

AMERICANS ABROAD IN THE WRITINGS OF
WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS AND HENRY JAMES

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PREFACE

I first became acquainted with Americans abroad in fiction when, in the spring semester of 1956, I read The American and The Ambassadors for courses in the novel. I became interested in the subject because of its close relation to the general interest in Europe which developed in America during James's lifetime, partly as a result of his writings. After reading several of Howell's novels about Americans in Europe I was struck by the great similarity in the attitudes of the two novelists toward America and Europe in spite of their differences of opinion concerning intellectual patriotism. In this study I have attempted to point out both their similarities and their differences.

I have attempted to study the problem by considering the importance of Europe in the life of each of the authors and its manifestations in their writings--in their travel books and journals; in five novels of Howells; and in six novels and representative shorter works of James.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Before plunging into the specific concern of this thesis, the portraiture of Americans abroad in the writings of William Dean Howells and Henry James, I believe it essential to fill in the background of my study. Howells and James were important writers who wrote, not in a vacuum, but with extraordinarily keen awareness of the cultural history of their nation and the cultural climate of their times. When they wrote of Americans abroad they were writing for Americans at home. This first chapter will be not on Howells and James but on the American-European cultural relationships which influenced them and which are essential to an understanding of their writings.

The cultural and social relationship of America to Europe has been of interest to both Americans and Europeans since the earliest days of our Republic. The political system which the Colonies constructed was entirely different from the monarchic systems of the Old World. Because they believed their logical Constitution to be superior to the traditional and irrational institutions of Europe, many patriotic Americans held a strong distaste for all traditions. They were hostile toward European patterns in art as well as in government because the art was part of what they considered decadent European culture.¹

¹Henry Nash Smith, "Origins of a Native American Literary Tradition," The American Writer and the European Tradition (Minneapolis, 1950), p. 63.

Emerson, in his address "The American Scholar," stated this attitude in what has been called America's declaration of social and intellectual independence when he said

Perhaps the time is already come . . . when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fill the expectation of the world with something better than mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests.²

There were others who felt, as did Emerson, that, "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe,"³ and that the time had come when "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds."⁴ As a remedy for dependence on Europe Emerson proposed a reliance on nature. One interpretation of his doctrines was that for the nation at large nature meant the West, and Whitman, Mark Twain, and others eventually came forward to celebrate the West.

There were, at the same time, however, writers who faced toward Europe for the fulfillment of their hopes for the arts in this country. Washington Irving, for example, was dissatisfied with the possibilities of using America as subject matter. In a letter to a relative who was in Paris he wrote:

I have been to a commonplace little church of white boards, and seen a congregation of commonplace people, and heard a commonplace sermon, and now can muster up nothing but commonplace ideas. Good Lord, deliver me from the all pervading commonplace of our country. It is like the sands of the desert, which are continually stealing over the land of Egypt and gradually effacing every trace of grandeur and beauty and swallowing up

²Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Complete Essays and Other Writings (New York, 1940), p. 45.

³Ibid., p. 62.

⁴Ibid., p. 63.

every green thing.⁵

Hawthorne was another who looked to Europe. In the preface to The Marble Faun he explained why he used Rome instead of the New England he knew so well as the setting for the novel.

No author, without a trial, can conceive the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity in broad and simple daylight as is happily the case in my native land.⁶

The interest Americans showed in Europe was not, however, merely a quest for the unusual. This interest arose from a group of complex causes. In turning toward Europe, American men of letters were repeating an age old pattern. During the Renaissance Englishmen had gone to Paris and Italy, as the ancient Romans had looked to Greece, for richer cultural models for their literature. This dependence, which is common to all nations during periods of cultural immaturity, was peculiarly intensified in the case of America. Americans, in a sense not true of the relationship between England and Italy, or Rome and Greece, had belonged to Europe. Because ours was a completely transplanted culture, the only possible models for the literature of the Republic were European, which, in effect, were our own. The roots of our national literature were in Europe, not in Indian sagas or the folklore of the frontier. The cultural resources of Europe at this time were boundless, in comparison to America's, and they blended in the minds of most Ameri-

⁵ Stanley T. Williams, "Cosmopolitanism in American Literature before 1880," The American Writer and the European Tradition (Minneapolis, 1950), p. 45.

⁶ Henry James, Hawthorne (New York, 1899), p. 41.

cans with the outward antiquity of Europe. This blending gave rise to a mood of romance which helped foster the nostalgic facing toward Europe.⁷

The interest in Europe was not limited even at first to literary men. There was a great interest among painters and sculptors in Europe because of the inspiration and training they hoped to obtain there. James McNeill Whistler, who left America in 1855 and settled eventually in London, was the leader of a great exodus of artists to Europe. They went to the leading artistic centers of Europe, Munich, Florence, or London, but most of them went to Paris. From the seventies on, every French painter who gained prominence collected American pupils and followers. Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, and Thomas Eakins are only three of this large group. These fared well in their studies, but there were many others who did not. Earlier in the century Samuel F. B. Morse had warned his students at the National Academy of Design that if they studied abroad they would return to a country that, being without sympathy with their foreign tastes, would ignore them.⁸ His prediction came true, and many of these artists found they had got out of touch with their audience by their studies in Europe.

As time passed, however, the interest in Europe spread from artists and writers to the public of America. In increasing numbers, after the Great Western made its first voyage in 1838 and made the trip shorter and safer than it had been before, Americans made the trip to Europe.

⁷Ibid., pp. 47-61.

⁸E. P. Richardson, Painting in America: The Story of 450 Years (New York, 1956), p. 309.

These Americans had more money and leisure time for travel than they had had previously, and European countries provided them with special incentives, such as the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851 and the Paris exhibitions of 1855 and 1867.⁹

This increase in travel gave rise to the great popularity of travel books, which in turn gave rise to an even greater growth in travel. There had been, of course, earlier books telling of journeys through Europe and describing the historical scenes, buildings, etc. Irving's Sketch Book and Bracebridge Hall inspired many of his countrymen to follow his example, and in the following years there was scarcely a professional writer who did not write of his impressions of Europe. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edward Everett Hale, Helen Hunt Jackson, Francis Marion Crawford, Bayard Taylor, Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Charles Dudley Warner are only a few of the many writers who presented America with works of this kind. Even Longfellow, with Hyperion; Emerson, with English Traits; Lowell, with Impressions of Spain; and Hawthorne, with Italian Note Books and Our Old Home, contributed to this flow of writings about the Old World.¹⁰

A magazine writer observed in 1853, "Not many years ago a man could acquire quite a reputation by crossing the Atlantic, but it does not set a man up very high to travel nowadays: everybody travels."¹¹ The magazines, as well as book publishers, were flooded with articles on travel, and there was scarcely a periodical, newspapers included, that

⁹Willard Thorp, "Pilgrims' Return," Literary History of the United States, ed. Robert E. Spiller et al. (New York, 1953), p. 827.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 830-836.

¹¹Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines (Cambridge, 1938), II, 176.

did not print travel sketches, review travel books, and describe foreign journeys.¹²

The Civil War interrupted Americans' travel abroad, but they were quick to return to it after the hostilities had ceased. In 1866 a writer spoke of the "necessity for men of culture and refinement to possess some knowledge of the polished nations of Europe."¹³ Another writer said, "There can be no better recreation for an American than to break away from his own restless, overworked country, and expand his mind by the calm contemplating of the historic monuments of Europe."¹⁴ This interest rose to such heights that one writer in Scribner's Monthly declared,

All Americans are by nature "Passionate Pilgrims." The Old World is a Lodestone that is always drawing them to it . . . An American Magazine . . . must, if it wishes to keep its hold on the public attention at home, satisfy the appetite of its readers for knowledge of the past and present of the Old World.¹⁵

How much of America's interest in Europe was motivated by ardor for culture, and how much by mere restlessness and idle curiosity is difficult to say, but in the year 1873 a Swiss economist estimated

Twenty-five thousand Americans visit Europe annually. There are comparatively large permanent colonies of Americans in Paris, Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, Hamburg, Frankfort, Geneva, Basle, Marseilles, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, and in all the chief cities of Italy and England.¹⁶

The mass of travel literature can truly be said to be both cause and effect of Americans' interest in Europe.¹⁷ It aroused interest which

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., III, 257.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 258.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 257.

¹⁷Williams, "Cosmopolitanism in American Literature before 1880," p. 58.

caused many Americans to make the trip across the Atlantic, and these travels in turn resulted in more travel literature. A standard pattern was soon evolved by less imaginative writers for their travel books.

The author must begin with the excitements of the ocean voyage itself, and devote at least a portion of a chapter to the thrill, so long anticipated, of setting foot on foreign soil. From this point on he should mix architecture and scenery with comment on philanthropies, skillfully work in a little history cribbed from Murray's guides, taking care to add a touch of sentiment or eloquence when the occasion permitted. If the essay or book required a little padding, it was always possible to retell an old legend or slip in an account of the dangers surmounted in crossing the Alps.¹⁸

At first readers seemed not to care at all that they had read countless other descriptions of the same places, such as "Shakespeare's tomb, the Burns country, Warwick Castle and the Tower of London, the Vale of ChamoniX, and the Roman Campagna."¹⁹ They demanded only that writers give them sentimental variations on the same theme.

During the late sixties the sentimental approach began to give way to books of information and advice, and writers concentrated on restricted areas to describe for their readers. Authors tried more conscientiously to organize their impressions and infect their readers with their discoveries. Some of these books are still of interest to readers, and among these are those of Howells and James. They deserve attention because they are concerned with answering the question which was, in varying degrees, present in the minds of all traveling Americans: "What shall I, as an American, do about Europe."²⁰

The most famous American travel book in its day was Mark Twain's

¹⁸Thorp, "Pilgrims' Return," p. 831.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 831.

²⁰Ibid., p. 834.

The Innocents Abroad. Twain, too, was concerned with answering this question, but his answer was characteristically different from the others. His answer was that America should ridicule and laugh at Europe's bad qualities, and appreciate its institutions for what they really are. Twain begins his book with the itinerary of the trip and his period of anxiously awaiting his departure, and tells us, "If I met a dozen individuals, during that month, who were not going to Europe shortly, I have no distinct remembrance of it."²¹ From this lighthearted beginning he continues in the established pattern, but seasickness interferes with the enjoyment of the voyage, and the first sight of foreign soil is hardly worth the trouble of getting up so early. He satirizes the practice of keeping a journal of one's travels, and then gets on to the serious business of the expedition. Traveling through Europe and the Holy Lands, Twain always looks at what he sees from a distinctly American point of view. He sees dirt and poverty and these things dim for him the beauties others had written about. He cannot admire the magnificent burial decorations of the Bishop of Milan because he has seen the condition of the poor the Bishop was supposed to have helped. The Catholic Church and the Throne are the two evils Twain sees at the root of everything that disgusts him in Europe. The unsophisticated Westerner whom Twain uses as his persona and his American companions stand for purity, naivete, progress, and democracy, and the Europe against which they are seen represents the past and its corruptions.²² His awareness of social wrong is so vivid that he recognizes only ironically

²¹Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad (New York, 1911), I, 56.

²²Smith, "Origins of a Native American Literary Tradition," p. 71.

the value of the art of the Old World. This rejection of the Old World because of its corruptions had great appeal to the American public, and it was largely for this reason the book gained such great popularity.

The travel book, important as it was in its time, was not, however, the only literary result of this new interest of Americans in Europe. The influx of American travellers gave rise to a new subject for fiction. The American abroad, in contact for the first time with the art and institutions of the older European culture, was seen by writers to be a fitting subject for novels and stories, and there arose what has come to be called the international novel. I shall attempt to show that these fictional works reflect the new cultural relationship of America to Europe. For the purpose of this paper, I have chosen to limit my study of Americans abroad in fiction to the writings of William Dean Howells and Henry James. Because they are both major American writers who have made outstanding contributions to our literature, and because they both showed continued concern with the situation, their writings will provide sufficiently significant materials.

CHAPTER II

HOWELLS AND AMERICANS ABROAD

Readers who know William Dean Howells as the editor of the Atlantic Monthly, and the author of The Rise of Silas Lapham and novels of social change in America usually overlook his broad cosmopolitan interests. They ignore the fact that he began his literary career by writing the impressions of Italy which he had obtained during the four years he spent as American consul at Venice during the formative years of his tastes. The long list of travel books, international novels, and critical essays is often overlooked in the evaluation of Howells' literary productions, but without the experiences which made these works possible Howells would probably have developed into an entirely different writer.¹

Howells was given the appointment to the consulship at Venice as a reward for having written a campaign biography for Lincoln.² It was a self-educated young man who left New York in November of 1861. He had worked most of his life up to this point as compositor and reporter for his father's and several other newspapers in his native Ohio, and these vocations, along with voracious reading, had provided most

¹James Leslie Woodress, Howells and Italy (Durham, 1952), pp. vii-viii.

²Edwin H. Cady, The Road to Realism (Syracuse, 1956), p. 90.

of his education. He hoped that he would be able to combine government service with education during his stay abroad.³ This was the young man who was beginning what he would call later "four years of almost uninterrupted leisure for study and literary work" which gave him "a wider outlook upon the world."⁴

When he arrived in Venice Howells was surprised to find that his diplomatic position and nationality were not highly regarded by Europeans in general. Consular officials had won the reputation of scoundrels, and the social ineptitude of some traveling Americans had caused them to become the standard butt for jokes. This lack of regard made Howells very concerned with the quality of men who were being appointed as consuls, but his service was such that no aspersions could be cast on him.⁵

The duties of the consul at Venice were very light during Howells's stay there. In his first year there, only four American ships stopped at Venice. There was no American capital invested in Venice, and the Austrian occupation was strangling all trade through the port. This absence of consular duties gave Howells abundant time to study Italian language and literature and to become better acquainted with Venice and other Italian cities. It was during this period that he turned from writing poetry to prose, and it was also during this period that he was married.⁶

Howells had met Elinor Mead in Ohio and had courted her during the

³Woodress, Howells and Italy, p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁵Ibid., p. 10.

⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

winter of 1860-61. Because he was unable to make the trip to America, she came, with her brother Larkin Meade, to Europe, where she and Howells were married, in Paris, in December, 1862. They returned immediately to Venice, and there spent the first sixteen months of their married life. Their first daughter, Winifred, was also born in Venice.⁷

In his earlier years Howells had been ambitious to become a poet. During the early part of his stay in Venice he continued in this vein, sending several works to various magazines and publishers in the United States. "Louis Lebeau's Conversion" was the only one of these poems which was accepted. It was printed by the Atlantic Monthly in November, 1862, but the rejection of his other poetic endeavors caused Howells to look around for new outlets for his creative abilities. He began keeping a journal of his impressions of Venice. From this journal he wrote a series of "Letters From Venice" which were printed in the Boston Advertiser. The pay for these letters was small, but he rejoiced that his work was being placed before Bostonians.⁸

His study of Italian literature led him to write "Recent Italian Comedy," which was published by the North American Review in October, 1864. This essay was "an effective blend of history, cultural analysis, human interest, and literary criticism."⁹ The letter of acceptance for this article came directly from James Russell Lowell, and was filled with such enthusiasm for the article and admiration for the Advertiser letters that it completed Howells's conversion from poet to prose writer. He

⁷Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁸Cady, The Road to Realism, pp. 103-105.

⁹Ibid., p. 108.

set about collecting his letters into a book, and traveled over the rest of Italy, especially to Rome and Naples, to gather material for other articles he hoped to write. He was already looking forward to his return to America. He wrote to Lowell saying, "I find myself almost expatriated, and I have seen enough of uncountried Americans in Europe to disgust me with voluntary exile . . ."10 He wanted to get on with his literary career in America, and set about accumulating as much information as he could about Italy before the time would come for him to be relieved as consul. The Howellses finally left for America on July 3, 1865, and, stopping for a short time in London to arrange for the British publication of his first travel book, arrived in New York a month later.¹¹

Three years and nine months abroad had done much for Howells. He had enhanced his American reputation as poet and journalist with the accomplishments of traveler, commentator, and scholarly critic. There were now excellent career possibilities open to him. His marriage was proving to be a good one, and Venice had provided him with an opportunity to complete his education. As Lowell put it, "Venice has been the University in which he has earned the degree of Master."¹²

Howells made extensive use of the Italian experiences. On a personal level the polish he acquired in Italy made possible his entry into the literary life of Boston and the Atlantic Monthly, and the wealth he had amassed from the riches of Italian culture paved his way to the in-

¹⁰Woodress, Howells and Italy, p. 46.

¹¹Ibid., p. 49.

¹²Cady, The Road to Realism, p. 112.

tellecual companionship of the Cambridge literati. A cascade of novels, travel books, critical essays, reminiscent sketches, poems, translations, and incidental uses of Italian background are ample proof of the importance of his Italian stay in his career.¹³

Again seventeen years later, after he had resigned the editorship of The Atlantic, Howells made a trip to Europe. By this time he was an established novelist and critic with an enviable position in American letters, and no longer feared that foreign residence would jeopardize his literary reputation.¹⁴ He wished to get away from the stresses of the life he had built for himself and the trip was to act as a stimulant to his daughter Winifred's health. The Howellses had three children now, and the family set out for Europe in 1882.¹⁵

The writer was greeted with great acclaim in England, and the acclaim was enjoyed by Howells and all his family, but soon the social press became too demanding and the family left London for Italy. Howells had made plans before leaving America to write a book on thirteen Italian cities, and had convinced his publisher, James R. Osgood, of the possibilities of his plan.¹⁶ The old, golden glamour of Italy, however, was gone. He could find grace and esthetic solace in Florence, where he and the family lived for six months, but amid the squalor and hopelessness of the people he experienced a dismay and disillusion as much with his younger self as with Italy. This trip answered for him Henry James's

¹³Woodress, Howells and Italy, p. viii.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁵Cady, The Road to Realism, pp. 216-217.

¹⁶Woodress, Howells and Italy, p. 173.

question as to whether an American novelist did not have to live abroad and deal with international society. After this trip abroad Howells wrote Tuscan Cities, another travel book, and two novels, Indian Summer, which reflects his later disenchantment with Italy, and Ragged Lady; but for the most part he restricted himself in fiction to American settings which he felt were the proper province of American authors.¹⁷

It will be of value to consider, in our efforts to establish Howells's early attitude toward Europe, his first two travel books, Venetian Life and Italian Journeys, which were both results of his term as consul at Venice. He begins Venetian Life by exploding romantic illusions about such well known Venetian landmarks as the Bridge of Sighs, the dungeons under the Ducal Palace, and the Carnival of Venice. After telling his readers the truth about these storied places and occasions, he proceeds with what he considered the true motive of his book.

I was resolved in writing this book to tell what I had found most books of travel very slow to tell--as much as possible of the everyday habits of a people whose habits are so different from our own; endeavoring to develop just a notion of their character, not only from the show-traits which strangers are most likely to see, but also from experience of such things as strangers are most likely to miss.¹⁸

Thus the book Howells wrote was quite a different volume from those which had previously been written about Venice.¹⁹ Howells's book is predominantly a socio-economic study of Venice with a strong autobiographical thread. He adds engaging bits of history, lively anecdotes, and amusing incidents, but it is in the characterization of

¹⁷ Gady, The Road to Realism, p. 221.

¹⁸ William Dean Howells, Venetian Life (Boston, 1895), p. 94.

¹⁹ Everett Carter, Howells and the Age of Realism (New York, 1954), p. 53.

Venetian people and description of their lives that his interest really lies. He describes the native holidays, the opera, the theater, the islands of the lagoons, the churches and pictures; but the servants, the gondoliers, the street peddlers, the Armenians, and the Jews in their Ghetto are his primary concern. It is the pitiful condition of these people which leads him to say, "Thank God that the good old days are gone and going. One learns in these aged lands to hate and execrate the past."²⁰

Thus Howells's attitude toward Europe can be seen clearly. Americans are lucky to have none of the institutions which bind so tightly the people of Venice to poverty and aimless lives. He does not hesitate to attack the corruption in the Catholic Church, and social mores. He shows a real affection for the Venetians, but he also recognizes and lists their faults.²¹

Again in Italian Journeys Howells presents a realistic picture of places that had been much romanticized and sentimentalized by earlier writers. He tells about his visits to Padua, Genoa, Naples, Pompeii, Rome, Verona, and various other cities which have long attracted visitors by their antiquity, but as with Venice he tells what he sees. In Pompeii, for example, after confessing that his mental picture had not been one which included the broken state of the ruins, he says,

I think that the friend of Pompeii should make it a matter of conscience, on entering the enchanted city, to cast out of his knowledge all the rubbish that has fallen into it from novels and travels, and to keep merely

²⁰Howells, Venetian Life, p. 218.

²¹Woodress, Howells and Italy p. 62.

the facts of the town's luxurious life and agonizing death . . . ²²

He exploits the strangeness and charm of distant places and delineates the Italian character with a humor which satirizes the over-evaluation of such scenes by other writers. ²³ Again he is as interested in the people as he is in the scenery. The Cimbrians, the washerwomen of Arqua, the manners and costumes of the Neapolitans, and a cripple in the railroad station at Castellamare provide the commonplace of Italy in which he was interested. Again he sees in the contrast to these things the dignity and value of American civilization which allows common humanity to develop without many of the restrictions of Europe. ²⁴ This value is again shown in the novels he wrote with an Italian setting.

A Foregone Conclusion, the first of Howells's novels about Americans abroad, ²⁵ compares East and West--the conventional and the unconventional--which he had done only implicitly in his travel books. ²⁶ The story is told by Henry Ferris, who, Howells tells us, was one of his predecessors as American consul at Venice, an artistic and sensitive young man who spends much of his time on this first visit to Europe improving his painting technique. Ferris is visited by Don Ippolito, a

²²William Dean Howells, Italian Journeys (Boston, 1901), p. 82.

²³Woodress, Howells and Italy, p. 72.

²⁴Carter, Howells and the Age of Realism, p. 52.

²⁵Howells wrote so voluminously that it has been impossible for me to read all his works for this paper. I have therefore relied in the selection of works dealing with Americans abroad on the comments of James Leslie Woodress in Howells and Italy.

²⁶Cady, The Road to Realism, p. 189.

priest and would-be-inventor, who wants a visa so that he can go to America, where he feels his inventions will be appreciated. Ferris realizes that the inventions are futile, and tries to soften the blow of being unable to help the priest by arranging for him to give lessons in Italian to Florida Vervain, the daughter of a frivolous American woman who is in Venice for her health. Ferris enjoys Florida's company because

after so long disuse, it was charming to be with a beautiful girl who neither regarded him with distrust, nor expected him to ask her in marriage because he sat alone with her, rode out with her in a gondola, walked with her, read with her.²⁷

Mrs. Vervain, Florida's mother, feels that the priest is the perfect tutor because he will not fall in love with the girl as have all her recent tutors.

It first becomes obvious that Florida does not understand the subtleties around her when Ferris tries to explain to her what he is trying to capture in his portrait of Don Ippolito.

"What I'm going to paint at is the lingering pagan in the man, the renunciation of a personality that would have enjoyed the world . . . Then I just work in that small suspicion of a Jesuit which there is in every priest. But it's quite possible I may make a Father O'Brien of him."

"You won't make a Don Ippolito of him," said Florida . . . "He has the simplest and openest face in the world, . . . and there's neither pagan, nor martyr, nor rebel in it."²⁸

Ferris tries to warn Florida that the priest misunderstands the warm friendliness with which he is welcomed into the home, but again Florida refuses to see the truth.

Because of Florida's friendliness toward him Don Ippolito confesses

²⁷William Dean Howells, A Foregone Conclusion (Boston, 1875), p. 70.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 75-76.

to her that, though a priest, he is a skeptic. She is horrified by this revelation, and urges him to try to find relief in religious devotion. When he convinces her that he cannot do this, she tells him that it would be better for him to quit the priesthood than to continue as a hypocrite.

It is decided that Don Ippolito will go to America, where he will be welcome in the Vervains' home until he has made his way as an inventor in the mechanized world. The priest has all along misunderstood Florida's candor and passion for truthfulness. He has mistaken her friendly concern for love, and when he tells Ferris that he will propose marriage to her when he has "made his fortune," Ferris realizes that he also loves the girl, and his fear that she will again misunderstand him keeps him from warning her.

When Don Ippolito finally declares his love for Florida, both are shocked that their intentions have been misconstrued. Thus the situation symbolizes the inability of American innocence and guilty European sophistication to understand one another or bridge the gulf between them with anything but suffering. The Vervains leave Venice immediately after this, and the priest's statement shortly before his death, after he has found consolation in the Church, that Florida loves Ferris makes possible the marriage of the two Americans when they meet in their own country several years later, but the priest still remains a problem in their minds.

In The Lady of the Aroostook, Howells's second novel concerning Americans in Europe, we find a plot similar to that used by Henry James in Daisy Miller. The heroine is an unsophisticated American girl thrown

²⁹For a fuller discussion of the similarities, see Annette Kar, "Archetypes of American Innocence: Lydia Blood and Daisy Miller," American Quarterly, V (1953), 31-38.

against more sophisticated traditions. She represents the true gentility of democracy as opposed to the snobbery of European society.³⁰

Lydia Blood leaves her home in rural Massachusetts to travel to Venice where she is to visit her aunt, Mrs. Erwin, and Mrs. Erwin's English husband, and to study voice. She becomes the center of a circle of dark sophisticated and masculine thoughts when she sails as the only woman passenger on board the Aroostook.

Lydia herself is not at all bothered by being the only woman on a ship full of men. Her aunt in Massachusetts, when she finds out about the situation says, "I guess Lyddy'd know how to conduct herself wherever she was; she's a born lady if there ever was one," and is concerned that Lydia might be lonely for feminine companionship.³¹ Two Boston gentlemen, Charles Dunham and James Staniford, who are aboard the ship, see the situation through different eyes, however. These two sophisticates have adopted many of the attitudes of Europe, Staniford through travel there, and Dunham, the more Europeanized of the two, by reading European newspapers. They decide that "this girl is plainly one of those cases of supernatural innocence . . . which wouldn't occur among any other people in the world but ours."³²

They are soon sympathetic with Lydia, and Staniford, attracted by her beauty and candor, falls in love with her. When Lydia tells him how people stared at her when she was left alone in a church on the ship's stopping at Messina, Staniford "was ashamed to know that a girl

³⁰ Delmar Gross Cooke, William Dean Howells (New York, 1922), p. 178.

³¹ William Dean Howells, The Lady of the Aroostook (New York, 1879), p. 46.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

was as improperly alone in church as she would have been in a cafe, and he began to hate the European world for the fact."³³ He still does not declare his love for her because he thinks he should wait until she is under her aunt's protection.

When Lydia reaches Venice she is shocked by many of the social practices she finds there. Attending the opera on Sunday night is quite contrary to her principles, and she is amazed to find her aunt doing just that, as she is also that her aunt meets socially "that married woman who lets a man be in love with her and that old woman who can't live with her husband because he is too good and kind, and that girl who curses and doesn't know who her father is . . ."³⁴ When her aunt explains to her that "the way to treat men in Europe is to behave as if they were guilty until they prove themselves innocent"³⁵ she realizes what Europeans will think when they find out about her ocean voyage, and decides to return to America immediately. Lydia's reaction to the situation and her questioning of Mrs. Erwin's efforts to be more English than the English cause her aunt to do some musing about her own lost American innocence.

Staniford's love for Lydia wins out over his Europeanized view of the situation, and they are married and go to California where, along with the Erwins, they find happiness far from the false standards of Europe which had caused them all so much trouble.

A Fearful Responsibility shows another facet of the relationship

³³Ibid., p. 209.

³⁴Ibid., p. 282.

³⁵Ibid., p. 280.

of Americans to Europe. In this story Professor Owen Elmore and his wife, Celia, go to Venice at the outbreak of the Civil War. The war has reduced the number of Elmore's students, and, because he is physically unable to take part in the war himself, he takes this opportunity to work on his proposed history of Venice. They are visited there by Lily Mayhew, the attractive younger sister of one of Mrs. Elmore's friends. Even before she arrives in Venice Lily has been behaving herself in a way which is quite counter to European conventions. She has met on the train a young Austrian officer, Captain Ernst von Eckhardt. He has interpreted her American candor and camaraderie as romantic interest.³⁶

When Eckhardt presents himself to ask for Lily's hand in marriage, Elmore is dismayed with the entire situation and is unable to appraise his worth. Feeling very strongly his responsibility to Lily and her family, he discourages the Austrian's attentions to the girl. Lily is unable to get over the confusion which this difference in standards has caused, and, though she receives several other proposals, none of them interest her as did that of the dashing officer. She returns to America, and when Elmore sees her there later he can only wonder what unhappiness may have been caused by this unfortunate misunderstanding.

Howells considered Indian Summer, which he wrote after his 1882 trip to Europe, one of his most mature and artistic creations.³⁷ The hero is Theodore Colville, a middle-aged journalist from Indiana who returns to Florence, where he studied architecture in his youth, after an absence

³⁶ Woodress, Howells and Italy, p. 170.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

of seventeen years. The return to a place he had liked so much previously is disheartening to Colville because he realizes that his impressions were largely illusions, and he is overcome by a feeling of remorse for the life he feels he has wasted since he gave up his artistic studies to practice journalism.

In Florence he meets Lina Bowen, an American widow who was a friend of a girl he had loved there in his youth. Imogene Graham, Mrs. Bowen's beautiful young protegee, is attracted to Colville by this unhappy love story, but her interest is discouraged by Mrs. Bowen, who has taken up the conventions of Italian society in her treatment of Imogene and her own daughter, Effie. Though not yet forty and still an attractive woman, Mrs. Bowen sees herself as a duenna for Imogene, removed from all emotion, merely an onlooker at the trials of the girl. She prefers the European plan of bringing up girls and does not allow her daughter the freedom she herself enjoyed.³⁸

Though Colville is unconsciously attracted to her, Mrs. Bowen will not allow him to express his admiration, because this does not fit in with her Europeanized views of herself and of propriety. He is therefore thrown with Imogene for companionship. The combination of Colville's feeling that he hasn't really lived and the girl's romantic notion that she should make up to him for the previous unhappiness in his life, along with the confusion caused by European social standards, bring about an engagement between the man and the girl.

Mrs. Bowen, though she loves Colville, is unable to do anything to rectify what she considers an awkward situation. Imogene's sentiment-

³⁸Cady, The Road to Realism, p. 227.

tality and Colville's common sense begin to weaken the attachment, but it is the arrival of Imogene's mother from America that finally breaks off the engagement. This lady, unaware of the causes of the situation, can see only that it will cause her daughter unhappiness, and she takes Imogene back to America, leaving Colville and Mrs. Bowen to find their happiness together. American candor saves the trio from the involvement which European conventions and social practices had helped push them into.

In Ragged Lady Howells again uses Americans in Italy for social contrast. Clementina Claxon, a lovely girl from the White Mountains, is taken as a traveling companion by Mr. and Mrs. Lander, two newly-rich Americans who have nothing to occupy their time. After Mr. Lander's death, Mrs. Lander takes Clementina to Europe. There her sweetness and sense of justice cause the girl to be much admired by everyone who becomes acquainted with her.³⁹ Mr. and Mrs. Milray, sophisticated American expatriates who live in Florence; Baron Belsky, a Russian nobleman; and the cynical American consul are all favorably affected by this artless American who rejects European wiles and returns to America to marry George Hinkel, an inventor whose qualities of character resemble her own.

This study of Howells's novels which have their principal settings in Europe and of two of his travel books indicates that he provided an answer to the question "What should I, as an American, do about Europe." Through his own experiences in Europe he was able to observe the evidence at first hand, and his answer was one which shows he tried to be

³⁹ Woodress, Howells and Italy, p. 189.

fair to both the East and the West.

For most of Howells's Americans abroad Europe provided an interesting experience which helped them to understand their own country better and appreciate it more fully. They are not the often satirized Americans who reject everything foreign merely because it is different from what they are familiar with. They appreciate European painting, music, architecture, and literature, and the variety that established traditions and customs can add to their experiences. They are able to enjoy the differences between Europe and their own country, but for most of them the stay in Europe is a relatively brief experience. They return to America to continue their lives in their native country which, despite its dearth of variety, is still a better place for them to live than Europe. Colville and Mrs. Bowen are an exception to the rule in that they remain in Europe. They continue to live in Florence, but they do not as a consequence reject America. Each had romanticized Europe from his earlier experiences there, but they come to realize their mistakes and esteem Europe honestly. Through their unhappy experience they are able to see that European social conventions are wrong for them, but they are able to enjoy life abroad on their own terms.

In his travel books Howells insisted on an honest appreciation of the arts and beauties of Europe, but he could not ignore the generations of people who had been mistreated while these things were being made possible. In his fictional handlings of Europe he was again zealous to remove from Europe the aura of idealization it had previously held for many Americans, and he tried to attain a sort of balance between Europe as it really was and the humanitarian values of America. His Americans abroad are all able to benefit from European influences, but the false

standards and conventions of the Old World are not overlooked in the larger view of the situation.

CHAPTER III

JAMES AND AMERICANS ABROAD

Henry James is the most famous of the American writers who have been voluntarily and permanently expatriated. He became, through his travels in Europe which started in his childhood and the years he lived in England, a citizen, both figuratively and literally, of two countries.¹ He is claimed by both American and English literature as the greatest novelist of his day. This extensive exposure to European influences could hardly have failed to have its effects on any writer, and its effects on James were many. The most important result to be studied in this paper was his discovery of the literary potential of the international scene. Again and again he wrote about the effects of Europe--all that Europe contains and connotes to the American imagination--upon the representatives of his native country who descended upon the scenes and culture of the Old World. In his later life he wrote:

The most extraordinary things appear to have happened, during that golden age, in the "old" countries--in Asia and Africa as well as in Europe--to the candid children of the West, things admirably incongruous and incredible.

These "things" which happened to Americans provided him with his main

¹Robert Charles LeClair, Three American Travellers in England (Philadelphia, 1945), p. 125.

²Henry James, The Art of the Novel (New York, 1934), p. 153.

subject matter, and he called it his "international subject." He saw the American abroad as a New Man in an Old World, a classless person in a class society, an individual without traditions coming into contact with them for the first time. From his own experiences and his American point of view of his European environment he developed this subject which he used at the first and last of his literary career.

James's contact with Europe began in his childhood. His earliest memory was of riding through the Place Vendome on one of his family's trips there when he was two years of age.³ Even during the ten years, 1845 to 1855, that the family spent living in Albany and New York City the child's interest in Europe grew. He read Punch and the novels of Charles Dickens avidly, and pored studiously over pictures of European scenes.⁴ His interest in far-off places was increased by his father's incessant plans to take the family abroad.

Henry James, Senior, the novelist's father, was the independently wealthy son of an Albany merchant. Relieved of the necessity of working for a living, the elder James spent much of his time dabbling in theology. He was a friend of Emerson and Carlyle and a follower of Swedenborg and Fourier.⁵ Along with his other interests, he was greatly concerned with the education of his five children. He sent them to various private schools and had them taught by numerous tutors during their stay in New York, but he feared pedantry and rigidity as evils. He wanted his sons to enjoy "an atmosphere of freedom."⁶ He wrote to his friend Emerson:

³Leon Edel, Henry James: the Untried Years (New York, 1953), p. 83.

⁴Ibid., pp. 91-92.

⁵Ibid., pp. 32-39.

⁶Ibid., p. 115.

looking upon our four stout boys, who have no playroom indoors and import shocking bad manners from the street . . . we gravely ponder whether it would not be better to go abroad for a few years with them, allowing them to absorb French and German and get a better sensuous education than they are likely to get here.⁷

The education James received during the years 1855 to 1860 which the family spent mostly in Europe fulfilled his father's wishes. Visiting London, Geneva, Paris, Lyon, Boulogne, and Bonn in their travels, the family took full advantage of all Europe offered. The sequence of boarding schools, tutors, and governesses provided only part of their education. The father was concerned that his children should form their own impressions of as much of the world as possible, so sight-seeing, conversations, and reading were an integral part of their training also. Even at this young age James was able to comprehend partially the contrast between the Old World and the New which was to concern him so greatly.⁸

When the Jameses returned to America in 1860 they went to live in Newport. In this least American of all American cities the influence of Europe was felt strongly. While living in Newport James became acquainted with his cousins, especially Mary (Minnie) Temple, whom biographers have found reflected in his American characters. Europe loomed large on his horizon through the influence of John La Farge, with whom he studied painting for a while and who introduced him to the writings of Balzac and Merimee. A back injury kept James from participating in

⁷F. O. Matthiessen, The James Family (New York, 1947), p. 45.

⁸Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years, p. 122.

the Civil War.⁹ For a year he studied law at Harvard, but law held little attraction for him, and his thoughts turned increasingly to literature. From 1863 to 1869 he published nearly fifty reviews and ten short stories. It was during this period that he became acquainted with Howells, who remained a friend until the end of his life.¹⁰ He was thus an emerging writer when, in 1869, partially for his health and partially because of his interest in it, he made another trip to Europe.

He spent a month in London where, because he was a friend of Charles Eliot Norton, he enjoyed an active social life.¹¹ He explored the city vigorously, revisiting scenes he had known in his earlier visits there. From the beginning he sensed the profound attraction the city had for him. The leisurely London life, the gentlemanly interest in politics, art, and social intercourse proved more compatible to his nature than did the rapidly mechanizing forces of American life.¹² He traveled on the continent to Rome, Geneva, Venice, Florence, and Paris before returning to America to continue his literary career in 1870.

During the next ten years James wrestled with the problem of where he should live to pursue his literary career. In 1872 he wrote, "It is a complex fate, being an American, and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting a superstitious valuation of Europe."¹³ Again in 1872 he returned to Europe, where he worked for two years. On his return to America he intended to adjust himself to the nation and settled in Cam-

⁹Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 268.

¹¹Ibid., p. 284.

¹²LeClair, Three American Travellers in England, p. 152.

¹³Matthiessen, The James Family, p. 280.

bridge with his family, but within a year his experiment had proved a failure and in 1875 he sailed for France.¹⁴

He knew that he could find a sense of fulfillment only in literature and he went to Europe to perfect his art. He went to Paris to rid himself of New England Puritanism and find intellectual company, intending to live there for an extended period. Because he possessed breeding, culture, and a certain amount of wealth, he found it easy to gain entrance into Parisian society. He met Flaubert, Daudet, Maupassant, Zola, Edmond de Goncourt, and, most important to James, Turgenev. He wanted "to sit at the feet of his chosen French masters" and "learn from them the true meaning of art and the intrinsic value of the written word."¹⁵ However, before the year was out these writers had played a large part in his decision to leave Paris. "I don't like their wares," he wrote to Howells, "and they don't like any others."¹⁶ He was disturbed by their narrowness and the immorality of their works. In July, 1876, he wrote to his brother William:

My last layers of resistance to a long encroaching weariness and satiety with the French mind and its utterances have fallen from me like a garment. I have done with 'em forever, and am turning English all over.¹⁷

This decision to "turn English" led him to go to London. Having decided upon London as an adopted home, James did not give up his interests in America. His family connections and the approaching realization

¹⁴Le Clair, Three American Travellers in England, p. 152.

¹⁵Mervyn Jones-Evans, "Henry James's Year in France," Horizon, XVI (July, 1946), p. 52.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 56.

that the American abroad and the international scene were to be his main literary theme made him aware of the necessity of keeping his eyes on his native land. He did this, and at the same time immersed himself in English life. He enjoyed wide social popularity, and became a perpetual guest at dinner parties and weekend gatherings in the country. He attended every sort of traditional function of English life which would give him a better knowledge of the people he wished to know. Derby day at Epsom, the boat races on the Thames, the London theater (and the audiences) were all part of his efforts, and his impressions were fresh and vital because of his American point of view.¹⁸

The attraction of Europe was made manifest for James in a variety of ways. He had a great fondness for old things: old houses, old furniture, old pictures, etc. Many cultured Americans delighted in such objects, mellowed by time and associations, which their own nation did not offer. But more than this, the attraction of old customs, habits, and manners drew him to Europe.¹⁹ His critical biography of Hawthorne throws a great deal of light on James's reasons for going abroad. In it he criticizes American society as well as the writer, and conveys his judgment of the place of the artist in nineteenth century American society. He indirectly examines the reasons which led him to live abroad, and indirectly defines the kind of novel he wants to write.²⁰

. . . [Hawthorne] has the advantage of pointing a valuable moral. This

¹⁸Le Clair, Three American Travellers in England, pp. 178-179.

¹⁹Robert Herrick, "Henry James," American Writers on American Literature (New York, 1931), p. 303.

²⁰Matthiessen, The James Family, p. 482.

moral is that the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep, that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in action . . . It is upon manners, customs, usages, habits, forms, upon all these things matured and established that a novelist lives.²¹

History, as yet, has left in the United States but so thin and unpalpable a deposit that we very soon touch the hard substratum of nature; and nature herself, in the Western World, has the peculiarity of seeming rather crude and immature. The very air looks new and young; the light of the sun seems fresh and innocent, as if it knew as yet but few of the secrets of the world and none of the weariness of shining; the vegetation has the appearance of not having reached its majority. A large juvenility is stamped upon the face of things, and in the vividness of the present, the past, which died so young and had time to produce so little, attracts but little attention.²²

It was not until 1881, during a trip to America, that James decided to make his permanent home in England. He wrote in his journal:

My choice is the old world--my choice, my need, my life . . . The painter of manners . . . must deal with Europe . . . I have lived much [in London] felt much, learned much, thought much, produced much . . . I came to London as a complete stranger, and today I know much too many people . . . Such an experience is an education. . . I take it . . . as one whose business is the study of human life.²³

Feeling as he did the necessity of "social machinery" for a writer, his decision to live abroad can be seen to be caused to a large extent by his interest in literary art. Thus he returned to London to live there permanently in 1883.

As he spent more time in England he began to write of English life exclusively. He still wrote on his international subject, probably because it was popular with readers and editors, but he seems to have felt it was "written out."²⁴ In 1887 he wrote:

²¹James, Hawthorne, pp. 2-3.

²²Ibid., p. 12.

²³Matthiessen, The James Family, pp. 296-297.

²⁴Frederick W. Dupee, Henry James (New York, 1951), p. 148.

I aspire to write in such a way that it would be impossible for an outsider to say whether I am . . . an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America.²⁵

His English novels were not well received by the public, however, and he attempted for a while to write plays, but his dramas were unsuccessful. That the failure of his English novels affected him deeply is shown by a conversation with Hamlin Garland.

"If I were to live my life over again," he said . . . "I would be an American. I would steep myself in America, I would know no other land. I would study its beautiful side. The mixture in me has proved disastrous. It has made of me a man who is neither American nor European. I have lost touch with my own people and I live here alone. My neighbors are friendly, but they are not of my blood, except remotely. As a man grows old he feels these conditions more than when he is young. I shall never return to the United States, but I wish I could."²⁶

Thus James returned to the American abroad as the theme of his last three great novels.

The American in contact with Europe became his own particular theme, and he rode it hard, treating it now briefly, now at length, now lightly, now seriously.²⁷

Parisian Sketches, which James wrote originally as travel letters to the New York Tribune during his stay in Paris in 1875-1876, shows clearly his attitude toward his stays in Europe. In the first paragraph of the first letter he proclaims his determination to speak as a representative American. He says that the average American in Europe is there "on a sensuous and esthetic basis--eating good dinners, staring

²⁵ Matthiessen, The James Family, p. 302.

²⁶ Hamlin Garland, "Recantation," The Legend of the Master, ed. Simon Nowell-Smith (New York, 1948), p. 104.

²⁷ Dupee, Henry James, p. 96. I have relied in the selection of works to use for this paper on the observations of Dupee. James wrote so many novels and short stories it has been impossible for me to read all his works for this study.

at paintings, listening to superior music, watching accomplished acting."²⁸ It is these things, and others, with which he is concerned in his letters. The grace of Parisian living, exhibitions of paintings, the Theatre Francais, the opera, Versailles, the political scene, and French literature provide him with subjects.

He does not simply report, however. He criticizes and reflects on what he sees as well. He uses the opinions he had formulated during the past decade to clarify for his readers the things he describes. He explains his objections to impressionistic painting and gives his reasons for disliking the meticulously realistic sculpture of the day. He explains his objections to Zola and the other experimenting French novelists, and reveals George Sand's limitations. He exposes the central flaws of the plays of Dumas and Sardou. Even his political views, his confidence in the extension of suffrage, his opposition to the repression of minorities, found voice in his letters. The attempts of reactionaries to curtail personal freedom fill him with disgust, and, concerning attempts to bring more Catholics into the country, he says

Heaven forbid . . . that anyone who had the good fortune not to be a Frenchman should become one [now]. They are a sadly perplexed people.²⁹

Thus in his travel letters he fights the "superstitious valuation of Europe," and tries to present a true picture of the values of Europe for Americans.³⁰

²⁸Henry James, Parisian Sketches (New York, 1957), p. 5.

²⁹Ibid., p. 76.

³⁰Ilse Dusoir Lind, "The Inadequate Vulgarity of Henry James," PMLA, LXXI (1951), p. 891.

Again in "A Passionate Pilgrim," which is generally considered James's first really good story, he seems to warn against valuing Europe too highly.³¹ It is the story of Clement Searle, an invalid American who goes to England to make his claim on an ancestor's estate. The narrator, who is nameless, meets him shortly after Searle has learned that his claim is hopeless and accompanies him in his travels. Searle reveals the depth of his passion for England when he says, "I should have been born here, not there Sitting here on the verge of this old park in this old land, I feel that I hover on the misty verge of what might have been."³² Again and again he talks of his love of old objects and what might have been. When the two men go to the estate, which is in the hands of a distant cousin, they are struck by Searle's resemblance to the portrait of an ancestor. The cousin ejects them from the house in a fit of anger, and Searle, all access to the estate cut off, suffers from the delusion that he is the ancestor whose portrait he resembles. His hopes crushed, he declines and dies. He has been in love with the past, and because of this he is unable to live in the present. He is an American whose adoration of the objects of antiquity and glories of England have made him unfit to live either in England or America.

"Madame de Mauves"³³ is the story of a rich young American woman who is married to a French Baron. It is told by Longmore, a fellow American who meets her through a friend in St. Germain. Longmore is

³¹Dupee, Henry James, p. 55.

³²Henry James, "A Passionate Pilgrim," The Great Modern American Stories (New York, 1932), p. 57.

³³Henry James, "Madame de Mauves," The Great Short Novels of Henry James (New York, 1945), pp. 1-84.

struck by the idea that Mme. de Mauves is unhappy, and he visits her because he is attracted to her. He learns from her sister-in-law, Mme. Clairin, that the lady is unhappy because her husband is in love with another woman. According to Mme. Clairin's French point of view this is to be expected and Mme. de Mauves is merely being foolish in resenting it. Mme. de Mauves has a much higher standard of moral conduct, however, which has led her to idealize her husband and expect him to follow her own code of conduct.³⁴

Mme. Clairin suggests openly, and the Baron hints obliquely, to Longmore that he should become Mme. de Mauves's lover. Longmore, who is in love with Mme. de Mauves, reluctantly agrees to the plan, which seems so acceptable to the French and would ease the Baron's conscience. But Mme. de Mauves does not act as her sister-in-law expects her to. She triumphs over her husband and Mme. Clairin because she rejects this means of retaliation. She rejects Longmore with delicacy and dignity, making him understand her ideal of conduct. Longmore returns to America and several years later learns that the Baron de Mauves, appreciating at last the fineness of his wife's nature, has begged her to forgive him. She has refused to forgive him and accept his love, and he, in despair, has committed suicide. At first Longmore wants to return to Europe and Mme. de Mauves, but as time passes he begins to suspect that her moral code has become so dominant as to exclude her from love altogether. He does not return to her because he realizes that the innocence of Mme. de Mauves must come to terms with experience, and that until that time the

³⁴ Charles G. Hoffman, The Short Novels of Henry James (New York, 1957), p. 11.

lady will be beyond reach of all human emotions.³⁵

In Roderick Hudson James shows the effects of Europe on a brilliant young sculptor who is discovered working in a dreary law office in Northampton, Massachusetts, by Rowland Mallett, a wealthy patron of the arts. Roderick reflects the feelings of many nineteenth-century American artists when he says:

It's a wretched business, this virtual quarrel of ours with our own country, this everlasting impatience to get out of it. Is one's only safety then in flight? This is an American day, an American landscape, an American atmosphere. It certainly has its merits, and someday, when I'm shivering with the ague in classic Italy I shall accuse myself of having slighted them.³⁶

Mallett takes Roderick to study in Italy, and there Roderick meets and falls in love with Christina Light, a beautiful American girl whose foolish and vulgar mother is dragging her around Europe trying to arrange an advantageous marriage for her. Roderick produces several pieces of sculpture of notable quality, but soon his artistic genius, under the seductive Roman influences, becomes merely a flair for adventurous living. He has not the self-discipline of Sam Singleton, another American in Rome who has been able, through diligent application, to improve his talent for painting. When Christine is forced into a marriage with an Italian prince, this disappointment, along with the collapse of his talents, leaves Roderick despondent, and he commits suicide. His story clearly illustrates the collapse of an innocent American artist who had not enough self-discipline to survive under the influence of Europe.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁶ Henry James, Roderick Hudson (New York, 1879), p. 26.

³⁷ Dupee, Henry James, p. 87.

In the preface to The American in the collected edition of his works James states the theme of the novel. It is

the situation, in another country and an aristocratic society, of some robust but insidiously beguiled and betrayed, some cruelly wronged com-patriot; the point being in especial that he would suffer at the hands of persons pretending to represent the highest possible civilization, and to be of an order in every way superior to his own.³⁸

Christopher Newman (the name is symbolic), a rich American who comes to Paris, represents the social upstart and the new humanity produced by America.³⁹ In Paris he meets Mrs. Tristram, a rich Europeanized American who lives in the French capital because elsewhere it is "always more or less of a trouble to get ten-button gloves."⁴⁰ "You're the great Western Barbarian," she tells him, "stepping forth in his innocence and might, gazing a while upon this poor corrupt old world and then swooping down on it."⁴¹ What Newman really wants of Europe, he confides to her, is the perfect wife, some supreme product of the Old World civilization. Mrs. Tristram is glad to introduce him to Claire de Cintre, daughter of the aristocratic but impoverished Mme. de Bellegarde.

For a while Mme. de Bellegarde and her older son, Urbain, are willing to accept Newman as a suitor for Claire because of his great wealth, and Claire and Newman come to love one another. Claire appreciates Newman's sincerity and genuineness, as does her younger brother, Valentin, but when Newman embarrasses her in front of her aristocratic friends,

³⁸ Henry James, The Art of the Novel (New York, 1934), p. 96.

³⁹ Dupee, Henry James, p. 98.

⁴⁰ Henry James, The American (New York, 1907), p. 37.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 45.

Mme. de Bellegarde insists that they cannot be married. Because she has appreciated Newman's innocence but cannot break away from her evil family, Mme. de Cintre must do penance as a nun in a convent, and Valentin, who has also understood but has rejected Newman, must die in a duel. Mme. de Bellegarde and Urbain, whose perverse evil will not allow them to profit from an association with Newman, have understood innocence no more than Newman has understood evil, must remain in their present state. Newman comes into possession of a document with which he could disgrace, and perhaps even send to prison, Mme. de Bellegarde and Urbain, but vengeance is counter to his nature and he burns the letter. The Bellegardes have been able to deprive him of what he wanted most, but in so doing they have lost their power to corrupt him and Newman returns to America unaffected by his experiences. A self-made American without antecedents and traditions, in contrast with people for whom these are the whole of life, Newman reflects the difference between America and Europe, where people are thwarted in every direction by social restrictions.⁴²

The conception of Europe as a complex organism which would have no use, or only cruel use, for those bred by the simpler American system, is shown again in "Four Meetings."⁴³ It is the story of Caroline Spencer, a New England schoolmistress who has long nourished a passion for Europe. "You've got the great American disease," the narrator tells her, "and

⁴²Joseph Warren Beach, The Method of Henry James (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 200.

⁴³Henry James, "Four Meetings," The Short Stories of Henry James (New York, 1945), pp. 3-38.

you've got it bad--the appetite, morbid and monstrous,--for the picturesque and romantic at any price."⁴⁴ She at last saves enough money to make the trip to Europe, but she gets no farther than Havre, where she is met by a cousin, one of those Americans on whom continental life has acted as a solvent to all morals, who tricks her out of her money with a story of a runaway marriage to a countess. She must return to America still hoping to "see something of this old Europe yet."⁴⁵ Her hope is ironically fulfilled when, several years later, after the cousin's death, the "countess" descends on her in New England and makes her life miserable by using her as a servant while living off her charity. The Countess is truly something of the "dear old Europe" which Caroline has romanticized. Because of this Caroline is gullible enough to accept the Countess's Bohemianism for the truly European. Caroline's acceptance of the counterfeit as the genuine article allows the Countess to follow her to America and take advantage of her there.⁴⁶

The story of "Daisy Miller"⁴⁷ is told as it is seen by Frederick Winterbourne, a young American who has lived in Europe for ten years. When he first meets Daisy, a charming girl from Schenectady who is traveling in Europe with her mother and younger brother, Winterbourne is doubtful concerning her innocence when she goes with him unchaperoned on a

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁶Rebecca West, Henry James (New York, 1916), p. 37.

⁴⁷Henry James, "Daisy Miller," The Great Short Novels of Henry James, pp. 85-114.

public excursion boat to the castle of Chillon. He is influenced toward thinking ill of her by his aunt, who sees her through the eyes of a Europeanized American.

When he meets Daisy again later in Rome he finds that she has been behaving in a way that is considered scandalous. She has been going around the city with a dubious native in defiance of the system of curfews and chaperons which the American colony holds so dear. Even Winterbourne, who is half in love with Daisy as she is entirely in love with him, comes at last to think she is really bad. Daisy continues doing as she pleases and does not see Winterbourne again until he finds her one night in the moonlight in the Colosseum with her Italian, Giovanelli. He tries to make her leave, but she will not, even though she knows that her being there is against social practice. As a result of this midnight lark Daisy contracts Roman fever and dies. After her death Giovanelli resolves the mystery of whether or not she has been innocent in her favor. She has been guilty of nothing more than doing what she liked. Thus, according to one reading of the story, she vindicates the individual against the group and establishes the doctrine, basic to American thought, that human nature is guiltless until proven otherwise. The Europeanized Americans of her acquaintance, as Roman as the Romans if not more so, assumed the contrary theory of human nature on which traditional morals and manners rest. Judging her morals by her manners, they imagined the worst, and that is why they ostracized her. They were wrong, but Winterbourne most of all was wrong. "I was booked to make a mistake," he says when it is too late. "I have lived too long in foreign parts."⁴⁸

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 144.

He has not only misjudged Daisy; he has made the mistake of judging her when he should have loved her. For some readers the setting gives weight to this interpretation of the story. Italy, Rome, and the Colosseum are the setting where Daisy, a new martyr of the spirit, contracts her fatal fever.

If one looks more closely at "Daisy Miller," however, it can be seen that this interpretation is not entirely valid. Daisy suffers from the complete lack in her social life of the traditions for which she cares so little, and the American colony cares too much. She does what she likes because she hardly knows what else to do. Daisy inhabits a vacuum created by a large fortune and no commitments, much freedom and little use for it. The story, then, is not altogether a tribute to the American girl. The legend of American innocence is not denied by the story, but Daisy's moral naivete acts as a disadvantage in her contact with Europe. Her ethical values are superior to the social values of Europe, but, because of her naivete, she needs the manners of Europe to guide her.⁴⁹

In "An International Episode"⁵⁰ James contrasts two Englishmen's impressions of America with two American women's impressions of England. Lord Lambeth and his cousin, Percy Beaumont, come to America, where the latter has business to attend to. They go to Newport, where they are guests of Mrs. Westgate, the wife of a wealthy railroad man. The two Englishmen do not understand America, nor do they even attempt to do so.

⁴⁹Dupee, Henry James, pp. 108-112.

⁵⁰Henry James, "An International Episode," The Great Short Novels of Henry James, pp. 115-122.

But Lord Lambeth is attracted to Bessie Alden, Mrs. Westgate's younger sister. Beaumont, however, has been warned previously by Lambeth's mother, the Duchess of Bayswater, to let her know if any young American girl attracts her son. Beaumont does so, and the Duchess immediately calls her son back to England.

The next year, when the two ladies travel to London, Mrs. Westgate warns Bessie that their English friends may not be cordial to them on their own grounds. She is wrong, though, for Lord Lambeth renews his attentions to Bessie, going with the two ladies to see the sights of London. Bessie realizes, however, the patronizing attitude the English take toward her. She realizes also that when the Duchess of Bayswater finally calls on her at Lord Lambeth's insistence, the Duchess thinks she is paying her a great compliment. Bessie, with her fine intellect and high moral consciousness, seems vulgar to the Duchess because of the gulf between American and English social customs. Bessie appreciates the traditions and past of England more than does Lord Lambeth, who takes them for granted, but she also believes an American young lady of good standing in her own country is in every way equal to the "best people" of Europe. Thus her realization of the difference between American and English values causes her to reject Lord Lambeth's proposal.⁵¹

In The Portrait of a Lady Isabel Archer is another example of the American girl whose freedom proves too much for her to handle. She is a poor orphan in Albany when she turns down a proposal of marriage by Caspar Goodwood, a rich manufacturer, because he is too possessive and she has higher expectations of life. She then goes to England with her

⁵¹Hoffman, The Short Novels of Henry James, pp. 16-19.

Aunt Touchett. The Touchetts are Americans who have lived such a long time in Europe that Mrs. Touchett's American rectitude has turned into an intense observance of social convention. Isabel turns down a proposal by Lord Warburton because she believes that his life would be too restricted for her.

Through Mme. Merle, a friend of her aunt's, she meets Gilbert Osmond. She marries him and goes with him to live in Italy. At first Isabel is blind to Osmond's faults, even though he is even more snobbish than the Touchetts. She comes slowly to realize that Osmond is a moral half-caste, determined to deny his American origins, while his very individuality makes it impossible for him to become a European. There are no conservatives like American conservatives, and Osmond can only ape and envy the local pomp. He admires the Old World institutions of the convent because he considers it a school of good manners, and he has had his daughter Pansy schooled by the nuns to give her the social perfection of the Old World. Isabel comes to realize that Osmond had married her for the money she inherited from her Uncle Touchett. Then she learns that Pansy, whom Isabel has supposed to be his child by a former marriage, is really the child of an affair between Osmond and Mme. Merle, and that Mme. Merle contrived Isabel's marriage to Osmond in the hope of bettering Pansy's situation.

Isabel thwarts Osmond in his efforts to force Pansy to make a "great marriage" instead of accepting the unimportant man she loves. She defies him by going to tend her cousin, Ralph, who loves her, in England during his last illness. In England Goodwood reappears and urges her to leave Osmond and go with him and be free. She realizes the force of his passion and knows that she has never been loved by anyone else, but

she rejects his love and his offer of freedom, and returns to Osmond. She does so partly to help Pansy and partly because she has come to understand that she cannot run away.⁵² She had been confident that all the world lay before her, that she could make whatever fine choice she liked. She was wrong in that belief, and every act has been determined by the innocence, the willful eagerness, the generous but romantic blindness that she derived from her American background. Now she has learned that there is evil and suffering in the world, and she must learn to live with it.⁵³

"Mrs. Medwin"⁵⁴ is the story of Mamie Cutter, a poor American woman who has been accepted into English society because of her cleverness. Her only means of livelihood is the payments she receives for helping other Americans break into society. It appears, however, that Mamie has tackled a job that is too big for her when she tries to help Mrs. Medwin, a nouveau riche English widow, do the same. Mrs. Medwin is unacceptable to Lady Wantridge, whose recognition is necessary to insure her social success. The Lady is intrigued, however, by Mamie's American half-brother, Scott Homer, and Mamie is able to achieve her desired ends by having Scott refuse her invitations unless Mrs. Medwin is invited also. Mamie succeeds because, as Scott observes:

"The bigger bugs they are the more they're on the lookout."
 "The lookout for what?" asked Mamie.

⁵²Dupee, Henry James, pp. 114-124.

⁵³F. O. Matthiessen, Henry James: the Major Phase (New York, 1944), p. 26.

⁵⁴Henry James, "Mrs. Medwin," The Short Stories of Henry James, pp. 461-483.

"Why for anything that will help them to live. . . . They're dead, don't you see, and we're alive."⁵⁵

Thus James recognized that the English were gaining from the energy of the Americans who came there. Scott and Mamie represent that energy, just as Lady Wantridge represents a society badly in need of something beyond a fresh supply of gentlemen.

The heroine of The Wings of the Dove is Milly Theale, a fabulously wealthy New York heiress, who travels for her health to Europe with Susan Stringham, a lady writer from Boston, as her companion. In London they meet Mrs. Lowder, an old acquaintance of Mrs. Stringham's, and her protegee and niece, Kate Croy. Mrs. Lowder is a wealthy and social woman, but Kate is a poor relation of hers. She is trying to force Kate into an advantageous marriage with Lord Mark, although Kate is secretly engaged to Merton Densher, a young newspaperman as poor as herself.

Milly has met Densher on a recent trip of his to New York and has been attracted to him. These people, rich and poor, American and European, constitute the fateful circle in the London social season. The two girls are fond of one another, but Kate conceals from Milly the news of her engagement to Densher as she has from her aunt. Milly is ignorant of Kate's secret, but Kate guesses Milly's, which is that she is very sick. Sir Luke Strett, Milly's doctor, hopes that she will fall in love and thus find ample reason to recover, but Kate is skeptical about the possibilities. In time the circle moves to Venice, where Milly has rented a huge palace, and Kate develops a conspiracy which she reveals to Densher. She plans for Densher to marry Milly, so that when she dies

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 472.

he and Kate will be provided with adequate means of support and will be able to be married. The plot has the moral advantage of seeming to give Milly what she wants most during her last days, and, knowingly or not, it is fostered by the others--by Milly because she innocently loves Densher, by Sir Luke and Mrs. Stringham in hope of saving Milly, and by Mrs. Lowder and Lord Mark in hope of getting rid of Densher.

Supposing Kate to be free, Lord Mark asks her to marry him. When she refuses, he guesses that the conspiracy is afoot and, for vengeful reasons, tells Milly about it. For Milly it is a fatal shock. It deprives her of the will to live, and she dies, alone with Mrs. Stringham in Venice. Densher can only return to London and Kate. Milly's innocence and inexperience have not been enough to sustain her, and the realization of evil in the two people she esteems most highly has crushed her delicate hold on life.⁵⁶ The realization has not, however, destroyed her innate goodness, and she has left her money to Densher, and thus shown her forgiveness. Her innocence has had its effects on Kate and Densher. He has been affected most deeply. His realization of Milly's good qualities, though too late, is complete. His contact with her has alienated him from Kate, and he must do penance for his sins alone. Milly has shown that her love transcends the evil which has been committed against her. In their treachery Merton and Kate have debased their love, and each must go his own way. Merton tells Kate he will marry her without the money or make it over to her and remain single. She accuses him of being in love with Milly's memory, and he does not deny it. They cannot be married, for, as Kate says, "We shall never

⁵⁶Dupee, Henry James, pp. 249-250.

again be as we were!"⁵⁷

The Ambassadors owes in a surprising way to Williams Dean Howells. When Howells was in Paris in 1894 to visit his son, who was studying there, he seems to have realized that his hard work had made him a stranger to what James called the world. He said one day at a party given by Whistler that Paris made him realize that he had not lived. This incident was later reported to James, who wrote it down in his notebook as a possible theme for a story.⁵⁸

This idea developed into The Ambassadors, in which Lambert Strether, the middle-aged editor of a small American literary review, goes to Paris as emissary for Mrs. Newsome, the first lady of Woollett, Massachusetts. His mission is to return to the home town and family business her son, Chad, who is being detained in Paris by what Woollett believes to be a sordid passion. On his arrival in Europe, Strether meets Maria Gostrey, who forces him to realize that he is really on a mission to prove whether or not he is worthy of the hand of Mrs. Newsome.

When Strether meets Chad he is amazed to find that the awkward boy he once knew has become the charming center of an accomplished circle of artists and aristocrats. Having been ignorantly evil-minded concerning Chad's affairs, Strether now rebounds in the opposite direction and assumes that the woman responsible for the change in Chad must be much better than he had supposed. His impression is confirmed when he finally meets Mme. de Wionnet at a garden party. She is the very expression of wit and culture, a countess, beautiful, sympathetic, and the mother of

⁵⁷ Henry James, The Wings of the Dove (New York, 1923), II, 439.

⁵⁸ Dupee, Henry James, p. 239.

a teen-aged daughter. Strether voices his confidence in her and decides Chad is not illicitly involved with her, but innocently in love with her daughter. When Mrs. Newsome hears of this, she sends her married daughter, Sarah Pocock, Sarah's husband, and his sister (who is an added enticement to Chad) to Paris to save Strether as well as Chad if Strether will denounce Mme. de Vionnet. Strether will not do this because he still believes Chad is in love with Mme. de Vionnet's daughter.

When Strether finally discovers that Chad and Mme. de Vionnet are actually having an affair he does not make the mistake of over-simplifying the situation as he had done before. He is able to see that the situation is not entirely bad, and his regard for Mme. de Vionnet grows as he realizes that she really loves Chad and that Chad is tiring of her. Chad finally returns home in hope of making a compromise between his new culture and the family business. Strether has, in a sense, succeeded in his original assignment. He has allowed Chad to return home in peace by taking on himself Chad's rebellion. And he is rewarded, because he who formerly felt isolated and useless in his narrow surroundings is now confirmed in his own self-sufficiency in the much broader vista which has been opened for him. He too returns to America, but not, presumably, to Woollett.⁵⁹

The Golden Bowl is the story of Maggie Verver and her father, Adam, a fabulously wealthy American, who go to Europe to collect objects d'art for the museum Adam is building in American City. The Ververs are very close to one another and spend as much time as possible together. When Mrs. Assingham, the American-born wife of a retired British officer, in-

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 240-246.

troduces Maggie to Prince Americo, a handsome Italian, she is greatly attracted to him and her father gives her a handsome dowry so that she can be married. After she and the Prince are married Maggie decides that her father should marry again so that he will have someone to take her own place in his life. Maggie chooses as her step-mother Charlotte Stant, an American girl who has spent much of her life in Europe. After Charlotte and Adam are married, Maggie and her father continue to spend much of their time together. Slowly the realization dawns on Maggie that the Prince and Charlotte are having an affair. At first she does not know what to do, but, because she would hurt her father by bringing the relationship out in the open, she decides that she must win her husband away from Charlotte without allowing her father to know the situation.

Maggie forgives Charlotte and the Prince for their transgressions, but she must also make a sacrifice in order to maintain her "beautiful life." She must sacrifice her relationship with her father. She does this when he and Charlotte return to America. He has also realized the situation, and, to shield Maggie from circumstances, decides the only solution is to leave his daughter forever. Thus American innocence, through realization of evil and sacrifice, is able to overcome the evils of Europe and still enjoy its beauties. Maggie, whose Prince has been just as much an expression of European culture as any of the paintings her father has bought, has, because of her inexperience, had a terror of life. Only through sacrifice for love of her husband can she enjoy the life she has created for herself.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Caroline Gordon, "Mr. Verver, Our National Hero," Sewanee Review, LXIII (1955), pp. 45-46.

From this discussion of some of James's works his continuing concern with Americans in Europe can be seen. His own contacts with Europe from his childhood to the end of his life gave him ample opportunity to evaluate Europe for his fellow Americans. In his travel writings as well as his novels he fought the "superstitious valuation of Europe." He showed again and again the honest attractions of Europe, but he did not ignore the dangers of accepting Europe blindly at its face value. He opposed the assumptions of guilt which were contained in European social standards and valued American innocence highly. The cultural influences of Europe were advantageous for Americans, but they must beware of its seductive powers.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HOWELLS'S AND JAMES'S PORTRAITURE OF AMERICANS ABROAD

The portraiture of Americans abroad in the writings of William Dean Howells and Henry James can be seen, from the foregoing analyses of representative works, to reflect the disturbance of the American mind resulting from the New World's discovery of the Old, and the Old's re-discovery of the New which took place during the nineteenth century. These works also reveal differences and similarities of the two authors in this portraiture of Americans abroad. The differences are not so large as one might expect from the widely diverging attitudes of Howells and James concerning the proper subject matter for American writers, but they are important ones.

The four years Howells spent in Venice, important though they were to his literary development, constituted a relatively short time in his long and productive life. His fictional Americans abroad are also, for the most part, characters who are firmly rooted in America and spend relatively short periods of time in Europe. Their reasons for going abroad are usually not very serious ones. Ferris is in Venice largely because the job as Consul will provide him with support and ample time to paint. He does not study the Italian masters to any great extent, so the quest of European art can hardly be said to provide his major motivation. Professor Elmore goes to Venice to write his history only after

the Civil War has halted his teaching career temporarily. No clear reason is ever stated for the presence of most of Howells's women characters. Mrs. Vervain is there "for her health," and Lydia Blood is to study voice while she visits in Venice, but for both the trip to Europe is just an interesting experience. Most of Howells's Americans abroad are in Europe merely for this reason. They have no argument with their own country. They go abroad merely because of a mild interest, not because they have been dissatisfied with their own country or have found it lacking. They have the time and money for leisure, and are using Europe to occupy them pleasantly. One must not assume, however, that they do not profit from their stays abroad merely because they have not powerful reasons for going. They do derive benefits from European culture, but they remain at the same time distinctly American in their outlooks.

The extended period James spent in Europe is reflected in his characters, many of whom go to Europe to live. The length of time, however, is only the result of a more important difference. James's characters are, for the most part, in Europe for a purpose. This purpose is sometimes a distinct one, and at other times it assumes the proportions of a quest. Isabel Archer goes to Europe to find a use for the freedom she has gained from her American background. Roderick Hudson goes to find artistic inspiration; Christopher Newman wants a wife who will personify Old World culture. Maggie Verver and her father go to find and bring back to America parts of Europe's artistic heritage. The Ververs' quest, like that of most of James's Americans abroad, is for Old World values superior to the New World ones they had known. It has sometimes been argued by critics who resent the criticism of America im-

plied by his decision to live abroad that James always favored Europe and denied America in his fiction. It cannot be denied that James felt strongly the attractions of Europe, but he did not as a consequence deny American values. He esteemed them, but felt that they needed to be complemented by European conventions.

The difference between the attitudes of Howells and James concerning the benefits of Europe for Americans can be seen most clearly by a comparison of Daisy Miller and The Lady of the Aroostook because of the similarities in characters and situations of the two stories. Both novels have as heroines naive American girls who go to Europe. Daisy and Lydia possess an inviolable innocence and instinctive moral judgment, and both meet European values first and most directly through Europeanized Americans, Winterbourne and Staniford. Both girls remain through most of the action unaware of the difference between their standards and those of Europe, but here the similarity ends.

Daisy suffers from her lack of appreciation of European social standards. She proceeds according to her own moral judgment and makes a foolish mistake which has fatal results. All Rome knows that the atmosphere in the Colosseum at night is unhealthful, and Daisy's death proves that not all taboos are frauds. Even though her moral values are superior to European social values, Daisy needs to understand European traditions and conventions, and her death is a result of her failing to do so. Lydia, on the other hand, rises above European conventions by the sheer force of her own convictions. When she finally realizes these standards she rejects them, and decides to return to America. Her native judgment, however, has enabled her to win Staniford over from European values to a realization of American qualities. Lydia

has no need for European traditions because her own standards are superior to them.

These two novels and the purposes of the two writers' 'Americans abroad show the differences between Howells's and James's attitudes. Howells was shocked by the realization that Europeans assumed guilt existed merely because the opportunity for guilt had been presented.¹ He understood the contrast between these assumptions and those of American society. When he wrote of Americans abroad he used his perceptions of the cultural and moral differences of America and Europe. His experiences in Europe provided him with an opportunity to understand the meaning of his own culture by comparing it with other cultures, and it was largely as a means of illustrating for his countrymen the advantages of America that he used Americans abroad in his fictional writings. These characters profit from their European experiences primarily because of the cultural advantages of Europe. European social standards have no value for them. For Howells the assumptions of human nature upon which democracy is based provided Americans with an atmosphere which, because of the freedom it provided, is of comparable quality to that of Europe, whose shackling institutions detract from its culture.

James's Americans abroad, in their serious searches for European values, are looking for social as well as cultural standards. James felt that Americans needed the traditions, taboos, conventions, and manners with which Europe could provide them because the feeling of these limits of life could help them in leading more complete lives.²

¹Cady, The Road to Realism, p. 186.

²Dupee, Henry James, p. 145.

By realizing their limitations Americans could better pursue their objectives. Some of James's characters over-estimate European values, and thereby lead even more limited existences than the Europeans. Some of them are only partly successful in finding Europe's good. Only if they understand the good of both America and Europe can Americans hope to benefit from their European experiences. For different characters, with different capabilities, Europe could do different things, and James presented a series of individual Americans abroad, each profiting or suffering from his experiences in different ways. It can thus be seen that both Howells and James had a kind of faith in America and that both believed Europe had its just attractions for Americans. The difference is in the degree of emphasis each placed on American and European social values.

Both Howells and James saw their Americans abroad as innocents in a rich complex of good and evil. Europe's effects on American innocence were various. It could confuse such characters as Florida Vervain and Christopher Newman, both of whom possessed goodness which it could not finally corrupt; or it could subject such characters as Caroline Spencer, Roderick Hudson, and Clement Searle to suffering because they blindly hungered for the advantages of its culture without being aware of its defects. Europe could corrupt Americans who accepted too readily its social institutions and aristocratic values. Some of these Americans appear in a comic light; for example, Mrs. Ersin, the Milrays, and Mrs. Touchett; others, such as Charlotte Stant, Osmond, Mme. Merle, and Mrs. Light, are serious portraits. Europe acted on the second group as a destroyer of morals, because, in their rage for the externals of aristocratic society they were unable to realize the implications which un-

derlie these values. Equally as humorous as the comic characters who accept Europe without understanding it are those who reject it blindly, such as Mrs. Lander and the POCOcks.

For other Americans who accepted it with caution, Europe could provide a broadening influence, as it did for Longmore, Strether, and Isabel Archer, who found that their experience of the corruptions of Europe contributed greatly to their understanding of life. And for the Americans who understood Europe best and were able to transcend its corruptions with their own goodness, there was an opportunity to improve the lot of the Europeans with whom they came in contact, as did Milly Theale for Densher and Kate Croy; Maggie Verwer for Prince Amerigo; and Clementina Claxon for Baron Belsky.

These Americans show that the values with which they have been provided by American democracy, though they may sometimes place them at a disadvantage to European guile, will provide them with an excellent basis for appreciating Europe's good if they are able, at the same time, to understand the benefits of their own country. Howells and James, as the world grew smaller and their countrymen came more and more into contact with older civilizations, attempted to evaluate Europe for Americans. They believed that, in the great balancing of moral and material values, Americans could face Europe unafraid and indeed rise on occasions superior to the complexities and corruptions of Europe.

The Old World and the New are still trying to accommodate themselves to each other's idiosyncrasies, and their efforts are still topics for fiction in our day. Howells and James, during the time when Americans first seriously sought national orientation, provided portrait after portrait which illuminated the American character and illustrated

in fictional works of undeniable quality the advantages and disadvantages which their "comparative innocence" would have for their countrymen in their contacts with Europe.

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