelligence/body dichotomy is comically shown by the way in which Strether converses with Chad when Strether first comes to Paris, "pour[ing] into him all it concerned him to know, put[ting] him in full possession of facts and figures" (104). Chad listens attentively, asking questions, but he "works out" the information in a metaphorically "physical" way. We are told that Chad "had in every way the air of trying to live, reflectively, into the square bright picture," as Strether, misled, will later do in the French countryside, which he persists in seeing as a work of art into which he steps. Chad responds to Strether's "picture": "He walked up and down in front of this production, socially took Strether's arm at the points at which he stopped, surveyed it repeatedly from the right and from the left, inclined a critical head to either quarter, and, while he puffed a still more critical cigarette, animadverted to his companion on this passage and that" (104).

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16 Therese-Marie Meyer in Where Fiction Ends sees personal identity as a four-fold field split along two binary oppositions, self/other and body/mind (9).
Once again, at the end Strether tells Chad that he is obligated, this time in a different way, to perform with honor and integrity as Strether now understands it, and again Chad (more or less the same Chad), gets his hat, takes Strether's arm, treats him "as a noble eccentric who appeal[s] to tenderness," and physically propels him down the street. When, a few moments later, Strether tells Chad that he, Chad, is "restless," Chad responds that he, Strether, is "exciting." He also responds a little earlier to Strether's urgings with "'You needn't tell me, you needn't tell me!'" and we read

> What he needn't tell him was now at last, in the geniality of separation, anything at all it concerned him to know [a phrase repeated from page 198]. He knew, up to the hilt—that really came over Chad; he understood, felt, recorded his vow; and they lingered on it as they had lingered in their walk to Strether's hotel the night of their first meeting. (340-41)

Nevertheless, Chad just a minute later tries to negotiate his way out of his vow, in spite of the fact of what "really came over [him]" (and this is an interior view of Chad, as we usually see only Strether). (Once again here, the words "hilt" and "vow" call up courtly romance associations, that of knights swearing vows on their sword hilts.) Thus, all it concerns Chad to know is not the same thing as what it concerns Strether to know. What it concerns Strether to know also changes, from the first of the novel to the last, from his naive, high-handed moralizing series of utterances about business and economics and family responsibility to his series of morally imaginative utterances about responsibility for past actions and to Mme. de Vionnet.

On the simplest (physical) level affecting the plot, what it concerns Strether to know is the nature of Chad's connection with Mme. de Vionnet. On the level of the novel's imaginative "soul" or "truth content," however, the metaphors and other figurative
language are also his and our guides to assigning correct names to things and actions and determining the moral and aesthetic identities of people and their foibles. As well, as William M. Gibson explains of Strether's Lambinet, "works of art, functioning metaphorically, are indispensable plot elements in James's fiction" ("Metaphor in the Plot of The Ambassadors" NEQ 291). This is true regardless of how many of the metaphors one sees as originating in Strether's mind or in the language of the other characters and how many one sees as "aimed" at us by a more remote narrative voice. Therefore, even when the metaphors are opposed to each other and when James might otherwise perhaps be taken as frolicking in language for its own sake, the metaphorical language is drawn from nearly all of life. As James says in the Preface,

> Art deals with what we see, it must first contribute full-handed that ingredient; it plucks its material, otherwise expressed, in the garden of life—which material elsewhere grown is stale and uneatable. But it has no sooner done this than it has to take account of a process….The process, that of the expression, the literal squeezing-out, of value is another affair—with which the happy luck of mere finding has little to do. (4)

This is a very "happy" expression of the mimetic process of extracting the essence as it occurs for James, in metaphors as elsewhere. Though Smit has argued that all the voices, characters and narrative alike, sound like James's public voice (LM), and though Holland suggests that Strether's mission to Chad and their relationship is improbable on the surface (EV 230), once one has allowed James one of his primary subjects, the process of

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17 Gale (CI 15) divides the metaphors he chooses into "six major groups" and "many minor ones," both of which overlap with some of the divisions in my discussion. He mentions water, flower, animal, war, art, and religion as the six major groups. His minor groups contain fire, metal, sensation, children, America, money, travel, wind, etc. I do not discuss or divide the categories identically. For my breakdown of the main metaphors of The Ambassadors, see the Appendix of my work and the included Table II.
vision in Strether, a "super-subtle" identity with the best of them, these problems disappear.

Some of the items raised for consideration by the metaphors are reality's various avenues of appeal to the imagination, a mirroring of the costs of moral and aesthetic views, and the quandaries involved for identity in having free will, not in opposition to a philosophically impersonal or God-centered determinism, but more in opposition to, or in interaction with, the free will of other human beings and situations and feelings in which they involve us. And though people must, and Strether must, at some point cease labelling and naming and rest, Strether yet manages at the end of the book to rest by a resolution based on both doubt and faith. He foregoes absolute answers about identity, taking only his impressions, yet still is able to strike a moral stance in line with his final perspective, though it requires leaving Miss Gostrey's "haven of rest" behind.

Following James's remark that "[a]rt deals with what we see," it is obvious that one of the main metaphors lurking behind other metaphors (and occurring even in passages otherwise descriptive in this novel) is what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in MWLB call the "Understanding is Seeing; Ideas are Light-Sources; Discourse is a Light-Medium" metaphorical complex (48). [George Lakoff and Mark Turner also discuss this complex more structurally in MTCR (94).] That this metaphor occurs throughout the book can be demonstrated even when the metaphors it "backs" tell an inset story with

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18 P. Gibson remarks, "[S]uch a use of metaphor [cannot] be viewed as a purely intellectual ability. For the capacity to think in imagery and to grow by projecting concretions instead of by passing concepts, James had an apt and illuminating metaphor. Instead of 'knowing,' his characters are always spoken of as in the process of 'seeing.' They exchange felt insights, not mere concepts, in terms of metaphors which are more or less figuratively grasped by each character" (PMLA 1084). It is a "felt insight" with Strether along the river that Marie and Chad mean to "cut him." Thus, though Gibson's point is taken about "felt insights," to "grasp" a figure must still be conceptual as well as intuitive, since vocalizing one's insight requires concepts and images, to be perhaps "intuited" by one's listener. There is a translation process which cannot be ignored.
thematic relation to the main story. These sight and light metaphors occur in the earlier parts of the novel in such passages as this:

His greatest uneasiness seemed to peep at him out of the imminent impression that almost any acceptance of Paris might give one's authority away. It hung before him this morning, the vast bright Babylon, like some huge iridescent object, a jewel brilliant and hard....It twinkled and trembled and melted together, and what seemed all surface one moment seemed all depth the next....If he, Strether, should like it too much, what on earth...would become of either [him or Chad]? It all depended of course—which was a gleam of light—on how the "too much" was measured....The only engagement he had taken, when he looked the thing in the face, was to do what he reasonably could. (64-65) [emphases mine]

Including the simile above as in the same general area of figurative language as metaphor, as Quintilian does (IQ Vol. III Bk.VIII vi.8), it is possible to notice of the underlined forms that identity, awareness, and recognition-as-seeing all function here.

Susan Griffin says,

...active and interested as Strether's visual efforts are, his seeing is restricted by both his immediate environment and the history of his relations with his world. In attempting to see what he needs to see, Strether must contend not only with Chad's and Marie's visual manipulations [the "clever canvas" to "clever canvas"], but also with his own perceptual past. Strether cannot eliminate these material, social, and temporal constraints, but, by learning and attending visually, he can limit them [i.e., place limits on the limits]. (HE 33-34)

Most notably in this novel in the recognition scene in the countryside outside Paris the metaphor of understanding as seeing dwells even behind the simplest descriptive language in what might almost be described as the multiple inset "frame." There is first the outside frame of the novel The Ambassadors, which then contains the inset frame of the story from Strether's past, his "adventure" in the art gallery on Tremont Street in
Boston. This inset story has for subject its own literal "picture in a frame," the memory of which Strether then superimposes over what he is looking at literally in the present day French countryside, as if it is a means of understanding what he sees.

It will be felt of him that he could amuse himself, at his age, with very small things if it be again noted that his appointment was only with a superseded Boston fashion…The oblong gilt frame disposed its enclosing lines, the poplars and the willows, the reeds and river…fell into a composition, full of felicity, within them; the sky was silver and turquoise and varnish; the village on the left was white and the church on the right was grey; it was all there, in short—it was what he wanted: it was Tremont Street, it was France, it was Lambinet. (304)

That what he literally "sees" is also "understood" in a particular way is obvious from this passage—his visual imperialism seizes on what he "wanted," of which only the middle term, "it was France," is actually true. Susan Griffin's discussion of The Ambassadors in fact takes tacit note of what I have called "visual imperialism" in her title of one chapter on the book, called "The Selfish Eye: Strether's Principles of Psychology." As she remarks,

Strether survives in his world by seeing what he needs to see. His perceptual pictures are always self-interested—even when they seem self-sacrificing. For example, he constructs a series of pictures of Marie de Vionnet that portray a lady in mild, romantic distress and thus in need of noble, yet limited, "saving." These pictures permit Strether to become safely, restrictively, involved with her. Strether's need to think of himself as noble does not prevent him from acting nobly. His selfish eye is not the mark of a villain because it is not an organ peculiar to Strether….To discover that what the Jamesian eye sees is always in the interest of the Jamesian "I," is not to uncover secret evil in James's protagonists. (HE 44)

Thus, though American imperialism certainly was and still is an evil, an American character such as Strether, visually imperial as James has constructed him, can be both
noble and appropriative, his identity that of both a knight and a burgher of consciousness. He is also a comic figure because he must revise his conclusions continually until the end, when he must put a stop—artificial to some degree—to speculation and "vision." At that point, he may well be considered no longer a burgher either, but more like an impoverished knight, or a strange cross between the demotic and the knightly, quixotic even.

To return to the passage from James quoted immediately above,

Moreover, he was freely walking about in [the picture]. He did this last for an hour, to his heart's content….boring so deep into his impression and his idleness that he might fairly have got through them again and reached the maroon-coloured wall….He really continued in the picture….all the rest of this rambling day….and had meanwhile not once overstepped the oblong gilt frame. The frame had drawn itself out for him, as much as you please….For this had been all day at bottom the spell of the picture—that it was essentially more than anything else a scene and a stage, that the very air of the play was in the rustle of the willows and the tone of the sky. The play and the characters had, without his knowing it till now, peopled all his space for him…. (305-08)

Hence, the "picture," actually all in words, tells a layered story, that from within its compound metaphorical structure gives an impression to the reader something like what the work I'm Six Years Old and Hiding Behind My Hands (by Ken Aptekar) gives, as shown and described by Mieke Bal in the second edition of her book Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative (66-75). The work is what she calls "a rich painterly work" of which the background is a copy of Francois Boucher's Allegory of Painting set in "an exuberant gilded frame" and the foreground a written text which she calls "emphatically autobiographical."
In the James narrative, the pictorial description becomes a stage setting, and the drama is peopled, presumably, by those Strether sees at a distance or comes into contact with as strangers; those he imagines, such as the driver he imagines himself employing later in the day who might remind him of Maupassant; and finally the "good woman" at the White Horse, where he winds up. Strether is clearly looking for personal time in an artistic setting—"autobiography" as opposed to his constant "biography" of the lovers. These humans and fantastic imaginings, in their idyllic/picturesque/romantic setting, are gradually introduced to Strether in an incremental way, with the minor background "characters" apparently seen or encountered first, and the main characters Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, willy-nilly introduced at a moment of "arrest," after the traditional dramatic model.

Even given the following of this basic pattern, Charles R. Anderson in Person, Place and Thing in Henry James's Novels finds James to be a "radical experimenter who transformed the art of fiction. By common consent," he however acknowledges, "he is the commanding figure for students of the novel as it developed from nineteenth- to twentieth-century modes" (3). Thus, the experimenting is not essentially of our contemporary theoretical variety, as some try to prove of James and his "gaps" and "abysses," though James has many later imitators in fiction. Rather it is more of the time and place he actually occupied, the time of transition mentioned by Anderson. Anderson argues later on that

…[t]hough the similarities are only implicit, a strong case can be made that most of the series of small climaxes by which the novel's inner theme is revealed were inspired by contemporary paintings of the French Impressionists…. [T]hese analogues…constitute a brilliant new technique for illuminating the subtlest nuances of his meanings. There is plenty of sup-
porting evidence that is direct, in the form of references throughout The Ambassadors to the terminology of painting—picture, pastel, portrait, miniature, frame—especially in the key episodes. (PPT 223)

He accounts for James's original dislike of the Impressionists in his 1887 essay on Sargent by saying that James changed his original opinion in his 1894 notebook entry where, he notes that James felt "the only way to limit one of his stories to the desired length was" to structure it as "an Impression" after the manner of Sargent, whom James specifically mentions in this context.

Anderson also notices the "possible 'inspirational influence'" of "the French literary impressionists who influenced the compositional mode and descriptive style of his last great novels." Anderson nods to Daudet, Maupassant, and Loti and remarks, "[T]hey were close friends of Renoir, Manet, Monet, and the rest" (PPT 277). Thus, the Lambinet setting which Strether originally admires, especially in the countryside scene outside Paris, is actually described in terms which make it appear Impressionistic. The passage reading "the sky was silver and turquoise and varnish; the village on the left was white and the church on the right was grey" (304) focuses on colors and light, as does the village aspect described as "whiteness, crookedness, and blueness set in coppery green" (308). And this focus on the picture into which Strether sees himself stepping shifts our attention as it shifts the drama of identity and discrimination, from the "painted" stage setting to the "scene" to be enacted upon it.

Strether sees himself as "…engaged with others and in midstream of his drama. It might have passed for finished, his drama, with its catastrophe all but reached: it had, however, none the less been vivid again for him….He had only had to be at last well out of it to feel it, oddly enough, still going on" (307). As we also find, when he sees Chad
and Mme. de Vionnet first, without knowing their identities, he thinks of them as "exactly the right thing" required by the "picture" as it presents itself before him (309). "The light of the town" (305) has not only inhibited him from airing his French vocabulary and accent before Waymarsh, it has also impeded his correct "vision" of the couple he observes. Were one to suppose, incidentally, that Chad and Mme. de Vionnet are not having a fully-fledged intimate affair, even so the "lie in the charming affair" is at least found in how they seem to feel about Strether in the city—"hail-fellow-well-met"—versus how they nearly "cut" him "out there in the eye of nature" (311), a pertinent phrase. The shock sustained momentarily causes a drop in the aesthetic references and an expression of wonder about the connections between "nature" and human nature, another sort of speculation on human identity.

An ironic element in the difference between how the city and the country are seen by Strether is that he goes to Paris itself expecting the worst. He finds instead a strong degree of civility and courtesy where he expected to find the tawdry. When he goes for a day's rest to partake of the beauty of the countryside, perhaps wearied by the struggle to see things innocently, and expecting to find the countryside merely "picturesque" and "romantic" in a bland, American sense, Strether instead unearths evidence of some "realistic" implications of the picturesque and the romantic. Then, led by his visual imagination, the next time he is in Paris he feels he has a somewhat jaded "too interpretive innocen[t]" manner reminiscent of the disappointed idealist, seeing "the typical tale of Paris" at the telegraph office where he goes to send his response to Mme. de Vionnet. Thus, neither the city nor the country is wholly innocent, and the "idyllic" is always a "drama" for someone.
This reversal switches terms of the two forms, since Chad seems in the country to be in happy, active possession of Mme. de Vionnet, thus engaged in a drama, not an idyll, whereas Strether, who becomes aware in a melancholy lyric fashion of the outcome of such a drama, is more like the "lyric poet," the shepherd of the idyll, who may "die," but even in dying "sings." Identity issues are in this part of the novel being partially motivated by reference to various literary models, for example the romantic, the picturesque, and the lyric. Yet since the drama Miss Barrace originally spoke of and the one Strether is engaged in is one of perception, it is its own special kind of action.

Put in another literary language by Sheila Teahan,

...[t]he reflective center [Strether] is in part a figure of speech that condenses two master tropes of literary representation: the mimetic trope of mirroring or reflection [the dramatic side of Strether's character], and the structural metaphor of the center [the central "I" of the lyric poem]. It belongs to the realm of figure, not of a transparent or non-figural critical metalanguage that would enable either James's or our own conceptual mastery of his represented practices....Strictly the central intelligence cannot be extricated from the narrative it claims to organize. (RL 2)

The underlying metaphors of "seeing as understanding" and the attendant and connected metaphors continue here and there throughout the novel even to the very end, both setting up conditions for the working of other metaphors affecting identity and also occurring more simply in their own right. At the end, for example, after Strether makes the point that staying with Miss Gostrey would make him "wrong," the text reads, "Honest and fine, she couldn't greatly pretend she didn't see it." She says to him a minute later, "'It isn't so much your being "right"—it's your horrible sharp eye for what makes you so'" (347).
This insight is not the only possible perspective, yet it is the one which James assigns also to Strether and through him to the substance of The Ambassadors. It has been made largely possible by what I have called Strether's "visual imperialism," which is based on his experience of the American attitude towards the world. To see a parallel here between Strether and James one need only excerpt a couple of paragraphs from the Preface of Laurence Holland's book:

Both James's criticism and his fiction suggest the relevance of tangible institutions and virtually demand that we give attention, as he clearly did, both to the complexities and to the elemental if sometimes obvious features of the institutions of marriage, the family, and publishing, money-making, and social and economic symbolism of money, forms of diversion or entertainment, the institution of manners in America, and governing standards of taste in the arts in the nineteenth century….James had the "grasping imagination" which he once said was necessary to meet the challenge presented to the artist by American civilization, and the result is his distinctly modern art…. (EV xi, xiii)

Strether too has a "grasping imagination," based on a connection between the notion of "paying for what you want and taking it" and "seeing is understanding," which results in the idea that one can "buy" insight. Though this sounds like something of an unsavory assumption to load on Strether, Strether makes his "purchases" with all the tangible things he stands to lose, as well as with his more amorphous emotional comfort. He is thus engaged both in "getting and spending" and in aesthetic activity. For this reason of connection between the two ideas, which normally inspire two different models of identity, I have considered the monetary, mercenary, commercial metaphors, the idealistic knighthood metaphors which balance them out, and the ubiquitous "seeing is understanding" metaphor which plays between the two extremes first. (A description of the supporting metaphors working as periphrasis by which naming and identity are seen
as central concerns and perceptions of Strether, and by extension and implication of his author, are described in the Appendix.) I will now go on to examine items in The Ambassadors which refer directly to identity or naming.
IV—ANTONOMASIA/PERIPHRASIS IN EXPLICIT NAMING AND IDENTITY LANGUAGE

Discussion of the textual items explicitly referring to identity or naming begins with returning briefly to a consideration of some assorted antonomasia/periphrasis, representing constellations of attributes to which Strether in particular tries to give a name. Strether sometimes thinks either that others understand him, they understand each other, or that he understands fully what he himself "means." At the heart of the issue is how knowledge, certain or approximate, operates as the link between naming and identity. I would also like to consider what part the various expressions derivative of "there we are" play in the character/identity development and plot resolution.

As Yeazell points out in numerous places, this seeking for a name in the late novels is fraught with more than one danger for Strether. Not only must he allow himself to become aware of something he already in fact suspects or knows [Yeazell is careful to dissociate this knowledge from simple Freudian subconsciousness (LK 17-18, 31)], but since Strether's effort is more and more to be precise, he must navigate between underemphasizing and overstating what he sees as the essential truth. Some pieces of antonomasia/periphrasis carry an amount of weight disproportionate to their length in his naming efforts, and in his attempts to legislate between two cultures.

The term "Europe," usually set apart in quotes as an overarching periphrastic signification for the experiences and adventures which typically face the identities of Anglo-American travelers in Europe, occurs at least eight times in the novel. It reflects the way in which colonies of Anglo-Americans travelled and perhaps still travel, becoming only passingly conversant with the surfaces of their new environment, and joining enclaves of others of their own nationalities, only some of whose identities are
better adapted to their foreign surroundings. In this context, two references to the fiction of Mürger show how Strether begins, with both wistful romanticism and a certain degree of horror. As well, the "dear old light" of "dear old Paris" is used by Miss Barrace, Bilham, and imitating them, Strether, after he has asked if the light of Paris shows people for what they "really" are. There are more of these direct references to "Europe" and "dear old Paris" by far in the first half of the novel than there are later on. This occurs less when Strether has begun to "resolve" his experience "into its elements," and to acquire some sophistication in recombining the whole again before he leaves.

Just as new and foreign places form constellations of concepts, so does Woollett associate itself through synecdochic treatment à la Burke (GM 507) with the whole of America as embodied by Mrs. Newsome, whose identity it thus characterizes. Or if one prefers to call it metonymy (Lakoff and Johnson MWLB Chapter 8 and p. 234), one finds Woollett connected with a group of qualities which together sum up Strether's American experiences of home, Mrs. Newsome, and the Pococks. For example, Woollett occurs thrice in this fashion (92, 104), then three times as "dear old Woollett" in the dialogue between Strether and Miss Gostrey (115), as they speculate whether any prospective bride will be able to "take" Chad's home and family. Woollett becomes disadvantaged "poor Woollett" when Strether considers it as lacking the qualities of Jeanne de Vionnet, presented to him by Chad (134). This signals the gradual dethroning of Woollett as a stellar concept for Strether's eventual homecoming.

People, characteristics, and things as well as places receive appellations, some consisting only of extra quotation marks, some of several words, both in dialogue (directly and indirectly aimed) and in the narration. These appellations operate as another
form of shorthand. We see "dear old Waymarsh"; "dear dyspeptic Waymarsh"; "poor man [Strether]"; "poor Strether"; "poor thing"; "poor dear thing"; "poor dear old life"; "my dear"; "my dear man"; "the dear man"; "dear lady"; "my dear lady"; "poor lady"; "ma toute-belle"; "monsieur"; "you women"; "you people"; "poor little painter-man"; "you wonderful gentlemen"; "poor Jim"; "poor Pocock"; "dear Jim"; "'Jim'"; "the regular French style"; "my friend Waymarsh"; "his 'good friend'"; "poor dear old sombre glow"; "dear little old court"; "dear Sarah"; "mothers and sisters"; "his poor old trick of quiet inwardness"; and "poor Maria’s face." These are some of the nouns and modifiers constituting forms of antonomasia/periphrasis which sketch out the boundaries of the novel's various subtext dialogues of identity.

The endearments, especially those coupled with the word "poor," are used by Strether in his conversation and mentally to demonstrate a certain mastery over and knowledge of the person he is addressing or is discussing, as well as to indicate some degree of affection. This does not mean the implied condescension by Strether is factual, as it is often only aspired to. And Strether’s categorizing of Waymarsh as "dear" and "poor" and "dyspeptic," as well as speaking to and of Sarah as "dear Sarah" from his position as "the valued friend of her family," slip away as circumstances change. Chad also uses endearments such as "my dear man" to Strether with more confidence still, and it is this tone of his that Strether seems to be aping with others of whose identities he would like to be more certain.

Places and qualities, such as "dear little old court," and "the regular French style," "poor dear old sombre glow," or "his poor trick of quiet inwardness" sometimes denominate in the conversation or narrative the original "starting point" in which, from
which, or through which Strether (or in the second instance, Waymarsh) feels he has developed so far. There is a parallel development of the other Americans which does not always go far—especially of Waymarsh and Sarah together, from the "spots" in which Strether has placed them in his thoughts—and Strether himself, who has gone on so much farther. These developments are marked by the changing distance between the appellations themselves and the accuracy with which they denominate the actual person or situation. This is not to overlook the part played by the difference between "seeing" the Americans as Strether first describes them to Miss Gostrey and "seeing" them in action in Paris, because this latter view is still largely Strether’s. If we are taken aback by their slight development, it is because Strether is taken aback first.

Not only do some of the previously understood constellations of naming become less fixed: "dear dyspeptic Waymarsh" becomes healthy, joyous Waymarsh without the "sacred rage," carrying on an innocent flirtation with Sarah Pocock; Woollett is no longer "dear Woollett," having become the source of a split between Strether and the other previous inhabitants; Paris, from being the "city of light" in both literal and figurative senses, becomes filled with the light of a dark knowledge for Strether. But also, American expatriates and Parisians alike surprise Strether, Parisians by their equivocal conversation, of which Strether seeks the root meaning, and Americans too, by sometimes being unlike the Americans he has known before, inhabiting a middle ground full of uncertain aesthetic and moral tonalities.

Strether is continually seeking, with only partial success, to name the other constellations of character, place, and situation attributes before him. Yeazell feels that James’s fiction produces "a very special form of literary anxiety" due to the critic’s
temptation to "translate Jamesian dialogue and experience into the form of understandable crises in character’s lives" ([LK] 65). Especially in reference to The Ambassadors, however, it seems that the situation between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, as well as all the various perspectives taken on it by the characters with whom Strether discusses it, do not go "unspoken and unnamed" ([LK] 64) for the entire length of the novel. Yeazell does agree, despite noting the "discomfort" of reading Jamesian dialogue, that the language between the characters is the means by which the plot unfolds and that Strether "learns to acknowledge terms and definitions which do not appear in the limited lexicon of Woollett, Massachusetts" ([LK] 70-1).

She goes on to say, "[w]hen the characters in James's fiction talk, the reader suffers from a kind of epistemological vertigo, for he is granted no secure position from which to judge the moral or even the factual truth of what is being said" ([LK] 71). This overstates the case: to say that making the novel "wholly confined to a single center of consciousness…threatens to make Strether’s inner drama [the] sole reality" ([LK] 71) is to beg the question of what James is setting out to do, which is in fact to give the drama of moral and factual "vertigo" (Yeazell’s own word), what James calls "the drama of discrimination" ([James Preface] 7). Further, the reader’s "vertigo" is far more pronounced on the first reading than on following ones. As Yeazell notes, however, the "Parisian talk" to which Strether is exposed, "even as it seems to dissemble," because it is "sufficiently ambiguous…ensures that no hasty judgments can…be made, that all possibilities of vision and feeling must remain open" ([LK] 75). Up to the discovery scene on the river, this textual assessment seems accurate, yet having restructured his sense of the possibilities involved, Strether decides as he does to leave Paris, and also remains in
serious doubt about Chad’s ethical identity, because he in fact has a new sense of the probable truths themselves. This new sense is thus evidenced in part by his no longer staying and waiting for Chad’s decision, but by preparing to take ship and by changing his expectations of what home will be left him. And given the evidence of his decisions and his resolve, which come to us through the dialogue as well as through the narrative, it would be deliberately mischievous to doubt such resolution of meaning as these decisions and resolve indicate. Further, *The Ambassadors* is not a solipsistically sealed off text, as *The Sacred Fount* is. Therefore, James must be taken seriously in his claim for Strether as one who "now at all events sees," and for "the precious moral of everything,…just my demonstration of this process of vision" (James Preface 2).

Traditionally, some readers have been dissatisfied with the way James ends *The Portrait of a Lady* and late novels such as *The Ambassadors*, seemingly without finality. In addition, such readers as Mary Cross feel that his addition of

…a shadow text-- the 'story of the story'--...disrupts and problematises the procedure....Enacting for James so many of the crises and choices the author himself is engaged in, Strether 'lives'—or must learn to live—in a very intangible, mental world, one where representation mimics representation and where words change their meanings as they confront new 'experiences' in the text, and where sentences enact a dynamic of continuous change and supplement. (CS 101-02)

Though accurate enough as a description of what the isolated word play does, this assessment does not deal with what the apparent extended meanings do, and one must assume meaning at least starts somewhere, or why read at all? Depth as a direction of meaning is covered by the periphrasis, and the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Cross's assessment forces James's work onto the level of "surface" only, which he has thus been unjustly charged with having as his sole concern.
I have been discussing plot in a conventional way in combination with periphrasis in extended antonomasia and in metaphors (and similes) in order to locate the discussion on a very basic level, uniting the concerns of naming and identity and plot structure. I have contended, in contrast to Mary Cross, that once one has allowed James his subject of a "super-subtle" onlooker such as Strether, one must accept even from the beginning that he will naturally live more in the realm of thought than in the world of action. But it is a sort of life. The plot structure thus is naturally the "story of the story," especially since Strether watches himself apprehending things as much as he watches others. He first thinks of "the worst" in relation to Chad and Mme. de Vionnet. We find this in an inset narrative which as periphrasis is a sort of parabolic metaphor or exemplum, grounded as Strether is in the sermons of home. This narrative describes Strether's reading of the Latin motto on a clock, which he sees as referring to Chad and his amours, the gist of which is "they had all morally wounded, the last had morally killed" (67). Then Strether thinks briefly, led by what Chad initially tells him, that there is not a woman in the picture. Next that there is, but that she's simply "good," or in Miss Gostrey's term, "excellent." Then, that Jeanne de Vionnet is Chad's interest. Then, for quite some little time, that Mme. de Vionnet and Chad are having a platonic love affair. He sees Mamie and Chad as no longer destined for each other after the Pococks do arrive, and so tries, half seriously, to match her up with Bilham. He sees and perhaps exaggerates in his own mind the "courtship" of Sarah Pocock and Waymarsh. Finally, he "sees" the adulterous relationship of Chad and Mme. de Vionnet for what it is, with all possible attendant complications and justifications, and adjusts his expectations.
My point is that "the story of the story" and Strether's story itself become successfully all of a piece by the end of the novel. James is using the periphrasis in antonomasia and in the metaphors and even strings of adjectives in the metaphors and elsewhere rhetorically, to reinforce the principles both of telling "the story of the story" and to disengage the reader from all easy variations of plot so that the reader follows James into a "plotless," though mimetic, world. James is "plotting" to do this. This makes the story more like reality thereby. As Mieke Bal says in her book Narratology about one of the "points of departure" for fabula, or what some call plot, "[a] structural correspondence was assumed to exist between the fabulas of narratives and 'real' fabulas, that is between what people do and what actors do in fabulas that have been invented, between what people experience and what actors experience" (176). As she points out, this is not to suggest "concrete identity" but rather "structural similarity." Though structural similarity may not be meant to suggest "concrete identity," naming is often a matter of metaphorical or analogical “mapping,” to use the terminology of Lakoff et. al., not only from metaphors alone, but from other word structures as well. This also implies a kind of structural similarity; thus the naming and search for identity(ies) going on leaps beyond the text itself on the literal level of the narrative to be construed as a "name" for what all of us know can happen to us on a realistic level. Bal continues, "the fabulas of most narrative texts do display some form of homology, both with a sentence structure and with 'real life,'” having a ""logic of events"" which "may be defined as a course of events that is experienced by the reader as natural and in accordance with some form of understanding of the world....This point of departure suggests one consequence:

everything that can be said about the structure of fabulas also bears to some degree on
extra-literary facts" (NITN 176-77). Thus, what critics quarrel about, whether from a more "naive" point of view or from a deliberately over-doubting and seemingly equally disappointed idealist stance is not being given a particular happy ending at the end of The Ambassadors, whether to assert a certain view of life and literature or to "plug up" the "gaps." Strether has a sense at the end that "[Miss Gostrey's offer] built him softly round, it roofed him warmly over, it rested, all so firm on selection. And what ruled selection was beauty and knowledge. It was awkward, it was almost stupid, not to seem to prize such things..." (346). The answer to this structural problem of resolution is to be found in the character content. Strether is determined not to make the same mistake twice of allowing someone else, particularly not Miss Gostrey, so much more like him than Mrs. Newsome is, to be his main economical or identity support. For a man of Strether's type, after what he has "seen" and "been through," such a decision is natural, and in its own way "happy."

Concerning a sense of plot resolution, Wayne Booth delineates three types of "literary interest (and distance)" which may occur in works of fiction. The first is "intellectual or cognitive," about which he says: "We have...strong intellectual curiosity about 'the facts,' the true interpretation, the true reasons, the true origins, the true motives, or the truth about life itself" (RF 125). The second kind he calls "qualitative" and says: "We have...a strong desire to see any pattern or form completed, or to experience a further development of qualities of any kind. We might call this kind 'aesthetic,' if to do so did not suggest that a literary form using this interest was necessarily of more artistic value than one based on other interests" (RF 125). He names the third kind "practical," about which he says "We have...a strong desire for the success or failure of those we love or
hate, admire or detest; or we can be made to hope for or fear a change in the quality of a character" (RF 125). Though James perhaps uses this last kind of interest and distance in a more attenuated fashion, Booth also says, "[O]ne finds this practical aspect even in the most uncompromising novel of ideas" or "even in the purely 'aesthetic' novel of sensibility..." (RF 125). As he discusses the first kind of interest, Booth remarks, "Even in so-called plotless works we are pulled forward by the desire to discover the truth about the world of the book." What has happened to James in the past is that critics and scholars have pulled him apart in roughly these three directions, according to their own preference of topic. What Booth has done, under his discussion particularly of metaphor, is to reunite the pieces, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. As he says in his opening discussion (RF 19), "every distinctive literary allusion or colorful metaphor...implicitly evaluate[s]." He continues later, conquering in one charge the accusation that James's "surfaces" are only "surface treatments,"

...[m]odern authors have often managed to give an acceptable air of objectivity while reaping all the benefits of commentary, simply by dealing largely with the appearances, the surfaces, while allowing themselves to comment freely, and sometimes in seemingly wild conjecture, on the meaning of those surfaces. [These conjectures often] establish a broad band of possibilities within which the truth must lie....Most novelists before James did not trouble about such disguises. (RF 184-85)

As an example of a modern author he mentions Faulkner, one imitator of James, and he mentions James here overtly. That surfaces are important as "disguises" to James is of course true, as this quote from Booth makes clear. However, James also gives many a hint when there is a correspondence or a dissimilarity between surface and depth, and has other imitators as well. James was for most of his career still influenced by nineteenth-
century models; yet even then, he was separate and special, not only in his dramatic use of "centers of consciousness." He was modern in many ways; he was not, however, a poststructuralist, except in the sense that he prefigured as a writer the poststructural adroitness at finding gaps and ambiguities and dramatizing the results.

Thus, it is possible to feel that Strether is being inconsistent in his preferring to leave Maria at the end, since she seems much more ideally suited to him than Mrs. Newsome was, with whom he was apparently willing to suffer an engagement at the beginning of the novel. The final fact we are given, however, is that he and Miss Gostrey agree on his resolution, both in the sense of his belief that "there will always be something" for him at home, and in the sense of his ending with her as he does. That agreement, based on the high ideal of coming out "square" and being "in the right," is for both of them an adequate ending if one has read for depth and followed the periphrasis in all the different places in which it occurs. It is true that on the level of dialogue Miss Gostrey protests against losing Strether. Even on that level, though, she too has her ideal, as "remembering what Mrs. Newsome had done" (346), she forbears from pressing him.

The plot resolution à la James merges with the dialogue in Strether’s exclamation, "Then there we are!" in the final line of the novel. To some, the recurring expression might seem meant to call attention to a certain inconclusiveness of plot. For example, Yeazell believes that the "finality and closure," both "literary" and "literal," of The Golden Bowl take first place among the novels of the major phase (100). In fact, I believe that among other things the sentence "there we are" and its variations in The Ambassadors demonstrate Strether’s and others' capacity to readjust their expectations, a pragmatism such that at any given moment of its occurrence the characters use it to stand
pat at a given conceptual locus. This is partially indicated by the fact that different characters use it and that it also occurs at times in the narrative itself, indicating in each case the point reached by the characters in their discussions or by Strether in particular in his thoughts. However progressively this sentence has changed previously, at the last it caps off a discussion between Maria Gostrey and Strether about the "right" thing to do, and in that sense it also allows at least some finality to the novel, such as closing a chapter in one’s life would actually have, especially for a Jamesian character, whose "loaf on the shelf" need not be literal.

As noted, however, the clause develops progressively as what at first seems to be a stray periphrastic thread, a thoughtless repetitive element. I would like to trace its development now as a means of conclusion to my own argument for the finality and the strong definition of identities in this novel, in particular in respect to the way in which the periphrastic phrases and clauses help to mark character.

In Book I, Strether identifies his position with Woollett’s "failure" to allow him to enjoy Chester with one difference: he acknowledges that now he has Miss Gostrey to help him learn to enjoy himself. This is one of the first appearances of the expression "'Ah there you are!'" with which he marks Woollett’s "general" failure of which he is a part (25).

Book II features by contrast an examination of Strether’s relationship with Mrs. Newsome, and also of that lady herself in some measure. Strether says he has "sinned enough," in comparison with Mrs. Newsome, "to be where I am" (52). This defines the way in which he relates to Mrs. Newsome, just as his situation with Miss Gostrey was defined in Book I. In the first book, he is to be taught to behave as a leisured traveller
behaves, with the quest for enjoyment uppermost in mind, and to give rein to his aesthetic sensibilities, though as his relationship with Miss Gostrey develops, they also find themselves assessing morality. By contrast, Mrs. Newsome’s status is defined by Strether’s assertion that "she hasn’t sinned." Her state of unexceptional morality is what dominates the novelistic picture of her here, as her lack of imagination will figure in the later parts of the novel, with the lack of imagination being the source of her perceived rigidity (300). Where Strether "is" as a person with moral characteristics is slantingly revealed by where he is physically, uniting his distance from Woollett and his apparent desirability as a negotiating agent.

Strether tells Waymarsh in Book III how much his marriage depends on bringing Chad back to Woollett, and says he is "nowhere" if he misses his marriage. At this point, Waymarsh is a bit dubious about Mrs. Newsome’s "judgement" of the situation and says "'What do I care where you are if you’re spoiled?'" (75). Strether assures Waymarsh that he must make the acquaintance of Mrs. Newsome, indicating that at this point he himself is more or less seeing from her perspective, though even from the first page he begins to feel distance from it. "So there they were" occurs next in the narration itself (79), with Strether insisting to himself that he must make Chad meet his expectations and not the other way around, and feeling that Bilham and Miss Barrace, Chad’s friends, are distinctly unsatisfying when it comes to helping him decide privately "what…he was still condoning." He expresses to Miss Gostrey (81) that he wants her to meet them, and that he is already giving them dinners: "'Yes—there I am…'" he says of this activity.
In Book IV, Strether says to Chad (95), "'And that's why you see me here,'" speaking both of his literal physical presence in France and of his moral position, at this time trying to persuade Chad of Mrs. Newsome’s "excellent arguments and reasons." His new "intelligence" of expatriate Americans, which has come about through his contact with Miss Gostrey, Bilham, and Miss Barrace, is not yet sufficient to rout thoroughly his original mission. Strether pursues Chad verbally, seeking to discover what or who is keeping him in Paris (101). Chad insists, "'I never was entangled….I always had my own way….and I have it at present.'" Strether asks, and again it is both a literal question and a question which focuses on moral stance, "'Then what are you here for?''' When Chad reproaches him and Woollett for having a "low mind," Strether thereupon assumes, perhaps without proper warrant, that the worst he knows of Chad does not concern a woman; he is forced to admit to himself, instead, that he does not really know what the "prime producing cause" is that has affected Chad (101-02). He broaches this subject in Book IV to "'the only close personal alliance" he has seen of Chad’s, namely Bilham, and wonders, "'Where do you see him come out?''' (110), another way of asking about Chad’s moral locus and intentions. Thus far, Strether has only begun to be led astray by Chad and Chad’s acquaintances, but he will in the end achieve the knowledge he seeks by this long detour.

In Book V, Miss Barrace says, "'Well, then there we are!'" in response to Bilham’s jocular claim about having been "cannibalized" by Parisian "savages" and being left as "the bleached bones of a Christian" (125). This prefigures Strether’s later remark about having sacrificed to "strange gods" on "alien altars," equally oddly cast in a religious metaphor, and locates part of the influence of America as inhabiting a different religious
dogma and mindset. Also in Book V, Strether still tries to use the language of Woollett, even after his own commitment to it has begun to weaken. It operates by a simple moralistic division of good and bad, and he attempts to use it to sort out both what may be said of Mme. de Vionnet, whom he has just met, and by implication what her acquaintance with Miss Gostrey may be. Mme. de Vionnet has asked him if Miss Gostrey has put in a "good word" for her, and when he meets up with Miss Gostrey, she says that she does not "require" the visit from Mme. de Vionnet which she has been led to expect "to know where I am." Strether then follows her up closely by asking, "'By which you mean that you know where she is?'" (136). Both of these loci are non-literal. Miss Gostrey indicates that she will not be at home, but does not really give Strether a straight answer as to why she intends to be absent when Marie de Vionnet calls. Much later, she says that she did not want to lie for her (332), which indicates that Miss Gostrey suspects all along the true relationship between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet. Thus, she knows "where" she is quite adequately, but after this, when Chad asks him to go and see Mme. de Vionnet, Strether answers, "'Excuse me, but I must really…know where I am. Is she bad?'" (144). Chad makes him feel foolish for asking, but Strether is only trying to achieve, in the same words, the clarity which his friend Miss Gostrey has shown that she has, and which she has refused to elucidate. It is by this maneuver, as well as by an outright half-fiction (that Mme. de Vionnet’s life is entirely "without reproach"), that Chad strings Strether along, and gets him to visit her. Once again the question of where someone "is," either morally or intellectually, has moved the plot forward into the next stage of development as well as advancing Strether’s understanding of the situation and identities he is questioning.
Strether, when asked by Mme. de Vionnet for what she calls "common civility," demurs somewhat and then says "'I've...done all that for myself the case admits of. I've said my say, and here I am'" (149). "Here I am" is a marker for both a physical and a moral locus, but this easy finality is not adequate to the circumstances, as Strether will learn. "Saying his say," carrying a message, is not all he is "in for"; he is in for actively "living out" the moral stances of each party to the other.

One might quarrel a little with the next occurrence of the sentence: "...[H]e knew, once more, as we have seen, where he was" (166). We might object on the score that it carries forth Bilham’s lie and deliberately misleads the reader by obfuscating in the narrative voice the actual relationship between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet. However, it defines not this, but where Strether finds himself in relation to such marginally verifiable knowledge as he has at the time. As he himself acknowledges to Miss Gostrey near the end of the novel, Bilham’s lie was only "a technical lie," and he says further that "the virtue came out" for him "hugely" (332). Near the end of the same paragraph as that of the narrative misdirection, which after all causes the reader also to experience a broader concept of morality by the end, Strether sketches out for Bilham his view of the "high fine friendship" between Chad Newsome and Marie de Vionnet and gives most of the credit to Mme. de Vionnet's fine qualities. He is to do this throughout the time in which he perceives Chad’s changes to be fortunate. He sums up by saying, "'So there you are'" (166).

In the next paragraph, while commenting upon the beneficent effect of her fine qualities and her "friendship" upon Chad himself, he says "'There he is,'" to which Bilham responds, "'There he is!'" (166). They conclude that by evidently "caring" for
Chad more than he cares for her now, Mme. de Vionnet has "saved" Chad, in Strether’s words, "as a social animal." He also attributes "a very high ideal of conduct" to Chad (169), and puts forth here at the end of Volume I the same conclusion as he does near the end of Volume II, that Chad should not leave her. The major difference in the parallel so constructed is that in the first volume he is unaware of the aspect of actual adultery which one must assume from all "clues" is in the relationship. Thus, what Strether has named the "high fine friendship" and Chad’s "very high ideal of conduct" in Volume I has still this identity, more or less, in Volume II, should Chad be "saved" and act admirably. This is true though the relationship of the lovers is tarnished in the second volume, with Strether’s knowledge operating as the catalyst for the change between the two volumes. Chad would be admirable because staying permanently with a woman who has already been intimate with him and sacrificed so much for him would still require a set of high ideals and would still properly acknowledge their "friendship." But as we know, Strether is doubtful at the end of Chad’s being "saved."

Book VII begins in Notre Dame with Strether watching Mme. de Vionnet as she prays or meditates; Maria Gostrey by looking at Strether can tell, when he reproaches her for leaving him and going away for a while, "'You're not where you were. And the thing…was for me not to be there either. You can go of yourself" (192). Where the "there" is in the two cases, however, is different if one has followed the implications of Miss Gostrey’s having originally refused to see Mme. de Vionnet, even to the extent of absenting herself from Strether. Strether is at a "there" that includes a spiritualized, aestheticized view of Mme. de Vionnet; he originally sees her as "beautiful"; he will end by viewing her as part of the "picturesque" vision of Paris (the difference between the
two axiological terms is examined by K. Johnson in *Henry James and the Visual*. Miss Gostrey’s position, by contrast, is murkier, beyond the "there" she originally occupied with Strether before it became apparent to her that Marie and Chad were under discussion. But when she and Strether talk, she more or less follows his lead and tells him this is what she intends to continue doing. Not only does this bifurcation of epistemological loci in terms of character development allow us to watch the fulfillment of Strether’s enlightenment, but it also keeps the two characters from dealing too directly in their conversation with the question of actual wrongdoing. This allows the "plot" also to develop satisfactorily to a startling discovery scene and a telling dénouement, the first retaining its shock value even after the first reading.

Strether himself tells Miss Gostrey that he has encouraged Chad to acquaint Mrs. Newsome with Chad's plans to remain in Paris, and he gives as his logic that the "old reasons" of Woollett have been met by "new facts" in Chad himself. He says to Miss Gostrey as his preface to this: "'That…is where I am'" (193). The clearest answer he gives her to her question, "'But where's Mr. Newsome?'" is that Chad "half" wants to go and "half" wants to stay (194). He indicates that the Pococks will have a chance to bring "new reasons," if they have any. When he and Miss Gostrey discuss the further probability that Chad will introduce the Pococks to Mme. de Vionnet and Strether says he himself is "prepared" for this, Miss Gostrey becomes French with her "'Bon! You are magnificent!'" (196). She thus ends her sentence with one of those Jamesian adjectives like "prodigious," "wonderful," etc. upon which Purdy (*LS* 176) and Yeazell (*LK* 73) have commented, Yeazell calling it "enigmatic praise." Strether, however, seems to accept this praise at face value, and says, "'…[T]hat's what, just once in all my dull days,
I think I shall like to have been!" (196). Here, the question of "where" people are in their decisions and preferences leads directly into a foreshadowing of the arrival of the Pococks, which takes place in Book VIII.

In Book VIII, Strether and Chad discuss the reception they will give the Pococks and in turn what reception the Pococks will give to their attempt to be "ravishing" (208). When Strether points out that Sarah has a "high firm definite purpose," which is to take Chad home, Chad at first says he will go with her (emphasizing the word "her" as if putting her in contrast with someone else, presumably Strether). When Strether does not immediately respond, then Chad asks if Strether really means for him to stay. At another silence from Strether, he says that he means for the Pococks to have "the best sort of time," to which Strether responds, "Ah there you are! I think if you really wanted to go….you wouldn't trouble about our good time." It is as if Strether, having overcommitted himself originally to his first objective, is now trying to renege, or to balance himself in preparation for adverse criticism. When he agrees with Chad that Chad is "too decent" not to care about his guests’ enjoyment (209), we read of Strether, "And he felt for the moment as if it were the preposterous end of his mission." For all that they agree at the end of Book VIII, Chapter I that they do not know what Mrs. Newsome thinks, it is clear from these exchanges that they at least anticipate resistance. As often happens, James has used his method of "telegraphing ahead," a sort of foreshadowing. In this case, it has the effect not only of introducing the Pococks before they actually appear and assessing what Chad’s stance toward them will be, but also of giving the reader an opportunity to compare the accuracy of Strether’s view of them with what he or she sees of them in their later dialogues. As well, Strether says that Sarah is
not coming to be "bamboozled" or "ravished," and he has just considered privately that she is not as "bribeable" as he himself has proved. This language in the text indicates that there is something a bit amiss in Paris, to call forth such compromised language. And again we have seen the source of the assessment of Chad’s intentions and preferences to be in the "there you are" remark, though Chad’s ultimate intention is to stay in Paris until it suits him to leave, not permanently as Strether seems to assume here.

The next significant repetition of "there we are" comes in Book IX when Strether and Maria Gostrey are discussing Chad’s involvement in the engagement of Jeanne to M. de Montbron. The expression in this case acknowledges two basic facts: the one that Chad has not told Strether of his efforts to get Jeanne married, the other that Chad’s action in the affiancing leaves only himself and Mme. de Vionnet as a possible set of "good friends," as Strether puts it (245-46). Strether uses the sentence "'So there we are,'" which Maria "candidly" repeats. One may wonder if this adverb "candidly" is not coy on James’s part, since upon subsequent readings it becomes obvious that Maria has not said to Strether all she thinks.

As Strether and Maria Gostrey debate what is ahead of Sarah and where her case falls short, they light upon Jim as the weak element, since he stands symbolically for what Mrs. Newsome wants of Chad. Strether indicates that he himself believes the only member of the group who senses Jim’s dreadful vulgarity is his own sister, Mamie. When Miss Gostrey wonders aloud what "good" this will do, Strether answers, "'None perhaps. But there—as usual—we are!'" (247). Coming at a significant or ultimate position in a chapter as this does again, with the addition “as usual,” it seems to signify at least in part Strether’s sense of resignation to the whole experience of being replaced, and
by those who cannot expect to appreciate the Paris he himself has learned to know. It is not that he does not try to help them to his new "knowledge," but rather that he phrases it in a language which they cannot understand. He refuses, particularly with Sarah, to speak in plain language to people who regard themselves as "frank" if not "plain folk." Instead, he speaks the indistinctly allusive, sometimes deliberately outrageous, slightly flirtatious, indirect language of Paris and of the expatriate colony more frequently than he is direct, showing off his acquisition of "mandarin" speech and deserting the more "natural," more "demotic" American language. As a Jamesian parody of himself, this is priceless.

The next chapter of Book IX picks up the phrase under discussion and echoes it in the narrative, introducing Strether’s unintentional private meeting with Mamie: "There they were yet again, accordingly, for two days more; when Strether, on being, at Mrs. Pocock’s hotel, ushered into that lady’s salon, found himself at first assuming a mistake on the part of the servant who had introduced him and retired" (247). There is a double meaning to a sentence on page 249, where we read "[The occupant of the balcony, Mamie]…did…come more into view, only she luckily came at the last minute as a contradiction of Sarah" [emphasis mine]. Strether has thought just previously to this that he wants a "clarifying scene" with Sarah, yet even after he sees the corner of a dress on the balcony, he "still [hangs] fire." The word "luckily," which I have emphasized, may mean not only that it was lucky that she did move within eyesight of Strether before he assumed there was no one there and left, but also that she "luckily" was not Sarah.

He has previously given up on Waymarsh, and neither Jim nor Sarah are people with whom Strether may form alliances in this situation. We receive about four pages of
Strether’s thoughts reported about Mamie before she has spoken more than one full sentence. Therefore, when Mamie says of Jeanne’s marriage that she herself will be suited by it, she may be hinting that it will leave her a clear field with Chad. There is in fact no direct evidence that she herself is aware of Sarah’s negative attitude towards Mme. de Vionnet, and there never is. Nor, though Strether tries to see it this way, is there any direct evidence that she is moving on mentally to Bilham as "the next young man," though she is waiting for him. In fine, this chapter between Strether and Mamie, interpreted even generously, is one of the most problematic in the novel in terms of judging the accuracy of Strether’s perceptions. It encapsulates the only hint of an alliance of perception which Strether can convince himself he has with those at home, and yet as Miss Gostrey says at the end of the previous chapter, "'What good will [such an alliance with Mamie] do?'"

In Book X, Strether and Bilham discuss the relative merits of the people of Paris and of Woollett. Strether suggests to Bilham that in Paris it is the occasion which has made the people’s identities, and not vice-versa. "'Well then,' his friend replied, 'there you are; I give you my impression for what it's worth'" (259). Bilham’s suggestion that Sarah wants Chad to enrich Woollett by the new ways he has acquired, and at the same time to benefit from Woollett itself, is not directly contested by Strether.

Half-seriously and half-jokingly, Strether goes on to suggest to Bilham that Bilham himself should marry Mamie. When Bilham tries to outmaneuver Strether’s "ingenuity" of suggestiveness by pointing out that he kept his appointment with her formally, strictly at the appointed hour, Strether does not mind contradicting his own previous assertion, that Bilham kept her waiting to seek proof of her affections. Strether says, "'Better still—
then there you are!'' (260). He says this as if it were still proof of Bilham’s being particularly taken with Mamie. When Bilham pointedly tells Strether that it was in fact Chad who asked him to call on her, Strether asks him if Chad knows "where [Mamie] has come out" (261). This is just another phrasing of the demonstrative "there she is."

Bilham tries to turn the tables on Strether by asking if he knows himself "where" Mamie "has come out," but Strether insists, in a remarkable paragraph, on the validity of his intuition. He has to admit that he has no absolute knowledge, no exact word from Mamie herself, yet says just observing her and knowing that she was expecting Bilham and was somewhat disappointed to see Strether himself is conclusive. He ends his peroration with "'For all you say, you're up to your eyes. So there you are'" (262).

When Strether figures as an oracle or augur beside Miss Barrace, her conversation, though witty, is more to the point when it comes to Chad’s relationship with Mme. de Vionnet than Bilham’s was with reference to Mamie. As Miss Barrace says to Strether, the "question" is as to "where" he will come out in his speculations, thoughts, and intuitions, and she and others, as she says, hope it will be "very, very far on" (265). We in fact get some sense from their interaction that Strether is forced to go far indeed when he ends up saying of Mme. de Vionnet’s feelings for Chad, "'How indeed she must care!'" and we are told that Miss Barrace, who has dropped him the hint, "had got used to it long before" (269).

Thus, in Book X a certain balance and contrast are struck between the two theoretically romantic relationships being discussed, that of Bilham and Mamie, which is more or less guesswork on Strether’s part and is far-fetched, and the relationship between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, about which Strether receives outside confirmation from
Miss Barrace. And in each case, the sentences about "where" someone is or will end up occur. These loci are expressions of identity.

Chad uses the expression "Ah there you are!" in Book XI as if in surprised discovery of Strether’s position and desire to see Sarah a second time after the first private meeting with her proved a fiasco. As Chad notes, he does not understand what advantage Strether could possibly hope to "gain" (292). Strether answers the challenge by pointing out that Chad has no "imagination." This identifies Strether for us again as a man of much imagination, increasingly combining moral and aesthetic ingeniousness.

The same manner of pointing to a character’s essential identity occurs in the next repetition of the sentence as well, when Maria Gostrey "wails" the sentence "'Ah there you are!'" in response to Strether’s unsatisfying offer to "express fifty" wishes in order to have her attention (295). It is not fifty that she really wants, but one, and we have derived the increasing sense from her dialogue with Strether that it is of a personal nature. Here, however, the character herself is underlining her ficelle function across the boundary of the text. She is noting that she is really held to Strether’s convenience and need of her, which is translated into the reader’s need of her. The narrative thus expresses Strether’s resignation to his advantage over her by echoing "There, if it were so, he continued for the rest of the time to be…” (295).

Strether jests that if he drags Chad away, instead of having to deal with Mrs. Newsome’s disappointment, he will have to deal with Miss Gostrey’s, to which she, emphasizing her previous point again, says "'You haven't come out where you are…to please me'" (296). She further states the difference between them in terms of their power in the situation (301) when she denies that she "make[s herself] felt," and says he does so
more than anyone. He admits that Chad feels the same, and she answers, "'There you are then…'" When the conversation veers back to Chad and what he has to "forget" if he leaves Paris, and she questions its possibility, Strether responds, this time pointing out the facts themselves rather than locating the position of a person amidst them, "'Ah there again we are! That's just what I was to have made him do…'" (302). Thus, just as the first two books in the novel initiate a starting point for an examination of people’s loci morally, epistemologically, and dramatically, Book XI initiates a summing up of the loci, particularly Strether’s, which Book XII will continue and make even clearer.

For example, Book XII has as its first occurrence of the sentence Mme. de Vionnet’s final statement of resignation and self-sacrifice, the notion that one must give instead of taking because, as she says, "'You know so, at least...where you are!'" She has just noted that giving is "what plays you least false" (323). This locates her in line with a comparatively high moral stance, a greater extreme of which Strether had previously credited to her. There is some indication, however, that her stance is not perfect, that she is not above getting Strether to deny his negative emotions about having been deceived, when she appeals to a more aesthetic guide for behavior. She does this by saying to him later in their discussion, "'We bore you—that's where we are'" (326). Boredom is not, after all, the correct name for Strether’s condition. He tries to reassure her that he may still help, but she seems difficult to console. This would naturally be the case under the circumstances, not only of the loss of Strether’s view of her as "sublime," but of the upcoming loss of Chad which she knows may be necessary.

As Maria Gostrey and Strether are discussing the outcome of his support of the two lovers, she tells him of his previous outlook(s) on the situation, "'I never quite knew
where you were" (332). That she is speaking both of a moral locus and an epistemological one is made obvious when she tells him he sometimes seemed "grandly cynical" and sometimes "grandly vague." She gets her answer, however, as to "where he was" in the course of their discussion, when she finds out for sure that before the day on the river, his "eyes" had been "closed." She exclaims, "'There you are!'" (334).

That Strether himself is not unaware of how this quality may strike others is clear from his telling Chad, who is after all subject to the natural flightiness of youth, that he himself is "portentously solemn." "'There I am….I was made so'" (340). This is yet another more aesthetic and less moral assessment of himself, but he addresses himself to a receptive audience and Chad strives to reassure him, which is not entirely successful. That is, he must feel that he himself is "right," but finally doubts of his ability to make anyone else so, with the possible exception of Miss Gostrey. When their encounter ends with her admission that she cannot "resist" his "horrible sharp eye" for what makes him "right," his remark as previously noted is, "'Then there we are!"' This is again a conversation about a moral assessment.

Thus, Strether ends as he began, "right" in some field or endeavor. The difference is that whereas initially he was "right" in the eyes of others who validated his identity by accepting him into their society, at the end he is "right" but stands alone, with the exception of Miss Gostrey as a temporary verifier before such time as he leaves Paris. He goes home to a "difference," but has arduously worked through his identity stance, not only intuitively and morally, by feeling, but also aesthetically and epistemologically, by theorizing his way through his predicament and by general appreciation. He has achieved therefore a new status, though his "little course in the public eye" he sees as over. He has
become his own man, his "being-for-itself" in Sartre's terms, and has supported as well James’s famous assertion, echoed by Susan M. Griffin, that character development is plot, a sort of plot ideally suited to Bal's "plotless world." Though Strether feels that he has made a "poor show" of his "beginning to be young," he nevertheless agrees earlier with Miss Gostrey when she tells him that "[t]he wonderful and special thing about you is that you are, at this time of day, youth" (199). He agrees that he is "youth for the trip to Europe." From this one might be tempted to put James’s novel about Strether’s development under the category of a Bildungsroman, or, since Strether becomes at least an artist of the sensibilities, a Künstlerroman, though it would be an exceptional type of either form in question. After all, Strether still centers his view of his own "absolutely prime adolescence" vicariously in Chad and Marie, and he is a middle-aged man.

Strether’s development of awareness and identity is part of the overall development of knowledge and perspective in the book. There is a plethora of periphrastic forms relating to "what to call it" and "naming," and knowledge seems to occupy a negotiatory, intermediate position between naming and identity. On the other hand, all clues to actual identity are being filtered through Strether, though indirectly, so his identity is the one about which he finds out the most, and it is the most important for readers.

Miss Gostrey leads the way for Strether by being gracious in Bilham’s surroundings about those expatriates like him, "the named, the numbered, or the caricatured" (85). This is illustrative of at least three ways to interpret identity which are easier for Miss Gostrey in Paris than they are for Strether, at least at the beginning. The word "caricatured" brings up the concept of "type," which Strether uses through the first part of the novel while he is at a loss. He does not really use it again until he is in the country
(304-305), when he hopes to meet villagers who will remind him of Maupassant, and when Mme. de Vionnet’s fluster and flurry of language upon their meeting reminds him of "a mere voluble class or race."

The birth of Strether’s major awareness of type occurs in the English theatre with Maria Gostrey (43-44), when he thinks that both the actors on the stage and those around him in the audience are not "as the types of Woollett," of which he thinks there are only two, men and women. The question surfaces between Strether and Miss Gostrey as to what type Mrs. Newsome belongs, and when Miss Gostrey asks if she is "an American invalid," Strether responds, "'There’s nothing she likes less than to be called one…'" (46). Later, Miss Barrace jovially says that his friend Waymarsh is "a type, the grand old American….[t]he Hebrew prophet…” (77).

The first indication we have that Chad seems no longer of the American "type" which Strether recognizes is when Chad presents himself at the theatre in Paris. Early on, Strether thinks that he has a qualitative name for Chad when we are told that Chad and his qualities have "taken on a name…[that of a]…Pagan" (99). However, soon Strether revises this estimate and thinks that Chad is perhaps a "gentleman."

One of the first people previously unknown to him for whom he has to find a type and a name is Bilham, especially as Bilham is representative of himself and his friends. As we have seen, type signifies a kind of approximate, condensed knowledge. One of the first remarks Strether makes about him is "his name’s rather funny," and in this use the anomaly of the nickname signals Strether’s lack of exposure to the "type." We are told that "[t]he young man was [Strether’s] first specimen" but at the same time "'[I]t came up for Maria Gostrey…as a special form of the oldest thing they knew," and what she knows
is his quality of "being more American than anybody" (83). When Waymarsh objects that "little" Bilham does not strike him as much of a "good American," she replies, "'Ah,…the name of the good American is as easily given as taken away! What is it, to begin with, to be one….Surely nothing that’s so pressing was ever so little defined'" (86-87). This question of what makes a good American is by-the-by another central point of contention in the book. Strether seems to prove himself to be the most favorable example of a truly self-achieved good American in the whole novel, as is natural because he is the hero, and being exposed to his thinking processes enlists our sympathies.

Repeatedly (117-119), when Strether knows of Mme. de Vionnet and Jeanne only that they are Chad’s "friends" and are a mother and daughter, the question comes up between him and Miss Gostrey as to "their name," and "their nationality," and he says he does not care, but one of the first things he asks Chad about them is what their nationality is. He meets them at Gloriani’s reception, where Gloriani is to him "a dazzling prodigy of type" and his guests are types Strether notes again as very unlike those of Woollett, the women even more so than the men (120-122). He also makes an interesting point to Miss Gostrey, that she herself evidently thinks the relationship between Chad and the ladies can be "virtuous—in any sense worthy of the name" (117) only if the elder woman is not free. When he sees and meets them for the first time, they are called ces dames; that is, they are sufficiently foreign that the text itself uses their own language to denominate them, and the words femmes du monde are further applied to the women at Gloriani’s reception.

As Strether finds out (136), Miss Gostrey recognizes their name, and soon makes her decision not to "be at home" to Mme. de Vionnet on the symbolic basis of it, because she
knows the history behind it. Miss Gostrey is also sensitive to what Mrs. Newsome represents, the more when Strether has lost Mrs. Newsome; she is hesitant to mention Mrs. Newsome to him near the end, and her hesitation is "as if she had had a delicacy about sounding the name" (345).

Thus, his own quest is an important part of his original mission to bring Chad home, but sidetracks him from this goal the more he considers it; his quest is "to find names for" things or people, or "to give a name to" them, where the name has an obsolete correspondence point-to-point to the reality itself, is "transparent," not "opaque" like the Parisian terminology to which Strether learns to adjust. To access concepts used in Yeazell’s discussion of metaphor and talking in James, she quotes Ortega y Gasset from The Dehumanization of Art and Notes on the Novel (passim) to the effect that primitive man mistakes the word for the thing itself, as if they were identical (LK 59). Strether develops from James’s version of a man whose chances have left him with what James considers a more "primitive" society, the American one, though Strether is not as apparently simple as Waymarsh, and is intelligent and imaginative enough to extend his boundaries of understanding. In doing so, he navigates the boundaries between demotic (American) and mandarin (Parisan) talk, so that he is able to find the human "equation" uniting the two.

That Strether has trouble naming things and people is signified by the occurrence of sentences such as "...[H]e asked himself by what name, when challenged...he could call [Chad’s difference] for [Sarah]" (206). Strether more than once exclaims, "I don’t know what to call it," which is sometimes followed by a surmise, but which is at times a helpless search for a definition. That he sometimes falls short of his goal is indicated
when even to himself he can find no words, as in the sentence which tells us that "he had no name" for the "general result" of Mme. de Vionnet’s surroundings, but would "come nearest to naming" it her "private honour" and "respectability" (146). Also, when we see him contemplating what he will tell Sarah about himself, we read, "...[H]e had no name ready for the working, in his own organism, of his own more timid dose [of Europe]" (213). There are even times during his conversations with Miss Gostrey when he expresses this and his frustration with it outright. For example, she asks him if he means to stay in Paris out of "curiosity," and he responds, "'Call it what you like! I don’t care what it’s called…'" (194).

Strether’s quest position at the beginning is one he articulates to Waymarsh, upon fielding various questions from his friend, as "'I don’t know….I don’t know….I don’t know….I guess I don’t know anything….nothing but that—that I don’t know anything" (72). This is Strether’s version of the Socratic reduction. He twice says to speculation and queries, "'I haven’t the least idea'" (82, 95), first about whether Chad’s "friend" has accompanied him to Cannes or not, second from Chad himself as to whether or not he seems "improved." The only thing Strether seems quite sure of is stated when he says to Waymarsh, "'I do know what you know'" (74). One might speculate that the near quotation of Socrates’s position is meant to align Strether with the sceptical tradition, were it not for Strether’s tendency to romanticize, idealize, and theorize freely. His questions, however, are related to the epistemological tradition in general, as he asks of Miss Gostrey searchingly, "'How do I know?'" [of which he makes a joke by adding to it “'And what do I care?'" about whether or not Chad has anyone “with” him, and about which Strether is actually quite serious (81)]. He has this in mind in a slightly different
form again after the trip to the country, when the narrative indirectly questions "How could he tell?" [about whether or not the lovers went back to the countryside after leaving him in Paris and whether their relationship with him has changed (327)]. A difference between the two questions is that in the first case, Strether apparently still cares about his potential marriage to Mrs. Newsome, but later on in the second case he has become far more committed to the issue of the honesty of the two lovers. "How do I know?" becomes a central inquiry of the book, as Yeazell has seen. Other more precise questions, asides, and speculations about identity operate around it. Many questions, especially Strether’s about Chad and Mme. de Vionnet and the Parisian milieu, are both rhetorical and non-rhetorical. That is, they are of that odd paradoxical Jamesian form which Mme. de Vionnet uses when she says to Strether, "'Ugly or beautiful, it doesn’t matter what we call [the appearances we have forced upon you]'" (326). The questions which are of this variety express both postulations of possible positions and at the same time a genuine lack of knowledge. One of the rare times when Strether is actually said actively not to want to know something, as opposed to being simply reluctant to find out, is when he goes to the country for a day and sees the river. We are told it is "a river of which he didn’t know, and didn’t want to know, the name…” (304). This is because he seeks rest and solace from the burden of information which he already has, only to find himself caught up by the lovers and floating at first down "the silver stream of impunity" with them.

Waymarsh and Miss Gostrey in their different ways are more certain of things than Strether is. Waymarsh asks Strether of Bilham’s knowledge of Marie de Vionnet, “Doesn’t he know what she is?” This not only assumes that Bilham will tell what he
"knows," but also uses "what" instead of "who"; Waymarsh, like Sarah, has some hard and fast categories for people. Strether answers him by saying, "'You can’t make out over here what people do know'" (74). By contrast, Miss Gostrey, though she confesses that "'I don’t quite know how'" Bilham is working for Strether to unite him with Chad, also says the knowledge that he is doing so is "'in [her] bones" (88). This does not stop Miss Gostrey from having many more complicated "categories" than Strether, and from saying to him in friendly mockery, when he seems to be thinking it too easy to label the unknown mystery woman in Chad’s life "not nice," "'I delight… in your classifications'" (107). Strether is often uncertain, as "whoever she was" is applied to Miss Gostrey’s card early on (22), and later "whatever it was" to "the need…that had brought [Mme. de Vionnet to Notre Dame]" (174). He frequently asks, "'What shall I call it?'" which is sometimes then followed by a guess, and when Miss Gostrey insists that Bilham is working by instructions from Chad via telegram from Cannes, Strether asks "'Do you know that?'" (88). She tells him, "'I do better. I see it,'" which appeals to Strether’s view of her as "the priestess of the oracle" though she has just said that she is neither a "seer" nor a "prophetess," but simply a "woman of sense" (87). Other questions and ponderings are signified by such expressions as "'Is [great interest] the expression [Bilham] uses [for Chad’s attitude towards the de Vionnets]?'" (82); "'….[I]s Chad—what shall I say—monstrous?'" (88); "'….[W]hat shall I call it?—the sense of beauty" (87); "'Is it then a conspiracy?'" (87); "'an event so—what do they call it?—auspicious'" (96); "'And what do you call the truth?'" [Strether to Mme. de Vionnet when she suggests that he tell the "truth" to Mrs. Newsome to keep her "patient" (150)]; "'What do you call your dose?'" [Bilham to Strether at Chad’s soirée (261)]; "'…[W]hat proof [of your deep admiration
for Mrs. Newsome] would one have thought you’d call sufficient?" [Sarah to Strether at their first private interview (280)]; "What…should you call counting?" [Miss Gostrey to Strether when he indicates that he would not like to “count” with Miss Gostrey’s disappointment in him (296)]; and "….I’ve upset everything in your…sense of—what shall I call it?—all the decencies and possibilities" [Mme. de Vionnet to Strether in their interview after the country scene (323)].

Expressions relating to what something is called occur with some variations in emphasis; for example, they mark when knowledge and naming occurred, one first, or both simultaneously, as in the clause "as he afterwards named it." While there is no indication precisely that Strether’s lack of ability to come to immediate terms with his surroundings and the people whom he tries to analyze is purely linguistic, he aligns "word,’ as the French called it," with the term "virtuous attachment." That even a direct quote from Bilham receives a label translated into English from the French word "mot" marks the fact that it is still an approximation, and as we know, it is one of which Strether will discover the full potentiality. Some clauses also mark the difference between his discussions with Miss Gostrey and his private ponderings, such as: "as Strether put it to himself," "as he would have expressed it," "as he would have called it," or the more indicative "as he could perhaps have scarce escaped phrasing it." "As he synthetically phrased it to himself" seems to express his private dissatisfaction with not having given Sarah, who is travelling to Paris, an adequate picture of "a sort of thing" he does not himself know how to denominate exactly for her, the relationship between Chad and Marie. "As he put it" and "as it might have been called" signify respectively a naming
activity of fairly definite nature and approximate knowledge. "As you may say" and "as you say" are dialogue forms of the same basic indefiniteness as the latter.

We are told at the beginning of the scene in Notre Dame that "good moments" still have their "value" for Strether, interrupted by the clause "if he could call them good." This aside seems to link up with Strether's remark to Miss Gostrey that what he wants to get out of the situation "is a thing I've ceased to measure or even to understand" (296). He sorts this out by the end of the novel, however. "As he was...pleased to think it" gives an example of how Strether has to accept the less tangible sometimes. A kindred example is when he thinks at Chad's soirée, after talking to Bilham, that he is free to think anything that keeps him going (264). Or, when he remembers having appeared to ask Mme. de Vionnet (before going to the country) to be for him not as he knows her through Chad, but as whatever he shows her would please him (306).

That he is sensitive to Mme. de Vionnet’s influence remains true even after he has been led by the river encounter to think the obvious. Thus, when he goes to see Miss Gostrey, he is aware that Mme. de Vionnet has been to see her first. We read, "He was sure within a minute that something had happened; it was so in the air of the rich little room that he had scarcely to name his thought" (330). He is led here by intuition, as he often is when cogitation alone will not serve, and Sarah is the real contrast with him in terms of how she names (or does not name) things. She is stiff with family honor almost throughout, and we find out that what is produced in Woollett, as Strether indicated at the beginning to Miss Gostrey, is something ludicrous. It "[is] a matter about which Mrs. Pocock appeared to have had little to say [to Mme. de Vionnet]—never sounding the word—and it didn’t signify [later on]" (344). As well, Sarah relies neither on cogitation
nor on intuition, but on a tried-and-true system of basic (American) principles of judgement and prejudice. She knows exactly "what to think" and "how to act" regarding Mme. de Vionnet: "[Sarah] required no patronage and no support, which were but other names for a false position…" (223).

By contrast with Sarah's directness and staunch support of her mother, Chad has from the first prevaricated with Strether as his mother's representative, and therefore with her. He does so by indirect means, such as responding with "'One doesn't know quite what you mean'" to Strether's question about whether or not he is "in anybody's hands" (100). Strether has been stymied at the beginning by Chad's disclaimer, which provokes many of the older man's later questions, standing as it does as a starting point for his inquiry. Even in his further conversations with Chad, Strether is still struggling with labels and names. He asks Chad, who has just claimed that his own relations with Mme. de Vionnet are "good," if she is "bad," using another of the Jamesian paradoxical contrasts in conversation, and Chad asks, "'Is that what's implied--?''' Strether does not withdraw his question. We read, "But something in him brought him back, though he still didn't know quite how to turn it" (144). This term "turn" could refer to a trope like a metaphor, and Strether's understanding is often metaphorical, or it could refer to an attempt to turn aside Chad's implied criticism, or both. Strether rephrases the question and asks, "Is her life without reproach?" to which Chad gives a resounding affirmative. Thus Chad again evades the implication of wrongdoing, which Strether tries to put into language that only blames Mme. de Vionnet. Only after the discovery scene does Chad really take upon himself any of the responsibility of his acts, and Strether seems to have the distinct impression at the end that Chad intends to "wiggle out" of accountability for his actions.
Their opposition of terminology continues throughout the book, when Strether has begun to explore the process of questions and answers. When Chad asks him if his following Chad home if he leaves can actually be called "accepting" his "flight," Strether responds, "Certainly—it’s the only thing to call it" (191), and tells him that he himself must stay to keep Chad there.

Strether is still definite about some things. His most certain knowledge is that the couple in the country is Chad and Marie, even when they are at a distance and seem to be thinking about avoiding him. This unravels a whole chain of suppositions previously made and supports other conclusions which were only tentative before. One of these is the question of his own complicity in honoring their affair, and this in turn leads him to feel vicarious guilt which, unacknowledged at first to anyone like Miss Gostrey, makes him feel in turn that "…[H]is irresponsibility, his impunity, his luxury, had become—there was no other word for them—immense" (318).

Several characters including Strether have fanciful names for things and people. Waymarsh calls Strether a "fine-tooth comb" (74). Miss Gostrey calls herself "an instructor of youth" (86), and calls her "huge general acquaintance" "the shop" (198). Later, Strether’s thought about the difference of "emancipation" between himself and Waymarsh is that it is "but the difference…of tweedledum and tweedledee…so purely comparative that it was like the advance of the door-mat on the scraper…" (201). Even the restrained Mme. de Vionnet is partial to the fanciful when it serves a useful purpose, as for example when she tells Strether that Chad's "cousin" is "what we call the young lady [Mamie]" (238). When Strether considers the affiancing of Jeanne de Vionnet, we read, "It was…what he would have called the real thing" (240).
The narrative voice's "I" and "we" enter into the naming using the word "call" for "name" or "denominate" in at least two places. In the first, the image is one from the previous page of Strether whistling in the dark when he writes copiously still to Mrs. Newsome. The text reads, "The increase of his darkening, however, and the quickening, as I have called it, of his tune, resided in the fact that he was hearing almost nothing" (197). There is another striking instance, that of Strether discovering the "key, as it might have been called," by which to regard Chad’s offer of a room for the night: the first instance of the metaphor is followed up on the next page by the clause which explains that Strether’s urging of Chad to stay with Mme. de Vionnet is "the rest of his business" and "the effect of it was to enable him…to play with what we have called the key" (336-337). The "we" form and the "I" form may both just simply be authorial identity forms and not invitations to the reader to consult, if one considers as proof that there are relatively few intrusions of this kind in *The Ambassadors*. The proof is perhaps made a trifle stronger if we include the gesture of seeming authorial impatience which results from the other use of "we," that which occurs when "…[S]trether gave [Maria Gostrey] the view, vivid with a hundred more touches than we can reproduce, of what had happened for him that morning" (295).

Some of the things we learn about the characters’ attitudes toward things and toward each other are drawn not from James’s delicate way with "touches" and "nuances" but from exact questions and outright statements and equivalences involving some conjugation of the verb "to be." These are relatively low in number for such a long work, and are queries meant to achieve certain knowledge, or are pretenses at certain knowledge. Some of the things we supposedly "learn" are: Waymarsh is a success;
Strether is a failure; Mrs. Newsome is "just a moral swell"; Strether "was Lambert Strether because he was on the cover [of a periodical], whereas it should have been…that he was on the cover because he was Lambert Strether" (62). "It was Strether’s belief that [Chad] had been comparatively innocent before th[e] first migration…” (66); [Mrs. Newsome’s desire to see "the woman herself" (Mme. de Vionnet)]….is courage….it’s exultation" (47). Strether is a "humbug"; Cannes is "different….better….best" (82).

"Oh, you’re not one of them!" Strether says to Waymarsh of the Europeans (74); and "Oh he’s all right—he’s one of us!" (83), as Miss Gostrey says to Strether of Bilham.

Strether, after meeting Chad, is taken aback by the puzzle "that Chad should not be Chad…it was… a case of transformation unsurpassed" (90); Strether is a self-proclaimed "busybody"; Chad is "altered," "older and more of a handful"; Chad is "the way men marked out by women [are]"; the difference in Chad is a "plot," a "plant"; Chad’s a "rare case,…awfully changed"; Chad (according to Bilham) is not "playing any game"; Chad "wants to be free"; Chad’s connection with the de Vionnets is "a virtuous attachment";

Strether is Chad’s "next best" friend to the de Vionnets; Miss Gostrey is "a collector"; women (according to Miss Gostrey) "are abysses"; [Mme. de Vionnet is] "a woman who, between courses, could be graceful with her elbows" (179); people in Woollett (according to Chad) are "children"; [Sarah’s gracious behavior to Strether at the train] "was only a sign, but [it was] enough" (209); [Waymarsh] "wouldn’t be [Strether’s] friend…without the…sacred rage" (273); [Mrs. Newsome] "is all, as [Strether has] called it, fine cold thought" (299); "the gentleman [on the river] was Chad"; [according to Strether, if Chad left Mme. de Vionnet, he would "be a brute…[and would] be guilty of the last infamy…" (337); and as Chad says, "'[If I leave Marie,] I should be a beast, eh?"' (339).
Simple questions which are significant for the development of the novel's picture of identity(ies) occur more readily early on than the complicated speculations which largely replace them as Strether gets caught up in his "mission." The oppositions they set up are fairly direct. For example, one set of questions concerns the "article produced" in Woollett and whether or not the Newsomes as a family inherited the money of "an old swindler." Opposed to this is Strether’s question honoring Waymarsh’s assessment of him as unfit for the job of sorting things out for the Newsomes, when Strether asks, "Am I a fine-tooth comb?" (74). The next conflict occurs between Chad’s question as to whether or not Strether finds him "improved," and our suspicion that for both of them at this point of Strether’s development the question is largely confined to appearance, or that Strether is trying to read the identity of the man thus. Strether asks Chad further if there’s any woman with him, but Chad dismisses the question as not affecting his behavior without really answering it, answering it only by implication. Another set of questions which is especially pertinent occurs when Strether questions Bilham about the unknown Mme. de Vionnet by asking, "Is the creature honest?" and "Is it untrue that [Chad’s] free?" and Bilham wants to know "Is the creature…Chad himself?" Strether persists with questions such as "Why isn’t he free?" repeated several times, and "Why isn’t he free if he’s good?" (111-12). Further than this, he asks Bilham if Chad wants to marry the unknown woman, and says, "Then I may take it from you that he is good?" (112), to which Bilham responds in the affirmative. When later Bilham tellingly explains not only that the de Vionnets are the "virtuous attachment" but says also that it’s "what they pass for," and comments "What more than a vain appearance does the wisest of us know?" (124), Strether goes on questioning but comes away with the impression that
Jeanne is Chad’s interest. Strether later asks Miss Barrace if people in Paris show “for what they really are,” and she gives him a partial affirmative, whereupon he goes on to ask if Mme. de Vionnet shows "for what she really is." Miss Barrace answers by assuring him that Mme. de Vionnet is "charming" and "perfect," and Bilham tells him to judge for himself. Here, we see that his questions are not met with rejections or denials, his original expectation, but with evasions and half-truths. Thus, the explorations conducted with the otherwise straightforward verb conjugations of "to be" in question form are distinctly unsatisfying for Strether, and lead him into the morass of human behavior, identity, and motivation, not always and only because people deliberately mislead him, but also because the answers he is seeking do in fact portray a very complicated, though perhaps not totally inaccessible, truth. Strether finds that the truth is complicated no matter what the issue and whose basic identity he is considering.

There are at least nine more significant occurrences of the word "identity" itself, and one of the related word "identify" in the novel, and in each case, some kind of deviation from the truth, however simple, takes place in relation to the character involved. The word might almost be said to be a periphrastic abbreviation of this intention. The first occurs with reference to Miss Gostrey’s card of introduction, which she gives to Strether. We are told that her card has her name, a number and a street in Paris on it, "without other appreciable identity than its foreignness" (22). Though Miss Gostrey turns out to be a very complex person, her card is simple to the point of obscurity from Strether’s perspective, and cloaks much that will later become even more obscure before it becomes clear. We know that later she hides her reasons from him for leaving town and refusing to see Mme. de Vionnet, and she often seeks out his opinion without immediately
offering her own analysis. This is not to discount the way in which she operates to elicit his opinion as *ficelle*, but only to point to her qualities as a character who is Strether’s main interlocutor. Thus the foreignness of her identity consists in the sophistication with which she fields Strether’s questions and meditations.

Perhaps the character with whom it is hardest to associate any form of deceit is the shadowy form of Mrs. Newsome, whom we do not see directly but only through Strether’s descriptions and thoughts about her. Yet even she is capable of casting herself into a rôle which Strether has indicated to her that he associates with her. For instance, we read that Mrs. Newsome is fond of wearing to the opera

…a black silk dress…and an ornament that his memory was able further to identify as a ruche….He had once said to the wearer…that she looked, with her ruff and other matters, like Queen Elizabeth, and it had after this in truth been his fancy that, as a consequence of that tenderness and an acceptance of the idea, the form of this special tribute to the "frill" had grown slightly more marked. (43)

As an educated woman, Mrs. Newsome surely knows who Queen Elizabeth I was, and perhaps does not mind associating herself with an imperious ruler, though Strether also discusses with Miss Gostrey whether or not Mrs. Newsome can be called an "American invalid." The tribute she has accepted, more of a tribute to her personality than to her state of health, may be wishful thinking, though we see her in the book first ordering Strether forth and then sending forth the Pococks. It is not that she is consciously deceiving anyone, rather it is that Strether acquires in the course of his time in Paris a fuller perspective on her, courtesy of that psychological distance which physical distance and time away provide. This perspective allows him to become aware of her foibles, her self-deceits, and her refusal to comprehend what Strether regards as Chad’s great change.
The two ladies, Mrs. Newsome and Miss Gostrey, "stand for" two different kinds of influence of the American woman on Strether. Both of them seem to have taken him to improve upon in their different ways, Mrs. Newsome as a rigid, upright, and ultimately exhausting model of behavior, Miss Gostrey the expatriate as an imaginative, lucid, supportive (though occasionally obscure) aid to the exposition of Strether’s perspective.

When Strether speaks to Miss Gostrey of what he is and what he has done with his life up to the point when they meet, he refers to his "name on the cover" of Mrs. Newsome’s journal as his "one presentable little scrap of an identity" (51). That he is thinking of how he is presented as a public man is indicated, because he also mentions that this editorial duty "rescue[s his identity] a little…from the wreck of hopes and ambitions, the refuse-heap of disappointments and failures…” (51). In any complete sense of the word "identity" these things are a part of the picture as well, but Strether here implies that he wants to exclude them from consideration, that he is, if not content, at least desirous of being known for the one positive thing alone. It is almost as if he deliberately overstates the case, Miss Gostrey’s sympathetic ear causing him to become self-pitying or falsely modest while trying to seem, as she hints, self-effacing and ironic. It seems also true that he is trying to return her attentions to him by amusing her with whatever is at hand, a smile at himself perhaps most of all.

Strether also questions whether he has deceived those in Woollett, particularly Mrs. Newsome, and acknowledges still later that he has at least partially deceived himself. The first questioning occurs when he wonders in Book VII if, in his letters home, he has "…acquired….the great new science of beating the sense out of words" (196). The second recognition of deceit is less of a question and more of an admission, and takes
place when his consideration of the revealed affair between Chad and Marie provokes this statement: "He recognised at last that he had really been trying all along to suppose nothing" (315). Thus, Strether is not entirely reliable even to himself, though essentially his attempts at honesty with others and his sincere admissions to them and especially and finally to himself (coupled with his intelligence and imagination) make him fairly reliable as a complex recorder for the reader.

Chad’s apparently changed identity, as a Pagan, gentleman, man of the world, however Strether labels it privately, is what Strether is forced to acknowledge when first he meets the young man again. There are at least three repetitions of the word "identity" in connection with this meeting in Books III and IV, and early Chad receives more of the attention of Strether’s excited imagination than anyone else. All other instances of the word "identity" are bestowed more sparingly amongst the other characters. Strether’s "perception of the young man’s identity" is described as "quite one of the sensations that count in life," which brings on "the emotion of bewilderment…that he had proposed to himself from the first…to show least" (89-90). Here, his “imagination” is bewildered as to how to follow up on the "sensation" because "It had faced every contingency but that Chad should not be Chad" (90). The sensation itself thus seems to Strether a sort of gestalt, which relies on a correspondence or internal connection between what cannot be called its "parts" without separating Chad’s physical appearance from his inner identity. That Chad’s change is Strether’s strong impression is clear. However, we later see Chad displaying the selfish behavior which Strether thinks of as allowing others to "turn his wheel" for him; it is also clear that this is more consistent with the "bold and wild" Chad of Strether’s previous memories. Here again, Strether allows himself to be misled,
deceives himself even, but deceit is a mutual endeavor in this case, with Chad trying repeatedly until after the discovery scene to obscure Strether’s accurate perception of what is happening between him and Mme. de Vionnet. Meanwhile, starting with the "too remarkable…truth" of Chad’s "sharp rupture of an identity," judging from the public man again as he has done of himself when speaking to Miss Gostrey of his own former life, Strether is therefore doing Chad the justice of equal consideration. That Strether is alert to Chad’s flaws is passingly obvious, as when the reader sees that "Chad raised his face to the lamp, and it was one of the moments at which he had…most his air of designedly showing himself. It was as if at these instants he just presented himself, his identity so rounded off, his palpable presence and his massive young manhood, as such a link in the chain as might practically amount to a kind of demonstration" (99). Strether notes further "the hint of some self-respect, some sense of power, oddly perverted; something latent and beyond access, ominous and perhaps enviable…." All these items, the idea of "designedly showing himself" and the idea of something "perverted" and "ominous," are not enough to keep Strether from the mistake of allowing Chad to lie to him, both verbally and implicitly, partially because of the "perhaps enviable" qualities Chad has achieved or has had fostered in himself.

That considerations of identity can be the subject of witty conversations is made obvious by Miss Barrace, when she "hits off" Waymarsh as an "Indian chief" and herself as "the Great Father" of another civilization before whom he stands wordless, "wrapt in his blanket…" (126). We are told that "[s]he was delighted at this hit of her identity with that personage—it fitted so her character; she declared it was the title she meant henceforth to adopt." One hears the tone of Miss Barrace’s wit in this sentence, for what
she appears delighted with is less "this hit of her identity" than her hit of Waymarsh’s. And it is typical of her that as usual she compares herself to a male figure, as she does implicitly in her tendency to smoke, which at the time was not usual for women and which seems to shock Strether and Waymarsh. As one can see, witty conversation is its own kind of deceit in this novel, for it keeps other people at a certain distance from the converser, and gives the converser a critical distance from and an advantage over those to whom she speaks. She, like Chad, is performing, though her aims are perhaps less culpable.

Mme. de Vionnet’s identity is the most complex in the book after Strether’s, and it is appropriate that Strether aligns himself with her and attempts repeatedly to fathom her identity and motives. One especially pertinent part of her identity is shown to him when she is in Notre Dame, is not aware of his presence, and cannot therefore be deceiving him, though it is always possible to think that she is fooling herself. The text describes the "special interest excited in him by his vision of his companion’s identity with the person whose attitude before the glimmering altar had so impressed him. This attitude fitted admirably into the stand he had privately taken about her connexion with Chad…” (176). Strether assumes here that she is not obfuscating the truth about her relationship with Chad, based on his supposition that she is "unassailably innocent" because she "haunt[s] the churches," where she would "never have come to flaunt an insolence of guilt." Her great effect on Strether further changes part of his own identity, from being someone of a slightly indecisive and theoretical cast of mind to a more active, though still vicariously disposed, figure. "Since she took him for a firm object…—he would do his
best to be one" (177). Thus, Mme. de Vionnet also deceives Strether, not perhaps as willingly and directly as Chad does, but just as certainly.

Jim Pocock’s identity, or near lack of one in Strether’s view, occupies the next major discussion of the term itself in the book. He is a sort of caricature, a parody, a stereotype, a "leading Woollett businessman" who is "normal" and "cheerful" while it is his rôle in life "to be out of the question [societally]" (215). Strether asks himself if he had married earlier or marries soon if he himself might become like Jim, but reassures himself that he is "in higher esteem." We are told of Jim that he is "[s]mall and fat and constantly facetious, straw-coloured and destitute of marks…practically indistinguishable hadn’t his constant preference for light-grey clothes, for white hats, for very big cigars and very little stories, done what it could for his identity" (215-16). Funnily enough, James calls this stereotype a "failure of type," by which perhaps he means to indicate, as he says elsewhere, that the American husband of his time, whether a recognizable "leading businessman" or not, lacks the "polish" and "hard surface" of distinguishable personality types which Strether notices in the "new" Chad. Really the only noticeable ways in which Jim Pocock acts even slightly deceitfully are in his ribald discussion of his wife and her mother behind their backs, and in his mistaken championing to Strether of Chad’s and Strether’s time in Paris, which he assumes is equally ribald and which he thinks that the women would disapprove of. He also is treated with especial consideration by Mme. de Vionnet later, which his wife and mother-in-law are unlikely to enjoy either, but this, according at least to Strether’s conversation with Miss Barrace at Chad’s evening party for Sarah, is more Mme. de Vionnet’s doing than Jim’s.
Another American male success is Waymarsh, as Strether tells Miss Gostrey near the beginning, and for Miss Barrace if not for others, he is a recognizable type. Strether’s concern is with him as a personal friend, one as it seems who has deliberately betrayed Strether to the criticism of Mrs. Newsome and Mrs. Pocock by wiring to them without Strether’s initial knowledge, and thus has deceived him. Strether at no point actually has outright proof that this has happened, except for his own knowledge of Waymarsh, which the reader must take on trust. When Strether goes to see Sarah and finds Mme. de Vionnet there visiting, however, he also finds Waymarsh in the odd grouping (219). We read what seems like a simple statement: "…[H]e was at no loss as to the identity of the broad high back presented to him in the embrasure of the window furthest from the door." He gleans from this "identification" some things about Waymarsh’s intentions themselves. Waymarsh has not only "anticipated" him, but stands in "marked detachment," has "conspicuously, tact, besides a stiff general view," leaving Mrs. Pocock "to struggle alone" so that Mrs. Pocock may have him "in reserve" (220) after Mme. de Vionnet leaves. Nevertheless, in spite of the slender evidence that Waymarsh has joined forces with the Pococks in the intention to split Chad from Marie de Vionnet, in dialogue he attempts to influence Strether to accept Sarah’s (and her mother’s) terms. Furthermore, he not only entertains Sarah in Paris while her husband and sister and brother are elsewhere, but also leaves near the end to travel with the Pococks. Thus, though Strether considers that he himself is the more culpable in his relationship towards Waymarsh, it is Waymarsh who, with no previous acquaintance with the Pococks, takes up with them and supports them, particularly Sarah, in the attempt to influence Chad’s actions, therefore trying to supplant Strether. Thus Waymarsh, though mainly forthright
with Strether even after the Pococks arrive, can be perceived as deceitful, whether or not he is so because he is trying to act on Strether’s ultimate behalf. He is compromised by his methods.

Finally, even Sarah Pocock, who is direct to a fault, comes under the "spell" of indirection which Strether often attributes to Paris. She allows Waymarsh to escort her and aid her with Strether, which to other eyes might not seem as innocent as Strether seems to know it is, and she stubbornly sees only what she came out prepared to see (a sort of self-deceit), refusing Strether's complexity of vision.

Thus, Strether discovers that deceit, far from being restricted to sophisticated, Parisian circles, affects him where he "lives." It is not only a flaw of European people but of people in general, even those attempting to remain honest and in touch with "the simple truth," as he once phrases it. As well, it seems to entwine itself with each person’s identity, however much they try to stay clear of it, including Strether. Yet, with all of Strether’s complexity and his mind-twisting, truth-seeking battle to comprehend the reality of what is before him and inside him, there is for the reader the reward of perhaps the closest attempt that can be made to render up the picture of a character’s growth from inaccurate to accurate perception of identity(ies) and circumstances. There is honesty and authenticity in James’s rhetorical effort, and also in his concurrent strong effort to achieve "intensity of effect." Just as one gets the sense that Mme. de Vionnet longs for genuineness between herself and Strether, though the burden of achieving an effect on behalf of the secret relationship with Chad hampers her efforts toward honesty, so it is here. Perhaps it is this final double vision of the honesty of the well-intentioned which helps justify James's comparison of Strether to himself.
V—SOME PENULTIMATE COMMENTS ON THE JAMESIAN
ASPECTS OF IDENTITY

In this penultimate chapter, I would like to comment on how Jamesian notions of identity interact with the ideas of some more specialized identity theorists. An interesting study of the late James, though it is highly partial to one particular contemporary critical manner of interpretation, is Ross Posnock's *The Trial of Curiosity: Henry James, William James, and the Challenge of Modernity*. The book is partially flawed because it is erroneous to naturalize James as a thoroughly forward-thinking and forward-looking member of a timeless non-prejudiced society to which right-thinking members of our own cultural left-leaning society would want to belong. Not all the "saying" and misrepresenting of James's "saying" in the world can make him otherwise than what he was, a member of a Brahmin elite who did not use his words as the same identical words are used now, in their equivocal, contemporary-ironical, identity-dissolving senses (the word "difference," for example, a favorite of James's which he strews about in *The Ambassadors*, mostly with reference to Strether. But it is well to remember that James came first and initiated his own equivocal use of the term; it should not be necessary to point out that deconstructive thought uses the term in another way). James used words and their meanings (like ""Europe"" and "America," "violence" and "boundaries") to protect himself from the ironies of his own time which he perceived and sometimes generated; his ironies were not identity-dissolving but identity-affirming. That is, they were supplementary and not subtractive. I believe this is partially because he was aware of his function as a "translator" of the Brahmin/mandarin ethos for a more demotic audience. Such a supplemental life-affecting irony for James was following his brother
William in birth order, as Posnock points out correctly, taking issue with critics who interpret James at his literal word, that of a sense of envy and defeat.

If James was in the forefront at all of anything other than writing excellence and his mastery of the particular and the societal, which inspired some modernist writers (a point that could help improve Posnock’s argument), it is in perceiving that ironies could endlessly reverberate, whence comes all the playfully mournful remarks about boundaries never ending discussions. James saw the problem "through a glass darkly," but generally dealt with it by a rueful verbal shrug, inviting the reader to contemplate infinities and imagine him master of them, all the while taking care to assign responsibility to the nature of things. Still, the Eastern philosophical influence which encourages dissolution of the self in the infinite had just begun to be really felt in his time and had not yet permeated his culture—in its affection for importing goods and ideas from Asia—to the same extent as it has ours. If it had been felt more strongly, perhaps he would have "read" himself with regard to his more identity-dismissive remarks, into The American Scene, The Ambassadors, and other texts as a single text claiming consistency of psychological affect if duplicity of everything else, as Posnock attempts. But Posnock is very eager partially to excuse James’s bigotry in The American Scene by admiring his critical eye for differences (which also occur in the James autobiography) while excusing to some extent the elegiac notes of the same texts.

As well, both James and Posnock overlook or disregard the conflict between James’s bigoted and reductive remark about the Jews in the Lower East Side looking like monkeys or squirrels swarming over the fire escapes (The American Scene, 467-8) and the apparently high-minded remark he makes when meeting a Southerner about what evil
that Southerner would do to a Southern black person (AS, 672-3). If the mind is truly consistent and dissolved of harmful identity and ego, one prejudice is very like another prejudice: if the Southerner is wrong, and he is, then so is James, though his perspective rather than his potential actions are at fault. (It is this kind of dissolution of ego and identity which Strether experiences, learning to question himself not merely on one front, but on all fronts. This is why the ironies thereby generated are supplementary and not subtractive.) Perspective leads to action, however, and one can see The American Scene as a form of action, occasionally wrong-headed. James was able to imagine the experience in fiction of identity distributive over almost all issues, while not mastering it or at least not reflecting it in The American Scene.

James finds several "groups" too much for his pained tolerance, or feels some need to comment negatively upon their influence in the new America he encounters. There are numerous slurs cast in his orotund manner against Jews; immigrants in general ("grosser aliens," AS 585); women in society [he pays the Washington hostess as a phenomenon the back-handed compliment of saying that she is happier than other women in having been restored to her "place"—(AS, 638-9)]; nearly all classes of Americans for one reason or another; African-Americans newly liberated in the South, etc. (AS 362-3, 372, 427, 460-1, 462, 464, 466-7, 467-8, 471, 515-16, 520-1, 570 et al.).

In attempting to come up with a theory of civilization both accurate about the United States and acceptable to him, James obviously uses his mind; it is his absence of empathy, so otherwise present in most of his late fiction, which is at fault. He does note that America is a land given to encouraging immigrants, and asks "who and what is alien?" in this atmosphere (AS 459). Nevertheless, this passage leads straight into one of
his regretful elegies about how things have changed. He comments at one point (as he
does in his novel The Europeans as well) that there are few doors to shut off inner
sanctums in America, and mourns "the inveterate suppression of almost every outward
exclusory arrangement" (AS 492-3). It is hard not to see this physical regret as tied in
with a social regret when he later says of the American country club as an institution that
"even the most inclusive social scheme must in a large community always stop
somewhere" (AS 621), and praises the clubs for catering only to the "arrived" and
"disembarked" (AS 623). Largely, he approves of the clubs, because he oddly sees the
club in itself as "one of the great garden-lamps in which the flame of Democracy burns
whitest and steadiest" (AS 619). He has analyzed the club also as featuring extensions of
the family, "the entire Family…the sovereign People" (AS 623). From this perspective, it
is not hard to see, though he finds much of Philadelphia "blank," why he also approves of
the society there, composed as it is of families and relations en masse. He seems to
become aware for a moment that he is constructing a highly exclusive paradigm based
upon models not native to the American identity, but waves it away and adopts a
somewhat defensive stance regarding his aggrandizement of the country club by writing
"It depends upon whom I call the People?" and proceeding to continue with a non
sequitur about them having no interest if they weren't the People (AS 623). This seems to
be begging the question. Yet, his discussion for seeing "the People" this way is
connected with how he constructs what could be called demotic moments of fiction, by
one of his tricks of perspective.

James's apparent conflation of two opposed trends, toward an intelligent theory of a
new civilization and against its representatives, continues as he heads farther South. He
meets the son of the old South whom he designates "new" (AS 672-3). He correctly
notices both the suppressed violence of manner and outright verbal violence of subject
matter in the young man's conversation about the Civil War, and comments on "the
pretence of a social order founded on delusions and exclusions" (AS 675). Nonetheless,
he complains later about the bad service and the "inaptitude" for it of the "negro race."
He bemoans the loss of "the scramble of young darkies for the honour" of carrying his
bags (AS 702). James also comments upon the "vulgarity" of his fellow travelers in
general, and the lack of fulfillment of the "social proposition" (AS 706). He cannot seem
to make up his mind whether he hankers after being waited upon hand and foot, or
whether he really is curious about the new social experiment of the United States. His
entire discussion of the backward theory behind Southern slavery (beginning AS 661) is
intelligent, but flawed. A mind so dedicated to understanding such things as how a
prejudice or prejudices could generate social practice can yet obviously still fall short of
making the total dedication to freedom and self-respect for all as a theory preceding
practice.

All of this is not to say, obviously, that James is too distasteful to read entirely: he
must be read with selective emphasis. And to read James well on the subjects of naming
and identity with particular reference to The Ambassadors is a very different issue than to
read about naming and identity in The American Scene et. al. (the late texts which
Posnock wants to treat as an "interconnected unit"), and then to overwhelm the whole
discussion with references to Adorno, W. James, Godkin, Dewey, Foucault, Santayana,
Bourne, Benjamin, Veblen, and the like. All these other writers are heavy-hitting
intellectuals, and Posnock's attempt to discuss James as one of them, his avowed purpose,
does not come off well. First of all, even as a cultural analyst in *The American Scene*, James writes as a literary man, not a philosophical one, his election of himself as a "restless analyst" aside. His ideas are momentary, sometimes startling, vivid, but not consistently analytical from page to page. The effort bears traces of his earlier experiences with writing travelogues and is indeed partly that. The whole reads more like a dreamscape of James's mind than it does like a genuine attempt to reflect reality, and is consistent only in that sense, by the same token projecting James's own identity too fully to be considered a classical text of non-identity. Merely feeling no longer at home in one's native country does not constitute non-identity; it actually indicates a supplemented and richer identity. James claims he is an "analyst," however restless; Posnock claims he is a pioneer of non-identity: neither is entirely correct.

Also, *The Ambassadors* and *The American Scene* move in two different directions conceptually. In the first, a man from a "newer" world is exploring and coming to terms with the historical/cultural background of his own Western society and identity with a sense of shock and disorientation as he realizes the names assigned and identities therein. In the second, the so-called cultural analysis, a man acclimatized to British polite society is moving back through the New World to observe changes in its newness and especially in his own reactions. In doing so, in both books James does indeed review "the local, the particular, and the embedded" (Posnock *TC* 285), but if a comparison of the two is necessary, then it is not only as examples debating "the politics of non-identity," a philosophical/psychological/political issue, but also as forerunner texts of fictional practices in the modernist period, particularly of fiction writing as a means of finding inductive (rather than universal deductive) world views. I am thinking now of such
writers as Hemingway and Faulkner, who in their different ways are each indebted to Jamesian practice (Hemingway with the development of the impersonal narrative voice, Faulkner with the development of the center of consciousness, which both involve questions of naming/identity). To this extent, Posnock's argument holds water, but then, this is not the claim Posnock makes for himself.

Specifically with reference to The Ambassadors, Posnock misrepresents the sheer complexity of James's viewpoint(s): James stays most firmly to the middle route of every dichotomy even while he is exploring both lines of fictional discourse. This allows readers of both (and indeed most) stripes to claim him. The liberal humanists (whom Posnock sees as elitists) having had their day, now the opposite is taking place. And while Posnock says that for James perception is not "innocently transparent" (TC 16 and passim), thus seeming to acknowledge James's doubleness and even saying in numerous places that it exists, he overlooks the additional disconnect which allows for what I have called in my Introduction James's "transparency of intention between the 'implied author' and the 'narrator'" (8). This disconnect allows James his authority as implied author while he simultaneously performs (as if on stage) as the narrator, rather like an actor who has played the same rôle for years on end, to the extent of being totally identified with his character, another term suspected by Posnock. This puzzle is a true conundrum worthy of Posnock, an identity which paradoxically is at the same time a disconnect. It is as if Papa James said "Here, children, I'll act it out for you." The closest Posnock comes to noting it is in referring to moments of what he calls "aporia," though he does not place them in James's authorial presence/narration. He does speak of the "dialectic of identity and difference that the novel will make one of its major thematic concerns" (TC 221) and
discusses the term "revolution" as it applies to Strether's double change. As well, Posnock mentions a passage from James's notebooks, in which James says of Strether that for him "nothing is final." It is final, however, that Strether's Parisian endeavor must end and he must go home, to whatever "difference" will come, and this is the final resolution of the novel, whatever James originally planned. Posnock also notes James's "framing" tendency, and concludes that both "subject" and "object" are theatrical, which I do not believe for a second was James's motive, setting aside for the moment the oversimplification, especially in James, of the subject/object split. James is stagey and in The Ambassadors uses metaphors based on the stage, but there is a difference between a consistent (authorial) mannerism plus a claim to frame things and an actually achieved frame without a break. All we agree upon in this respect is that the storyteller is not protected from examination. Posnock would thoroughly turn every picture James constructs inside out and stand every paradigm on its head: I would in the final analysis (especially in The Ambassadors, for which James mentions a particular sense of identity vis-à-vis himself) accept the stopping point James assigns when Strether concludes for the final time "Then there we are." This is not because it is impossible to revolve and refute ideas which James has raised and given breath to in the book, but because much of the compelling threat, charm, persuasiveness, and energy of the book is dissipated and lost if one makes of it a totally ironical artefact in the contemporary postmodern style. It disappears; so does an author, treated likewise. In fact, this is what happens with any creative text subjected to such unremittingly intellectual rigors. After all, accepting the end of the novel itself as an adequate stopping point for the fiction is not to say that the
fiction does not excite further discussion and comment afterwards, as I think it does even in subsequent readings.

Taking James's claim (made in *The American Scene*) to write about and for "the People" seriously for the time being, one could see with a little imagination that there is a certain "democratic" bearing of the upper middle classes and upper classes of different nations toward each other in *The Ambassadors*. In Strether’s attempt to speak in the language of Paris, and in the indirect, challenging answers he receives, one is reminded of Bakhtin's remarks about how "serious parody" can take place in "familiar conversational language, the language of the realistic genres" (Di 75-76). The demotic perspective in this case is comic, revealing a posed contest and contrast between one standard speech (Standard English) stretched to its limits and groping, and its presumed equivalent in the standards of French culture and language. As Kendall Johnson notes of Valentin from *The American*, the characters in *The Ambassadors* are "not democratizing art; but aestheticizing democracy" (HJV 100). When in the discovery scene Mme. de Vionnet goes off into French idioms which Strether cannot follow, she is turning away from and denying his seizure of like modes of understanding to her own. (The true "low" demotic dialect in English in this book, though it is lower class only by comparison, is in the visiting Americans' language, is in Waymarsh's homey metaphors to Strether, and is suggested by remarks about Jim Pocock's jesting vulgarities. Otherwise, the standard speech of Strether and James's other characters in the book reads as the speech of a rough degree of social equality "higher up," which is "decoded" for the delectation of a more demotic reading audience.)
One might at first wonder at the exclusion of James's *The Princess Casamassima* from a consideration of the demotic in Jamesian explorations of identity. Though it has some share of lower class dialect in dialogues, it celebrates Standard English as a goal to be met. Hyacinth Robinson is torn between two worlds, but he is Dickensian in his reach toward social respectability rather than demotic or deeply revolutionary. Dickens was half really inclined to the pathetic in his portrayal of the poor, and half to the coyly bathetic. James imitates him here, particularly in his creation of such eccentrics as Miss Pynsent and Rose Muniment. And though there is something to be said for the book having a hybrid topic, still the anarchic of Paul Muniment is not demotic, because the majority of working people at any one time are not anarchists (despite the governmental queasiness of the age). Muniment is rather a curious figure of a monad, like a motionless statue (monument/Muniment), the conception of an anarchist. Thus, imitating Dickens, *The Princess Casamassima* cannot be said either to be written in a working person's demotic voice or as the more ordinary (to James) intense examination of language and meaning between two cultures to be found in *The Ambassadors*, which is James's own attempt to paint "the People's" language in the interaction with another culture; he rings changes as they have developed between the Anglo-American and the French since the days of *The American*.

Posnock also mentions James's *Autobiography* as one of the late works having some important connections of the identity topic with *The Ambassadors*. In terms of James's tentative experimenting with identity as achieving both knightly and demotic status, however, the similarities are less apparent. Though James mentions in *The Autobiography* that there are sayings and doings of the Irish domestics which constitute
part of the James family's hilarity, he does so without offering an example, which would moreover be slighting, rhetorically speaking. Also, he is studying the James family almost egoistically, and such "folksy" dialogues as one is made to imagine are clearly only demotic as the internal "code" of the Jameses as a sovereign state. By contrast, even The American Scene, with its alternately amused and annoyed tones at the "locals" James meets in the States, is a better example of the demotic, as James claims for himself vis-à-vis the country club set. This is because in the travel book in general, though James seems to be more consistently complaining of the "thinness" not only of cultural tradition in his native country but also of the natural surroundings both supplemented by the hands of humankind and not, there are still some picturesque places and locals that he consents to admire.

The question of the picturesque is planted squarely in the midst of our consideration of identity, particularly in The Ambassadors [Strether likes to think he is appreciating the resurrected beauty of a picture, when in fact he is conflating "the picturesque" with "the beauty" of the French countryside as K. Johnson points out that Ruskin, James's model, did not ([HJV 31-32]). Both the people in the countryside and Mme. de Vionnet end up as examples of the picturesque. In each case, a person or group of people is being put in the background or added to it as a part of the picture of France contained in one's travel experiences instead of being foregrounded as a self-owning individual or individuals. The discovery scene threatens to break through Strether's view of beauty, but the picturesque view of Mme. de Vionnet remains. At the end, both the French countryside of the demotic classes and the aura of the upper classes is picturesque to him—and James is thus "guilty" of authorly "oppression" only in a demotic fashion (that is, if one is in
agreement with the ironical Blake, that "One Law for the Lion and the Ox is Oppression".

While commenting on much that is visually picturesque, James also notes the verbally picturesque in passages in his work in general which bring characters (or James himself in *The American Scene*) into contact with "locals," both those of European countries and those of the American continent. James generally catches himself or adds ambiguous content when he seems at first to be confusing Ruskin's voyeuristic "low picturesque" with Ruskin's "noble picturesque," as in *The American Scene*. The confusion of the beautiful and the picturesque in *The Ambassadors* thus is Strether's problem, though he becomes aware of his confusion in his examination of his own axiology after the discovery scene. He thinks of himself that he had "dressed the possibility [of an intimate relationship between the lovers] in vagueness," and he compares it to a child dressing a doll. A doll is of course a child's tribute to, and veneration of, what it perceives to be beautiful.

In traditional terms, axiology is the study of value, usually contained in the good (or in more modern times, the expedient) or in the beautiful. In several places, Strether mentions the beauty of the relations between Chad and Mme. de Vionnet, and the study of these particular values is one key late topic for James. And this ties in with two different kinds of writing, the "mandarin" (from J. Scott) of James's often strictest use of Standard English, and the "demotic" (or even, as J. Scott calls it, the "proletentious," as when Strether listens to Mme. de Vionnet's leveling tears and thinks of her as being like a maidservant crying for her lover). By the end of the novel, James has situated his own aesthetic squarely in between the beautiful and the good, or in encapsulation of the two
values, which aesthetic is abruptly strained for Strether with the meeting in the country. Of the two values, there is perhaps more intuition of the good (or bad), and sight of the beautiful (or otherwise). When Strether tries to achieve or seek resolution of his intuition of the good and his sight of the beautiful in a balancing act worthy of his author (but distinct from him), he is finally stuck with an adjective which sounds like the picturesque in place of either of the other two (K. Johnson quotes Coleridge from Biographia Literaria as saying that in the picturesque, the "parts" are "seen and distinguished, but the whole" (as in the whole apprehension of the lover's relationship) is "felt," and in Strether's case it is "felt" as appalling. Strether "feels" the "violence" of the near social "cut." If they had "cut" him, of course, they would have left him as only a distant observer, but by trying to "naturalize" him to their own experience, they invite his views of their (and more remotely to them, of his own) identity. At first, Strether "sees" the couple as beautiful, and picturesque when they are on the river, but once it is clear who they are, the effect of a whole scene is produced, though they try to dissemble the parts.

He finally says Mme. de Vionnet will remain "wonderful" for him. He does not really find much either beautiful or deeply "good" about the situation; he is left with a sense of awe, rather like someone looking at a picturesque natural scene, but somehow feeling that it is a trompe d'oeil. In terms of demotic-mandarin writing, this is clearly an uncomfortable hybrid to be left with, yet it expresses what seems "sincere" or "authentic" to Strether's voice and experience. The choice between intuition/the good/the demotic (which does not slight the common person's experience) and sight/the beautiful/the mandarin (which forces all standards to meet one "deductive" test) presents itself as similar to Yeats's split in his poem "The Choice" between "[p]erfection of the life, or of

the work." Yeats refers to this as "that old perplexity." In the second case (beauty), the perplexity compels one to "refuse a heavenly mansion" and accept "the day's vanity, the night's remorse" (Definitive Yeats Collected Poems 242). The picturesque in The Ambassadors is thus a sign of "perplexity" for Strether. He "resolves" it as far as he is able by the fiat contained in the last repetition of "Then there we are."

Though William J. Scheick thus considers James to write an example of "aesthetic romance" as opposed to "eventary romance" (like H. Rider Haggard) or "ethical romance" (like Hawthorne and his closer imitators), Scheick is considering the Jamesian example of "The Turn of the Screw" (Scheick ER 2-3), not the more ethically inclined writings of the late completed novels. He even quotes James as saying that art should "'offer us another world,'" give "experience that…muffles the ache of the actual'".20 What is ironic about this remark is that the other "world" which James presents in The Ambassadors, the one which Strether is afloat in before the discovery scene, may "muffle the ache of the actual," but the novel as a whole is the picture of a man brought face-to-face with the end of an illusion which was created by aesthetic sensibility. Hence, the "rude awakening" of the demotic/intuitive/good experience takes the place somewhat of the mandarin/seen/beautiful experience, or at least balances it out. Yet, the romance is not equally brought to an end, as the ending of the novel clearly shows, because like many characters in romance, Strether renounces a happy ending for himself, and his renunciation is not unlike that of someone seeking solace in a monastery, also a plot feature in romance. Scheick reemphasizes Diana Elam's point that romance is "'a game that defies boundaries through excess, that threatens to expose "reality" as a constructed referent rather than as a "natural" state of existence to which we all naturally, textually,  

20 Henry James, Notes on Novelists 436. Qtd. by Scheick ER 15.
refer." In this respect, it is like the "carnivalesque" in essence, which also supplements the boundaries of ordinary day with the mad chaos of nightmare vision.

In fact, if one thinks of William Penn's objection to romance, one sees that whereas Penn describes it as the source of lies and illusions, James magically transforms it into the stuff of reality and disillusionment, while not giving up the spell of romance entirely. For example, Penn says that romance features "'passions and amours…grand impediments…miserable disappointments…wonderful surprises, unexpected encounters…intrigues managed with unheard-of-subtlety…'". Certainly all of these, in addition to the immense surprise and odd occurrence of meeting the lovers in the countryside, are evidence in *The Ambassadors* of the peculiar features and coincidences of romance novels. James on the same topic deplores "boats…tigers…historical characters, ghosts…beautiful wicked women…pistols and knives…[all] for the most part reducible to the idea of the facing of danger." Yet all these elements above, trailing along their sense of various kinds and degrees of social "danger," occur in the imagery, themes, and subjects of *The Ambassadors*. Thus, the picturesque, the "real," romance, and aesthetic and ethical considerations, all mingle in *The Ambassadors* to create a sense of identity, not only of the main character, Strether, who confronts all these elements internally and externally, but also of the cultures involved and of the reader also. Citing Wolfgang Iser, Scheick supports the idea that "'Every text we read draws a different boundary within our personality, so that the virtual background (the real "me") will take

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on a different form.""\textsuperscript{24} It is therefore possible to see that there is a mimetic suggestion in \textit{The Ambassadors}, as the reader is encouraged to imitate the structure of Strether's own sense of discovery, while separating himself/herself enough to evaluate Strether as well as the "reality" he presents. This doubleness does indeed cause a fourfold division between \textit{mimesis} and \textit{diegesis}, in the "virtual background," or the "real 'me.'" The ties with earlier literature of the Romantic and Victorian periods are thus clear, just as the special/intellectual separation from the text so valued by the subsequent moderns is signaled by James's "doubleness." It seems from these indications that James has not only retained some of the sensationalism of topic of the Romantic period, recast some of the ethical concerns of the Victorian period (minus its overbearing earnestness and its tendency to moralize), but also has sounded the signal for a new mingling of the aesthetic and the ethical for the approaching century(ies). To quote once again from \textit{The Golden Bowl}, ""What is morality but high intelligence?"

It is not, however a direct route from the beginning of \textit{The Ambassadors} to the end, and the mimetic path which a reader is encouraged to follow contains "a beast" of an experience, a trap, as many of James's novels do. It is, in fact, the identity of the novel itself which threatens to devour or to collapse in upon the reader and end the reading experience. In this section considering for the moment James's life in the British Isles for half of his life and the degree to which he was both Anglo- and American, I turn to Kurt Koenigsberger, who puts forth the subject of "the imperial animal and its English stories, narratives that foreground 'the ideals of imperial unity' and that depend upon a notion of the British Empire as a novel and sometimes charming 'whole'" (\textit{The Novel and the

\textsuperscript{24} Wolfgang Iser, \textit{The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett} 34, 285, 293. Qtd. by Scheick ER 7.
Menagerie ix). He continues, "The appearance of the zoo, the circus…or an individual beast—tiger, elephant, camel, or boa constrictor, for instance—in the novel invites us to read through the menagerie to the exotic landscape it evokes and imaginatively maps" (x). In The Ambassadors, in the scene in particular in Book V, when Strether and his friends are invited to meet the great Gloriani and his friends and associates, the characters themselves are on display like animals in a menagerie, not only, as Strether intuitively and with a certain shock senses, the French for the Americans, but also the Americans for the French. In this scene especially (and to use Koenigsberger's terms for it), the "picturesque" which "frames up or delineates complete views of empire" and the "carnivalesque" which "confuses and breaches boundaries of domestic and exotic" alternate when Strether, in confusion himself, meets up not only with those French who see him as picturesque, but also with the "tiger," the great Gloriani, who like Lewis Carroll's crocodile "welcomes little fishes in with gently smiling jaws." [Though Koenigsberger does not mention Bakhtin, it is very likely that he has him in mind when he uses the expression "carnivalesque," which signals in Bakhtin a breaking forth and a transgressing of boundaries without the penalties of transgression, and a unity of character and reader more than is usually permitted because of the usual intermediation of the author/implied author.] As Koenigsberger points out, "both the novel and the menagerie are institutions that put English [and American] identities and characters on display and seek overtly or implicitly to narrate their relation to empire" (NM xiii).

Though James, in "The Art of Fiction" in 1888 said "a novel is a living thing…all one and continuous," "an organic whole" (54), which remarks Koenigsberger also considers, the identity of the novel itself is threatened and "totality" (Koenigsberger's term) is barely

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25 M. M. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (passim).
contained by the bursting through of the "secret plot" of the lovers into the structural plot (and just how many in Mme. Vionnet's circle are aware of the internal plot we never know accurately). It is as if a true tiger were raging around in Strether's naively constructed "cage," the one in which he attempts to place the lovers as examples of both goodness and beauty. It is actually Strether himself as James's stand-in and emissary who rounds off the plot in the concluding scene, rather as Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending* says characters may almost extra-textually do (30), and this is another reason for assigning Strether a special status *vis-à-vis* the author, in addition to referencing James's remark that Strether is a likeness of himself. Through the rest of Koenigsberger's treatment of James (*NM* 21, 28, 196), he sees him as signaling totality, which is perhaps true of the earlier James but only true of the late James in a supplementary sense: Strether's final remark to Miss Gostrey reads like a conclusive afterthought as much as a conclusive theory of his experience. As Koenigsberger helpfully remarks, however, "with the gathering front of twentieth-century aesthetic movements and impulses we call modernism, totality…ceases to be the cynosure around which the novel's theoretical universe revolves" (*NM* xi). It is precisely because James is writing *The Ambassadors* as a mingling of aesthetic and moral tendencies, as an example both of the "picturesque" and the "carnivalesque," with its overdrawn character masks—and certainly Strether lying like a shepherd on the sward above the river is almost a parody of the picturesque drawn originally from nature poetry—that Strether must "save" the situation by stepping out into his "Then there we are" almost as an extra-textual choral character, since he cannot do more to "save" Mme. de Vionnet or Chad.
What, after all, is all the fuss about in *The Ambassadors*, if not about the wide difference between an aesthetic experience and a rewarding ethical one, and a proposed (if possibly less than entirely convincing) conflation of the two in consenting to bracket the entire experience as one's encounter, finally, with the puzzle of France? It has been popular for a while now to talk about fictions being "open-ended," and while it still seems to me that James does try to seal *The Ambassadors* firmly between two "parens" of humor and lightness, it is also true that those following him have taken the cue to be a great deal less heavy-handed with their finalities than even James himself, however much they owe him for the rest of the novel's theory and example.

No consideration of ideas about literary identity, whether of reader, text, or writer, would be complete without mention of the monumental study of identity as scandal by Therese-Marie Meyer. Though her topic is beyond the range of Jamesian writing *per se*, her survey of opposing theories, from Aristotle to post-post-modernism, makes the assessing critical task not only easier but one hopes more profound. She is primarily concerned with "creation[s] of…fictional authorial identity" which are actually fraudulent in a "real" sense, but her handling by no means excludes and even illuminates theories of textual and readers' identities as well. Considering theorists including Descartes, Fichte, Freud, Erikson, Lacan, Schechtman, Levinas, Ricoeur, Husserl, Wittgenstein, Hume, Locke, Foucault, Wiley, Derrida, Kristeva, W. James, Pierce, Piaget and many others, she constructs her basic premises thus: over time there has been a shift in the belief of the monadic self-entity to a self entity conditioned by awareness of "the Other." As she says, "The problems of personal identity and of selfhood (rationality, reflexivity, agency, and moral accountability)...generally date[] back to Descartes...Altogether, it is easier to
group the discussion into four fields, split alongside two binary oppositions: self versus
other, and body versus mind" (WFE 9). She excludes from consideration "puzzle cases"
(hard cases) which theorize about ethical partialities and tangents and also what she calls
"sci-fi" situations. Meyer attempts to reign in the extreme "decentering" in Derrida and
Kristeva [who, as she records, both later partially retracted their own positions (WFE 15-
16)] as well as Barthes in The Pleasure of the Text. She also records that Schechtman's
own work "unwittingly" turns up three situations "in which narrative identity meets with
strange consequences": 1) subconscious processes [Strether: he is "more" than what he
knows and "sees"]; 2) "[in]coherence for self-narrative" [Mme. de Vionnet: what in fact
is "coherent" and in what culture?]; 3) "deceit" [Chad and Mme. de Vionnet] (WFE 17-
18). As Meyer relates, "The identity of a human self [and by extension of a "picture" of
such a self in a text]….ideally takes into account unity of body and mental events, just as
it fluctuates between the private and the social, accounting for self-constitution and
recognition" (WFE 18). I have in previous chapters tried to deal with the manner in
which James experiments with the notion of a unity between "body and mental events."
In especial, Meyer continues, in identity "experience is passive and immediate while
action is active and wilful [sic] [and]…there is no denying that experience is given sense
(a story) in retrospective, first lived and then told." She further emphasizes that with
plots in literature, "the plots…are constructed and not inherent…and can be retold
differently under different connotations" (WFE 18, 19). For example, in The
Ambassadors the plot of the novel is something that has a greater or lesser degree of
 correspondence not only 1) to actual situations which apparently occurred [cf. James's
comments about his own and W. D. Howells's being the inspirations for the book
(Rosenbaum 374, 407)]; 2) to a literary veracity which however debated depends upon the reader's acceptance; but also 3) to the characters' telling of their tales and their experiences (both literal and figurative, external and mental), for each other and themselves as they present their characters to Strether. These "fictions" and "facts" of identity must at least temporarily succeed, because Strether is figured in the novel as something of a judge. Meyer also remarks that in a story, autobiographical or not, presumably, "closure" is "questionable as long as the individual would continue to experience, change, and narrate" (WFE 20). Though this lack of closure is in fact signaled by Strether on one level when he says he will go back to a "difference," it is also contradicted and controlled by the abrupt end he puts to his French adventures with his final remark, very like that of Kipling's editor in "The Man Who Would Be King," who says at the unsatisfying end of his tale, "And there the matter rests." One might theorize that this encourages reflexivity in the reader, who is reflected back into both stories for an explanation, and thus into himself (cf. ER 146-53). Norbert Wiley the Pragmatist (of whose ideas Meyer gives a brief synopsis) sees identity as a "trialogue within the self between a permanently present 'I,' an increasing 'Me' in the past, and a diminishing 'You' in the future";26 this view combats the "blind spot of self-reflexivity" introduced by Descartes, by extension holding out hope for Strether. Finally, though The Ambassadors is in no criminal or fraudulent sense the kind of literary "scandal" Meyer is analyzing, in some sense it is partially threatening to signal itself (however truly or not) as a "trespass against authenticity," a "central offence in a culture revolving around authenticity to self and social role" (WFE 27)—which ours still is, if only in the number of times we are told not to expect any such things. It is thus a form of "scandal." It is in fact a "cause

célebre," but a text and plot which bodies forth the repressed "scandal" that Strether discovers and can only "end" by absenting himself from Paris (the text). To give Posnock credit where it is due, this is at least a flirtation with "non-identity."

The connections of naming and identity, as previously indicated, are at least two-fold in *The Ambassadors*. First, there is the naming done by the gossiping atmosphere generated by Miss Gostrey and Miss Barrace, by the artist's colony in supposed self-deprecation about themselves, and by the false gossip about himself which Chad at the beginning generates in imitation of them and which he evidently regards as "French." As well, the signal topic of *The Ambassadors* is whether a self can with impunity be used by another self justifiably (and in a naming process with a purpose) in any way but for the empathetic internalization of it, to lead to (true) self-recognition. Thus, James seems to define himself both within and against the prevailing and slowly passing currents of Victorian fiction, which posited in general a "holistic" identity. While he does not fully embrace the awareness of "the Other," or modernist (and post-modernist) alterity, he clearly recognizes it as a topic for fiction.

As Kathleen Glenister Roberts notes about alterity, "In a fundamental sense, [it] is simply the consciousness of Self as unique from Other. In the twentieth century, its philosophical study had largely been in phenomenology. The Self is a lived experience; it is necessarily divided from Other, since experience is only capable of capturing the fullness of Self." She continues: "Phenomenologists argue that one cannot fully experience the Other. However, Self is also dependent on Other: a differential field is required in order to circumscribe the Self." Finally, she explains: "The complexity of this process of circumscription has challenged some philosophers—notably Levinas..."
to understand it in ethical terms. For Levinas, the Other calls the Self into existence, but also into a relationship of responsibility. Communication and dialogue are crucial to the successful management of alterity” (AN 5). One has only to consider the vast amount of communication and dialogue (including subliminal communication) taking place between the characters in *The Ambassadors* to note their great curiosity about each other and their apparent willingness to learn, though as Roberts also notes, "First people give an account of their actions through narratives, but they also announce their values within these accounts…. [N]arratives about 'the Other' are doubly embedded and doubly evaluative because they draw artificial boundaries around our own 'culture' and are at the same time culturally constructed" (AN 7). Though Roberts’s primary concern is with the interplay of Western and non-Western cultures, she might almost have been writing about what Strether's romantic Anglo-American views concerning himself and the French (and in a broader context, European) Mme. de Vionnet are—himself as her "knight." As Roberts observes, alterity narratives for a specific society or "culture are highly significant to identity because alterity construction is typically much more pertinent to Self than Other. The Other that is created through narratives of alterity is imaginary, stereotypical, and biased. But the details of the narratives lend crucial insight into the identity formation of the Self as differentiated from the exaggerated Other" (AN 4). This is obviously true of Strether as a knight.

To tackle a slightly different question which has often occasioned critical comment about Strether, to what extent he himself is culpable for the events he "narrates" (allowing for the moment Booth's comment that though the text is in so-called "third-person," it seems to be in "first") there is no question that he is an observer in a real sense, that in
his rôle as ambassador (particularly in its self-appointed aspects) he is to observe before he interferes. But as Roberts observes, E. T. Hall was instrumental in putting forth the notion that "[f]oundational to intercultural communication as a field…is the assertion that Americans often did more damage than good in their study of other cultures." If one thinks of Strether's rôle both for the other characters in the novel and for the reader in terms of Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle converted into narrative form (one can only observe momentum/others' intent by losing exact placement of location/one's own intent, and vice-versa), he has also for them produced "a difference." It is not for example that he has forced Chad and Mme. de Vionnet to be liars and adulterers, it is only that he has in his quest for their logic made them see what his own is, and put upon them the burden of guilt which they seem to him, as his "location" changes, to have borne lightly before he discovered their "momentum" (which was apparently a rush not only to obfuscate the issue, but also to naturalize Strether to it as others were originally, perhaps).

This novel is truly James's international tour de force, calling into question even the assumptions about Europe which the novelist himself seemed more sure of in such texts as Daisy Miller, The American, and especially The Portrait of a Lady. It like the others purports to be about the mystification, intentional and otherwise, of an American in Europe, but it distributes the intercultural meaning over both sides of the situation. As Roberts says in her opening pages,

> Although "identity" should not be confused with identity politics, we live in a moment where "identity" and "culture" are synonymous terms. The very concept of culture has changed within the conflation. Culture—perhaps the most significant and simultaneously loaded term of our times—is intertwined with identity….Culture (and therefore [one kind of] identity) "presents itself through narratively contested

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27 Roberts AN 3, referring to E. T. Hall, The Silent Language (passim).
accounts": first, the accounts of human interactions, and then the accounts of normative attitudes and evaluative stances about those interactions. "What we call 'culture' is the horizon formed by these evaluative stances" inherent in narratives.  

To consider the British and American forms of culture which delineate the parameters of James's "argument" about names and identities in The Ambassadors, and which sometimes seem to strain the parameters themselves, I would like to look briefly at two more critical texts.

In the first, to construct an entry point into her discussion, the author (Poon) quotes Kipling: "'What do they know of England who only England know?' asks Kipling's persona…in the poem, 'The English Flag.' Empire, as Kipling succinctly suggests, provides the extra-territorial and transnational co-ordinates of Englishness, rendering the knowledge and indeed construction of English culture." The "terms" in which this is done are "irrevocably relational rather than autochthonous terms….The articulation of national identity and the perceived ontological 'fact' of being English are thus effects of as well as prerequisites for the exercise of colonial power" (Enacting Englishness in the Victorian Period 2,3). In Chapter 5, Poon sees H. R. Haggard's novel Allan Quartermain as descriptive of a mindset unlike the equally enthusiastic nationalist books by such imperialist writers as Charles Dilke, John Seeley, and James Anthony Froude. The latters' "expansionist visions…insist on the here and now, on empire as present reality, and promote images of interconnection and global ties." Haggard she sees as provoked in general by a "fundamentally isolationist, paranoid, and nostalgic impulse, which brings into play a compression of time—past, present, and future" (EEVP 127). But just as Norbert Wiley's view of identity (as presented by Meyer) uses past, present, and future in

28 Roberts AN 1,3 also quoting S. Benhabib, The Claims of Culture 6.
a way which cuts against "isolationism" "paranoia" and "nostalgia" by integration of the Other, so too Strether, starting from a position of apparent morbid nostalgia for a dead wife and son of his own, combating his own isolated self to include awareness of others, and going past paranoia finally about what things and people "mean," is projected willy-nilly into a new state of (perhaps not entirely) consolidated acceptance of difference and variation in moral and aesthetic motives. In this, he is originally a bit of an unreconstructed imperialist in the American tradition, which got a slightly different start from the British but was contemporaneous with it. While Theodore Roosevelt as President consolidated "gains" of "manifest destiny" made on several fronts on the American continent, notably against Native Americans, who from earlier in the century had been put on display for whites [K. Johnson, in visual records of exhibitions, (passim)], and though he carried a "big stick" in war policy, he seemed more or less content to let "speaking softly" in the thunderous tones of American enterprise play a key rôle as well, trust-busting aside. Free enterprise and business, which repelled James both in his fiction and in numerous places in letters and other supplemental prose texts, are indeed the sort of American endeavors Chad celebrates at the end of the novel. It is interesting to note that Strether starts out at the beginning in a relationship to business (canvassing the British shops), and Chad ends up in an even tighter one, advertising as a vaunting of business. This positioning is deliberate, signifying a struggle which perhaps takes place in most people (though it has become trite and sentimentalized) between an elusive (aesthetic) "mind," whatever one believes one's aesthetic to be, and a visibly evident (active) "body." Strether is like the mind of the self in this special sense, Chad is the overweening and inconvenient body; both are necessary. As Laura L. Behling insists,
"Between corporeal reality and the rhetorical representations is a contradiction; a gaping
gap…appears between the body and the mind" (GA 187). In this chapter, significantly
for my work on The Ambassadors entitled "Seeing for Oneself," she then quotes W. James, who "both delineated the separation and reaffirmed its inseparability":

"If we look at an isolated printed word and repeat it long
enough, it ends by assuming an entirely unnatural aspect
….Let the reader try this with any word on this page. He
will soon begin to wonder if it can be the word he has
been using all his life with that meaning. It stares at him
from the paper like a glass eye, with no speculation in it.
Its body is indeed there, but its soul is fled. It is reduced,
by this new way of attending to it, to its sensational
nudity (726-27)."29

The question which H. James puts forth in the novel by presenting his characters in
the above lights also, as I am persuaded he does, is "How can one live as much and as
blamelessly and as free from criticism as possible without intrusive business (both literal
business and busy-ness of the body) from the external world, and yet retain enough
energy (stimulation from others and income) to survive once one has accomplished a feat
of vision?" This is not only Strether's final dilemma, but most probably was the concern
of James himself upon finishing each work, as it certainly was of other modernists and
transitional figures, notably Virginia Woolf. Strether cannot finally fully desert Chad,
though he suspects his motives, both aesthetic and moral. Nor yet can he himself fully
engage in a vast money-making empire like the American one in which his ex-fiancée's
family engages. Thus, whether he wants to or not, his awareness of "the others" and his
imagination must almost certainly include a modicum of something which will "keep"
him, and his awareness in this case is of Chad's identity too, and Chad's perhaps

29 William James, Principles in Psychology (1890). Qtd. by Behling GA 187-88.
imperative though imperialist right to be as he is, whatever shorthand "name" Strether might feel tempted to assign Chad's identity when Strether is more fully aware.

To return to the attempts at naming in The Ambassadors, and as was mentioned in detail in previous chapters of this critical work, they are many and various, and are "generously" provided by nearly all the characters for the others, whether they are generous in the moral sense or not. In one particular example which is at the center of Strether's self-debate, "the young man," many more qualities than can be contained in the simple naming are encapsulated in the reality of Chad which characters "mean" to refer to, even from the beginning. One has only in imagination to replace Chad with Bilham as "the young man" (which James makes a feint of doing in the first balcony scene). Bilham, who is a central character, would by this show us how much more like Marius the Epicurean the novel would read, and how much less like a cautionary though comic post-Victorian Tom Jones. The issue is, of course, how much or how little can be excusably credited to being young, and as Strether is "young for" the trip to Europe, so his position and identity are also called into question. All other names which attempt to negotiate a "quick take" on identity radiate out from this central concern, and as earlier chapters have shown, in each case fall short of containing the entire truth (as might be expected), and in some cases even become as complicated (in the portraits of Miss Barrace and Mme. de Vionnet, for example) as to need a supplement from emblematic and symbolic means, as when these ladies are pictures as powdered "heads" in art and faces on coins. Yet, these physical and representative means of transition between naming and identity are still inadequate, which in Mme. de Vionnet's case is insisted upon by the lady herself, who recounts "in full" her point of view. That is, she must try
to acquaint Strether with "the whole story" to attempt to exculpate herself, and ironically attempts to do it by finally blaming herself.

The "whole story" of naming and identity both is and is not what we have by the end of the novel. While we have participated as readers by following all the ins and outs of Strether's thoughts about identity, his own and others', and may think we know them all—and have garnered a great deal of aesthetic enjoyment from the lively comedy by the way—some serious questions remain to be answered. For example, why must Miss Gostrey at the end "sigh it" "all comically, all tragically, away"? Besides the fact that she is a ficelle, what compels her (and us) to be satisfied with this? Are we indeed intended as in Kipling's story to turn inward to the story again for convincing? And, does the novel indeed "vanish into" itself as both Strether and Chad seem to do into themselves, Strether into his rapidly evaporating position as a "recalled" ambassador, Chad into a reduced identity as the cad/adventurer/bounder/rotter we (and Strether) always wondered if he was? If two different naming-to-identity experiences are being recounted, Strether's as he becomes aware of many "Others" and internalizes others' feelings, and Chad's as he firmly turns his back on the same procedure, are we sure that James is not suggesting that in the end the first necessitates withdrawal from the world (ironically enough), just as the latter insensitivity arguably equips one for wrestling with the quotidian world (again, ironically, as ideally the awareness of others' feelings should prepare one better for what one may meet)? And, finally, in terms of questions of identity that reach beyond the text, is it possible that one could achieve a balance of the two tendencies, as James seems (with regret) to doubt is possible? In attempting to answer these questions, I have considered mainly narrative and philosophical modes of identity resolution, those of
nationality, culture, physicality, and alterity, among others. I submit that finally, and crucially, when James was not airing his class/ethnic prejudices, he meant not only to be discussed as the purveyor of aesthetic experience which he often insisted he was in his Prefaces and essays on literature, but that he also wanted to be the "ambassador" for a newer, freer view of life, one which, while not deserting basic decency (and he was both genial and ironic about what this term "decency" might mean), might also create a mental "space" in which intelligent adults might live. It is thus with a view to affecting the readers' identities that he wrote this story, by his own account putting more of himself (knowingly) in a character portrait than was his usual habit. It is in this sense that Posnock's view of James's identity topic may best prove itself, not in the reference to non-identity, but in its reference to a strong contrast with older models of the self.
VI—CONCLUSION

The experience of Europe for all concerned in The Ambassadors, native and foreigner alike, is "highlighted" in places, as noted before, by the placing of the word "Europe" in quotation marks. The distance between the word unmarked and the word set apart by quotation marks can be illuminated and examined by reference to a lengthier section of the quote from Bakhtin about the nature of serious parody:

Every type of parody or travesty, every word…enclosed in intonational quotation marks…is in a broad sense an intentional hybrid—but a hybrid compounded of two orders: one linguistic (a single language) and one stylistic…. Two languages (both intra-lingual) come together and are crossed with each other: the language being parodied (for example, the language of the heroic poem) and the language that parodies (low prosaic language, familiar conversational language, the language of the realistic genres…). It is the nature of every parody to transpose the values of the parodied style, to highlight certain elements while leaving others in the shade: parody is always biased in some direction…. It is not a dialogue in the narrative sense, nor in the abstract sense; rather it is a dialogue between points of view, each with its own concrete language that cannot be translated into the other. ([D] 75-76)

The two voices speaking of Europe in The Ambassadors not only are those for whom it is home and those for whom it is a vacation area, but also are the voices of grandeur-cum-pretense (mandarin voice) and modesty-cum-forthrightness (demotic voice), which cut across the international scene with the sharpness of a knife. Here, though the characters from the two cultures do not always understand each others' moral and aesthetic dialects, they are each capable of moments of "familiar conversational language, the language of the realistic genres," the debunking tendency, though the "bias" here which Bakhtin mentions is toward Strether's own conceptions as they focus upon the language of a more sophisticated society. Both societies have moments of grandeur and
at least pretended immunity from falsehood. As much as they are thus all human and therefore imperfect, they surround Strether, through the discourse of the novel, with a completion of his initial awareness, his picture, his vision, and his self-awareness. What final unity he achieves is accomplished not through a total devaluation of the heroic, knightly impulse which is associated with Mme. de Vionnet's society, nor through an entire rejection of the (for Strether) more "realistic" middle-class impulses which come to daunt his romanticism by interference of the Pococks. Instead, Strether makes for himself an existential identity, working away as much as possible from the seemingly simple figure all see, his "being-in-itself," and toward his "being-for-itself," his "modest retreat" which he hopes to find after he leaves Paris. The extent to which he will be able to escape his public identity is a picture beyond the end of the novel, away from the European adventure, yet James also salutes the finality of Strether's intention. He does this by "putting quotes," metaphorically and comically speaking, around the concept of opaque language, particularly the epistemological. Therefore it too becomes one of the subjects of his novel, which attempts, at least, to render transparency of intent through the completeness of its periphrastic usages. That is, miming indirection or dishonesty for storytelling purposes does not automatically make one's mimesis dishonest.

Identity itself, simple-seeming, only subject to physical evaluation at first in the novel, becomes increasingly complex, especially when the word "identity" itself is in play: the notion is put into perspective by its own multiplicity. This multiplicity, as I have remarked, is not always or predominantly intentional deceit; it is rather that each character hugs a secret or special concept of self to his or her chest, and thus cannot be simple, though Strether at first tries to deal with others as holistic entities.
Never simple from beginning to end, the language in *The Ambassadors* grows and guides our awareness of Strether's growing perception. The least complex elements of periphrasis; the least miscellaneous expression being tossed to and fro by the characters; the wide variety of metaphors and other figurative language; the adjectives and qualifiers used in dialogue; all contribute to the picture of Strether as a visual imperialist with a gentle nature. He is finally a combination of the knight and the more demotic burgher, someone who has been forced to desert a few of the higher reaches of romanticism because of his awareness of dishonesty and "bad faith" in everyone, but who finally takes his responsibility for his own selfhood to be the highest obligation of all.

Thus periphrasis, far from being unnecessary inflation or a redundant feature in this novel, from small antonomastic fragments into the longest, most complex metaphors, embodies in its naming ventures the full and complete identity at least of Strether at a certain point in time. By the end, not only is he a residue of what he was from before Europe, but also he is the composite of all his denominative (and connotative) adventures. Strether is presented as an American who has learned to consider not only the outer (body) and the inner (mind) human, and Self and Other in their intimate relationship, but who has also partially achieved the construction of a responsible narrative of alterity. This narrative about French-American relations is in some part what *The Ambassadors* is. As well, the characters who have fallen under Strether's inner vision, though seen most of all through him and referred to in his terms, have by their sometimes startling dialogue (their "concrete language that cannot be translated") caused Strether to grow in order to understand them, or at least to embrace their reality in his own, through acceptance. The attentive reader too participates in this acceptance through
adoption of a standpoint just "behind" Strether, from which he or she "sees" the aesthetic and moral choices presented to Strether, "hears" the terms set in his language and that of others, and adjudicates likewise the issues of naming and identity which Strether's thoughts raise for consideration in all their complexity.
APPENDIX—EIGHT CATEGORIES OF METAPHOR (CLICHEd AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ONES AND SOME MORE USUAL METAPHORICAL FORMS)

The place most likely for the considerations of "dishonesty" and "bad faith" to enter into an assessment of an author is that of the metaphor, for the very reason that Genette mentions in passing: that is, that it has not only "conventional value" but also "the oblique power of natural evocation" par excellence. A metaphor may seem to express beyond the boundaries logically construed as the limits of a particular meaning; a metaphor may in fact "escape" from the "police force" of strict ideological structuring of a concept of exact description. James, however, is intent on multiplicity of meaning anyway, on the most complex rendering of a social situation that can be achieved. Therefore, his metaphors as a form of periphrasis are not dishonest or lacking in faith, but are used because periphrasis as a rhetorical strategy even in its simple forms (as antonomasia for a character's name, for example) is by him used as portraiture, not skeleton sketches, and in metaphorical form it most completely fulfills this purpose. The metaphors in James's novel stand as a major variety of periphrasis which it is fruitful to explore, because they connect up and form patterns, motifs, and parts of the rhetoric of the book which contribute to the exploration of naming/identity. Even a word or two of metaphorical activity may cause a whole web of consonant meaning to vibrate in sympathy, and even a short bit of text can be considered periphrastic in the truest sense.

There are eight categories other than the three already discussed into which the main metaphors of *The Ambassadors* fall.\(^\text{30}\) These eight are dominated by the previous three discussed (see Table II below).

\(^{30}\) Gale not only uses somewhat different groupings, but also passes over or dismisses some of the metaphors and other figurative language in *The Ambassadors*. He focuses a great deal of attention instead on James's short stories and *The Golden Bowl*, admittedly an imagery-filled book, densely imagistic.
TABLE II—Metaphors of The Ambassadors: What and How Thought Is Expressed

A. Seeing as Understanding—Cognitive/Conceptual Metaphor (Visual Imperialism—"Grasping Imagination")

B. & C. Metaphors of Knighthood (B.) and Merchantry (C.)—Structural Metaphors Which Guide the Development of the Plot in a Manner Analogous to Structural (Constant Compositional) Irony

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Seeing as Understanding—What Strether (and Others) See:</th>
<th>B. Knighthood Metaphor</th>
<th>C. Mercantile Metaphor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bad: Dishonest Business Practices in Past as Basis for Present Ones</td>
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2A. Seeing as Understanding—How Strether (and Others) See: Categories (In Terms of What):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Miscellaneous</th>
<th>2. The Elements and Natural Phenomena</th>
<th>3. Human Activities</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Clichés</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Physical Action</td>
<td>Prophets, Seers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cerebral Realities</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Omen-Givers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directions</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Miracles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Water</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal/Adverbial /Adjectival Forms</td>
<td>Animal and Organic Imagery</td>
<td>Warfare and Weapons</td>
<td>Ghosts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td></td>
<td>Religion and Religious Artefacts</td>
<td>Goddesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers, Surfaces, and Façades</td>
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<td>Heroines</td>
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To begin with the miscellaneous category, mostly they are less concrete, more amorphous, or more a matter of mental operations in their "vehicles" (to use I. A. Richards's term from The Philosophy of Rhetoric 96-7); they sometimes accompany or underlie other metaphors (again, I am taking a line through MWLB and MTCR).  

However, first emphasis must be given to a section of this category which deals with the unusualness of the use of cliché.

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31 Also highly significant here is Mark Johnson's work The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason (26-29). In this work, Johnson distinguishes the bases of metaphors, which he calls "image schemata," from actual fully developed metaphors, which he refers to as "rich images." Though I accept and acknowledge this distinction, I will simplify the language attached to the concept for my discussion by referring to all the items I plan to discuss as if they were fully developed metaphors, even the image schematas such as "containment," or metaphors concerning the concept of "in/out." To see this idea treated by Johnson, cf. his work, 21-23, 34-35, 39-40.
First, there are the clichéd metaphors into which James breathes new life to illustrate identity concerns. Clichés held in common are a currency of exchange which both the Americans and the Europeans in James's world can use. They are thus immensely valuable in their own right. James, when he uses them either in the narrative voice or in the characters' dialogues, finds a way to make them versatile. As Austin Warren explains some of James's "renewals," they are "'extended conceit[s]' made by prolonging an image proverbial, trite, conventionally 'beautiful.'...These regalvanized figures, a kind of wit-work, suggest minor 'metaphysical' poetry..." (RO 148).

Like a series of mirrors which reflect in both directions, these metaphors, wherever they occur, resound throughout the text. Dealing with only a few of the multitude proves this point. The "historic sense" is described as "wincing" in Paris "like a touched nerve" (59). The innervating aspect is in the combination of the clichéd nerve comparison with the phrase "the historic sense." This simile suggests a condensation of something very complex into something that takes but a second to apprehend; James was elsewhere at great pains and wrote at length to describe "twinges" such as these in response to the historic sense; here, his purpose is fiction, not travelogue.

Some clichés are drawn from literary or folk saying sources. Strether's sense of being starved for new experience is signified in a sentence, which alludes to the Biblical Matthew 26:52, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The sentence in question refers to his smoking with Miss Barrace, which scandalizes Waymarsh. It reads, "He might perish by the sword as well as by famine..." (78). The sentence occurs again in a different usage and in combination with a new variation on another old saying (179): "It was clearly better to suffer as a sheep than as a lamb. One might as well perish
by the sword as by famine." Here, Strether is doing something else he feels is daring, sharing an omelette and some Chablis in a café with Marie. The original proverb is "One might as well be hanged for [stealing] a sheep as a lamb," but James alters the saying and pairs it with the "sword" proverb to emphasize Strether's funny combination of maturity and innocence and to tone down the original emphasis on theft.

"Being at sea" occurs more than once in The Ambassadors, notably when Strether is trying to find his way through an indeterminate "sea" of insinuations, for example at his and Waymarsh's meeting with Bilham and Miss Barrace and their friends. The shapelessness, density, and changing quality of his fears and assumptions about others' identities are reflected in the metaphor: "...[H]e was in fact so often at sea that his sense of the range of reference was merely general and...he on several occasions guessed and interpreted only to doubt" (78). "Being at sea" is actually fleshed out as a metaphor a few pages later in a reference to Bilham. We are told, as Strether is too, that Bilham had "come out to Paris to paint," but "he hadn't saved anything from his shipwreck...but his beautiful intelligence and his confirmed habit of Paris" (84). This prefigures Strether's end, though he will have only a series of reminiscences of Paris.

Strether's qualifications, both the ones he makes, and the ones that manifest his ability, constitute another clichéd metaphor. Strether hesitates to form opinions that seem obvious to the Pococks, and to Chad. The first example arises when Chad asks him if he is now engaged to Mrs. Newsome (96). Strether has just been meditating to himself on the unpredictability of the new Chad, but when Chad asks if Strether is engaged, it was "the determinant touch." "Well, that was enough, Strether had felt while his answer hung fire. He had felt at the same time, however, that nothing could less become him than that
it should hang fire too long." The contrast with Sarah Pocock is evident in her husband's expression of it to Strether (216): "[I]t would be like her, he felt, to open fire on the spot."

There are different reasons for "hanging fire," depending on personal "form." Strether relies on a sense of form, an adjunct to personal identity, which grows and expands for him gradually. In the next cliché, to "suit someone's book," of all the possible derivations of this phrase, from references to gambling, card games, financial records/business, and rules, the most likely for James was "conventional wisdom about someone's performance or 'form'" (Chapman New Dictionary of American Slang 39). One of the first examples occurs when Miss Gostrey tells Strether that he should judge the mysterious woman in Chad's background by Chad's development itself, a question of form. Strether already seems to like the unknown woman on Chad's behalf, which bothers him because he sees "at once…the full extent of how little it would suit his book" (107). "Suiting someone's book" is spoken of several times in the novel, but elsewhere it sometimes combines with the same wording for financial/business and card game metaphors in a layer-upon-layer use of metaphor.

When Strether perceives, at Sarah's smile from the compartment of her train, that she is going to be "gracious and unallusive," is "going to play the larger game" with "the valued friend of her family," "his spirits [rise]." This cliché is used frequently in English and contains one of the "orientational metaphors," "Happy Is Up; Sad Is Down," described by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (MWLB Chapter 4 and p. 15). James uses many of these types of metaphors, as well as others described as daily-use metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson, and he thus strikes a balance with the more technical,
amorphous, intellectual concepts which he also uses to examine the relationships between naming and identity. He completes the orientational metaphor by continuing, "relief and reassurance had softly dropped upon him." That is, something fell gently on his "rising spirits," simultaneously or slightly in advance of their rising, almost like a blessing. In the midst of these orientational metaphors, comes the sentence "[I]t was as if what had occurred in the alighting of his critics had been something other than his fear..." [emphasis mine]. Therefore, Sarah, his prime critic, "alights," or gracefully "rustles down," whereas before he saw her she was "steaming up," completing the orientational perspective (209, 210-11).

Showing that he thinks he knows how to talk to people in Paris, Strether asks Miss Barrace if she is one of Waymarsh's "spoils of conquest" (266). This comic typing of experience helps to "naturalize" sophisticated conversation for Strether; it does some work for James of bridging the gap between Yankee imperialism and plainspokenness and Continental indirection, which Miss Barrace uses like a native. In fact, the whole "naturalization" process of words and phrases and clauses from New England to Paris and back again is one which can cause something to be lost in translation, like the altered names and sometimes identities of naturalized citizens.32 This tendency is also comedic in the book, combined with James's international theme. The Americans try to match their patterns of thought, in the word patterns familiar to them, with what they see. The French do the same. Miss Barrace herself is a threshold figure between the American and French modes of naming and determining identity, and her expressive "'Ah! Ah!'" fills

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32 As I have found since originally using this simile of naturalization/immigration, Nelson Goodman uses a similar metaphor of importation of persons in his article "Languages of Art," from PPM. As Goodman uses it, it reads, "The home realm of a scheme ["set of labels"] is the country of naturalization rather than of birth, and the returning expatriate is an alien despite his quickening memories" (128).
the gap between the two cultures with rich and otherwise lost meaning, rendering the expression *je ne sais quoi*. This expression hovers everywhere, but is nowhere used as a phrase except in English, in the parenthetical expressions more nearly parallel to *c'est-à-dire* and in "he didn't know what to call it," a question of naming. All these idioms are used both casually and not, and sometimes introduce figurative comparisons.

Sometimes, two people rather than one create a new metaphorical web from clichés. Strether and Chad use at least two different metaphors to describe Sarah's refusal to countenance Strether's explanation and manner. Strether begins more inventively, if vaguely: "'We gave them...their chance to be delighted, and they've walked up to it, and looked all round it, and not taken it,'" making of the chance itself some sort of object. Chad himself introduces the trite "bringing a horse to water" metaphor and Strether completes the comparison: "'[T]he tune to which this morning Sarah wasn't delighted—the tune to which, to adopt your metaphor, she refused to drink—leaves us on that side nothing more to hope" (288). As Gale notes, "Two...water idioms—leading a horse to water and washing one's hands of something—are frequent in James but are rarely elaborated into imagery" (CI 25). Not only does James have Strether identify the "idiom" as a metaphor, however. What makes the metaphor interesting here though it is trite enough is the way that Chad and Strether work on the wording together. P. Gibson says, quoting Austin Warren in passing,33

Even within the context of "scene" alone, images function in several distinct ways to dramatize internal processes and to define a clearer structure...Austin Warren has pointed to the "dialectic" exchange of metaphor that occurs in Jamesian conversation when "sometimes a figure started by one is developed by the other" speaker as phrases are taken up

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33 For her source, see Austin Warren, "Myth and Dialectic in the Later Novels," *Kenyon Review*, V (1943), 555. Warren takes up this as well as other issues in his 1948 book *Rage for Order*. 
and returned…. (PMLA 1077)

Chad's identity shadows Strether's, and both are often described in terms of depth.

"The young man...confessed to such deep identities between [himself and Mme. de Vionnet] as he might play with the idea of working free from, but which at a given moment could still draw him down like a whirlpool" (291) [emphasis mine]. Even more markedly, Miss Gostrey asks Strether how Chad can sail with his relatives without some decisive change: "'How can he join them at Liverpool if he but sinks deeper into his situation here?"' (296). As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson remark of this sort of metaphor:

Virtue Is Up: Depravity Is Down....[has a p]hysical and social basis: Good Is Up for a person (physical basis), together with…[the]metaphor Society Is A Person (in the version where you are not identifying with your society).

To be virtuous is to act in accordance with the standards set by the society/person to maintain its well-being. Virtue Is Up because virtuous actions correlate with social well-being from the society/person's point of view. Since socially based metaphors are part of the culture, it's the society/person's point of view that counts. (MWLB 17)

Thus, a cultural identity can be illuminated by a metaphor as well.

Another metaphor derived from an adage occurs twice in the same conversation, when Strether tells Miss Gostrey, "'[Mrs. Newsome's] all cold thought—which Sarah could serve to us cold without its really losing anything'" (298). This brings to mind the saying "Revenge is a dish best served cold." Taking revenge is something two high-toned ladies, Mrs. Newsome and Mrs. Pocock, would never think of themselves as doing, but the united force of their identities is formidable.

The "romance" of the countryside and his memory of a painting of it betrays Strether into an untoward enthusiasm when he goes to get away from what he has "been through,"
an orientational cliché. That there is yet more for him to "go through" should be clear, from all he already senses and intuits. Surely he should expect something truly pastoral, idyllic in the true sense of the idyll, involving in part the note of competition, unhappiness, or death in an apparently "idyllic atmosphere." These characteristics are shared at least in literature, a part of Strether's frame of reference, such as in Virgilian pastoral and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, the latter of which James may have read in its entirety, and from which he (slightly mis)quotes.34 We do see, in the repetition of the word "charming" in relation to the "miracle" and the "marvel" of the meeting in the country, a possible relationship with the pastoral of Theocritus, where magic is in the air. But Strether, before he sees the two lovers, notices mainly the atmosphere of the countryside, which in its French incarnation he has only previously encountered in art. Rambling across the landscape, he himself is a shepherd, "[lying] on his back in the grass." His public identity is not that of a French citizen like the others he encounters, and therefore not natural to the scene; he is "playing at" being like the cultivated people of different times who left a court setting and identified themselves as shepherds and shepherdesses, constructing elaborate (and conventional) poetry in the countryside.

In a persuasive essay entitled "James's 'Special-Green Vision': *The Ambassadors* as Pastoral," Paul Rosenzweig argues that the garden and summer outdoor pastoral

...[are] deployed throughout the novel at...key spots... most importantly in [the scene at Gloriani's garden and] in the other central scene of the novel...and in the opening and closing scenes of the novel....James...transposes the traditional contrast between the New World Garden and the Old World City and creates a pastoral retreat within its traditional antithesis—the city. (367-68)

He suggests that the aesthetic emphasis on the pastoral and garden images, which occur in both city and country scenes, relieves one of some of the pressure of a totally moral interpretation focusing on Strether's rightness of renunciation, focusing instead on "formal and aesthetic criteria" appropriate to "consider [Strether] a formal component of the pastoral mode" (SN 368), in its own way a cultural cliché. He continues:

The occasional comparison which is made between...Prufrock or James's own Marcher seems inappropriate. Those characters' inability to act is clearly a fault, while Strether's, when appropriately modified, makes him 'right.'...[H]e seems progressively to view himself in the alternative role of a pastoral figure of imagination and artistry and increasingly uses that model to guide himself in actively and positively abstaining from action. (SN 369)

The shock of meeting Chad and Mme. de Vionnet together in the natural surroundings causes Strether to fall back from moment to moment on older, "safer," familiar modes of identity assessment contained in other clichés, however. As if in a world of masks, he considers that "they had something to put a face upon," a cliché twice repeated. He later thinks of Mme. de Vionnet's French volubility and how Chad cannot openly contradict her. And, he analyzes her representation that she and Chad are only there for the day: "...[I]f she had so sized-up, in the Woollett phrase, their necessity, she knew best her own measure," though he finds her measure "odd" (314). This "sizing-up" and "knowing her own measure" read like other old sayings such as "If the shoe fits, wear it," or "Where the shoe pinches, there's the point."

Consequently, Strether's thoughts become accelerated to include their relationship as one similar to what he had first supposed. Strether thinks of the place where they must actually be staying, "from which they had so remarkably swum into [his] ken, and the tacit repudiation of which had been the essence of [Mme. de Vionnet's] comedy" (314)
[emphasis mine]. In this case, we see not a cliché, but an allusion to Keats's "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer." In a footnote to his book Robert Gale mentions that Keats was one of James's favorite poets (CI 19f 1). Furthermore, he says this particular poem "inspires a number of images," and that Keats "[heads] the list of poets used imagistically" (CI 111). Strether is filled with a "wild surmise" of his own, too. He, though not "silent, upon a peak in Darien," has previously had a moment with Chad at Chad's residence when he might have come to his "wild surmise," had he been less naive or less gentle in inspiration. In the very tenor of their discussion about Chad's relatives, in the analysis of what Chad's relatives think of him, and in his own tendency to take sides with Chad against them, Strether should be alerted (286). The text reads, "It was as if their high place really represented some moral elevation from which they could look down on their recent past."35

It is the overwhelming sense of awe and the slight sense of envy of Gloriani (or even of Chad) which triggers Strether's famous "overflow" of emotion and language in his

35 Because this "high place" is so significant in its implications, I discount Gale's remark that the use of "swims into his ken" is not "important." When the high place does not function for Strether's sensitive mind, the low place in which he sees the adulterous pair has to serve, and he is given a second chance to interpret, for he is in a high place there too, comparatively speaking, in the pavilion which "overhangs the water" (309).

Moments of recognition in a high/spacious place, usually recognition of some inner truth or state of identity, are common in the late novels; for example when Milly Theale is perched on the precipice in the beginning of The Wings of the Dove, and when her unseen but strongly felt presence drops down "like a dove" from her Venetian palace in the form of a letter which affects Densher and Kate. As well, she is in her palace, above the city of Venice, when Lord Mark tells her about the lovers and she "sees" Densher fully for the first time. And in The Golden Bowl, high spaces are often featured as places from which to gain new perspectives, as are the hillside with the bench above Fawns, and the terrace from which Maggie Verver watches Charlotte in the adjoining room and on which they later confront each other.

Of the balcony scenes in The Ambassadors, W. M. Gibson remarks that throughout the novel, the balcony scenes "[embody] a major discovery or decision for Strether and together they chart the rise and fall of his sense of freedom and of the value of youth" (NEQ 298). Strether struggles not only with finding the correct names for things, but also with trying to create a new identity for himself. He is trying to change his "style," in the sense in which Kenneth Burke uses the word, as "an aspect of identification." Strether seeks one that will be strongly established on the basis of such things as his deliberate choices and the choices he wants to make in retrospect, and less established on the vague basis of being Lambert Strether because he is on the front of a magazine that says so. Strether comes to the point of altering his style to suit his own ideals instead of the ideals of anyone else, even those of his confidante Miss Gostrey.
advice to Bilham in the section James calls the "germ" of his novel. First, there is the hackneyed metaphor about not "missing the train"; then, the more inventive metaphor about life being "at best a tin mould, either fluted and embossed, with ornamental excrescences, or else smooth and dreadfully plain, into which, a helpless jelly, one's consciousness is poured..." (131-32). This is interesting in terms of the idea of overflow, as if one's protesting consciousness (a synonym here for identity) could possibly overflow the (deterministic) mould. Contrast the relative placidity of the metaphor relating to Chad's "moulding," which reads, "It was as if...he had...copious...but shapeless, been put into a firm mould and turned successfully out" (97).

The "being at sea" mentioned earlier is contrasted in the book with the usual firm attitude we see attributed to American men. Strether thinks at one point in assertive, stubborn (and clichéd) terms: "So far as the essence of the matter went he had...stood fast on the spot on which he had...planted his feet" (184) [emphasis mine]. There is a similarity in the book in the figurative descriptions of how American men, sometimes very different from each other, are stubborn, resolved, raw, or firmly "themselves," speaking in terms of national identity. For example, Waymarsh's unrelenting and doubtful expressions are spoken of thus: his features "sit[], clustered and expectant, like a...defiant family group, on the doorstep of their residence" (30). When Waymarsh is silent, insistent, and expectant at the same time, "Waymarsh had always more or less the air of sitting at the door of his tent" (185). Finally, when Strether himself is describing for Miss Gostrey's benefit what Jim Pocock is to Chad, he says, "'Jim's the note of home....the home of the business. Jim stands, with his little legs apart, at the door of that tent; and Jim is, frankly speaking, extremely awful'" (247). The emphasis on this type of
New World identification plays against the suavity and smoothness Strether notices in the formerly "wild and bold" Chad. Strether's original American desire to pick a defensible spot and metaphorically "plant his feet" and "make a stand" is at war with his ability to name things open to interpretation.

In consenting to "be at sea" and neglect what seems firm ground in favor of an appreciation of the aesthetic of other people, Strether's progress is also traced through one persistent cliché of Jamesian writing, "the note" or "the note struck." This cliché is used by James “so often as to constitute a…mannerism” (CI 139). From the beginning, "notes struck" are things which either indicate or provoke thoughts of doubleness. During Strether's exploration of Chad's new identity, referred to in various forms using the word "note" (which occur on 65, 66, 89, 101-02, 102, and 185), Chad's personality, double because it is not the "old" Chad, is not entirely unfamiliar; but we are aware of a discordance between the "two" Chad's. Then, closing the examinations of Chad within a sort of parenthesis, we reemerge to see Strether and Waymarsh together again, though the note of doubleness from the way Strether regards Waymarsh at the beginning is again indicated in Strether's acknowledgement of the way in which "silence, after so many weeks, had come to play its part in [his and Waymarsh's] concert [of conversation]." As he thinks, "this note...had lately taken a fuller tone, and it was his fancy...that they had never quite so drawn it out" (185). Before the Pocock's arrival, Strether and Waymarsh are in silent opposition, yet their lack of conversation is presented as a concert, full of sound. Thus, "notes struck" and "notes sounded" in the book are cues to doubleness, or conflict, or paradox, wherever they occur in figuration. I call the word "note" figurative (contra Gale) because "sound," "tone," and "strike" all suggest music. Where music is
not directly suggested as the ground of the metaphor, a transferred sense from music to "notes" in other categories is, such as the sound of mechanical contrivances, perhaps clocks.

Strether's sense of integral things, as opposed to duplicity or doubleness, is sometimes comically complicated. Still mentally active during his meeting with Chad and Mme. de Vionnet in the country, though without all his wits about him, Strether later "remember[s] further still...many things that...fitted together" (312) [emphasis mine]. This tired expression is given new life through its interplay with other expressions that coincide, showing the "architecture" of Strether's thought, the tendency to sketch out "blueprints."

The next such segment reads:

Yet his theory...had bountifully been that the facts were specifically none of his business, and were, over and above, ...intrinsically beautiful; and this might have prepared him for anything, as well as rendered him proof against mystification....However....his real experience of these few hours put on, in that belated vision....the aspect that is most to our purpose....He was, at that point of vantage, in full possession, to make of it all what he could. He kept making of it that there had been simply a lie in the charming affair—a lie on which one could now, detached and deliberate, perfectly put one's finger. (312-13) [emphasis mine]

He starts with an inutile theory and must give it up, thanks to a "lie," a flaw in the structure. His "belated vision" surpasses his "theory"—he thinks he has received some kind of external evidence in what he "sees," which disproves what he previously assumed and provides the "groundwork" for a new "theory," a drastically altered one. This evidence is the lie on which he can "put his finger," another pat clause describing a metaphorical condition of certainty, so palpable one can "touch" it. We go from one metaphorical sense, "vision," to another, "touch." Strether must "fit together things...to
make of it all what he [can]." This "fitting together" is in essence coming up with a new theory of identity. Thus, his "bricks" and "mortar" have even been altered from what they were before. As Miss Gostrey points out later in the same language, his sense of Marie de Vionnet as "the most charming woman in the world...was an odd foundation." Strether asks, "'For what I reared on it?'" She responds, "'For what you didn't!'" (333).

In all these instances above, and in many more which derive their origins from the kinds of "everyday" metaphors in common use described by Lakoff and Johnson in MWLB, James comes up with innovative uses for dead, tired, or clichéd metaphors. By doing so, he helps familiarize the reader with something unfamiliar by means of taking hold of other linked ordinary concepts. This is like learning a new aspect of an old friend's identity, or finding a new name for a concept one has perhaps not fully articulated to oneself with all its implications intact. This "name," this metaphor, usually consists of more than just a single word, though a single word may stand as a metaphorical unit. When considering a metaphorical cliché as a form of periphrasis, whether actually a "wordy" periphrastic unit or a shorter one- or two-word metaphor implicative of periphrastic meaning, one finds the result the same: periphrastic cliché gathers up "historical" background clues as to the meaning of the fiction and the characters involved as we know them from categories of the past, and by improvisation on a theme grafts the characters, their identities, and their experiences onto a "branch" of human experience that we recognize.

The first miscellaneous non-clichéd metaphor to be considered is the use of the word "element," tied in with the elements of nature but also abstracted. Though elsewhere the word "element" in James refers to metaphors constructed around earth, air, fire, or water,
in case the reference is to a sort of chemical proposition, suggesting that the composing elements of art may be taken apart again, and restored to their original significance, reversing the act of creation. The passage is the famous one about Strether's Lambinet in Book XI, Chapter III:

The little Lambinet abode with him as the picture he would have bought….It would be a different thing…to see the remembered mixture resolved back into its elements—to assist at the restoration to nature of the whole far-away hour: the dusty day in Boston, the background of the Fitchburg Depot, of the maroon-coloured sanctum, the special-green vision, the ridiculous price, the poplars, the willows, the rushes, the river, the sunny silver sky, the shady woody horizon. (303)

This section reminds one that a work of art has a context and identity beyond the artist's vision of a scene (as intertextual artefact), beyond the place where the art work is displayed or encountered, but which includes even the circumstances of meeting between the prospective patron or buyer and his or her individual need of the work. These things make up the work of art, and give a depth of perspective to works beyond what exists within the frame itself. What Strether sees as "resolved" or "restored" to nature are largely sensory things, remembered as composite. As Strether judges of art, so he judges of the identities of others, including elements of his own "need" of the "work."

Thus, some of the periphrastic words and expressions related to Strether's new, more developed judgement, with which he seeks to analyze his own and others' identities, are the same as those applied to judging works of art. They too reflect in two metaphorical directions, both toward the aesthetic world and its "elements" and the moral world and its dimensions. Some of the condensed meanings are contained in words like "square" or "squaring" (257, 259, 334, 343), which is in moral terms a reference not only to being "squared" (bought off), but also to making things reconcile, as a moral account book
would be squared. This contrast between the two moral meanings is a consolidated aesthetic of being "square," or "right," a matter of being composed of right angles, like a picture frame around a subject, stopping off relations and making "fairness" appear to be bounded rather than an endless topic. This presumably shows that one has not strayed beyond certain boundaries, or been "bought off" or "bribed" "too much" (rather like Strether's early concern that he may like Paris "too much").

In terms of writing fiction rather than of constructing moral boundaries per se, James overtly notes the way in which this "framing" activity takes place. In this case the boundary metaphor is the circular embroidery hoop:

> Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so. He is in the perpetual predicament that the continuity of things is never, by the space of an instant or an inch, broken, and that, to do anything at all, he has at once intensely to consult and intensely to ignore it. (FW 1041)

Here, he uses the metaphor of "a young embroiderer of the canvas of life" for the author; he points out about the "presumability somewhere of a convenient, of a visibly-appointed stopping-place" that

> ...[w]e have, as the case stands, to invent and establish [the stopping-places], to arrive at them by a difficult, dire process of selection and comparison, of surrender and sacrifice. The very meaning of expertness is acquired courage, to brace one's self for the cruel crisis from the moment one sees it grimly loom. (FW 1041)

At many points here, one can see resemblances between the way James treats art and the way Strether, by aid of a kind of "moral art" of appreciation of circumstances, comes up with terms for his own "salvation." (As Fanny Assingham poses it in The Golden
Bowl, and taking the question unironically, “What is morality but high intelligence?”). Strether has a "geometry of his own," and likewise becomes aware that so do the identities of others.

Another such phrase combination, relating to being "straight" (20-21), is often a judgement made about playing societal games well or badly. Justifying or "squaring and straightening" Waymarsh's bedclothes near the beginning is a submerged synonym in the action for Strether's "justifying" himself (33); he wonders if Mme. de Vionnet will cause him to go "crooked" instead of "straight" with her smile (128-29); he gets to the heart of the subject of Mrs. Newsome with Miss Gostrey in a "straighter mode of dealing" (296); the comparative "straightness of [Marie's final] appeal" to Strether is referred to (321, 323). It is as if Strether were evening up a picture frame hung aslant, one of the metaphorical "clever canvases" in the book, to "see" more clearly what is happening.

Though he is tired before he comes to Paris, by the end he really has not achieved "rest," but only faced a different kind of challenge, which has involved "measuring" and "judging" of the "square" and "straight" in other people's actions/conversations. This word "measure" or "measuring" fits in as another figure which reaches back and forth across the novel as he takes the measure of others' identities.

When Strether first meets Chad's friends, his experience is reflected in these terms, which might well be applied to works of art: "It was interesting to him to feel that he was in the presence of new measures, other standards, a different scale of relations, and that...here were a happy pair who didn't think of things at all as he and Waymarsh thought" (77). He becomes intrigued with the "measurements" of taste, which suit his desire for wholeness, his as yet largely unfed metaphorical "vision," better than the
standards of Woollett. Taste is a middle term for Strether, a moderating influence between the harshly and naively judging world of Woollett and what he fears will be the lawless world of Paris; taste allows him to construct a sort of middle ground suitable to his final awareness that morality and aesthetics are not disjunctive but continuous aspects of life and identity, in their interaction causing a whole "world" of perception to flourish. Before he really enters the Parisian social rounds, he goes back and forth between the two extremes. M. Johnson (in BIM) calls a perspective like the one Strether starts out with “Objectivism.” He says,

By “objectivism,” I mean the basic conviction that there... must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness, or right-ness....Richard Rorty has shown that some form of Objectivism has defined mainstream Western philosophy for at least the last three-and-a-half centuries....[W]e ought to reject the false dichotomy according to which there are two opposite and incompatible options: (a) Either there must be absolute, fixed value-neutral standards of rationality and knowledge, or else (b) we collapse into an "anything goes" relativism, in which there are no standards whatever, and there is no possibility for criticism...There exists a large middle ground between the...extremes of foundationalism and relativism....On the account [of metaphorical language] I have sketched, [true] objectivity is...made possible by the public nature of image-schematic and basic-level structures of understanding, and the metaphoric and metonymic projections based upon them. Objectivity does not require taking up God's perspective, which is impossible;...it requires taking up approximately human perspectives that are tied to reality through our embodied imaginative understanding. (196, 197, 196, 212)

Strether is from the beginning naturally endowed with enough metaphorical imagination to reach this new form of objectivity, but he mistrusts himself at first and relies on a thoroughly analytical search for “certain knowledge” about the correct naming of others, while basing his considerations on “embodied imaginative understanding” only fitfully.
Much can be said about the influence of Paris and its culture here, upon Strether's identity, and upon all concerned. As M. Johnson also notes, “It is a mistake…to think of an organism and its environment as two entirely independent and unrelated entities; the organism does not exist as an organism apart from its environment” (BIM 207). A recent work of what is known as “deep ecology,” or the “new understanding of life” which “may be seen as the scientific forefront of the change of paradigms from a mechanistic to an ecological worldview” (Capra The Web of Life xviii), is based upon metaphors of “embodied imaginative understanding” as well, only James was earlier in his portrait of Strether and Strether's endeavor in his new environment and what he learns from it (to a large degree, Strether leaves behind the nineteenth-century mechanistic view and adopts a more "ecological" view of what causes people to behave as they do, and what solutions are within one’s limits). As Capra explains,

The paradigm that is now receding has dominated our culture for several hundred years, during which it has shaped our modern Western society and has significantly influenced the rest of the world. This paradigm consists of a number of entrenched ideas and values, among them the view of the universe as a mechanical system composed of elementary building blocks, the view of the human body as a machine, the view of life in society as a competitive struggle for existence, the belief in unlimited material progress to be achieved through economic and technological growth, and—last, but not least—the belief that a society in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male is one that follows a basic law of nature. (WL 6)

Though in his late works James does portray characters in competition with each other, either for worldly goods or for the attention and love of other human beings or both, his rhetoric is everywhere sympathetic to characters who rise above this identity pattern, his novels cautionary. By the end of The Ambassadors, Strether, Maria Gostrey, and Mme.
de Vionnet show every sign of "rising above" self, and Chad the reverse in his partnership with "unlimited material progress." Initially, though Strether is leery of Chad’s “Pagan” qualities, it is Mme. de Vionnet who makes him the most suspicious. It is here that Strether makes his greatest change—from a view of woman as predatory when in charge to a view of woman as unfortunately preyed upon even when in a tutelary position. In James, the realism appropriate to his time made some female figures forlorn, as Mme. de Vionnet is forlorn at the prospective loss of Chad; still, James does not see this as a desirable state for them, only one they can rise heroically above. In some connections an elitist, James in his sexual politics partially proselytizes for a more egalitarian and demotic world. That is, when Strether puts Marie on a pedestal, he is firmly deflated by his experience with her "vulgar" sorrow, and his final awareness that she is not an ideal, but a real, human being.

One of the strategies Strether uses in his taking of "measurements" is to sound the "depths" of things, judging how "deeply" things go. (In these latter metaphors, from squaring, straightening, framing, measuring, judging of depth, and etc. in the miscellaneous category, I am following the example, if not the exact words, of Lakoff et al.) First, there's Paris. The subject of measuring depth comes up when Strether suns himself in the Luxembourg Gardens, in which Paris "seem[s] all surface one moment [and] seem[s] all depth the next" (64). This famous quote is an excellent prose gloss on Marvell's "[a]nnihilating all that's made/To a green thought in a green shade" (The Garden 6.47-48), suggesting a possible source, just as other lines, "Two paradises 'twere in one/To live in paradise alone" (The Garden 8.64-65) may bespeak Strether's present freedom from Mrs. Newsome and preview his final state. For the moment following
Rosenzweig's point, that pastoral is a combination of nature and art (369), one can "feel" in both the primary quotes the warm sun and the shade shifting in the breeze, which invites in humans half-drowsy and half-intensely-alert thought. Some things previously separate seem whole, and unity of opposites prevails, as when Strether senses that "parts were not to be discriminated nor differences comfortably marked" (64). Though this may be merely an effect of intertextuality, it is also possible that James thought of Marvell's poem as a submerged and condensed metaphorical reference for his portraits of the gardens, city and country, in France. Strether refers again to his assessing terms, asking himself how the fondness for Paris is "measured."

Chad, whose identity is seemingly "changed," is assessed likewise for his "depth"; Strether wonders if Paris and a woman have only "given him a surface," but being unable to penetrate this surface, he credits Chad with depth for much of the novel, though uncomfortably aware of Chad's contradictory shallowness. As Strether is himself aware of attempting to hold his own against the "depth" of Chad's manner, which he tries to "sound," so he believes he is in turn "sounded" by Gloriani when the two of them are introduced: "He wasn't soon to forget [the sculptor's eyes], was to think of them...as the source of the deepest intellectual sounding to which he had ever been exposed...." (120-21). Miss Gostrey has the "depth" to absent herself instead of being compromised by Marie, and as she tells Strether generally of women, "'We're abysses!'" (140).

The visiting Americans have depths of identity too. Not only does Sarah's "depth" lead straight down into her mother's (230-31), showing strong agreement of purpose and outlook, but as Strether points out, their refusal to note any difference in Chad is "a
policy...a deep game" (230); Sarah herself is especially "deep." Mamie is even spoken of as "deep" in her concealment of what she feels for Chad.

One of the most versatile things about "depth" as applied to Strether and others is the difference in the way the term is handled. In the case of others, Strether is in the main assessing their moral qualities almost aesthetically, as if they were portraits hanging on a wall. He hopes to "penetrate" the meanings of their "pictures." But in his own case, he is lost in depths of water or other "European" immensities, trying to assess or judge himself and what is around and "beneath" him, what is limiting or confusing him. His own culpability as a moral agent is most urgent for him and no longer a matter of casual speculation once he has seen the lovers on "the silver stream of impunity." Even as he waits to see Mme. de Vionnet after the revelation of the affair, his leisure is thus described: "He hadn't yet struck himself, since leaving Woollett, so much as a loafer, though there had been times when he believed himself touching bottom. This was a deeper depth than any, and with no foresight, scarcely with a care, as to what he should bring up" (318). He feels most contrite during his leisure when he imagines his appearance to his American friends, his identity's original superego.

"Depth" is connected to the word "bottom" and the concept of "touching bottom," which occur metaphorically in the text. In metaphorical periphrasis as applied to art, "depth" and "touching bottom" of portraiture come into play as a relation of perspective. It is Strether's identity/perspective which must endure repeated revisions as the perspective in the "portraits" changes: "Self" is changed by "Others" (Roberts Alterity and Narrative 4). The levels of Strether's perception are worked in comically by the repeated bits of periphrasis, standing in turn for his most recent level. The fact that there
is always another level supplies the comedy. Strether's "descent" into other-awareness is simultaneously and in a parallel way a "descent" into self-knowledge and awareness, which aids him in coming to a final standpoint at the end.

When Strether declares to Miss Gostrey at the end that he is "done" with ideas, it is less a permanent declaration than simply his way of "squaring" and "making straight" the "picture" he leaves behind, of ceasing to "measure" and to reach for the "bottom" beneath his feet, of no longer seeking a "ground" for his arguments. He is aware of others not only in terms of "rightness" or "squareness" or "straightness"—people not being a matter of "right angles"—but also in the complementary terms of genuine wholeness, roundness, depth, and general complexity.

Another directional/orientational word used metaphorically in connection with the psychic action of "falling," of hesitating, of "going behind," of measuring or plumbing the depths, and of sudden discovery is "dropping." Mme. de Vionnet "drops" when she hesitates to express (149); Gloriani "drops" when he generates a surface over what may be his genuine responses to Strether (155-56); Waymarsh, in his sincere effort to swing Strether's sympathies, "drops" to "directness" (274-75); Strether gives Waymarsh credit for some of the same "flights and drops" of the imagination as he has had himself (275).

These "drops" and receding "bottoms" plague Strether and some other characters, and they seek for defensible "ground" on which to position themselves, often cast in the language of logical demonstrations and intellectual problems. Sometimes the language of a logical problem, demonstration, theory, or idea is "natural," as both being derived in its vehicle from the natural world (like a water image) and describing a physiological process in the whole metaphor, in this case a metaphor of "release," such as the release of
tears, an orgasm, breaking into a sweat, getting one's second wind, and the like. In the main case to which I refer, at Gloriani's Strether has just said to Bilham that some things are "Better early than late." This triggers a release of feeling in Strether and just before the famous "germ-of-the-novel" speech, we read:

This note indeed the next thing overflowed for Strether into a quiet stream of demonstration that as soon as he had let himself go he felt as the real relief. It had consciously gathered to a head, but the reservoir had filled sooner than he knew, and his companion's touch was to make the waters spread. There were some things that had to come in time if they were to come at all. If they didn't come in time they were lost forever. It was the general sense of them that had overwhelmed him with its long slow rush. (131)

Another example in which evidence of thought taken produces a physical "sensation" takes place when Strether is introduced to Jeanne by Chad. Chad "did enjoy his effect. That was why Strether had felt at first the breath of calculation..." (134) [emphasis mine].

Sometimes, premonitions have a cerebral, if metaphorical, character. Strether thinks he receives confirmation of Miss Gostrey's previous knowledge about the connection between Mme. de Vionnet and Chad. About Strether's own awareness we read: "He had grown clear, in a flash, on a point long since settled for herself; but no reapproximation to Mrs. Newsome had occurred in consequence. Madame de Vionnet had by her visit held up the torch to these truths, and what…lingered in poor Maria's face was the somewhat smoky light of the scene between them" (330). The textual variant for the first part of the first sentence, from the first English edition, reads, "He had shut to, with a click, on..." (Rosenbaum 353). Although the metaphor "held up the torch" might be figuring an

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36 Indeed, as M. Johnson notes in BIM, cycles are some of the "image schemata" which "constrain metaphorical projections" (112-13). He mentions such cycles as the reproductive cycle, the "heartbeat, breathing, digestion, menstruation, waking and sleeping, circulation, emotional build-up followed by release, etc." (119).
ordinary torch held up for light, and "shut to, with a click," some sort of mousetrap or other device, if one puts the two textual variants together for sense with "held up the torch" it suggests that the whole metaphor is based on photography, at the stage at which it was practiced in James's time. Strether's "growing clear in a flash" encapsulates the sense in which the sudden picture of Mme. de Vionnet and Chad together on the river tells him an intuitive truth, which in turn is "developed" by him later when he is alone. Thus in this image, intuitive truth (like a "photograph," a physical illustration of identity) supplies the understanding which all his logical fashioning of demonstrations has not been able to accomplish alone.

A consolidation of these two previously divergent tendencies in the book is brought about by empathetic acts of interpenetration of two spheres within Strether himself as he learns to look beyond the literal faces—people's visual identities—and façades, surfaces and veils which occur throughout the book. These "coverings" are associated with notions of "open/closed" in metaphorical descriptions. Such items are related to Gale’s category of doors, windows, and thresholds, not in many cases sexually significant—Gale follows Freud in seeing them as female symbols—but much more frequently connected, through the eyes as portals, doors, or "windows of the soul" or mind, with the light metaphors previously discussed. These include light having equivalence to understanding, or variations in light and darkness constituting different kinds of knowledge about identity which may come through open portals.

For example, concerning Gloriani’s history and appearance, it

...was more than enough to crown him, for his guest, with the light, with the romance, of glory. Strether, in contact with that element as he had never yet so intimately been, had the consciousness of opening to it...all the windows
of his mind, of letting this rather grey interior drink in for once the sun of a clime not marked in his old geography. (119)

Strether’s receptive "windows" or eyes are open to the soul, the mind.

It is not only Strether who is in question where portals or windows are concerned. "…[Strether's being different] was not at all events such a circumstance as Sarah's own unaided lights would help her to. Even if she had come out to flash those lights more than yet appeared she wouldn't make much headway against mere pleasantness" (211). Here, light is first inspired interpretation that Strether thinks Sarah will fail of; then, in a slight change of context, "to flash those lights" has not only become "a light in the darkness," like torches or lights of a boat or other vehicle trying to "make…headway," but also reads aggressively, as if Sarah’s angry or "brilliant" eyes flash the light as a weapon. The portal sense is attenuated here because of the cluster effect of the other images, but the light is still interior to Sarah, and shines beyond her through a threshold. In talking privately with Mamie, Strether feels that the "door" (the portal) of "his prime undertaking" stands "strangely ajar," and is at first afraid she means to discuss it; but Mamie herself is also keeping her feelings "dark" from Strether.

There is an addition of perspective(s) to the question of apertures and light. "Strether was glad at all events…that the saving he required [by Waymarsh] was not more scant; so constituted a luxury was it in certain lights just to lurk there out of the full glare" (270) [emphasis mine]. "In certain lights" is here equivalent to "from certain angles," considerations from the world of painting which are related to perspective, and in this quote we have also to do with the notion "perspective" meaning "viewpoint" or "opinion," or even identity itself.
Another periphrastic metaphorical construct which is related to the open/closed and to the surface/façade/barrier/veil metaphorical constructs is that of "in/out."37 This gives one’s position in relation to thresholds and portals of knowledge often concerned in the awareness of social savoir faire, this being perhaps (or perhaps not, as James raises the question) the most "surface" kind of knowledge of identity. Early on, Strether looks at Chad’s face, and tries to read what actual difference there is from Chad's face when he knew it earlier. "In gleams, in glances, the past did perhaps peep out of it, but such lights were faint and instantly merged" (97). "Contact" with Chad "elbow[s]" everything "out" of Strether's consciousness (108); Strether thinks of slipping the "reminiscence" of his non-"violent" talks with Chad "out of sight" (108-09); to Strether, the "kind way" with Mamie is to "put as many [things] as possible" into her consciousness (211-12). When he sees her privately, however, she becomes a more developed person in his awareness, and it is she who puts ideas "in" Strether’s head by tactful friendliness. Thus, the difference between "in" and "out" is more open to question than Strether first thinks. James generally likes to dramatize barriers to awareness proving permeable in spite of every attempt to hide true, or at least probably true, relations. This tendency to reveal hidden situations is one of the hallmarks of the demotic literature of identity, which James is usually not thought to practice extensively, a position I partly rebut in Chapter V.

Strether also uses the term "out" to describe the finality or result of a reasoning process. He wants to know from Bilham where Mamie "has come out" (261); in a sense, he is asking what she has become. Also at Chad’s party for the Pococks, Strether exchanges some of this "in/out" talk with Miss Barrace, who changes the metaphor from

37 This kind of construct is the one discussed by M. Johnson in BIM. Both this, which he calls the "image scheme," the basis for a metaphor, and the metaphor itself are "structures of embodied understanding" (195).
"far out" to "far on." There are many examples of this locution throughout the text, related not only to Strether, but to other characters as well. Sarah is mentioned as being "built in" or "built out" in the crowd of Chad’s friends. She exists "in splendid isolation"; Strether notes that everyone has been introduced to her, and they agree that she is "bricked up," "buried alive!" (Poe’s "The Cask of Amontillado" lurks here in the allusive metaphorical background. James's allusions form another kind of reference which is condensed/expanded—or periphrastic, as I note in Chapter I. These literary comparisons give "thumbnail sketches" of identities and situations.)

James continues to make changes to the meaning of his "in/out" metaphor, as Strether ponders his own psychic and social journey from his previous state of identity to where he is finally. His last "clock" image assumes that there is something circular about the journey, even perhaps something predetermined, though he seems to have transcended the simple predetermination in the "consciousness poured into a mould" speech he makes to Bilham earlier. As Frank Kermode says of the modern sensibility in The Sense of an Ending, "[W]e concern ourselves with the conflict between the deterministic pattern any plot suggests, and the freedom of persons within that plot to choose and so to alter the structure, the relations of beginning, middle, and end" (30). Strether evinces this modern sensibility, even though the alterations he has made to the "structure" of the plot seem more of quality than of quantity, of tone rather than of action per se. The determinism that Strether has fought is instead the hard and fast entrapment of people "in" or "out" of affairs in the world, which he has defeated on his own terms.

These opposing "ins" and "outs" take place in the "atmospheric" European France and American Woollett with their attendant metaphorical periphrases, homey or countrified
ones in Woollett's/America's case. For example, Waymarsh frequents the Rue Scribe where the papers are "traps for the arrest of wandering western airs" (58); with a "turn of the wrist and a jerk of the far-flung noose," Chad shows the "bold and wild" cowboy streak in him by lassoing "Woollett browsing in its pride" (101); Miss Barrace compares Waymarsh to a stoic "Indian chief" meeting "the Great Father" (125-26); when American characters debate, they often are said to "break fresh ground" or "clear ground" (187, 252, 260); and when Waymarsh dresses up for Sarah, Strether thinks that he resembles a Southern planter (170). The comparative "violence" of farming images in relation mainly to the American characters, to use the word used by James for plain speech or abrupt transitions of subject, ties them together in a way that emphasizes their common American identity, away from the more subtle conversational flow of Paris. Paris, even with its many subjects, is less "violent" than Chad’s and Mamie’s land of origin until at least the point when Strether fears that Chad and Marie de Vionnet mean to "cut" him.

The metaphor of medicine, like Strether's "unmitigated dose," is multicultural in nature: Strether believes he can "sugar th[e] pill" of Chad's return to America (95); by the time the Pococks come to Europe, however, Strether has received "medicine" from the opposite side, his "own more timid dose" as compared to Chad's (213). In one case, the metaphors of "breaking ground" and "medicine" occur in close functional proximity, when Strether wonders whether Sarah will "break ground" with him on the topic of Chad, giving him the "remedy for his vain tension" (249); he himself tells Bilham that his "dose" is "what I have to swallow," a metaphorical foreshadowing of the scheming lovers (261). When Strether understands from his day in the country what it is he has to "swallow," though, "[it is] the quantity of make-believe involved…that most disagree[s]
with his spiritual stomach" (315). To Chad's mind, even before the novel's crisis, Jim Pocock as an identity model for American husbands is "a damned dose" (291); Miss Gostrey tells Strether even before the crisis that he has his "straight remedy" for the situation if he takes Chad back to America (296). In these instances of medicinal imagery, the two opposed societies/social identities are seen as "cures" or at least "prescriptions," each to be used against excess of the other.

Some of the "remedies" against too provincial an Americanism, though more loosely connected with metaphor, still connect it to a general sort of periphrasis, being associated with the idea of new and strange experiences in a foreign country as "cures" and using superlative or absolute negative terms. Strether's "understanding…had never before opened so wide and effective a mouth" as when Waymarsh reveals Sarah's approaching visit (271); of this encounter with Waymarsh, Strether "had never so much known what anyone meant as…he knew what Mrs. Newsome did" (272), and of the connection between them, "nothing yet had so despoiled her of a special shade of consideration" (274). When Strether makes his late visit to Chad's apartment at "the witching hour," this hour is "one of those that he was to recall…as the particular handful that most had counted" (283); his interview with Chad that night is "one of the largest, loosest and easiest to which Strether's whole adventure was to have treated him" (284). These unusual experiences with people he otherwise knows well merge into superlative/absolute negative experiences with Paris itself on pages 292, 297, 306, 307, 308 twice, 313, 319-20, 323, 324, 334 twice, 335, 344, 345, 345-46, and 346. Finally, the experiences are restored to an interaction with a fellow American, though an expatriate one, when Miss Gostrey tells him conclusively that "'There's nothing…I wouldn't do for
you...nothing...in all the world" (346). He answers that his "only logic" is to be "right," and "[n]ot, out of the whole affair, to have got anything for [himself]." This periphrastic series of superlatives and negatives tangentially but significantly connected with the metaphorical traces Strether’s development of identity as the truly gentle man of the world he at first mistook Chad for. In many if not all of the other miscellaneous metaphors discussed, the boundaries and directions contained in a portrait of this "historical" world are indicated, and the natural question which thus arises and is answered by Strether’s example is "what does the American traveller, perhaps an Odysseus, 'look like' in this societally confused century?" James's instances of periphrasis form the terms of Strether's example.

Following clichéd and other miscellaneous metaphors under the eight divisions of metaphors which help constitute this periphrasis and paint the human identity in this "historical" world, the second category is that of natural phenomena. This includes various organic metaphors. James was clearly aware of chemical processes, as more than one stray metaphor here and there shows. Note the metaphor in which he longs to "precipitate the process" of clearing the air with Sarah (248-49), as well as the previously mentioned metaphor relating to "the remembered mixture [of the French countryside scene] resolved back into its elements" (303). His larger metaphorical emphasis regarding nature, however, falls within the traditional categories earth, air, fire, and water, and the combinations of life thereof.

James has many metaphors regarding earth, dust, literal ground, and land. They have a tendency to refer to a state of identity in which someone begins, transitions through, or ends, from Strether's own personal history ("the great desert of the years") contained in
the early summary through his final developments, and the identities he tries to trace in others. Earth and air come ephemerally together again at Chad's one evening when Strether thinks that he is "moving verily in a strange air and on ground not of the firmest" (158), and when Strether tells Miss Gostrey that Sarah’s "romance" occurs on "classic ground" in "charged infectious air" (244).

One of the first usages of a metaphor based on the element of air by itself might equally well be based on the element of water; in either case, a rigid resistance to the element itself is the source of Waymarsh’s discomfort, and a clue to his personality:

What [Waymarsh’s career] expressed at midnight in the gas-glaring bedroom at Chester was that the subject of it had…barely escaped…a general nervous collapse. But this very proof of the full life…would have made to Strether’s imagination an element in which Waymarsh could have floated easily had he only consented to float. (30)

One of the first metaphors related to fire occurs by the time Strether is at the play in Paris with Maria and Waymarsh. He feels a "final impatience of his own tendency to temporise," and his impatience is registered in a metaphor relating to fire, but one in which there is a peculiar tension between fire and water: "The only qualification of the quietness was the synthetic 'Oh hang it!' into which Strether’s share of the silence soundlessly flowered. It represented, this mute ejaculation, a final impulse to burn his ships. These ships, to the historic muse, may seem…mere cockles, but when he presently spoke to Miss Gostrey it was with the sense…of applying the torch" (87). There is no actual water here, and that boats and boat and water imagery figure so frequently in the later sections of the book makes this a significant image. It has resonances both of Marlowe’s "face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium" (Marie is a Helen figure), and of burning one’s bridges behind one. Chad uses a more
painful and destructive metaphor of burning in his friendly accusation to Strether when he finds out that Strether is engaged to Mrs. Newsome and has been sent to bring him home: "I see you make out…that bringing me home in triumph as a sort of wedding-present to Mother would commemorate [the event] better than anything else. You want to make a bonfire…and you pitch me on. Thank you, thank you!" (96). One of the many questions Strether asks himself is whether Gloriani's eyes, in addition to sounding him thoroughly, do not also supply "the most special flare of the aesthetic torch, lighting that wondrous world forever" (121). By contrast with this marvelous "torch," the homelier image of a match is given for Sarah Pocock's "marked thin-lipped smile," which is "intense without brightness and as prompt to act as the scrape of a safety-match…" (210). Later, in keeping with locating inspirations and indications of deeply engraved personal qualities in the fiery imagery, Strether wonders if "Chad but too probably were not with Jeanne the object of a still and shaded flame" (212), as if Jeanne were a vestal virgin tending a flame. These are very different applications of fire, sketching out different identities periphrastically.

Water imagery occupies the next subcategory of metaphor. As Gale indicates in his chapter on the water imagery in James, "[T]o James water was something mainly to be looked at for aesthetic pleasure and ships were mainly means of transportation from one place to another. James displays no such intimacy with water as we find in Twain or Melville" (CI 16-17). One of the first water metaphors refers to how Strether's personality is affected by Mrs. Newsome; the sense of the entire sentence and even the passage in which it occurs is ambiguous. On the surface, Strether is thinking of what he
owes Mrs. Newsome for "provid[ing] for his freedom." On a deeper level, she is the reason why he needs his freedom so desperately. The passage reads:

…[B]y insisting that he should thoroughly intermit and break she had so far provided for his freedom that she would, as it were, have only herself to thank. Strether could not at this point indeed have completed his thought by the image of what she might have to thank herself for: the image, at best, of his own likeness—poor Lambert Strether washed up on the sunny strand by the waves of a single day, poor Lambert Strether thankful for breathing-time and stiffening himself while he gasped. (60)

Mostly, the rest of the water metaphors fulfill a similar purpose, either bodying forth the identities of various characters and their physical/mental "actions," or showing situations confronting them, and their solutions. We are told, for example, of the "rising flood" of Strether's "compatriots"; Chad's "manner" is a "fathomless medium" (108); Jeanne de Vionnet gently "dips her toes" in the "water" of her acquaintance with Strether (154-55); Gloriani's air of "charming hollow civility" is an unsteady "bridge" over a "stream" (156); there is a "flood" through which Strether hesitates to "wade" or pilot Mme. de Vionnet's "boat" (221); Strether and Mamie, in a "community of shipwreck," share "drinkable" water" (253); Strether notes the societal "high tide of response" at Chad's party (256); while Strether sees himself as one of the "feeder[s] of [Chad's] stream," Chad treats him, he thinks, like a "laundress" covered in water and soap bringing Chad's "laundry" in (284, 285); Strether meditates about the "silver stream of impunity" on which the lovers seem to "float" (317); and, he thinks in his final meeting with Mme. de Vionnet that "[w]omen were…endlessly absorbent, and to deal with them was to walk on water" (324).
The organic and elemental metaphors also include those relating to animals. The animal images even more traditionally (sometimes more fantastically) help paint the characters' inner identities and qualities, as these are manifested to Strether's insight. Miss Barrace is a "fine high-feathered free-pecking bird" whereas Miss Gostrey is a provident one, putting together the "makings of a final nest"; Strether is a bird when thinking of his "highest flights" of aesthetic ambition (63); his "inner sense" hears the "wild waving of wings" at the Odéon literature tables (67); we read yet again that "his curiosity had raised its wings from below" (76); Waymarsh is at first confusingly figured forth as either a "horse" or a "lion," when he gives "a shake of his mane" (75), but this is clarified when he is spoken of as "caged and leonine," signifying his impatience (204); by contrast, Gloriani is the "glossy male tiger," an untameable threat. Strether at first thinks of Bilham's "serenity" as like "the trail of the serpent," but Bilham himself, when Strether teases about his potential courtship of Mamie, is compared to a wet-eared "terrier" (264); Strether as well is portrayed as "a dog among skittles," possibly thus ruining Chad's "game" (96); Strether and Chad also debate whether Strether "set" Chad "on a scent" in originally telling him not to care too much for Marie, which makes Chad also a "dog" (291). Strether in another metaphor conceives of himself as a "convenience," a beast of burden to Chad, a "camel" (286); and Chad acknowledges that he himself was "[a]n awful ass" when younger (339). The most unusually opposed two animal metaphors apply to Sarah Pocock. Jim has shared with Strether his view of the women in his life as wild beasts of prey (217-18), and Sarah is spoken of in these same terms later, when we read of Strether's remark to her that "[s]he sprang at its exposed side" (280). A few pages on, she is spoken of as a race horse when she abruptly leaves Strether; at least, if she is
not seen here as an animal that races, the physical prowess of a human racer is being referred to: "She was away at any rate; she had distanced him with rather a grand spring..." (282). That two such powerful figures, even though they are opposed to each other in the predator-versus-prey cycle of nature, should be used to represent Sarah, and beyond her to body forth the influence of Mrs. Newsome, underlines the quality of raw energy in the American identity.

Another subcategory of the organic metaphors is that of plants, fruit, and trees. Gale says of the critical prefaces that "when [he] wishes to describe artistic inspiration and tenderly cultivated productivity" that James "could be readily shown...[to use] seed, flower, and garden tropes" (57). This is also true of many places in the fiction, especially in The Ambassadors, where it is used as well to show the fostering and cultivating of young women’s (and Strether's) societal education. First, there are the "flowers" Strether imagines around him. Of the precious objects in Miss Gostrey’s flat, we see "they brushed his ignorance with their contempt as a flower, in a liberty taken with him, might have been whisked under his nose" (80). Then, there are the sorts of flowers which bloom forth in people’s mannerisms to him: the rudely staring duchess whom he meets at Gloriani’s casts a series of blunt remarks his way which are like a "loose handful of bright flowers she seemed...to fling at him" (130). In both cases, he is being treated in his imagination with a lack of respect by new experiences and acquaintances. Much later on, we are to see Strether on friendlier terms with the experience of "frequent instinctive snatches at the growing rose of observation, constantly stronger for him...in scent and colour, and in which he could bury his nose even to wantonness" (264). Jeanne and Mamie are both compared to flowers, though in different stages of growth, and they are
different types of flower. Jeanne is to Strether a "blossom" which Chad has "kept...overnight in water" (134), and thus is like a boutonniere, something which Chad uses rather to ornament himself than to appear to its own advantage. To Bilham, "[Her] pale pink petals are folded up there for some wonderful efflorescence in time; to open, that is, to some great golden sun." (164). Gale notes this quote as having sexual significance (CI 47). The same sort of method is applied to Mamie, but she is a flower in fuller bloom, and is an apple blossom rather than a flower tended solely for appearance.

Many of the fruit references which help illuminate naming and identity are matter of course and stereotypical, such as the expression "the fruit of experience" (98). More unusual is the usage of fruit imagery which occurs early on when Strether and Bilham are conversing together in the scene at Gloriani’s. It is the awareness of Gloriani as a "glossy male tiger," one of the "absurdities of the stirred sense, fruits of suggestion ripening on the instant" (133). Since fruits do not ripen this way, but bear long cultivation and careful tending, that Strether’s impressions burst forth in this startling manner is symbolic of his desire to make up for lost time and his fear that he cannot. The image is foreshortened in time, which shows the fertile ground of Strether’s imagination, and the way it provides lavishly for the littlest "seed" of an idea. Gale’s remark about this kind of image is apropos. He says of James’s use of fruit images that "[t]he best of them reveal a delight in savor and appearance; hardly any show technical awareness of such labor problems as planting, irrigating, and pruning" (CI 51).

The last significant reference to the plant kingdom which helps portray American identities includes some inseparable bird imagery. It occurs when Strether and Chad are discussing how the Pococks have reacted to the "new" Chad in Paris. Strether insists that
it is actually himself they came to watch, and that "[t]he first branch of their curiosity was inevitably destined, under my culpable delay, to give way to the second; and it's on the second that...they've been of late exclusively perched" (286-87).

Metaphors drawn from nature inevitably connect with metaphors of human nature and human activities as indices of identity. There are the words which recur often, the "crash" "smash" and "splash" words containing imagery of violence, collision, or spillage connected in Strether’s mind with women or revelations concerning women. There is the "smash" referred to in Strether’s déjeuner with Mme. de Vionnet, which contains all the elements of their increased intimacy (179). When Strether goes to see Sarah he hopes that he can "precipitate the process" of clearing the air, and considers that if she should come in, "a clarifying scene of some sort would result from the concussion" (249). He has another idea, at the same time that if nothing else happens, he will be able to "[pull] down the roof on their heads." Again in reference to Sarah such a word occurs, this time to describe her dress at Chad’s soirée for the Pococks: it is "a splendour of crimson which affect[s] Strether as the sound of a fall through a skylight" (258). When Sarah actually does come to meet with Strether at his hotel, we are told that "[the issue of Waymarsh’s leaving with the Pococks] was…as much there between them as if it had been something suddenly spilled with a crash and a splash on the floor" (277). A few sentences later, he is issued an ultimatum "after the crash ha[s] occurred." Finally, the meeting in the country has the force of a collision of worlds when we read of Mme. de Vionnet’s actions, as she first pretends not to see Strether and then shows apparent gladness: "[S]he had been the first at recognition, the first to feel, across the water, the shock…of their wonderful accident" (310).
Another general group of human actions and motivations are those of manipulation of others, provided in metaphors of wire-pulling and turns of the wrist. Two people particularly are said to "pull wires," Waymarsh (in Strether's supposition) when he summons the Pococks [and this metaphor may be based on his having sent an actual telegram (205)]; and Chad, in throwing a lavish party for the Pococks: "So could things go when there was a hand...that pulled the wire with a skill at which the elder man more and more marvelled" (256). The phrases "turn of the wrist" or "turn of the hand" also bring into play simple physical actions which metaphorically speak of intention to influence. When Chad denies to Strether that he is kept in Paris by a woman, it is by this "turn of the wrist" that he "pull[s] up, in a bunch, Woollett, browsing in its pride" (101).

Secondly, Mme. de Vionnet makes her appeal to Strether for "common civility"; the text reads, "by a turn of the hand she had somehow made their encounter a relation" (148). Finally, when Chad gives Strether a silent but pertinent look upon the advent of Chad’s relatives at the train station, Strether feels some discomfort. "...[S]uch a matter marked again for him strongly the number of stages he had come; albeit that if the number seemed great the time taken for the final one was but the turn of a hand" (213).

The metaphors and related language which mention human occupational identities break neatly into two categories, American and European. Nature is a "master-chef" and Mme. de Vionnet seems like a crying "maidservant" for a moment. Aside from Strether's actual sightings of various employed persons, the images (metaphors and similes) such as those just noted are taken from those in Europe which a tourist would come into contact with or be aware of. American or Anglo-American metaphorical occupations are usually
drawn from the world of commerce, business, money, "the shop," and the press; as I have acknowledged, Laurence Holland’s book notes and discusses these.

Another subcategory of human activities used metaphorically to isolate identity and personality issues is warfare. As Gale has shown, James’s warfare images, at least in *The Ambassadors*, are "routine bookish" ones, referring to general methods and tactics of warfare rather oftener than to specific ones. The weapons referred to are far more often those used in ancient warfare than those applied in James’s present day. Also alluding to Gale's discussion, it is important to mention that James refers often to the French Revolution. However, most of the references to warfare in *The Ambassadors* do not become this specific or "modern."

From the onset, Strether’s "campaign" dithers back and forth in disarray, a clue to Strether's identity. By contrast, Sarah comes to "kill or be killed" metaphorically speaking, and takes away Waymarsh as a "captive." After he has met the relatively tame Bilham alone at Chad’s address, Strether feels it necessary to point out to Waymarsh that he has not "beaten a retreat" but has instead stayed and interrogated Chad’s life from atmosphere alone.

For what had above all been determined in him as a necessity of the first order was not to lose another hour, not a fraction of one; was to advance, to overwhelm, with a rush. This was how he would anticipate—by a night-attack, as might be….If he was himself moreover to be treated as young, he wouldn’t at all events be so treated before he should have struck out at least once. His arms might be pinioned afterwards, but it would have been on record that he was fifty. (93)

In this one paragraph, there is the language both of success and failure in warfare.

Strether says of Chad’s assertion that he has not yet "put [Strether] through much" that
there is that much more reason to "gird [him]self" (98). This girding is out of order if Strether is conceived to be already engaged in battle: it should have occurred first.

By contrast, Sarah is on the offensive from the beginning. As she faces Mme. de Vionnet after the latter invites her to Chad's, the language is that of battle: "…she thus fronted her," a combat position. Mme. de Vionnet mentions the Boulevard Malesherbes as "common ground," attempting peacefulness, but the narrative voice makes it clear that Sarah does not receive the remark peacefully: "…Mrs. Pocock looked her invader well in the eyes" (223). Though Sarah cannot expect much active backing from her husband Jim, Strether mentions to Mme. de Vionnet that he "won't be a traitor in the camp" (235).

Even Mamie, smooth, friendly, and equitable, is in her own way ready for warfare. As Bilham says to Strether during their discussion at Chad's party, "...[W]hat she was…primed and girded and wound up for, was to deal with [Chad] as the…opposite [of right and good and disconcerting]" (263).

In the "games metaphors," which share territory conceptually with "warfare," in all but one case the metaphor is based not upon who wins or loses, but upon some quality of the play. The first important game metaphor describes Strether’s force of perception: an idea comes to him "as straight as a ball in a well-played game…” (20-21). Other metaphors are vaguer, not referring to any particular game, except to ones that require concentration, and which challenge Strether's ability at identity assessment. For example, Miss Gostrey tells Strether soon after he meets Bilham that "[e]very move in the game" long distance between Strether and Chad is arranged between Chad and Bilham at the start (88). Strether is involved, if only indirectly, in another "game" when Mme. de Vionnet tells him that Jeanne is to be married: "It affected him on the spot as a move in a
game, and he was even then not without the sense that that wasn’t the way Jeanne should be married" (239). Even Strether’s early reflections about Chad are associated with game maneuvers; this tells something about Chad, but Strether is caught up in wonder rather than calculation. Lost in awe at Chad’s "alteration," as he names it to Miss Gostrey, he lets her know how bewildered he feels by it: "It isn’t playing the game to turn on the uncanny" (106). After meeting Chad, Strether asks, "What game under the sun is he playing?" (110). Bilham, in a sentence which calls attention to the metaphor, responds finally, "I don't think…that he's really playing, as you call it, any game" (111). With Miss Gostrey, trying to determine without having met the French mother and daughter what Chad is "up to," Strether decides that one of them must be significant to Chad and tells Miss Gostrey, "It seems to give away now his game" (116).

The most noticeable sport other than games referred to metaphorically is horsemanship, which is mentioned in at least two instances. First is the odd notion Strether has during his meal out with Mme. de Vionnet that he has been in error to think he has "[held] her nose down and…[has] coerced her" (150), a misjudgement of her identity possibly responsible for his "smash." The second reference to horsemanship comes when Chad is planning and executing his party for the Pococks. He has asked Strether for advice, which Strether has not given; but Chad has already decided what to do. "He suggested, invented, abounded—yet all the while with the loosest easiest rein" (256-57). These two usages of the metaphor point up the difference between Strether and Chad as "horsemen." Strether has gentle hands yet does not genuinely have control of the "horse" in the crash of horse and carriage metaphor during his lunch with Mme. de
Vionnet; Chad has good hands, and temporarily manages to maneuver his relatives during the party.

The final subcategory of human nature/activities which helps portray identity is that of religion and religious artefacts. Miss Gostrey’s home is a "shrine" for precious art objects (80); Bilham, an artistic pilgrim, is accused by Miss Barrace of being "converted" by the "savages" of the Parisian art world when his intention was to "convert" them. He says he has been "cannibalized" and he is "but the bleached bones of a Christian" (125). We read of Waymarsh's superstitious fear of Catholicism, and we see Mme. de Vionnet worshipping at Notre Dame.

In a non-Christian usage of metaphor which initiates the "unusual life forms" category in the book, Mme. de Vionnet is seen by Strether as someone he "could have compared…to a goddess still partly engaged in a morning cloud, or to a sea-nymph waist-high in the summer surge" (160). Gale calls attention (Cl 129) to the many metaphorical forms Mme. de Vionnet assumes in this book from the goddess or nymph to "Cleopatra in the play" (160). She also appears as "some fine firm concentrated heroine of an old story…” (174). Finally, she appears as "the heroine" in the dialogue between Strether and Miss Barrace at the soirée for the Pococks, when Strether himself is named "the hero" (268).

Chad, by contrast, is an astrologer, a charlatan, when he is sitting alone with Strether at night in his rooms in Paris: "…[H]e smoked, with his eyes still on the stars. He might in quiet sport have been reading their horoscope" (286). Strether himself is a potential magician or diviner; his ability to "divine" things is supported by prophet/seer/omen-giver/augur/oracle sorts of language. He has been "waiting for Mrs. Pocock and the
sound of the oracle" to know where he stands (249). He feels that he knows when he sees
the letter from Mrs. Newsome in Sarah’s rooms, and is aware that Mrs. Newsome has not
recently communicated with him. By contrast with this prowling about and waiting, Miss
Barrace at Chad’s soirée has approached with the apparent intention to "stand a minute
behind the scenes with Strether and so…figure as one of the famous augurs replying,
behind the oracle, to the wink of the other" (264). Thus, Strether, from being someone
approaching the oracle with regard to Mrs. Newsome and the Pococks, becomes an
"augur" himself while watching Sarah’s progress through the party with Miss Barrace.

There are also images relating to ghosts, and they occur not only in reference to the
memory traces of actual people left behind, but also to aesthetic and historical
atmospheres and impressions which there is difficulty registering for Strether, the great
perceiver. In the first case, the actual word "ghost" is not even mentioned; instead,
Strether’s former self and his dead wife and child are pictured as some of the few
important people in his life. Secondly, there is the phrase "old ghosts of experiments"
(62) to express his attempts to find a worthwhile and rewarding public identity. Whereas
Strether’s ghosts are of things which have gone awry, a related expression, "ghosts at the
windows" (120), is used to help paint the atmosphere of Gloriani’s more successful
career and surroundings. While in the country at the inn, Strether finds the atmosphere
more "the thing" even than Mme. de Vionnet’s "old high salon where the ghost of the
Empire walked" (308). Lastly, when he returns to have his final meeting with Mme. de
Vionnet, he feels both the "associations of the place" and "the quietness of her own note
as the centre," and thinks of these things as "at first as delicate as if they had been
Thus, "ghost" in this novel, more than any actual idea from a ghost story, signals "evocation," "suggestion," and "memory."

The metaphorical language presents many appeals to the senses in its portraiture of the characters' identities. One of the first occurs when Strether has met Miss Gostrey and they are discussing people whom she believes they know in common. He does not know them, "...so that they were left together as if over the mere laid table of conversation. Her qualification of the mentioned connexion had rather removed than placed a dish, and there seemed nothing else to serve. Their attitude remained...that of not forsaking the board..." (19). The language describing Miss Gostrey's pursuit of her self-appointed mission of helping fellow Americans describes her as having "some familiar appetite in ambush, jumping out as she approached, yet appeasable with a temporary biscuit" (36).

The sensuous imagery which applies to Strether is vaguer. We read that Strether feels "shy of professing the full sweetness of the taste of leisure" (37) even while he is in England. When he meets Bilham's friends, another gustatory metaphor is used, though it is more inchoate than the one just mentioned: he thinks they avoid "those agreements that ruin the taste of talk" (109). The most interesting of all the vaguer metaphors is the synesthetic one which refers to the night Strether goes to visit Chad. They sit on the balcony. "...[T]he midnight air was delicious" (285).

By contrast with this metaphorical simplicity, many imaginative gustatory metaphors are used concerning differing aspects of American identity. First there is the idea expressed by Miss Gostrey in defense of Bilham that what it is to be a "good" American must be "defined": "It's such an order...that before we cook you the dish we must...have your receipt" (87). When the Pococks and Mme. de Vionnet meet for the
first time, she tells them that "[Strether] reserves [Miss Gostrey] for his best
hours;...[He] only gives us others the crumbs of the feast"
(225). More comically, since Mamie is described as a robust young woman and Bilham’s small stature is emphasized,
when Strether suggests that Bilham and Mamie might make a match of it, "Little Bilham
stared as a delicate appetite stares at an over-heaped plate" (260). Another expressive
food metaphor occurs when Strether is considering Waymarsh’s "rush" through tourist
destinations with Sarah as having "whipp[ed] up in its fine full-flavoured froth the very
principle, for good or for ill...of Strether’s destiny" (269). Eating and drinking
metaphors betraying American cultural and social concerns are thus drawn from all
aspects of food awareness, from the inception in the "receipt" to the actual consumption
and assessment.

When Strether goes to see Mme. de Vionnet finally, the taste metaphors recede, or are
alternated with other metaphors which come from each of the five senses. These appeals
are to both the literal and spiritual senses, the actual scenes and atmosphere in Paris
around Strether suggesting metaphors that add perspectival depth to Mme. de Vionnet's
identity. First, "the long stretch of his interval took the colour it would," an appeal to
visual cues (318). As he tries to relax, "[I]t was an ease he himself fairly tasted of for the
rest of the day," recalling the metaphor of taste again. Next, he thinks that he is
"touching bottom" again in this contact with her. Another visual reference follows this
one closely, in which he has an internal "vision" of the Pococks's seeing him idle away
the day. A further visual metaphor occurs to him then: he is viewing "clever canvas to
clever canvas." As he arrives in Marie's apartment, he hears the fountain in the court
literally, and beyond it sounds which he transfers mentally into "the vague voice of Paris"
Next, having the same literal-to-figurative relationship, are the report of "redundant hangings" at the window "swaying a little" in the night air and his "sudden gusts of fancy in connexion with such matters as [odd starts of the historic sense]."

Another such construction is made, this time figurative-to-literal, when he thinks of French revolutions and "the smell of revolution, the smell of the public temper—or perhaps simply the smell of blood." The sense of touch becomes atmospheric in the sentences which read, "It was…queer…that such suggestions should keep crossing the scene…the effect of the thunder…which had hung about all day…." Finally, the whole series of sensory appeals related to Marie's identity is summed up in his notion of a "loaf on the shelf," of sensuous and conceptual memories.

The metaphorical category of transgressions and punishments also plays a role in demonstrating how Strether considers his own identity. By far the most unusual image in the punishment category is the simile of Strether, at Sarah Pocock’s hands "recommitted to Woollett as juvenile offenders are committed to reformatories" (203). Strether tells himself he is exaggerating about Woollett, but still sees Sarah’s salon at the hotel as "a place of discipline." Interestingly, it would seem by this imagery that Strether is not the old man he feels himself to be, but is being punished for crimes of "youth." This places his entire trip in the context of recovering (vicariously) what he had originally missed. When Strether sees Mrs. Newsome’s letter to Sarah at Sarah’s hotel, and knows he has had no letter, he feels that she has kept him "in durance." He tells himself that he is by Mrs. Newsome’s hand thus "summoned" to remain and "take his punishment" (248). As well, Strether has the sense that it is "he…who paid," and "others…who partook" (271). Payment and criminality are closely linked in these figures.
In the next category of metaphors which structure awareness of identities are ones drawn from the arts including drama and acting, literature, music, lyric poetry as in an idyll, objets d'art, people as objets d'art, the verbal arts of conversation and the home arts. The last two often appear together in metaphorical form. Given James’s interest in the arts, it is "not surprising…that the largest single category of similes and metaphors in the fiction of James should be that of art. Nearly two thousand separate figures…concern art in one or more of its forms" (Gale CI 102).

Initial resemblances to dramatic/fictional identities occur to Strether when he experiences "[o]ld imaginations of the Latin Quarter" which "had played their part for him….[H]e had duly recalled…[that] with this scene of rather ominous legend…like so many young men in fiction…Chad had begun" (65). Strether feels that in his initial challenge to Chad at the theatre he has "already acted his part" (65). As Miss Barrace tells him, Mme. de Vionnet "'has in the first place…that [idea] of doing her part. Her part is to help you'" (268).

For Strether, the "performance" of "Europe" which he and Mme. began before the other Americans is continued by the "scene and [the] stage" of the natural surroundings in the countryside, where "the very air of the play" is in the landscape he sees before him. He finds that the lovers have "something to put a face upon," that they are masked by their "lie," and that "fiction and fable" are "inevitably…in the air." He feels that Mme. de Vionnet’s "manner" is a "performance," and one which requires him also to "make-believe" (312, 313, 315). Though Gale believes the reference to reality being "as queer as fiction, as farce" (310) is a bit "forced" as literary simile, it is not necessarily so. The mention of comedy and farce close together with the repetition later of "her comedy" (her
explanation) as uniquely come up with by Mme. de Vionnet, could point to a play like 
one of Feydeau’s or another such dramatist's (bedroom farce). It is not riotously funny 
here that an awkward meeting has occurred, but such meetings are usual in farce, and this 
is perhaps what James suggests.

Another set of metaphors, less literary than the allusions-cum-similes to Thackeray's 
*Pendennis* and Goldsmith, are still based on the written word. Strether imagines of his 
own assertion to Mrs. Newsome about Chad's saying there is no woman holding him 
back that it produces "the sharpest echo. This echo…[was]…as distinct…as some shrill 
'heading' above a column of print" (104). He further imagines Sarah Pocock’s response 
to hearing this news "in capitals almost of newspaper size…and he could focus in Mrs. 
Pocock the response of the reader of the journal" (105). By contrast, what he imagines 
himself writing about Mme. de Vionnet is romanticized, "an old story, something he had 
heard, read, something that, had he had a hand for drama, he might himself have 
written…" (174).

Strether often uses an abbreviated or extended metaphor mentally to contain an 
assessment of another's identity. Chad comes in for his fair share of assessment in this 
light, when Strether thinks of "lines and tones" first in terms of ethical verbal cues from 
him to Chad and then is forced to look at the "lines and tones" of Chad as a physical 
being, as a form of artistic expression of self. He judges Chad to be "smooth…as in the 
taste of a sauce or the rub of a hand" and thinks that Chad’s features have been 
"retouched" and "drawn with a cleaner line," that he now has a "design" (97). That Chad 
continues to be seen as a work of art in Strether’s eyes is shown in Strether’s view of him 
as waiting out the delay Strether has asked for "with a slight increase…of the hardness
originally involved in his acquired high polish” (206). Finally, not only is Miss Barrace like a "powdered head" in a portrait, but both of the de Vionnets are compared to works of art: Jeanne is a princess in a portrait who died young (154), and Marie is featured in a simile which says her head is "like a happy fancy, a notion of the antique, on an old precious medal, some silver coin of the Renaissance…” (160).

Metaphors for the home arts and verbal arts such as the art of conversation are intertwined, as when Miss Gostrey’s conversation is spoken of as "her embroidery of her idea" (87). When Strether and Miss Barrace discuss Sarah Pocock’s difficulties, Strether speaks, and then we see "Miss Barrace embroidered the theme" (265). In his treatment of Waymarsh later, Strether thinks of himself that he has "woven this web of cheerfulness" (204). As well, Strether while in the countryside thinks that "romance" can "weave" itself from things "mild enough," though the real weaver is Strether, who remembers "twisting and turning possibilities" for obtaining the Lambinet long before. Talk is an art of the social identity: this is made clear when we read that Strether has spoken to Bilham at the soirée "in the tone of talk for talk’s sake," an echo of "art for art’s sake" (261).

The last category of metaphors pertaining to identity issues (both direct and derivative) is that of inorganic objects, from small parts of machines and other random objects to buildings and edifices, to clocks, and to boats and trains. There is the concept of the "sharp turn of the wheel" which has reversed Strether’s fortunes with Waymarsh’s, and which is a reference to the medieval Wheel of Fortune. The word "sharp" is often used in other metaphorical contexts to express various discomforts, perceptions, verbal encounters, and states of mind. The conceptual "weaponry" occasioned by the
interactions between identities, however muted by civility and common cause, is what is being isolated by this adjectival metaphor.

One of the references to machine parts is made to screws when Strether’s perception of identity takes a leap forward under Miss Gostrey’s tuition. She has influenced his view of Bilham: "[Strether] had just worked round—and with a sharper turn of the screw than any yet—to the conception of an American intense as little Bilham was intense" (83). There is Strether’s assessment of why Chad disappears to London, which is apparently because Chad wished to "ease him off, to let him down—if it wasn’t…rather to screw him up—the more gently" (337). Three other instances of similar references to screws or related machine elements in the vehicles of metaphors occur first when Strether acknowledges to Bilham that his impressions may be thought "mild" to "wind a man up so" (132). Later, Strether is "wound up to [a] flare of high spirits" by Waymarsh’s announcement of Sarah’s intended visit to him (272). Thirdly, Mrs. Newsome’s special intensity of purpose is so described: "[C]lear enough was [Strether’s] vision of the expense that, when so wound up, the lady at home was prepared to incur" (274).

A pervasive Jamesian mannerism is using the image of a spring to express sudden insights and happenings having an impact on notions of identity. One of the first instances comes about when Strether is asked to consider whom he would like to resemble. "It was the click of a spring—he saw the truth" (133). Another instance occurs when Strether comprehends suddenly Mamie’s worth and possibly her feelings: "It had been at the most, this mystery, an obsession…and it had just now fallen into its place as at the touch of a spring" (250). Then, when Strether is evaluating Waymarsh’s motives for bringing Sarah down upon him at his hotel, he concludes that "they had united to save
him…. [S]o far as Waymarsh was concerned, that had to be the spring of action" (269). When Strether decides to visit Chad, he thinks of how much it mattered to his first impressions of Chad that he initially saw Bilham at Chad's address alone: "Present enough always was the small circumstance that had originally pressed for him the spring of so big a difference" (335). Finally, Chad’s mock expression of humility when he calls himself "an ass" occasions this remark in the text: "The response was as prompt as if [Strether] had pressed a spring" (339).

Random actions and objects impinging upon considerations of identity include "jamming down the pedal" (Miss Gostrey and Strether dealing with "high-strung" Americans); "being anchored by a strong chain" (Strether’s original view of what he lures Chad back to); "becom[ing] in a manner his compass and his helm" (Strether’s hope for the “truth” of Mrs. Newsome’s desire to help him relax); and having "nailed" someone (Miss Gostrey’s expression for Strether’s influence upon the evasive Chad). All of these metaphors suggest a certain (sometimes wishful) force and immobility of identity.

Metaphorical references to time and clocks also go among the inanimate objects which express activities or forces having an effect upon identity perception. There are five fairly literal clocks in the book; they also have figurative significance. Some I have already noted, but as a group they have a special importance, being accompanied by references to time. The first major clock is "the great Paris clock" (59) to whose tick Strether compares the action of "the little brisk figures" he sees in Paris. The second reference is to the clock in Spain of which Strether has read and which he recalls when he is pondering to himself how to approach Chad. The clock's motto, "Omnes vulnerant, ultima necat" (67). The third "clock" is more figurative, being only an internal "clock"
whose time is in Strether’s keeping when he thinks that his altered relationship Miss
Gostrey "marked for himself the flight of time" (198). Another internal measure of time
is how he and Chad have changed in relationship to each other; this time it is Chad who is
the inanimate object, the clock, and Strether who has controlled his actions. "He took
comfort, by the same stroke, in the swing of Chad’s pendulum back from that other
swing, the sharp jerk toward Woollett" (202). Finally, there is the fifth clock which I
have already mentioned, the one at Berne whose figure Strether compares himself to, a
little figure who "jigs its course" and then goes in again (344). It is possible that all the
clock references and the references to time are meant to convey a derivative message
about human life and death from the slanted skull’s head in the painting by Hans Holbein
the Younger, also entitled "The Ambassadors," in which two well-dressed men stand on
either side of a table containing objects boasting of their wealth and prosperity, while the
skull’s head is beneath their feet (Hawksley et. al. History of Art 81). The suggestion
here is that one of the overarching themes of the book—that fleeting qualities of time and
youth have influences on and interactions with identity—is bodied forth in the language
of metaphorical periphrasis, just as the picture "The Ambassadors" illustrates the same
theme.

The intricate relationships between the identities of men and women are also
indicated by boating references, whereas the two main train references are made in
relation to Waymarsh and Strether. Both Sarah and Mme. de Vionnet are spoken of as
rowing their own boats, so that when they draw men in after them, willy-nilly, it provides
the sort of humor which distinguishes The Ambassadors among the late novels. Strether
expresses to Chad "the certitude that Mrs. Pocock will take [Waymarsh] into her boat.
For it's your mother's own boat that she's pulling'' (205). Strether is cornered and committed to Mme. de Vionnet’s cause when, in front of Sarah, she "publicly [draws] him into her boat," and he feels discomfort that "he should affect Mrs. Pocock and Waymarsh as launched in a relation in which he had really never been launched at all" (221). As Holland remarks of the exchange between the women and its connection of Strether with Mme. de Vionnet: "[T]he image of a boat is a telling measure of his vicarious involvement, for the image is to dominate the discovery scene later in the novel…." On the same page, Holland notes also the passages in which Mme. de Vionnet is said to have "brought up her daughter, steered her boat" (EV 260). Strether's again consenting as he did in their déjeuner to "suffer as a sheep [rather] than as a lamb" is borne out by his determination to "step into [Marie's] boat…helping to keep the adventurous skiff’afloat….He took up an oar, and since he was to have the credit of pulling, pulled" (222). The only considerable rowing which takes place separate from the immediate influence of women even imaginatively is that which Strether figures forth as the influence of the river in the country. "Such a river set one afloat almost before one could take up the oars—the idle play of which would be moreover the aid to the full impression" (309). By contrast with the rocking of the boat and the unsteady footing afforded men therein, Strether imagines himself and Waymarsh travelling in trains, though Waymarsh is uncomfortable in the figure of him that Strether proposes to himself. Considering Waymarsh in Europe, Strether thinks that "[his posture of prolonged impermanence] suggested…a person established in a railway-coach with a forward inclination" (30). Strether’s own imaginative train journey is one which does not in fact
occur, but which he imagines Bilham making when he adjures him not to "miss the train" and instead to "live all you can" (132).

Thus, it is possible to see that the periphrastic metaphorical constructs of The Ambassadors not only name and identify the essential concerns and perceptions of Strether, just as the shorter periphrastic elements name and identify the characters: they also test these concerns and perceptions out against other minds, which in their turn generate metaphors in their conversation for Strether to consider. The metaphorical periphrasis in even the simplest metaphors does this as well: it paints the human pictures of identity in that historical world of the early twentieth-century American traveller, the picture which its creator found the most worthwhile and self-revealing he had created.
LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED


Uneasy Alliance: Twentieth-Century American Literature, Culture and Biography. 


Chatman, Seymour. Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film.


Lewis, Charlton T. and Charles Short. "Designo" Def. IA, IB, IIA; "dicitur" Def. IAb; "dico" Def. I; "nomino" Def. I; "ponitur" Def. IIB2, 2B8; "sumuntur" Def. IID;


