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**Writing differently somewhere else: Studies in the American
expatriate novel**

Hibbard, Allen Eugene, Ph.D.

University of Washington, 1989

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Writing Differently Somewhere Else
Studies in the American Expatriate Novel

by
Allen E. Hibbard

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1989

Approved by *Donald M. Hartmann*
(Chairperson of Supervisory Committee)

Program Authorized
to Offer Degree Department of English

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Abstract

Writing Differently Somewhere Else:
Studies in the American Expatriate Novel
by Allen E. Hibbard

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Donald Kartiganer
Department of English

Writing Differently Somewhere Else: Studies in the American Expatriate Novel seeks to formulate a general theory of the expatriate novel. Central to that theory is the important recognition that the movement of fictional characters away from their familiar surroundings to a place foreign, exotic, at times dangerous is a narrative basic to many American texts. In other words, the study registers not only the impact of the literally foreign, but also the extent to which "expatriation" is an aesthetic, psychological, and moral adventure whose links to American literature in general remain crucial: "flight and escape from social order, from the beginnings, have been dominant themes in the patterns of American life and literature."

The analysis proceeds with discussions of seven expatriate novels, each the focus of a separate chapter: Edith Wharton's The Reef, Henry James's The Ambassadors, Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Marble Faun, Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises, Paul Bowles's Let It Come Down, James Baldwin's Giovanli's Room, and James Fenimore Cooper's Home as Found. In each of the specific texts, the

Fenimore Cooper's Home as Found. In each of the specific texts, the study examines the encounter of the American with the foreign, frequently finding some version of "double consciousness," an ironic stance, in which the native and foreign elements stand in irreconcilable tension. It is this tension that ultimately constitutes the generic distinction of the American expatriate novel.

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PREFACE

When I informed Hazard Adams, professor of English literature at the University of Washington, that I was going to take a teaching job in Cairo he, knowing of my research interests, skeptically queried, "Allen, aren't you confusing subject and object?" I responded that I preferred to think of it as integrating, rather than confusing, subject and object.

I knew, in very general terms, what I was going to write about when I left Seattle--the American expatriate experience--but I had not yet arrived at a satisfactory design for it all. I had, though, formulated a purpose for leaving. First of all, I think I was, myself, even while living in America, a kind of latent expatriate. My grandfather, returning from Africa or the Middle East, would often bring gifts--polished carvings of gazelles or busty native women, drums covered with zebra-hide, ivory elephants, camels, head-dresses or replicas of painted shields and iron spears. Foreign lands had always, for me, held a certain mystery and charm, as they did for the young Redburn.

Upon the completion of my PhD exams, remaining in America to finish my dissertation and look for a job seemed like an awfully dull and common prospect compared to the idea, accompanied by no small quantity of romance, of going abroad. I could justify the seemingly foolish idea to skeptical on-lookers by pointing out that the experience was bound positively to affect my study of American

expatriates; nonetheless, there would always be those who would suspect that I, a bit like Chad Newsome, was running away from something--responsibility, family, the burdens of everyday life. My goal, though, was to write this book while I was away, and not to return until I had finished.

Of course, there is something to the thrust of Professor Adams' remark. The critic need not--nay, cannot--experience everything the writers he writes about have. Nor, generally, would he want to. Subject and object, no matter how closely tied to one another, remain to some extent, separable entities. I have hoped, though, that my own journeying and my residence abroad would give me greater insight into the writings of other American expatriate writers, and that somehow the writing of their stories would, in some sure and immeasurable degree, be enriched by the facts surrounding my own story. Indeed, frequently while I was writing portions of this manuscript (I think now particularly of the passages on irony in the discussion of The Ambassadors) I found myself turning from my writing to the life I was living and saying to myself, "Could this be right? It seems to make too much sense!" There is some truth, I feel, in Oscar Wilde's claim, in Intentions, that criticism "is the only civilized form of autobiography, as it deals not with events, but with the thoughts of one's life; not with life's physical accidents of deed and circumstance, but with the spritual moods and imaginative passions of the need." When I now look back on the pages which follow, I can trace the development of my own mind, and I can, as I recall where I wrote or revised each portion, plot my

own travels from America, to Cairo, to Tangier, back to America, back to Cairo, to Crete, to Tangier and back to Cairo, Aswan and Alexandria. In the mind of the writer, at least, these places where I have written are inscribed in the following pages.

The genesis and development of this book's shape also has a history. At first, the plan was to treat the subject chronologically, beginning with Irving and Cooper and moving, step by step, toward our own time, ending with Baldwin, Theroux and Bowles. I hoped, thus, to show the obvious--that literary expatriation has been a persistent phenomenon throughout this country's history. I began to find that while this means of organization was logical, it continually pulled me away from the literature itself and led me in the direction of literary history--stories which have, to a great extent, been told already.

At my next turn I began, with some profit, to think about how various theoretical frameworks (Marxist, Freudian, anthropological, and narratology, to name a few) might contribute to an understanding of the causes, dynamics and products of expatriation. While this phase carried my thinking forward, an ultimate design for the study yet eluded me. For some time I played with the notion that in certain texts there might be a foregrounding of certain codes--psychoanalytic, narrative and so forth--which might, in isolation, be extracted and examined. I soon concluded that this kind of dissection would do a great disservice to the material I was reading; there was too much of interest in the background to ignore.

I then developed yet another scheme to abandon. The plan,

which I made considerable headway with, was a tripartite division, the first dealing with the motives behind expatriation (the Oedipal struggle, flight from father, artistic integrity); the second with types of settings (familiar and exotic); and the third with the modes and structures of the expatriate experience, in which I talked about irony, narrative patterns, the dialectic, and the return.

Though I was making many discoveries, the shape still did not seem right. Finally, a solution began to show itself--though at the time it was proposed it did not yet have the character of a solution--when Donald Kartiganer, after reading a hundred pages of interesting but undirected prose, suggested that I try to work more inductively. "Choose a novel you like and know well and write everything you know about the novel. Let the generalizations surface more naturally from the particulars you deal with." Right away I went to work on Edith Wharton's The Reef, a novel which had impressed me when I had, at the recommendation of Paul Bowles, read it for the first time only months earlier. What stands now as the first chapter, on The Reef, is derived from that exercise which suggested to me, finally, a structure for satisfactorily handling the bundle of ideas which were seeking form: Discrete chapters on discrete texts. It seems so clear and right now that I wonder that I did not come upon it at once!

Various works, other than those mentioned throughout the book, have helped me to develop my perspective and define my work. One, not so well known, is Marcus Klein's Foreigners. Klein's interest is in those who came to America and INVENTED it, based on their

imaginative needs, when they came here. "Having no culture in which to be home," he writes, "writers made one--or rather, they fabricated many versions of a culture depending on their various kinds of knowledge of what they had been dispossessed from and what reasonably they could come into possession of." Though the picture I look at is somewhat different (those who left America, after living in it, and created fictions in their new residences), the dynamic of the double consciousness involving possession and dispossession seems analogous.

Another book which has for me been a kind of polestar during the time I have been working on this theme is Erich Auerbach's Mimesis. Though Auerbach's subject--the history of representation in Western literature--has only a slight tangible relation to my own, the influence the book (and the story behind the book) has had on my own work has been substantial. First of all, my method of textual selection and explication has, as I view it, not been unlike his. Near the end of the long volume Auerbach writes "I see the possibility of success and profit in a method which consists in letting myself be guided by a few motifs which I have worked out gradually and without a specific purpose, and in trying them out on a series of texts which have become familiar and vital to me in the course of my philological activity." This method is built on the belief that good criticism comes from extended meditation on texts; brief and slight encounters do not produce fine insights.

Beyond his method, though, what more deeply draws me to Auerbach is the story behind the writing of the book. As he tells

us in the epilogue, he wrote his study of Western literature while in exile in Turkey during World War II. He was, we could say, an expatriate critic, writing in rather difficult circumstances, and he hints that the book, and the insights captured in it, might owe something to this exile. That is, standing outside the object of study, the writer was afforded a unique perspective on his subject. The parallels between Auerbach's story and the stories of the American writers I deal with should be obvious enough. But the impact gains more force when I hazard certain similarities between Auerbach's circumstances and my own. Though the conception of my own project had firmly taken root in my mind before I left America, I owe the deepening of my thinking, the rereading of texts, and the actual writing of most of this book, to my four-year exile in Cairo, Egypt. There are, of course, notable limits to the parallel. For one thing, the circumstances of my own exile have been more pleasant than those of Auerbach. And by making this comparison I would not wish to suggest that my own work anywhere near reaches the level of Auerbach's.

Auerbach had, during his exile, to overcome some of the obstacles inherent in the exilic condition. The words on the final pages of Mimesis, for example, have particular meaning for me. "I may also mention that the book was written during the war and at Istanbul, where the libraries are not well equipped for European studies. International communications were impeded; I had to dispense with almost all periodicals, with almost all the more recent investigations, and in some cases with reliable critical editions of

my texts. Hence it is possible and even probable that I overlooked things which I ought to have considered and that I occasionally assert something which modern research has disproved or modified. I trust that these probable errors include none which affect the core of my argument. . . . On the other hand it is quite possible that the book owes its existence to just this lack of a rich and specialized library. If it had been possible for me to acquaint myself with all the work that has been done on so many subjects, I might never have reached the point of writing."

I do not adopt Auerbach's apology as my own. What interests me most here is that the poverty of exile, correctly managed, can be transformed into an intellectual plentitude. I, too, have felt a poverty and sought to transform it into a plentitude. It will be up to readers to judge the success of the attempt. Something Geoffrey Hartman writes, in "The Interpreter," in judging Auerbach's success in Mimesis, I kept nearby on my desk as I was writing:

Each of us finds his own exile, but with less of a good conscience. To be creative, to recover through exile a paradise within or a fruitful solitude, one needs the sense of being moved by some force majeure, whether that be Politics, Art, or Destiny. "I and the Abyss"--that is bracing. The anthropologist recording a dying culture, or Auerbach the decline of the Western historical consciousness--that is gloomily inspiriting. What is my saving paranoia? What will justify that discourse of the dead (Phaedrus,276) called Writing?

So much, it seems, must be in place before one can work well. My wife, Nora, an abler critic than myself, has been a partner of mine in expatriation and has sacrificed more than she ought to have to try to insure that I had as much peace of mind as possible in a very noisy, chaotic environment. Would that I could, sometime, somehow, show my gratitude by taking on the same role for her.

I have been fortunate, as well, in having had generous and perceptive mentors, here in Cairo and back in the United States. First among those has been Donald Kartiganer, whose participation in my work became more than academic when he visited me here in Egypt in the Spring of 1988 and saw, first-hand, my doings and the circumstances around my doings. What resulted was an experience which I am sure is unique among doctoral candidates who normally walk into the professor's office periodically and talk things through. During Kartiganer's visit, discussion of issues in the dissertation flowed naturally in and around tours to Ibn Tulun, Sultan Hassan, the pyramids and the Citadel. I remember very well one portion of our trip together to Luxor. In the relative cool of the spring morning we had visited the tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the striking Temple of Hatshepsut. By noon, back on the East Bank of the Nile, the heat had become intense and we took refuge in the air-conditioned lobby of the Etap Hotel where we decided to stay until things cooled down sufficiently for us to contemplate a visit to the Karnak Temple. Having ordered two Stellas, the local Egyptian brew, Professor Kartiganer asked, "Do you have that chapter on The Ambassadors which I was reading? I could read a bit more of it now." I

pulled the manuscript out of my satchel and handed it to him, then awkwardly sat there reading The Sun Also Rises, thinking of the next chapter, while he read.

From the other end of things, in America, Professor Kartiganer bore the anxieties associated with delays of mail, etc., with what was (or seemed to be) patience and good cheer. His guidance has always been consistent and firm. Not at all dogmatic, he has sought always to see what kind of discoveries I was making, and insist on their clearest expression. At the outset he knew, better than did I, the monstrous nature of my undertaking, and "saw me through," much in the way Maria Gostrey saw Strether through, from the beginning to the very end.

Professors Hazard Adams, Mark Patterson, and Evan Watkins have read the manuscript, I presume, under more usual conditions; for their encouragement and honest responses, including suggestions for extended inquiry and clearer distinctions, I am indeed grateful. I would hope their criticisms have made this a better work.

In Egypt I was lucky to have had a number of colleagues who offered me valuable emotional and intellectual assistance. Conversations with Professors Doris Enright-Clark Shoukri, John Rodenbeck and Ferial Ghazoul often pushed me to greater insights and given me the strength to carry on. To Dr. Leslie Croxford, himself a British expatriate writer born in Alexandria, I owe much gratitude. Initially, perhaps it was a shared knowledge of and admiration for the works of Henry James and Paul Bowles, as well as a natural affinity of sensibilities, which conspired in bringing us together. Dr.

Croxford has read substantial portions of my work in progress and always offered carefully considered and extremely useful comments. To his reading and to our conversations, he always brings his refined knowledge of the literature I have been interested in, his intuitive understanding of the exilic condition, and his unflagging belief in the value of my undertaking.

The prophet Mohammed reputedly noted that those were blessed who had friends good enough to point out their own foolishnesses in private so that they might be spared the embarrassment of being scoffed at and chided when their unwitting faults were publicly demonstrated. My own follies are so considerable that even the most vigilant efforts on the part of my friends would not be enough to arrest them completely. There have notably been a few who have affected me one way or the other, and whose relation to this enterprise should be recorded.

John Murphy was there at the dock, so to speak, to send me away. He has, while I have been here, been one of my most valued life-lines to America. Beyond the appreciated verbal encouragement, his support has taken very tangible forms. Often he has sent me material he knew would be of interest to me (such as Michael Seidel's Exile and the Narrative Imagination), and helped in many other concrete ways. Murphy, in no small measure, has figured in my imaginative plottings for a return to the homeland.

To my friend Jim O'Rourke I owe a modest debt: the title of this book, which he unknowingly supplied to me when, upon sending me a copy of Richard Poirier's A World Elsewhere, he fliply referred in

his letter to the book (or my project) as "A Different Style? Writing Elsewhere? A Place Elsewhere? Writing Differently Somewhere Else? Something like that?"

No one other than myself and immediate family, perhaps, will be as happy upon the completion of this book as will be Brian Kiteley. Our conversations, once I am free of my obsession with this topic, will be able freely to drift with the currents of other impulses, without being reeled in so quickly. For nearly four years Brian, himself a novelist, has listened patiently to my ramblings on American expatriate writers. Somehow influenced, perhaps, by my thoughts or actions, as well as his own desires, he landed in Cairo two years after I got here, and I exploited with a vengeance his presence in the flat adjoining ours, taking him, with no invitation, my most pressing anxieties and most recent drafts, leaving him no chance to turn them away.

This preface has been extended to the point where it seems to call for an apologia of its own. I would hope that the narrative and cast of characters behind the real narrative--the pages which lie ahead--will be seen as supplementing and illuminating the contents of that work. For me, the writer, at least, the two stories are intertwined and inseparable. One depends upon the other; one accounts for the other.

Cairo, Egypt
January, 1989
(revised Seattle, August 1989)

"It's a wretched business," he said, "this virtual quarrel of ours with our own country, this everlasting impatience that so many of us feel to get out of it.

Rowland Mallet in Roderick Hudson

"The natural love of life gave me some inward motions of joy, and I was ready to entertain a hope that this adventure might some way or other hope to deliver me from the desolate place and condition I was in."

Gulliver arriving in Laputa, Gulliver's Travels

INTRODUCTION

Toward the middle of The Aspern Papers, the critic-narrator, who has gone to Venice in pursuit of papers left behind by the famous American poet Jeffrey Aspern, meditates on the effect of expatriation on the poet he is studying. Longingly, he, the critic, looks back on an earlier, more romantic age of travel. "When Americans went abroad in 1820 there was something romantic, almost heroic in it, as compared with the perpetual ferryings of the present hour, when photography and other conveniences have annihilated surprise." Something about the time itself, the narrator seems to think, accounts for Aspern's literary greatness. "It was a much more important fact, if one were looking at his genius critically, that he had lived in the days before the general transfusion." He continues his probe into the factors leading to his subject's genius, and is led to consider the fact of his expatriation. He acknowledges that what Aspern created was somehow different because of his experience abroad. It is an intuitive response on the part of the critic-narrator, one which he would have some difficulty proving empirically unless he were able to measure the writer's oeuvre against what the writer would have created had he not left--an impossibility, of course. Nonetheless, the critic-narrator begins to wish that his subject had never gone abroad, perhaps because eventually he was compelled to follow in search of clues. "It had happened to me," he writes, "to regret that he had known Europe at all; I should have

liked to see what he would have written without that experience, by which he had incontestably been enriched. But as his fate had ordered otherwise I went with him--I tried to judge how the old world would have struck him."

Even while sensing something different and distinctive about Aspern's work, which he attributes in part, at least, to the residence abroad, the critic-narrator notes the essential American-ness in Aspern's writing. "It was not only there, however, that I watched him; the relations he had entertained with the new had even a livelier interest. His own country after all had had most of his life, and his muse, as they said at that time, was essentially American. That was originally what I had loved him for: that at a period when our native land was nude and crude and provincial, when the famous 'atmosphere' it is supposed to lack was not even missed, when literature was lonely there and art and form almost impossible, he had found means to live and write like one of the first; to be free and general and not at all afraid; to feel, understand and express everything."¹

These passages from The Aspern Papers note the distinctiveness of works of literature which have been generated abroad or informed by experience abroad. James's critic-narrator makes two observations about American expatriate writing which I will be exploring at considerable length in these pages: first, it is somehow different from other American writing; second, it is still identifiably American. My interest in this study is to account for this difference, to find out what themes are developed, what patterns emerge, and what ultimately results from the American expat-

riate experience, as it is rendered in fiction. What, in short, makes it different from fiction which would be written at home about home? In attempting to formulate a general theory of the American expatriate novel, I have found it necessary to consider rationale offered by writers of novels and characters in novels for their voluntary expatriation. Beyond this level of analysis, of course, are the various explanations (psychological, aesthetic, political) which disclose other, less obvious, dynamics which may lie behind the phenomenon. These matters are important to understand not only because they account for the phenomenon, but also because, as we shall see, they become embedded in the thematics and the narrative structures of the stories told. So, I am all at once concerned with those motives behind expatriation and the products or results of that experience--the fictions themselves.

As would be expected, the configurations vary depending on writers' and characters' personal circumstances, as well as those of their native land. Sometimes reasons of expatriation are more or less contiguous with explanations for it; other times the two diverge. These relations might be clearer by tracing a few cases. In the first novel of this study, Edith Wharton's The Reef, one of the central characters, George Darrow, is an American diplomat stationed in London. His diplomatic position, ostensibly, is his reason for being abroad. His job takes him there. An explanation of Darrow's expatriation, beyond the scope of the novel and presumably beyond Darrow's own conscious mental figurings, would consider the nature of America's need for representation in the English capital. That is, especially at this point in history, just

before WWI, the United States had ample cause to promote its economic and political interests through its diplomatic missions abroad. Within the narrative, as we shall see, though the nature of Darrow's occupation never takes on a substantive form, it provides convenient excuses for his sometimes sudden, unpredictable movements which are coincidental to plot.

Anna Leath, one of the central female protagonists in the novel, is in France because her mother-in-law had married a Frenchman and the couple had moved there presumably to protect the property (The Chateau) and to enjoy the French mode of living. But Anna's initial attraction to her husband can be attributed to her struggle to reconcile her imaginative ideals with her real life in New York. Her struggle to reconcile the two, her desire to be free from social constraints, becomes one of the main themes in the novel. While the basic reasons for her expatriation are clear, the underlying psychological explanation displays a fundamental conflict, that between the Real and the Romantic, which is rooted in the American experience.

Reasons and explanations, it seems, are more contiguous in the case of James Baldwin, or the narrator of his novel Giovanni's Room. Both Baldwin and his representative in the novel admit that they left home in order to escape the moral and psychological domination of their fathers. This fusion of psychological, sexual, moral and aesthetic rationale serves not only as explanation, but it is the basis for the fundamental issues and conflicts in the novel, if not for the actual form of the work.

The dynamics are somewhat different in James Fenimore Cooper's

case, to take one final, brief example. Cooper went overseas to keep closer tabs on European publications of his works, to provide his daughters with an education in European manners and languages, and presumably to make an extended Grand Tour himself. To explain Cooper's move, however, one would have to note the place Cooper's political and social ideas had, perhaps not altogether consciously, on his itinerary.

Before analyzing these reasons and explanations, and the fictional forms which have developed to hold these impressions, let us situate the expatriate tradition a little more securely within the American grain. A starting point is simply a recognition that this vein of literature is rich and has run fairly consistently through our nation's history. A significant number of our finest writers have felt a gnawing desire to leave their homeland, impelled not by governmental dictates but by internal, personal ones. In fact, it could be argued that no other national literature has an expatriate literary tradition so pronounced and so consistently exercised. It may even be somewhat redundant to speak of the "American" expatriate novel, for it seems as though the form is almost a peculiarly American one, used primarily by American writers. This literary impulse, I would suggest, is deep-seated, and constitutes the tradition.

Or, perhaps the tradition constitutes it. Flight and escape from social order have, from the beginnings, been dominant themes in the patterns of American life and literature. The early American Puritans--those crossing the Atlantic with John Winthrop on the Arabella and those following--may in fact have been the first American expatriates. "These Puritans," Perry Miller tells us, "were not

driven out of England, they sought a place where they would not be restricted by social mores and traditional political institutions." Miller goes on to say that they hoped that they would return to England, once their experiment had been tried and succeeded. "This was the large unspoken assumption in the errand of 1630: if the conscious intention were realized, not only would a federated Jehovah bless the new land, but He would bring back these temporary colonials to govern England."² Latter-day Puritan expatriates, in their quest to establish a new Heaven on Earth, have continued the flight away from all social order or homeland which has not resembled the vision in the mind. The visions various individuals have held dear may have differed; the impulse itself has not.

American writers who have sought reprieve from the solidifying forms of American society have had a number of options available to them. They could go West, as many did. They could stay put, as did the Transcendentalists, Emily Dickinson, and William Carlos Williams, and work on homespun brands of metaphysics, hermetic poetry or an American literary idiom. Hawthorne's fanciful recreations of the not-so-distant American past also can be thought of as yet another variation on this theme. So, too, can expatriation. In all these options--whether it be Daniel Boone's legendary habit of moving farther into the wilderness every time he was able to see the smoke from his neighbor's chimney, Emerson's metaphysical projects which enabled the mind to remove itself from immediate concerns and at the same time to participate in them, Hawthorne's study of the Puritan origins of the American self or James's decision to leave his homeland for what he perceived to be the richer aesthetic possi-

bilities in Europe--there is a conscious attempt to distance oneself from the common web of society. Of these versions of distancing, certainly none is so literal or dramatic as the last--the move wholly away from American soil.

Because, as Annette Baxter notes in the beginning of her study of Henry Miller, the expatriate as a type has been "persistent and familiar throughout our cultural history," the history of the expatriate novel, insofar as it runs parallel to and corresponds with literary developments in America, is an important chapter in American literary history.³ The continuum of expatriate writing, from Cooper, Hawthorne, James and Hemingway to Bowles, Theroux and Baldwin, takes us through very distinct periods in the development of American literature. And as they write from abroad, authors inscribe, in a unique way, the history of America's relations with the world. During Cooper and Irving's time, America was preoccupied, literarily and politically, with fashioning its own identity against that of Europe; works such as The Sketch-Book and Home as Found testify to this fact. During Hawthorne's time American literature may have come of age, yet there was still the power of Europe to contend with. While James was abroad America witnessed one of its greatest periods of growth, and James's own stature as a writer grew alongside that of his nation. When Hemingway and his crowd found themselves in Paris after the War, they were unwitting representatives of a major power. Now, in our own time, only the densest American can travel or live abroad without being constantly reminded that he is a citizen of the most prosperous and influential nation of the world. America is the world and the world--for better

or worse--is America, a condition contemporary expatriates such as Bowles and Theroux inscribe in their fictions. "The expatriate as a type," R.P. Blackmur writes in his essay on the American expatriate, "--whether he came back or not--almost uniquely served a major social function; almost alone as a class he made it possible for America to see the disorder and the confusion and the rich possibilities of the world of which America was a continuing and emergent part."⁴

The question, "Why do these people go abroad?" is pertinent to ask both of writers and characters in their novels. Though reasons vary from writer to writer, and from character to character, and though some are more compelling at various historical moments than others, we can nonetheless begin to schematize some of the most important factors--social, artistic and personal--which have weighed heavily enough in their minds for them to have finally decided to sojourn abroad. Some of these reasons have remained rather consistent; others have shifted during the course of history. They may be as simple and naive as Isabel Archer's: Whim; the wish to escape the banal everyday life of Albany, N.Y.; the romantic dream that a more complete fulfillment of her wishes lies across the seas. That desire seems to have been one of the impulses behind Nelson Dyar's flight, as well. Ishbel Ross begins her study of expatriation by saying, "The age-old impulse to know the peoples of other lands, to see the world and study the arts and sciences abroad, to seek freedom, or to escape from trouble and responsibility at home, springs to life with each succeeding generation."⁵ The motivations D. H. Lawrence, in "The Spirit of Place," the first chapter of that touch-

stone, Studies in Classic American Literature, ascribes to the early Pilgrims' decision to come to America might well be considered a motive for most expatriates. Their desire, Lawrence argues, was simply to escape--not, as usually assumed, to escape religious persecution. "They came largely to get away--that most simple of motives. To get away. Away from what? In the long run, away from themselves. Away from everything. That's why most people have come to America, and still do come. To get away from everything they are and have been."⁶

The wish to have different experiences has been seen by many American authors as being associated with their professional aims as writers, insofar as the experience would supply fresh material for him; give him time and space away from the forces which had shaped him, where, less distracted by popular trends, he could develop a personal aesthetics; or, allow him to support himself more cheaply while he was writing. Kay Boyle seems to speak for many other expatriate writers when she indicates that even before she left America, she saw her future life abroad as a kind of breaking of the flood-gate, which would result in a surge of writing. Sandra Spanier, in describing Boyle's Atlantic crossing aboard the SS Suffren in May of 1923 when she was heading off to France to visit her husband Richard Brault's family in Brittany (a trip which began 18 years of expatriation), says that "away from the distraction of other people, she intended to do a great deal of writing."⁷

Most often the writer, in moving abroad, is seeking (consciously or unconsciously) a degree of personal liberation--both in his attitudes towards writing and in his lifestyle. There have been a

good many writers--Stein, James, Miller, Baldwin, and Paul Bowles would be among them--whose writing never really took off until they left home. For a great many others, the experience abroad was an important catalyst for their work. The pen, somehow, was prone to move more freely when the writer enjoyed a foreign residence. This kind of liberation of spirit led, oftentimes, to a liberation of style as well. One feels not only in the work of Stein or Boyle, but that of Pound, James, Hemingway, Bowles and so many others, that a choice for Europe--or elsewhere--was associated with a desire to develop a unique literary style, perhaps along the lines of more "continental" literary values, or in a distinctly modernist vein. It must have been something along these lines which the narrator of The Aspern Papers felt in Jeffrey Aspern's works.

While some of our illustrious expatriates, such as Dame Edith, have when going abroad been quite amply bankrolled, others have traveled and lived abroad in order to take advantage of a cheaper place to live--to economize as much as possible while they are, income-less, writing. Or, they have left because they found something highly distasteful, repugnant in the American economic system itself. Kay Boyle explained her movements from Austria to England to France in a letter to her biographer: "Our peregrinations should be recognized as a continuous search for the most economical (or advantageous) countries to settle in at various periods."⁸ Both Malcolm Cowley and Ernest Earnest take note of the international economy following World War I, which produced highly favorable terms for the American. "Because of the devaluation of European currencies," Earnest writes, "American dollars often brought a fantastic

rate of exchange. At one time five hundred copies of transition could be printed in Vienna for \$25. . . In Berlin typesetting and printing for three thousand copies cost only \$150."⁹ Paul Bowles, when reflecting on his reasons for settling in Tangier after WWII, notes that life was cheaper there. He was able to buy a house in the Medina for five hundred dollars.¹⁰ When one wanted to write, and was not getting much from one's books, cost of living was certainly a consideration. Both Henry Miller and Ernest Hemingway have said that they felt it was less demeaning to be poor in Europe than in America, where all value tended to be determined in monetary terms. In A Moveable Feast, Hemingway writes: "To have come on all this new world of writing," Hemingway writes, "with time to read in a city like Paris where there was a way of living well and working, no matter how poor you were, was like having a great treasure given to you."¹¹

Either for writers or for characters the economic argument can take various forms. Like Strether (or Darrow in The Reef), a character might be sent on a mission, by some private party or some government, whose successful issue is expected to be a triumphant return to collect one's winnings. Nathaniel Hawthorne, too, as he takes on his diplomatic post in Liverpool, is sponsored and bankrolled by another party, to which he remains accountable. And like the ambassador, charged with representing his home to the foreign capital and the views of the foreign capital to home, the writer is caught between opposing forces. Among the reasons for expatriation is an economic reason of different nature. "His three chief reasons for the six-year stay abroad were," we are told by

Ernest Earnest, "his health, the education of his daughters, and the advantage of dealing directly with his publishers" (71). In a time when there was no adequate protection for authors under international copyright agreements, works by Americans were often snatched and published in the larger European marketplace, with no compensation given to the authors. Cooper and Irving both expatriated themselves partly in hopes of assuring for themselves a share of the profits gained from their writing.

Writing differently somewhere else implies living differently somewhere else. Some writers have left the country precisely in order to try to create elsewhere a life closer to their ideals, a life which might be difficult to create in their own country. A freer, or at least different, style of life has often been a companion of, if not a prerequisite for, this literary throwing off of the reins. For some such as Stein, Pound, Wharton, Miller, Bowles and Baldwin, this meant an escape from the American community and its puritan values. What this ultimately means, generally, is a search for a place where there is more tolerance for different attitudes toward use of drugs and alcohol, and toward various kinds of relationships.

It is worth noting that one of the greatest periods of literary expatriation coincides with prohibition, and in expatriate novels such as Tender is the Night and The Sun Also Rises incredible quantities of alcohol are consumed. (But, of course, this is also true of novels such as Sanctuary, written at home.) In Being Geniuses Together Robert McAlmon recalls being "poured off" a train in Venice, without having any recollection of it later, and finding

his way to a party where he competed in handsprings competitions and found himself, later that night, mysteriously checked into a hotel room. "Those were the days of passion, love and intoxication."¹²

Malcolm Cowley described Europe, in an ironic verbal prudishness, as being a place where "there was no false shame about the function of the body."¹³ In recalling the kind of hedonism indulged in by American expatriates of his generation, Cowley tells of Caresse Crosby--an image that had remained with him, of her, nude to the waist, carried across a sea of entwined corpses on the shoulder of ten handsome young men, at the annual Quatre Arts ball. Ernest Earnest suggests that "American expatriates before the 1920's were still committed to puritan views on sexual morality and the idea that life is a serious business. The hedonism of the expatriates of the twenties is part of the larger context of the era following World War I" (268). Of course, there was, even before the war, Ezra Pound who reputedly was fired from an instructorship at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana for allowing a burlesque dancer to spend a night in his room. Not long after the incident, he left for Europe. There may have been a connection.

This profound sense of liberation from puritan values is represented in comments James Baldwin once made in an interview:

Something struck me in Paris. I didn't realize what a Puritan I was--until I got to Paris. I know now I am a Puritan. But then I didn't. It was--it was really kind of--humiliating to discover it. Because I never thought of myself that way at all. Until I found myself dealing with people .

. . whose morality was entirely different from my father's,
which was the morality which I carried around with me,
really.¹⁴

The expression of release from the straitjacket of puritan morality is frequently seen in the works (and lives) of 20th Century American expatriates--from Gertrude Stein's Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, through Miller's Tropic of Cancer and World of Sex, (where he compares French and American whores), to Burrough's Naked Lunch, Baldwin's Giovanni's Room and Jane Bowles's Two Serious Ladies, in which Mrs. Copperfield seems finally to find her sexual ideal away from home, in Latin America, in the figure of Pacifica. The charge one of the characters in Baldwin's Giovanni's Room, which will be examined at length later, is that these Americans come over here to do what their parents wouldn't let them do back home.

Robert McAlmon reputedly said "I prefer Europe, if you mean France, to America because there is less interference with private life there."¹⁵ McAlmon's remarks echo ones made by Stein who also appreciated the sense of respect the French gave to a person's private life. What America seems unable to do, many expatriates have felt, is distinguish between public and private life. It is inconceivable, to the general American public, for example that a public leader could have a mistress--or, heaven forbid, occasionally take a drink or have smoked pot--and yet be a forceful, capable leader. If Gary Hart had been a Greek or French politician, no doubt his popularity would have soared, rather than plummeted, upon the revelation that he had been involved in some kind of monkey business.

Motivations for flight are not always simple. One or another or several motives might cluster in various combinations and proportions in various expatriates. And determinations might even be made upon a weighing of subtle issues such as climate and . . . desire. Not to be underestimated in this formulation of motives is the simple desire for romance, change and adventure, that is the essential impulse behind any travel. Whatever reasons might be given, the motivations themselves often carry with them an implicit critique of the country they were leaving. They furthermore signal a desire to reform or refashion the essential nature of their own beings.

It would seem that there is something about the American scene, or something about the American (or human) psyche which has created a condition of life in which expatriation has often been seen as an attractive option to living at home. One could sketch a list of cultural and psychological explanations, accounting for the phenomenon in a general way, which would complement those more personal motives we have just reviewed. To begin with, expatriation can be thought of as one extension of a dominant vein of Western metaphysics, stretching from Plato, through Kant and Hegel, to the present, which stresses the value of distance in the human project of gaining understanding and attaining genuine knowledge. The assumption is that we are better able to see and understand things, so the position is taken, once we are able to stand aside or above them. Proust, toward the end of his epic novel, describes how he views the dialectic between involvement with subject and separation

from it, in a way which could as well apply to many expatriates.

Was it not, surely, in order to concern myself with them that I was going to live apart from these people who would complain that they did not see me, to concern myself with them in a more fundamental fashion than would have been possible in their presence, to seek to reveal them to themselves, to realise their potentialities?¹⁶

Similarly, Gertrude Stein, in Paris France, describes the writer's need to have two countries, one a native land, the other a place of romance.

After all everybody, that is, everybody who writes is interested in living inside themselves in order to tell what is inside themselves. That is why writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really. The second one is romantic, it is separate from themselves, it is not real but it is really there.¹⁷

"In general," she continued, "that other country that you need to be free in is the other country not the country where you really belong."
(p. 3)

The nature of the artistic vocation as it has existed in this country further explains some of the cultural dynamics surrounding expatriation. What R.P. Blackmur suggests in his essay on expatriation is that expatriation has been, at least for Americans, a symptom of modern artists' difficulties in reconciling their artistic visions with cultural, economic and political realities

they live in. "The cult of expatriation," he writes, "may be said to represent the worst difficulty the artist has in his relation to society." Perhaps this struggle between artist and society has its origins in Puritan scorn of images and representation. It may also have something to do with the nature of the American experiment which, especially in its early phases, had a great deal to devote its energies to besides art. Early American writers especially, but not exclusively, expressed problems writing in a national tradition which had little literary tradition upon which to build. In the opening of The Sketch-Book, Irving talks about the natural beauty of his homeland: "no, never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery." But, then he goes on to admit how seductive the European milieu was for the writer, nonetheless:

But Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly-cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement--to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity--to loiter about the ruined castle--to meditate on the falling tower--to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the

past.¹⁸

Irving, under the influence of Scott and Byron, set sail for Bordeaux in 1804, after which he spent nearly twenty-four years abroad.

Hilda and Kenyon, the American artists in The Marble Faun, similarly go to Europe because they feel theirs is a work which needs the infusion of a richer heritage in order to flourish properly. Where back home would they have opportunity to see the work of Titian, Raphael, or Michelangelo, the classic works of art upon which they would hope to build their own style?

Even after the Civil War, expatriation was an alluring option for the American writer. Well-known is James's remark in his book on Hawthorne, which is addressed to the condition of the artist in America:

The 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 motion. American civilization has hitherto had other things to do than produce flowers, and before giving birth to writers it has wisely occupied itself with providing something for them to write about.¹⁹

Cooper and Hawthorne, before James, had complained of the same difficulty. Writing American literature in and about America still seems, at times, to be problematic for American writers. In search of a subject they often find either that they lack a meaningful perspective on life in their own country, or they simply are overwhelmed by the realism or banal aspects of life, which they find it

difficult to represent aesthetically. Gertrude Stein was another who was never shy about registering her view that the country they were leaving did not place sufficient value on the arts to sustain them, economically or psychologically. The dominant philistine tastes acted, for some, as a kind of psychological bridle. In Paris France Gertrude Stein suggests that this desire for greater aesthetic freedom, and a society which appreciated the arts, was one of the reasons many Americans (presumably even herself) migrated to Paris:

Of course they all came to France a great many to paint pictures and naturally they could not do that at home, or write they could not do that at home either, they could be dentists at home she knew all about that even before the war, Americans were a practical people and dentistry was practical. (19)

She goes on to describe the French view of art and the artist, which compares favorably to the pervasive American attitude at that time. "What they do," Stein writes, "is to respect art and letters, if you are a writer you have privileges, if you are a painter you have privileges and it is pleasant having those privileges" (21).

John Updike recently has given expression to some of the same sentiments felt by previous generations of writers:

The American writer, surprising to say, is rather typically baffled and disgusted by what would seem his prime subject, the daily life of his society; instead he flees to the woods,

to abroad, to the psychiatrist's couch, to opium under one name or another, and seeks to shock, dazzle, taunt, or save his audience--anything, almost, but engage it in conversation.²⁰

Of course, once having noted this tendency, we must recognize the very rich tradition of American literature which is truly in the American grain--the poems of Whitman, Frost, Williams and Olson; the novels of Hawthorne, Howells, Dreiser, Faulkner, and so many, many others.

The split in the American tradition which is created by expatriation symbolizes a deeper division between forces within American culture. As Philip Rahv writes, "Europe becomes one of the poles of American culture, the other pole being that most indigenous of indigenous places--the frontier."²¹ Rahv, I think, is right in suggesting how the European myth is simply part of an internal American dynamic; his notion that the frontier stands against Europe is a bit too simplistic. Rahv calls to mind a book by Ferner Nuhn, entitled The Wind Blew from the East, which takes to task traitorous Americans such as Henry Adams, Henry James, and T.S. Eliot. According to Nuhn, Rahv tells us, there is a "two-way pull" between East and West. "On the one hand there is . . . the message of money, ease and grace, piety, status; and on the other hand there is the West, standing for work, profanity, action, and democratic color." (Rahv ix.) This division bears some resemblance to the mental bifurcation George Santayana takes note of and analyzes in "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy." America, he writes, "is a country with two mentalities, one a survival of the beliefs and standards of the fathers, the other an expression of the instincts, practice and

discoveries of the younger generations."²² Emerson, he suggests, pulled away from the genteel tradition, but had nothing to put in its place "except intelligence itself." (50) Whitman left the genteel tradition entirely behind. Santayana's attention in the essay moves finally to the James brothers who "were as tightly swaddled in the genteel tradition as any infant geniuses could be," yet "burst those bands almost entirely." "The ways in which the two brothers freed themselves," Santayana writes, "however, are interestingly different." While William combined essentially European philosophical sympathies with a kind of Emersonian spontaneity or vitalism, Henry "has done it by adopting the point of view of the outer world, and by turning the genteel American tradition, as he turns everything else, into a subject-matter for analysis" (54). Henry James's expatriate stance, then, in Santayana's view, represents a means of bridging the split, rather than widening it.

The distinctions Santayana makes between the genteel tradition and an iconoclastic temperament and, for that matter, those Nuhn makes between the pulls of the east and the pulls of the west characterize a political debate which has very often gone on in the minds of American expatriates. Some Americans have left the country in order to take refuge in an older, more feudal or aristocratic order (which is part of the reason they were sometimes considered deserters or traitors by their countrymen back home). Cooper, as we shall see in the final chapter on Home as Found was, during his foreign residence, wrestling with a whole mass of questions involving democracy and the aristocratic tradition. Henry Adams was greatly attracted not only to the great French cathedrals of Mont-

St. Michel and Chartres but to the highly ordered and stratified culture which produced them. For similar reasons Eliot was drawn to the English High Church, Royalist tradition. And Ezra Pound, whose political philosophies are exceedingly difficult to sort out, spoke just at the beginning of the First World War of "the mob's hatred of all art that aspires above mediocrity."²³ Pound's discomfort with democracy, rather like that shown in crucial chapters of Hawthorne's House of Seven Gables, was based on a deep-seated doubt about democracy's ability to serve as a basis for the development of a high degree of intelligence and taste. But it was more than that. There was something pernicious, in his view, in the very governmental structure of a capitalist/democratic system (for the two seemed inevitably to be joined to one another.) The following "Paris Letter," in Dial, appearing in 1923, is just one of many diatribes Pound launched against the system.

One merely becomes inarticulate at the sight of America naively blundering and blubbing into the evils of paternalism, red tape, paper-forms, regulations, short-time passports, et cetera, that Europe has already discovered to be a foulness. The interference of government, the excess of government!"²⁴

Poverty and light are what Miller says attracted him to Europe. Central to the critique he offers from abroad are the views he holds on the effects the American materialistic mentality has had on the human spirit. Though he may not be as ruthless as Ezra Pound is in denouncing the usurers of American capitalism, he does, like Henry James in The American Scene, offer an aggressive attack on the ill-

effects produced by a society whose values are so inextricably tied to materialism. When primary value in a culture is placed on making money or accumulating goods, the human spirit has little hope of being civilized and enlightened, Miller preaches. In Remember to Remember Miller writes, upon considering the return of Europeans from America to Europe after WWII, "Dollars do not inspire artists, nor do they sustain them. It takes something more, something infinitely better, something which quite obviously we are not able to offer. What that something is you feel every minute of the day in Europe. If it is an intangible something, it is nevertheless very real. You partake of it with the bread you swallow, with the coffee you drink on the sidewalk. It is not only in the air, it is in the very stones, in the soil itself. And it is not vitamins!"²⁵ The pernicious evils of capitalism, Miller noted, also affected the American publishing scene, hence the nature of American literary production. "Is there anything more dull, monotonous, and destructive to the appetite than the typical American hard-cover book whose paper jacket screams and shrieks to capture attention?"²⁶

In general, Europe held out for Miller a wider range of emotional experience. In the comparison between America and abroad (Europe, in this case) he was prone to decide in favor of Europe (though he did return to make his home in Big Sur). In The Tropic of Cancer, after praising Paris and proclaiming "the deep wish that is in me never to leave this land," he compares the French capital to his native New York:

When I think of New York I have a very different feeling.

New York makes even a rich man feel his unimportance. New York is cold, glittering, malign. The buildings dominate. There is a sort of atomic frenzy to the activity going on; the more furious the pace, the more diminished the spirit. A constant ferment, but it might just as well be going on in a test tube. Nobody knows what it's all about. Nobody directs the energy. Stupendous. Bizarre. Baffling. A tremendous reactive urge, but absolutely uncoordinated.

When I think of this city where I was born and raised, this Manhattan that Whitman sang of, a blind, white rage licks my guts. New York! The white prisons, the sidewalks swarming with maggots, the breadlines, the opium joints that are built like palaces, the kikes that are there, the lepers, the thugs, and above all, the ennui, the monotony of faces, streets, legs, houses, skyscrapers, meals, posters, jobs, crimies, loves. . . . A whole city erected over a hollow pit of nothingness. Meaningless. Absolutely meaningless.²⁷

From his vantage in Greece and Crete just after World War Two began, Miller reflects on the course of Western Civilization and on the meaning of being an American at that point in history. The Hellenic spirit, for Miller, represents all that civilization has achieved, and all the hope which still could light the future. "The Greek cosmos," writes Miller in The Colossus of Maroussi, "is the most eloquent illustration of the unity of thought and deed. It persists even to-day, though its elements have long since been dispersed. The image of Greece, faded though it be, endures as an archetype of the miracle wrought by the human spirit."²⁸ In Greece and Crete

Miller experienced the joy and light and freedom which he had not found in his native land.

In somewhat the same spirit, Paul Bowles, it seems, has sought exotic lands because they represent an antithesis to the highly developed, mechanistic cultures of the West. "Each time I go to a place I have not seen before, I hope it will be as different as possible from the places I already know," he writes at the opening of his collection of travel essays, Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue.²⁹ The impulse here--away from civilization--seems to be identical to that of many anthropologists. According to Edward Said, the field trips of the modern anthropologists, who go off and live among primitive tribes, "provide us with the most lively means of seeing our loss: as he was for the eighteenth-century writer of philosophical voyages, the primitive is a model for our imaginings of lost plenitude."³⁰

The most powerful explanation, or interpretation, of expatriation is probably the psychological. The desire to leave home--travel or expatriation--might be thought of as a form of "wish fulfillment," the same way Freud spoke of dreams. The dream, for Freud, in its simplest form, was a means by which the dreamer reconciled his desires with a reality which refused to conform to desires. The theme is found consistently throughout Freud's work. The mature adult is able to find some means of bridging the two terms--by modifying dreams so that they become realizable, by acknowledging the vague status of dreams and abandoning them, or by finding some way of realizing the dream, as the artist does, through creative outlets. Neurosis for Freud, is the product of a person

whose efforts to reconcile the two have failed. We read in his Five Lectures on Psycho-analysis:

We see that human beings fall ill when, as a result of external obstacles or of an internal lack of adaptation, the satisfaction of their erotic needs in reality is frustrated. We see that they then take flight into illness in order that by its help they may find a satisfaction to take the place of what has been frustrated.³¹

The connection between Freudian theories on dream, illness and reality and my own subject should be clear. In the above passage, substitute "another country" for "illness" and the statement would become an almost perfect formulation of the key set of operations leading to expatriation among most characters, or writers, dealt with in this study. That is, one means of dealing with the difference between existing values, constraints, traditions, family dramas, is to leave them behind--as much as one can--and take refuge, literally, in another place which, at least theoretically, would avail itself of the desires inherent in the dream. As Northrop Frye puts it, "translated into dream terms, the quest-romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will contain that reality."³²

Freud supplies us with another model, his theory of family romance, whose usefulness in understanding the psychological forces behind expatriation become apparent once the relation is made. In a short essay which appeared with Otto Rank's Birth of the Hero in

1907, and then again in Moses and Monotheism, Freud describes his theory of the family romance. In a nutshell: The young child thinks of his own parents as gods or royalty who are all-powerful and can fulfill his every wish. Disappointment sets in when he learns, gradually and as he comes to know other children's parents, that his own are not what he had imagined them to be--gods capable of meeting his every wish. So, off he goes in search of surrogate parents who more suitably match the regal ideals in his mind. The desire to lift one's self above the class of one's birth is another element in the matrix.

If we examine in detail the commonest of these imaginative romances, the replacement of both parents or of the father alone by grander people, we find that these new and aristocratic parents are equipped with attributes that are derived entirely from real recollections of the actual and humble ones; so that in fact the child is not getting rid of his father but exalting him. Indeed the whole effort at replacing the real father by a superior one is only an expression of the child's longing for the happy, vanished days when his father seemed to him the noblest and strongest of men and his mother the dearest and loveliest of women.³³

The etymological roots of the word expatriate suggest a flight from father as well as from country. The father does not offer enough. He has other plans for his son than those his son has for himself.

This formulation resembles the thesis of Eric Sundquist's book Home As Found which discusses the question of authority for American

writers of the first half of the 19th century. In his treatment of Cooper, Thoreau, Hawthorne and Melville, Sundquist shows how the American propensity to rebel against authority and set out a "new world" is paradoxically accompanied by invocations of the "old world." "What is at issue is the authority generated by dependence upon, or independence of, a geneology; and it is precisely in the very personal terms of such a question that authorship may find its own power," Sundquist writes.³⁴ He likens the process of acquiring authority to "the notion of the sacramental totem meal adumbrated by Freud":

As a covenant with the father, says Freud, the totem meal must thus balance "expressions of remorse and attempts at atonement" against "a remembrance of the triumph over the father," and consequently entertain the risk that "the dead father [will become] stronger than the living one had been," even to the extent that he is finally transfigured into a god from whom the community can claim descent. (xii-iii)

Sundquist's analysis is largely of American writing in America: the establishment of a tradition which knew, self-consciously, that it was writing against nature and that it too would be, like Thoreau's arrowhead, buried, retrieved and appropriated by future generations. Many of Sundquist's insights, with modifications and elaborations, can also apply to American expatriate writing. The totemic meal, symbolically, serves much the same purpose and has much the same result as the search for surrogate parents in Freud's "family romance" scheme. The move abroad is often an attempt to break from

the geneology of the father. In this formulation the father, which conventionally had been Europe, becomes associated with "home," or America, and Europe becomes the surrogate, idealized parent. Yet, as in the totem meal, the presence of the father (taking the father to mean one's collective past) looms just as largely in the face of the attempt to be rid of it: "We find that these new and aristocratic parents are equipped with attributes that are derived entirely from real recollections of the actual and humble ones." Just as the expatriate leaves his country behind, he, by so doing, insures that the country will permanently reside in his memory. He seeks, with one fell swoop, to be recognized, to overcome, to overthrow, to incorporate, to rely upon, to co-opt, to reject.

In America there has been a long-standing, unresolved debate regarding the value of expatriation for the writer or for that matter for any American. Very often the expatriate is seen as shirking responsibility. And why, it is sometimes asked, would anyone ever want to live anywhere other than America? Thomas Jefferson was one of the earliest critics of expatriation. In warning the American youth about going abroad, he suggested that the expatriate "loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness."³⁵ Well-known are some of the statements later made by Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman regarding the making of an indigenous and truly American literature. "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe," pronounced Emerson in "The American Scholar," and in "Self-Reliance" he claims that "the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness

affecting the whole intellectual action."³⁶ He again voices a common concern when he writes that "Men run away to other countries because they are not good in their own, and run back to their own because they pass for nothing in the new places." Just as damning was Thoreau who wrote, "As for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649."³⁷ In Democratic Vistas Whitman writes: "European adventures? the most antique? Asiatic or African? old history--miracles--romances? Rather, our own unquestion'd facts. They hasten, incredible, blazing bright as fire."³⁸ These proclamations have sprung from nationalistic feelings of people who maintained that, particularly in the country's early stages, work needed to be done at home in the interest of creating an organically derived American literature, based on on American soil, dealing with distinctive American issues.

The debate took another form as Henry James's career was scrutinized by American critics. Well-known is Van Wyck Brooks's thesis in The Pilgrimage of Henry James (1925), which F.O. Matthiessen represents succinctly: "James was a writer of vivid and original talent who made the fatal mistake of becoming an expatriate, who thus cut himself off from the primary sources of his material, and whose works thereby lost freshness and declined until they became at last hardly more than the frustrated gestures of 'an habitually embarrassed man.'"³⁹ And, in his mammoth Main Currents in American Thought Vernon L. Parrington devotes two pages to "Henry James and the Nostalgia of Culture," in which his lack of aesthetic sensitivity (or even breadth of social awareness) surface in the exclamation, "How unlike he is to Sherwood Anderson, an authentic product of the

American consciousness!" Parrington, perhaps in a playful parody of James's own remarks on Hawthorne, writes, "It is not well for the artist to turn cosmopolitan, for the flavor of the fruit comes from the soil and the sunshine of its native fields."⁴⁰ Behind Brooks's and Parrington's attitudes is masked an essentially ideological conflict, representing more than the sting of rejection (and a modicum of envy, perhaps) implicit in the writer's move abroad. Those writers who have gone abroad, from the time of Cooper and Irving, or even Benjamin Franklin, have been seen almost as traitors to the American ideal.

The expatriate writers of the twenties were subject to essentially the same attacks. To many who stayed at home then, and even to some critics today, Fitzgerald and Hemingway and the many others who left America after WWI were seen as indulgent, adolescent escapists. They were fleeing America at a time when many, like William Carlos Williams, were redoubling efforts to develop a national idiom, in the spirit of Whitman and Emerson. Williams in his travels to visit American luminaries in Europe tried hard not to see anything in the thing, and his Voyage to Pagan is a parody of the whole craze. Some, too, particularly those on the left, were troubled by the more conservative political stance (or apolitical stance) implied by the move abroad. To begin with, it takes money to travel, and travel and being abroad has always, for the American as well as for other nationalities, been accompanied by a prestige or status quantity. More than that, these middle-class youngsters were seen as running away from important social issues at home. Dos Passos, not at all an impartial source on the matter, reviewing The

Sun Also Rises in New Masses wrote:

This novel strikes me as being a cock and bull story about a lot of summer tourists getting drunk and making foos of themselves at a picturesque Iberian folk-festival--write now to Thomas Cook for special rate and full descriptive leaflet.⁴¹

These few remarks, despite a general mistaken assumption and the spiteful tone, contain a kernel of truth. The novel certainly IS a cock and bull story, and there IS a lot of wine consumed within the pages of the novel. Furthermore, as I shall explore more in the chapter on the novel, the structure does take much from the travelogue. What Dos Passos fails to acknowledge is the same quality which a great many left-leaning critics devalue. That is, the work's aesthetic merit. What some seem to have wanted was a strictly proletarian literature written by workers, connected with the very real problems of being factory workers. The attack, again launched in New Masses, this time by Michael Gold, was that the expatriate novels of Fitzgerald and Hemingway had nothing "real" to say to America and that they were, moreover, artifacts of the inimical class structure of the status quo. Gold writes:

Just as European tours, nightclubs, Florida beaches and streamline cars have been invented for this class, just so literature is being produced for them. They have begun to have time, and now read books occasionally to fill in the idle moments between cocktail parties.

They need novels that will take the place of the old-

fashioned etiquette books to teach them how to spend their money smartly.⁴²

What these leftist critics fail to notice is that Hemingway and Fitzgerald may not have been so far from them as they imagined. Certainly, Fitzgerald's Gatsby is by no means an unconditional affirmation of the American dream it portrays; its excellence rather is in the display of its seductive dynamics. Very often, the expatriate has been driven from his homeland because he wants no more banks, factories, or suburbs.

This is just one side of the debate. The other side will be spread through the following pages. While it might seem that the expatriate writer turns his back on his country, he often does so in order to find his country. He does so still searching for an answer to the mystifying question St. John de Crevecoeur raised in his Letters from an American Farmer: "What then is this American, this new man?"⁴³ If the expatriation of writers has given us nothing else, it has enriched our literary tradition. The novels produced by the expatriate experience suggest unique ways of viewing and clarifying American experience. I would want to argue that the sharp disjuncture with their homeland often seems to sharpen their critical faculties. As the Dane Jacob Paludan--granted a somewhat less known source than Jefferson or Emerson--has noted: "I have always had confidence in people who break with their own country and do their life's work abroad. It is often the most talented sons who are disowned by their parents and from whom a country receives its most substantial criticism."⁴⁴ As he gazes homeward, the writer is

able to contemplate the deficiencies and strengths of his homeland. Native traits are highlighted as they directly encounter another culture. A dialectical disposition is generated.

Those writers I am dealing with, while still believing in the American myth, have felt so strongly the deficiencies of American society that they carried their idealized visions of "America" elsewhere in their search for a place where personal and social values would coincide. Though these idealized visions are not identical for all, there are some recurrent elements of that vision--human justice, freedom for self-expression, relief from the burdens of sin and history, and economic opportunity--dreams which are a part of the American monomyth. Not all, of course, found what they were looking for.

The results of this sort of transplantation are mixed, as we shall see. In Cooper's Home as Found, the Effinghams return to Templeton, compare their former home to their experiences in Europe, and find American manners vulgar, American style imitative, and American politics susceptible to popular whims. While Redburn's Liverpool offers little to capture the imagination of the young American sailor, Melville's South Sea novels provide a prelapsarian exotic setting where the author can effectively mock the economic and moral travesties of Western Christian culture. Hawthorne finds that his flights in time and space not only afford that desired blend of the "real" and the "romantic"; that act of separation also yields a privileged understanding of the American psyche, the workings of guilt, the nature of sin and innocence. Yet, despite this, his American protagonists in The Marble Faun are, in the end,

ready to give up moss-covered marble fountains and return to white steeples and village greens. James claims aesthetic discoveries which he thought would be difficult, if not impossible to achieve, had he remained in New England. For James, as perhaps for Lambert Strether in The Ambassadors, Europe offers more freedom, more chance for self-expression, than does America. France provided Gertrude Stein with a different cultural and linguistic environment which she credited for many of her fresh experiments with language. Later, in the same setting, Miller is able to reflect on the nature of materialism in America and how it affects the quality of our spiritual lives, while for Baldwin, Europe is a novel setting to think about what it means to be Black, homosexual and American. Bowles seeks a kind of Shangri-la in Morocco, but finds that even in this landscape, far from being an ideal Pacific island, the self must come to terms with the inner void and with the horrifying violence of forces outside it, the threat of barbarism and irrationality. The plague of Ahab cannot be avoided by moving away from home. Far from it. It often comes down on one with a greater vengeance.

The preceding discussion of reasons for and explanations of expatriation is, I believe, essential for an understanding of expatriate literature, because that body of literature which concerns and springs from a life abroad very often inscribes within it many of these issues and conflicts. Furthermore, I know of no other place where these matters are comprehensively discussed. The emphasis in this book, is not so much on the motives for expatriation, or the debate concerning its value, as it is on the nature of the literature the experience produces. In calling something "the American

expatriate novel," I am suggesting that there are features of the writing which are unique, which distinguish it from other kinds of writing, and which constitute it as a kind of genre. I am assuming that boundaries can be drawn, such that works can be determined to be inside or outside the generic demarcations. With somewhat less precision than Vladimir Propp shows in his The Morphology of the Folktale, we can begin to identify some of the more salient aspects we expect to find in the American expatriate novel. The examination of the seven novels I have selected will, of course, show variations on the theme, demonstrating how rich the tradition is. Very simply, the American expatriate novel can be defined as a novel written about Americans' experiences in living abroad, written by an American author who himself has spent substantial time away from his native land. One of its important distinguishing features is foreign setting. Moreover, the expatriate novel can be expected to do a number of things, some which other kinds of novels do not do. They can be expected to show Americans interacting with other Americans and, consequently, they expose or even play up American themes. But certainly the interaction between American and the foreign culture, the essential doubleness noticed by any student of the literature of exile, is of equal, if not greater, importance in these works.

One of the things which the reader will notice as he reads the following chapters is the extent to which setting influences the nature of the novel. It makes a difference whether a novel is set in America or whether it is set abroad. Not only that, but the specific character of the foreign locales make a great difference.

Setting, or place, generally figures quite prominently in the expatriate novel and carries with it considerable meaning. As Leonard Lutwack writes in his book The Role of Place in Literature, "specific geographical sites become associated with certain themes through custom or fashion . . . Africa has been a favorite place for primitivistic adventure . . .; the northern shore of the Mediterranean is the location for romantic entanglements and disentanglements, for 'running away . . . from bad love,' as it is said in John Knowles's Morning in Antibes; Paris, the prime expatriate place; North Africa, Mexico, India, and the lands of dark-skinned natives, the places where despairing Europeans are marooned in their search for pelf or spiritual rebirth."⁴⁵ Lutwack goes on to tell us that places often become figures for larger issues "as they cater to some human desire or craving beyond present reality" (32). Place, inasmuch as it becomes symbolic, carries with it, glacier-like, all those meanings which over time it has drunk in, which have become permanently or loosely frozen in it. Likely characters, whatever their reasons, will be fleeing something at the same time they seek, elsewhere, some fresh positive quality which they might associate with that place. Place, in psychological terms, can be thought to compensate for personal lacks. The choice of a particular locale may reflect a desire to reform or refashion the essential nature of character along certain lines.

To be considered an expatriate novel it is not enough merely for a writer to set his work abroad; he must also populate it with his kinsmen. Novels such as Cooper's The Headsman, The Heidenmauer, and The Bravo, for example, while they are written by an American

and set abroad (in the Rhine Valley, Geneva and Venice, respectively) and while a great many features of the works may be traced to the fact of their author's expatriation, fail to qualify as expatriate fiction simply because there are, in those novels, no American characters.

The presence of American characters in these novels is one thing which makes them distinctly American. One of the central arguments in this book is that in the American expatriate novel we are apt to find a playing out of essentially American dramas. That is, when people go abroad, even if they do not want to, they carry a lot of emotional baggage; even in the new place their minds are often preoccupied with "home" and all the issues associated with the place they left behind. There is, in these novels, generally, an increased self-consciousness of nationality. American characters feel so distinctly their national traits, which previously may have been taken for granted, when they are thrown amongst English, French, Italian or Moroccan. Margaret Fuller writes that "the American in Europe, if a thinking mind, can only become more American."⁴⁶ I take her to mean that not only does the sojourner gain a clearer idea of what an American is, but that in comparing his own salient national traits to those of other countries, he is prone to judge more positively his own and, in fact, find them of great advantage in the process of meeting and discovering another culture. In her brief remark, too, something like a dialectical process is suggested: a process by which one defines one's self more clearly by placing one's self beside another.

Genres are defined, in part by their differences from neigh-

boring genres, with whom they may even share certain characteristics. One of the expatriate novel's closest neighbors, it seems to me, is the travelogue. Paul Fussell, in his book on British travel writing between the wars, sees the travelogue as a version of the traditional quest romance where the traveler "leaves the familiar and wanders episodically, into the unfamiliar or unknown, encountering strange adventures, and finally, after travail and ordeals, returns safely."⁴⁷ In this formulation Fussell relies on Joseph Campbell's tripartite archetypal monomyth of heroic adventure: the setting out, the disjunction from the familiar, and the return. This division, reflecting a displaced version of the romance is, I believe, more easily applied to expatriate literature than is Northrop Frye's four-state division of the quest-romance: the agon (conflict itself), pathos (death), sparagorus (disappearance of hero), and anagnorisis (recognition, or reappearance of the hero). Using Campbell's scheme we are able to identify certain patterns in expatriate fiction, which involve various configurations of the tripartite monomyth. Some works include all three elements and follow the pattern closely. For example, Melville's Redburn begins with Redburn's decision to leave the comforts of home and go to sea, then traces his experiences in England, and leads eventually to his return. Jane Bowles's Two Serious Ladies also begins in the United States, moves to Latin America and returns to its point of departure. A good many expatriate novels, including most of those dealt with in this study, dwell wholly in the region of the unfamiliar. Still others begin on foreign soil and end, sometimes feebly, with a return (Tender is the Night, The American). Finally,

there are a few works, such as Cooper's Home as Found and James's The American Scene, which are set entirely on American soil upon a return from expatriation. The structural elements of narrative, then, are nearly always influenced by the course of the journey.

The nature of this movement itself often is very important in the expatriate novel. Where and when characters travel very often determine important elements in the plot. Or, conversely, the demands of plot may determine the nature of movement within the novel. Shifting the scene--moving from one country to another or from one region of the country to another--is apt to affect the tone of the narrative and even the dramatic action of the plot. Meetings occur (Darrow's and Sophy's meeting at Dover in The Reef), moods change (Strether's day in the countryside in The Ambassadors), and courses are irreversibly altered (Dyar's boat trip to Djebel Musa in Let It Come Down). In an Aristotelian, formalist sense, we can analyse the novel and see what is there and develop, as many of the structuralists have done, terms for describing the operation of plot, particular its temporal movement. That kind of activity, as Peter Brooks notes in Reading for the Plot, only takes one so far. Once the analysis is done, it is done. If, however, we take Brooks's notion of plot as a dynamic, "a structuring operation peculiar to those messages that are developed through temporal succession, the instrumental logic of a specific mode of human understanding," rather than "a fixed structure," then it would suggest that the analysis of plot could yield substantial insights into the text we are reading. We derive meaning, in other words, when we look at the sequencing of actions.⁴⁸ The consideration of plot, and

a meditation of the meanings of particular plots, is especially appropriate, I think, in the instance of the expatriate novel, for the expatriate novel is a literature of movement, and that movement, the form and the direction it takes, can very easily take on symbolic meaning greater than the mere actions might suggest.

I have also been concerned in this study with what happens to narrative when characters from one culture get involved with unfamiliar cultures and landscapes, and, I try to suggest, through these pages, that exile or expatriation is an action which enables or allows a certain kind of telling. The structure of the expatriate experience often is felt in the aesthetic representation of the experience. Expatriation is marked by separation, bifurcation; it is marked, as just indicated, by new setting; it is marked by encounters with the other. In approaching this issue, I tread ground which has recently been explored by Michael Seidel in his fine book, Exile and the Narrative Imagination. And though there is indeed a kind of kinship between my project and Seidel's, he has fortunately not encroached much on my own territory. Seidel's concern, which I share, is how exile transforms or affects narrative. In his preface, taking his cue from Henry James, he recognizes the prime task of the writer in exile as transforming a "figure of rupture" into a "figure of connection."⁴⁹ In that process, Seidel pays particularly close attention to the ways by which writers, in narrative figures, treat the familiar territory of home and the unfamiliar territory of exile. "Exile is a compelling subject and a propelling subject and a propelling action; it names a figure and establishes a narrative ground," he writes. "In the exilic plot the extraneous becomes

foundational. . . . The powers of exilic imagining represent desired territory, lost or found, as narrative fate" (8). "Narrative forges two kinds of scenes, the first a counter or allegorical space where the 'I am' of character projects a being that sustains an inscriptive sovereignty, and the second a mimetic space that limits the absolute otherness of the 'I am' by supposing a recognizable world to which it is answerable" (15). The expatriate writer, likewise, very often projects or creates, within narrative, new kinds of imaginative space.

Another useful notion Seidel supplies is that the encounter with the other side (the new setting) allows for "differentiation," and "cloning and twinning." That is, difference is felt not only as a theme, but it is often embodied in the narrative form which responds to the experience of exile. My own observations also confirm Seidel's contention that the other place translates "local fears and homegrown desires." It will be seen, for example in works such as The Ambassadors (which is the overlapping text in our studies) and The Marble Faun, that a great deal of the tension in the expatriate novel springs from the dual, often conflicting demands associated with representing "home" and, at the same time as representing the adopted residence.

In this study I have been attentive to a number of narrative strategies writers have used to represent the fundamental dichotomy between self and other which expatriation exposes and intensifies. Certainly those differences between self and other can loom very large in any fiction. All I suggest is that essential doubleness almost inevitably surfaces in expatriate literature. Beyond this

very tame and commonsense claim, I would suggest that this salient quality of the expatriate experience has had a noticeable effect on the narrative form of expatriate fiction. That is, the intractable presence of the "other," so clearly distinct from the self because of the gulf between cultures, forcefully presses to be represented, to be felt in the movement of plot, or in the handling of point of view. There is, of course, no single solution to this problem. Indeed, part of what this study will reveal is the number of approaches to point of view--ranging from James's limited omniscience, which seems to heighten a sense of irony, to Hemingway's first persona narrative, to Paul Bowles's over-arching omniscience which allows entrance into natives' movements and consciousnesses--and to the structuring of plot.

Whatever the strategies used by writers for representing experiences in other places, there seems usually to be a heightened ironic sense as a result, which reflects the ironic positions characters find themselves in as they are brought in contact with different cultures whose symbolic systems they do not fully understand. The irony may lean toward comedy, as it does in a novel like Melville's Typee, or it may lead toward tragedy, as it does in Bowles's "A Distant Episode," or it may remain in a state of suspended judgment, as is so often the case in James.⁵⁰

There has been, of course, considerable critical interest in the experience of the American literary expatriate. Most has been focused on the "artistic voyagers" of the 19th century and the "lost generation" of the 1920's. Treatments of expatriation, some of which I have referred to already, tend to deal with the topic

historically or anecdotally. They have generally brought little theory to bear on their observations, and have offered only cursory readings of texts. Not only has there been no significant attempt to outline what might look like a theory of expatriate literature, by identifying the forces behind its production, but there has been no single work devoted to the unique characteristics of expatriate fiction.

One of the more comprehensive studies in Ernest Earnest's Expatriates and Patriots: American Artists, Scholars, and Writers in Europe. The central question Earnest seeks to answer, as he states it in his introduction, is "What has the expatriate experience of a number of sensitive and thoughtful people revealed about the nature of American culture, and for that matter of European culture?"⁴¹ Earnest identifies the struggle, somewhat simplistically, as being between Old World and New World values. Several restrictions are placed on the study. First, it deals only with Europe. Second, it takes us only up through 1929. So, it omits figures such as Henry Miller, Paul Bowles and James Baldwin. His inclusion of non-literary figures, like Joy Kasson's study, Artistic Voyagers: Europe and the American Imagination in the Works of Irving, Allston, Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne,⁵² does, however, give the study a unique orientation. Both Earnest and Kasson supply a lot of useful historical and biographical background. More anecdotal is Ishbel Ross's The Expatriates, which is a kind of who's who of the expatriate scene, sweeping through everything from pre-Revolutionary times (Ben Franklin), to the present.⁵³

Books on individual authors have, of course, dealt with the

question of expatriation. Rarely is a book on an expatriate writer written without some reference to the effect of expatriation on his writing. Of special interest to me have been Christof Wegelin's book on James, Annette Baxter's on Henry Miller, and Richard F. Patteson's on Paul Bowles, all of which have taken ample account of their subject's experience abroad. Their insights have undoubtedly asked my own thinking.⁵⁴

There are a number of important studies in American literature, not directly related to expatriation, which have influenced my work, and to which I see this study related, the central one being Richard Poirier's A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature. Commonplace to the study of American literature, of course, is the notion that the writers of this new country, freed from past traditions and faced with the pressures of creating in language the experience of a new nation, have been challenged continually, from the earliest writings of Charles Brockden Brown to the poetry of Charles Olson, to generate new styles. In A World Elsewhere Richard Poirier, noting "the American obsession with inventing environments that permit unhampered freedom of consciousness," argues that the American writer has tried to achieve a certain kind of freedom from social, biological and economic structures in and through language.⁵⁵ One feature of the texts which make up the American fictional tradition, Poirier says, is that "they resist within their pages the forces of environment that otherwise dominate the world" (5). He continues:

American books are often written as if historical forces

cannot possibly provide such an environment, as if history can give no life to "freedom," and as if only language can create the liberated place. The classic American writers try through style temporarily to free the hero (and the reader) from systems, to free them from the pressures of time, biology, economics, and from the social forces which are ultimately the undoing of American heroes and quite often of their creators. (5)

It might even seem a bit surprising that given this description, Poirier did not write his book on the American expatriate novel, for the expatriate tradition is nothing short of a literalization of the desire Poirier presents in his thesis. The move abroad, as we have already seen, especially in the discussion on Freud, usually represents a strong urge on the part of the writer to free himself from all the forces mentioned in this passage. And the fiction of expatriation is an attempt to represent that new landscape. Quite naturally, in expatriate literature, as Poirier seems to realize in his discussion of The Ambassadors, one finds the results of the writer's struggle to find a place where all kinds of possibilities--in actions and style of writing--can be tested. Once finds a variety of interesting responses to this problem represented in expatriate literature, ones Poirier only hints at. The new landscape itself and the foreigner's presence in it seem to demand that fresh language and style be generated, and that a new perspective be formulated.

It is worth noting how this study of American expatriate fiction confirms the key observations of two other critical studies:

Richard Chase's The American Novel and its Tradition, and Leo Marx's The Machine and the Garden. Expatriate novels, I think it can safely be claimed, belong to that category of novel Chase calls, taking the term from Hawthorne, "the romance." Chase maintains that the best American writers "found that in the very freedom of romance from the conditions of actuality there are certain potential virtues of the mind, which may be suggested by such words as rapidity, irony, abstraction, profundity."⁵⁶ The Reef, The Ambassadors, The Marble Faun, The Sun Also Rises, Let It Come Down, and Giovanni's Room--as well as so many works not dealt with here--certainly display these characteristics. Marx draws our attention to the extent to which the pastoral ideal has figured in the literature of a nation increasingly being transformed by the forces of technology. He states his purpose as being "to show how the pastoral ideal has been incorporated in a powerful metaphor of contradiction--a way of ordering meaning and value that clarifies our situation today."⁵⁷ What will be seen in the examination of some of the works in this study, particularly The Marble Faun and The Sun Also Rises, is how the pastoral ideal and the desire to retreat from growing urbanization often figure in the course the expatriate maps out for himself.

A final study to which I see my own related is Edwin Fussell's Frontier: American Literature and the American West.⁵⁸ Like my own, Fussell's study tries to stake out a particular territory, which turns out not merely to be geographic, but mental as well. In the works that he explores--beginning with Cooper's Leatherstocking tales and ending with Whitman's Leaves of Grass--the American West generally serves as a philosophical orientation, a direction being

plotted, as well as an actual place which is ready to be explored and settled. The West, it would seem, as already mentioned, would be a pole opposed to the expatriate pole--and so it often has been. That is, if the East represents wildness, chaos and unclear boundaries, Europe could be thought to represent--as it often does, for example in the works of James and Wharton--order, tradition and civilization. But if the West is taken to represent a place to escape to, a foreign land with its own unique laws and symbols, a fresh landscape, or--as it was for Cooper--a "neutral ground"--then it seems as though the expatriate impulse can be thought of as participating to a great extent in the psychological forces behind the Westward Movement. We might easily conceive, for example, that Paul Bowles's Morocco--with all its novelty, wildness and Gothic terror--is simply a version of the American West.

Some connection can also be drawn between this work on expatriation and the considerable interest in exile and literature over the past few decades, much of which has attempted to understand the connection between the state of exile and an author's production. In addition to Seidel's book, we can turn to essays and books by George Steiner, Edward Said, Terry Eagleton, Andrew Gurr, and Asher Milbauer for meditations on the exilic condition.⁵⁹ The popularity of the subject is natural considering the number of prominent modern fiction writers whose works have been generated in exile--Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Vladimir Nabokov, V.S. Naipaul, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Salman Rushdie. The figure of exile, as a sign of alienation, has become nearly synonymous with the modern movement. Even though expatriates do not fall

into the same category as exiles, and even though their circumstances often differ considerably, they may share some things in common, for example the DISTANCING from homeland which can lead to rather unique fictional stances characteristic of both the literature of exile and expatriation.

A word, perhaps, should be said, finally, about my selection of texts for this study, and my basic approach. I have thought it best to dwell on one novel in each chapter and allow issues and observations to surface naturally during the discussion of the novel. Clearly, an exhaustive study of American expatriate literature, one which noted each writer who ever went abroad and what was written, would be unwieldy and ultimately of quite limited value other than as a catalogue. Selections have to be made, and we are continually reminded that the critic's selection of his texts is itself a determination of value. In the end, my own tastes have guided my selections, or my judgment that certain works would best elucidate the points I was trying to make at the time. In my selection I have also sought to achieve a sense of historical breadth, and representation of various kinds of novels.

A happy, natural consequence of my interaction with the topic and the means I have chosen to approach it has been the inclusion of a number of well-known writers who have (sometimes even because of their expatriation or their political stances) not been considered major. So, while I have chosen to discuss The Ambassadors and The Sun Also Rises, I have also seen good cause to include discussions of Edith Wharton's little-known, yet very fine novel, The Reef, Paul

Bowles's Let It Come Down, and Hawthorne's least-known novel, The Marble Faun--as well as other works. Of course, there are other novels I could have chosen. Why not Tender is the Night, for example, or Kay Boyle's Plagued by the Nightingale, or John Horne Burns's The Gallery, or William Carlos Williams's Voyage to Pagan, or Djuna Barnes's Nightwood, or James's Portrait of a Lady, or William Gardner Smith's The Stone Face, or Stephen Alter's The Godchild? There were, clearer, many novels to choose from and any choice necessarily results in a gain and a loss. I would hope that much of what I have to say about the novels I have chosen would suggest ways in which other expatriate novels, even ones from other national literatures, might be viewed and appreciated.

In addition to the generic restrictions I have imposed upon myself, I have also imposed some geographic boundaries for the study. All the novels I have chosen to discuss, with the exception of Bowles's, are set in Western Europe. I suppose in so doing, I have simply followed the path taken by most expatriate writers. Beongcheon Yu in The Great Circle, a study of the place of the Orient (particularly East Asia) in American literature and intellectual life, calls attention to the fact that a handful of American writers, including Lafcadio Hearn, Gary Snyder and Kenneth Rexroth, have sojourned in East Asia, and it would be an oversight not at least to point out this fact here.⁶⁰

One of the attractions of the subject, for me, has been that it has allowed for a considerable degree of methodological flexibility. I have felt all along that I would not be able to gain a full understanding of American expatriate literature were I strictly to

insist on one critical apparatus or another. In analyzing these works, very often thematic, historical, psychological, anthropological, formalist or Marxist approaches have sometimes be helpful. I have not been afraid to use whatever I thought appropriate. Yet, I have sought never to bend a text for the purposes of a theoretical argument. Nor are names mentioned, as so often is the case in criticism today, simply to be vogue and fashionable. I embrace two critical impulses: The close reading of texts and the desire to place works and writers withing a historical and political context. My method here is somewhat eclectic; I have gone "much as the dog goes/ intently, haphazard,"⁶¹ and I hope to show, in my discussion of various works in various manners, how a synthesis of methods can lead to a better understanding of this subgenre of literature, of American literature as a whole, and, finally, of that nexus between literature and culture.

Notes to Introduction

¹Henry James, "The Aspern Papers," in Great Short Works of Henry James (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 245.

²Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 4, 11.

³Annette Kerr Baxter, Henry Miller: Expatriate (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1961), p. 1.

⁴R.P. Blackmur, "The American Expatriate," in The Lion and the Honeycomb (New York: Random, 1956), p. 70.

⁵Ishbel Ross, The Expatriates (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1970), p. 1.

⁶D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 9.

⁷Sandra Whipple Spanier, Kay Boyle: Artist and Activist (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1986), p. 11.

⁸Kay Boyle, letter to Sandra Spanier, 6 Dec. 1984, p. 95.

⁹Ernest Earnest, Expatriates and Patriots: American Artists, Scholars, and Writers in Europe (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968), p. 258.

¹⁰Paul Bowles, interviews with the author, Tangier, June 1987.

¹¹Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast (New York: Scribner's

Sons, 1964), p. 134.

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CHAPTER ONE

Toward Solid Ground: Crossing The Reef

Edith Wharton had been living in France for nearly six years by the time The Reef was published in 1912. Though by no means the best known American expatriate novel, The Reef may be one of the most finely shaped and crafted. And as its central, controlling metaphor, reflected in the novel's title, refers to the dangers involved in crossing from one thing to another (say, one culture to another; or, living singly to living with another), the novel seems a most appropriate starting point.

At a glance, we can see that The Reef has all the most basic elements of an expatriate novel: It was written by Edith Wharton during her residence abroad; the whole novel is set on foreign soil, moving from England to Paris and then back and forth between Paris and the countryside village of Givre; and, the primary characters in the drama are American and thus--though perhaps to a lesser extent than some of its kind--the themes which arise are fundamentally related to the American condition. At the heart of the novel is Anna Leath's search (not unlike Wharton's own) for her romantic ideal. It is of no small consequence that the action takes place abroad. The shape and design of the novel, then, are formed by the interplay between place, characters, and their desires. To these elements, and what springs from them, the following discussion will be devoted.

In The Reef, as in other expatriate novels, particular settings

take on meanings and facilitate certain kinds of interactions between characters. Very often, in fact, the place itself, because of its freshness, becomes a dominant element in the drama. Wharton's use of landscape in The Reef is subtle, though no less significant for being so. While the landscapes in the novel are foreign, they are neither apprehended by the characters nor described by the author with the naive energy of an outside observer. They are, rather, almost taken for granted and therefore function much as we would expect them to in any novel. They are primarily familiar places which exist simply to facilitate the movement of plot. The role setting plays in relation to theme is quite insightfully described by Millicent Bell in her book on James and Wharton:

The action of The Reef is played upon a European stage and concerns Americans who have lived long in England and France, yet its theme is not "international" in the fashion of The American or Madame de Treymes. The alien environment which envelops Anna Leath is not national; it is rather a universal dimension of passionate experience for which her training has not prepared her. What seems to interest Edith Wharton in this instance is not so much the cultural encounters involved in her story as the more abstract conjunctions of moral attitudes.¹

The setting of the opening chapter of the novel illustrates this point. As the novel opens we are seated with George Darrow, the protagonist, an American diplomat stationed in London, on a train in transit from Charing Cross to Dover. Neither Darrow, who is no newcomer to England, nor Wharton his creator, seems much interested in

the landscape. Darrow's thoughts are the central concern. Just as he had boarded the train he had been handed a telegram, whose message appears as the novel's first line: "'Unexpected obstacle. Please don't come till thirtieth. Anna.'"² The train is already in motion as he reads Mrs. Leath's message, and so he is left for the time being with no alternative but to head in the direction he had planned, knowing that the envisioned itinerary would at some point have to be abandoned in favor of some as yet unformed plan. We are, then, at the outset, dropped squarely into a consuming thought, not a self-consciously drawn foreign landscape. To the click of the train gliding over the railway tracks Darrow contemplates the meaning of the telegram, and what it signals for his relationship to its sender, a question which is the dominant preoccupation for the rest of the novel.

When this opening is compared to other American novels set abroad, it will be seen how much it is taken for granted. Consider the opening of Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night: "On the pleasant shore of the French Riviera, about half way between Marseilles and the Italian border, stands a large, proud, rose-colored hotel."³ The next several pages of the novel are used to establish this place as the romantic backdrop against which Dick Diver and Rosemary, the young American film star, will begin to act out their drama. Place comes before, even in a sense determines, action in this novel, as it does so many others which come to mind--The Green Hills of Africa, The Sheltering Sky, The American, or The Marble Faun. The Ambassadors, to draw on another example which will receive extended attention in the next chapter, has its central character, Lambert

Strether, arriving in England, relieved at not finding his friend Waymarsh at his hotel so that he can savor more fully, without his friend's interference, the "oddity of a double consciousness," the sensation of being away from home, in another country. The introduction of this last example, by way of contrast to The Reef, allows us to see a main reason setting is handled so differently in the two novels, particularly in their beginnings. For Darrow, the landscape is not new or extraordinary--nor is the sensation of travel. Strether, on the other hand, is a new arrival, breathless in the face of the multitude of impressions, and the novel's apparatus conveys that dizzying feeling of suddenly landing on unfamiliar terrain.

Of course, though The Reef does not open in a way that calls attention to a distinctively English landscape, the setting, as the others in the novel, does have a particular meaning. It is, for one thing, more familiar than other foreign landscapes, and shares with America its language and much of its cultural tradition. It is significant as well that we are on a train, for trains and other public means of conveyance--but particularly trains--put characters in motion so that they are likely to bump into people--either people they plan to meet, people they have known and have no thought that they would meet, or people they have never--or only slightly--known before. Travel by train is prone to throw relations into new and unexpected configurations, especially when destinations are vague and persons are traveling alone. Both conditions apply to Darrow as he continues on his way to Dover, still vacillating between turning back and going ahead. His mood of indecision is arrested when, at

Dover on his way down to the pier, in the rain, an umbrella catches his collar bone, "and the next moment, bent sideways by the wind, it turned inside out and soared up, kite-wise, at the end of a helpless female arm" (11). This female arm belongs to a Miss Sophy Viner, a fellow American. Miss Viner immediately recognizes her catch from London parties hosted by a Mrs. Murrett, her employer until her recent escape.

Sophy's early meeting of Darrow is a kind of chance encounter which occurs very often and significantly guides or affects the plot in the expatriate novel--more so, or at least in different ways, it seems, than in other novels. Of course, chance encounter is a motif frequently found in the novel as well as its progenitor, the prose romance, where surprises occur with dizzying regularity, with sometimes ludicrous effects. Such chance meetings, as Northrop Frye points out in his Anatomy of Criticism, are often associated with a process of mutual revelation of identity and a consolidation of personality. This is the case, certainly, in The Fairie Queene when Artegal fights Britomart and only finds out her true identity when she takes off her helmet at the end of the battle.

The chance encounter, besides being an essential mechanism for pushing ahead the plot, is, in the expatriate novel, a part of the consolidation of identity, just as it is in the pure romance. Very much on the same order as this early meeting in The Reef is Strether's fortuitous meeting of Maria Gostrey in the first chapter of The Ambassadors. In The Sheltering Sky at a hotel bar in North Africa, Port Moresby meets Eric Lyle and the beastly woman posing as his mother. The meeting again propels the plot of the novel in a

direction it otherwise could not have taken. Port decides to accompany the Lyles for the next portion of his trip, leaving his wife to travel alone with Tunner (during which time the two consummate their yearnings), and setting himself up to have his passport stolen by the young Lyle. The traveler, in fact, often begins his travels with the hope or expectation that at some point along his way his course will somehow--even surprisingly--be altered from the one he has been on. Strange or unexpected unions are frequently formed owing to the relative openness of feeling which motion creates. (We often pick up books with the same hope.)

Sophy's philosophy, at the time we meet her and later in the novel, seems to be: "At any moment, of course, a turn of the kaleidoscope might suddenly toss a bright spangle into the grey pattern of one's days" (26). The kaleidoscope indeed does shift when Darrow meets Sophy. The meeting in the rain breaks down all formality, as Darrow offers to try to locate Sophy's missing trunk and Sophy runs her fingers through her hair after taking off her sopping hat. This meeting--a crossing of socioeconomic boundaries which is quite often found in expatriate novels--would have been out of the question in London where, on Mrs. Murrett's premises, Darrow had devoted his attentions to Lady Ulrica and Sophy had, for the past five years, written notes and walked the dog. There in Dover, however, Darrow is inclined to see the young Miss Viner as a welcome source of temporary amusement. She is a new quantity who promises to take his mind off of Anna's perplexing postponement, a shift in attention he is all too ready to accept and even encourage. Darrow finds Sophy's naturalness and enthusiasm refreshing when he compares

these lighter qualities to Anna Leath's restraint and refinement. Sophy is for him a new type. Upon observing her at one point, Darrow reflects "that mankind would never have needed to invent tact if it had not first invented social complications" (34). With him Sophy is candid and quick-witted, qualities he finds winning no matter how he resists them. When he finds she has just left her post at Mrs. Murrett's, he exclaims, "'Do you mean to say you've been there all this time?'" Her reply is quick and somewhat pointed. "'Ever since you used to come there to see Lady Ulrica? Does it seem to you so awfully long ago?'" (15). No doubt, too, their bond is strengthened by their shared nationality--a circumstance we shall often find associated with the meetings of foreign nationals. Very often the expatriate novel throws into close relation people who back home might have too much separating them. Of Sophy we are told, "She was clearly an American, but with the loose native quality strained through a closer woof of manners: the composite product of an enquiring and adaptable race" (13).

The foreign setting, which might be thought of as a neutral territory where parties can easily divest themselves of a lot of excess baggage, often provides a context for unlikely or unusual romantic configurations, as we shall see in the case of works discussed later. Paradoxically, the European setting--though usually thought to be much more structured than America--on occasion presents for the American character greater freedom than he has previously experienced. It is no wonder, then, that most of the romantically-charged meetings of consequence in The Reef begin, or are taken up again, on foreign ground. In Italy Anna first meets her

first husband, Fraser Leath. Back in New York, still swooning in the memories of their European meeting, they decide to marry. England is, in addition to being the site of Darrow and Sophy's meeting, where Darrow and Anna, who had known each other and been drawn to one another in their youth, reunite and discover in each other a sympathetic interest. For Anna and Darrow, England seems to be a kind of no-man's land where exchanges happen that could not happen so easily on their own soil. Though she has known Darrow before, upon their meeting at a London embassy party "she, who .pa was always so elusive and inaccessible, had grown suddenly communicative and kind: had opened the doors of her past, and tacitly left him to draw his own conclusions" (5). And the spirit of openness and expectation extends to the second meeting several days later in an old country house "in the soft landscape of southern England." We are told that Mrs. Leath, on this occasion, "was no less kind than before; but she contrived to make him understand that what was so inevitably coming was not to come too soon. It was not that she showed any hesitation as to the issue, but rather that she seemed to wish not to miss any stage in the gradual reflowering of their intimacy" (5-6). And at their third meeting, "the last evening, at the theatre, between the overshadowing Marquise and the unsuspecting Owen, they had had an almost decisive exchange of words" (7).

The train, leaving from Calais after the crossing, takes us to the Gare du Nord, the entry to Paris, the first fixed setting in the novel, and though it is not described in great detail, the city certainly takes on a particular meaning for its American charac-

ters--a meaning not wholly unlike that found by Strether, or by Jake Barnes, or by David, the narrator of Giovanni's Room. Paris, Sophy's destination before meeting Darrow, excites the young lady's imagination. And as Darrow comes to know Sophy's dreams, which harbor a vague desire to become an actress, he finds himself attached to her, eager to help her meet her aims and, thus, to give her a measure of happiness she had not been able to achieve thus far in her life. "She was starving, poor child, for a little amusement, a little personal life--why not give her the chance of another day in Paris? If he did so, should he not be merely falling in with her own hopes?" (55). This, at least, is how Darrow justifies to himself his involvement with Sophy. As they ride through the city the first evening together, Darrow suggests plans for them to go to the theater and see Cerdine play in Le Vertige, and they agree to see one another again.

If Paris is the citadel of culture and the lover's Paradise, it is also, like other cities at this historical juncture, a place suited to changes of fortunes. In a way that brings to mind Carrie Meeber, Sophy has, as a result of living with Mrs. Murrett, nurtured a desire to rise above her class. Lady Ulrica she has envied "because she had almost all the things I've always wanted: clothes and fun and motors, and admiration and yachting and Paris--why, Paris alone would be enough!--And how do you suppose a girl can see that sort of thing about her day after day, and never wonder why some women, who don't seem to have any more right to it, have it all tumbled into their laps, while others are writing dinner invitations, and straightening out accounts, and copying visiting lists,

and finishing golf-stockings, and matching ribbons, and seeing that the dogs get their sulphur?" (18).

Paris, as much as anything else, is for Sophy Viner a feeling of freedom. Wharton carefully draws and colors in her two characters' reactions to the French capital. "What she liked best, [Darrow] divined, was the mere fact of being free to walk abroad in the bright air, her tongue rattling on as it pleased, while her feet kept time to the mighty orchestration of the city's sounds" (39). And while "they were seated at their table in a low window above the Seine," Darrow imagines that for Sophy "Paris was 'Paris' by virtue of all the entertaining details, its endless ingenuities of pleasantness" (42).

Paris represents much the same thing for Darrow as it does for Sophy. Since London has become their temporary home, Darrow and Sophy are, in a sense, twice expatriated when they go to France, and with that second expatriation comes a corresponding expectation of release and expanded horizons. The contrast in how the two places are perceived is shown brilliantly in the characterization of the weather and air of the two places. After being pent up in London, with its "mysterious fusion of darkly-piled and low-lying bituminous sky," there was "the transparency of the French air, which left the green gardens and silvery stones so classically clear yet so softly harmonized," which "struck him as having a kind of conscious intelligence."

Every line of the architecture, every arch of the bridges, the very sweep of the strong bright river between them, while contributing to this effect, sent forth each a separate

appeal to some sensitive memory; so that, for Darrow, a walk through the Paris streets was always like the unrolling of a vast tapestry from which countless stored fragrances were shaken out. (40)

The Parisian setting--the city's architectural design, its air, its thick layers of romantic associations, and the relative anonymity it supplies to foreigners--allows, if not gently determines, the interactions between Darrow and Sophy, the intimate details of which Wharton prudently withholds, which take place on their walks about the city and in the theaters, restaurants and hotel rooms. The fact that Paris is not Darrow's residence and he knows he will not be expected to continue the relationship gives him the license to enjoy the company of Miss Viner without sacrificing the later resuscitation of a more serious engagement with Anna Leath. Darrow is, however, aware of some slight risk in the whole affair, should he be seen with Sophy by one of Anna's acquaintances--a risk which nearly materializes when, accompanied by Sophy, he meets Owen Leath, Anna's stepson. Except for one view of the couple's backs--scarcely enough for a positive identification--Owen never sees Darrow with Sophy.

Paris changes with the weather. What was for Darrow and Sophy, at the beginning of their stay, a cheerful, sunny city charged with desire and the lurking prospect of its culmination, is by the end of the first book a city overcast and spent. The rains have become torrential, and the inclement weather forces Darrow and Sophy to take refuge in their hotel rooms, a glaring symbol of the temporary status of their romance. It was, after all, setting and chance

which, more than anything else, had brought the two together and when all else is stripped away, the tenuousness of that connection is made terribly obvious. "The whole incident had somehow seemed . . . to be enacting itself in some unmapped region outside the pale of the usual," Darrow muses, after the fact, as he prepares for his return to London. "The rain had made all the difference. It had thrown the whole picture out of perspective, blotted out the mystery of the remoter planes and the enchantment of the middle distance, and thrust into prominence every commonplace fact of the foreground" (75).

Though a chunk of the story of Darrow and Sophy in Paris is discreetly omitted and Wharton gives us no concrete evidence as to what has happened between the two, she subtly suggests that a degree of intimacy developed. Throughout this section, as in the novel as a whole, Wharton carefully reveals and conceals events, always with admirable control. Upon hearing the opening and closing of a door next to his own as he prepares to leave his own hotel room after a ten-day stay, Darrow imagines the features of the room next door in great detail, and traces the movements of the person next door. Darrow hears the sound of a wet umbrella "placed in the marble jamb of the chimney piece, against the hearth"--a marvelous moment which pleasantly echoes their first meeting (77). Closed is this episode of Darrow's escapade with Sophy in Paris.

At the opening of Book II, there is a change of venue--from Paris to the countryside of Givre, a town about a hundred kilometers south of Dijon--as well as a shift in point of view--from a narration close to Darrow's consciousness to one following Anna's move-

ments. The change of seasons, from spring (May) to fall (October), accents the turn from the young Sophy to the older Anna. These three changes, not the least of them being the shift in place, alter the whole tone of the novel and influence the action of the three books set in this new locale. The section begins with this description:

The light of the October afternoon lay on an old high-roofed house which enclosed in its long expanse of brick and yellowish stone the breadth of a grassy court filled with the shadow and sound of limes. From the escutcheoned piers at the entrance of the court a level drive, also shaded by limes, extended to a white-barred gate beyond which an equally level avenue of grass, cut through a wood, dwindled to a blue-green blur against a sky banked with still white slopes cloud. (81)

Placid, settled, serene, and expansive is Givre, whose calm and solitude contrast so to the urban bustle of Paris. The narrator traces Anna's responses to her first arrival at Givre more than nine years earlier when the place had held out to her "a fate as dignified as its own mien" (82). With the passing of years, though, that old romantic image--though it could still be invoked--had gradually been subsumed by another image and

the house had for a time become to her the very symbol of narrowness and monotony. . . . [W]ith the passing of years, it had gradually acquired a less inimical character, had become, not again a castle of dreams, evoker of fair images

and romantic legend, but the shell of a life slowly adjusted to its dwelling: the place one came back to, the place where one had one's duties, one's habits and one's books, the place one would naturally live in till one died: a dull house, an inconvenient house, of which one knew all the defects, the shabbinesses, the discomforts, but to which one was so used that one could hardly, after so long a time, think one's self away from it without suffering a certain loss of identity.

(82-3)

The passage so vividly depicts the processes by which the space of romance, through prolonged habitation, is turned into a zone of comfort, from which the restless inhabitant seeks, again, some kind of relief.

While Paris was youth, impermanence, spring, and liberal attitudes, Givre is structure, tradition, maturity, permanence, and order. The Catholicism of the place is manifest architecturally, in the domed chapel situated at one end of the house. A peacock which struts about the lawns "seemed to have gathered into his outspread fan all the summer glories of the place" (84). The architecture, which in Paris facilitated movement, here regularizes and stymies it. On that October morning on which she is anticipating Darrow's arrival, however, Anna is eager to infuse the familiar landscape with fresh meaning and see it again as though for the first time. "She had been trying to see the house through the eyes of an old friend who, the next morning, would be driving up to it for the first time; and in so doing she seemed to be opening her own eyes

upon it after a long interval of blindness" (83). Wharton elsewhere has described how the elements in France join to produce a feeling of unity and rootedness. "In France," she writes, "everything speaks of long familiar intercourse between the earth and its inhabitants; every field has a name, a history, a distinct place of its own in the village polity; every blade of grass is thereby an old feudal right which has long since dispossessed the worthless aboriginal weed."⁴ She found, in France, a place where truly man was the intelligence of his soil.

The three books forming the core of the novel take place exclusively at Givre and its environs where the rigid customs, manners, and procedures affect the degree of formality and dictate patterns of exchange between characters. Relationships here at the Chateau are regulated, under the long shadow of tradition. The architecture of the place, or perhaps something in its very nature, seems to encourage the keeping of secrets and clandestine meetings; private rendezvous are arranged in various rooms by various characters, and what takes place behind closed doors is in marked distinction from the more public exchanges around the dinner table or in the garden. Anna keeps Darrow in the dark about Owen's proposed engagement to Sophy (who, much to Darrow's surprise--and perhaps the reader's--has turned up at Givre as the governess to Mrs. Leath's young daughter, Effie). Darrow meets and talks with Sophy on the sly. Owen finds the right moment to tell Mme de Chantelle, his grandmother and Anna's mother-in-law, about his and Sophy's plans. Even though Anna proclaims to Darrow that "Surely you and I needn't arrange the lights before we show ourselves to each other," the setting itself--

Givre--seems to be speaking a line quite to the contrary (112-13). What is seen here depends upon the light. Anna herself "was like a picture so hung that it can be seen only at a certain angle" (129). The scenes at Givre, acting as a counterpoint to the hotel scenes in Paris, derive their poignancy precisely from the tension between the necessity to maintain decorum and the pressing urgency of inner desires.

At the end of Book IV, the end of the Givre section of the novel, Anna and Darrow exchange goodbyes and the reader is left thinking, no doubt like the characters themselves, that it is all over for them now. The atmosphere has become so stifling and oppressive that one feels that the whole thing, too tightly housed, must finally burst forth from its small confines--as it indeed does in the opening of the final book--for there seems nowhere else the novel can go so long as it stays in Givre. In order for the narrative, and indeed the romance, to move ahead, the scene must change. As Book V opens we find Anna sitting in Miss Painter's drawing room in the rue de Matignon. The move back to Paris, in addition to giving the novel a pleasing sense of symmetry, also, as expected, throws the status of relationships once again into flux. When Anna begins to move physically, "her mind had begun to work again" (298). The subsequent movement in the book, back and forth between Givre and Paris, can well be thought of as a figure for the vacillation in Anna's consciousness. Should she or should she not proceed with her relationship with Darrow, knowing all she knows about him and his affair with Sophy Viner? Anna's Paris, at every step, is haunted by Sophy's ghost. Is that the restaurant they dined at? she says to herself when Darrow proposes a place for them to go out to eat. Ah!

when he suggests the theater, her suspicions are once more aroused. Was it at that theater Owen saw them together? No, she could not go. Anna's troublesome suspicions form a real impediment to the deepening, even the continuity, of the relationship. In the penultimate chapter Anna insists on knowing all there is to know about Darrow and his affair with Sophy, so she can forget about it. "'It's the only way to make me forget,'" she says. But Darrow doesn't give in to her pleas. "'You see it's impossible. . . . I've done a thing I loathe and to atone for it you ask me to do another. What sort of satisfaction would that give you? It would put something irremediable between us'" (358).

We have already implicitly recognized in The Reef the presence of another essential component of the American expatriate novel-- American characters. Not only are the three main characters-- Darrow, Sophy and Anna--American, but so too are a constellation of more minor characters, including Owen, Madame de Chantelle, and Adelaide Painter. It is, in fact, hard to find a genuine Frenchman in the novel. Some of the American characters, however, seem very French (in the same way that some of Henry James's Americans often do), and the whole novel at times feels like a French novel of manners. One reason, no doubt, for this impression--in addition to, in some cases, the French names, and Wharton's Racinean style--is that some of these characters have been in France for a very long time and have assimilated French ways. Or, it may have been that they were, in a sense, latent French before they left America. "'You can see how completely she has identified herself with Monsieur de Chantelle's nationality and adopted French habits and

prejudices,'" Anna notes to Darrow as she explains her mother-in-law's behavior to him. (159) Like their authoress, these characters find a great measure of affinity to the French culture they find themselves in.

Cynthia Griffin Wolff notes that the major characters in The Reef "are rendered with a chiaroscuro sharpness that articulates them almost as if they were specimens mounted against a backdrop."⁵ Along the same lines, Carol Wershoven points out that "the absence of a large cast of supportive characters like the Mingotts and Van der Luydens make the novel a sharp contrast to The Age of Innocence or The House of Mirth."⁶ While both of these critics comment on the small and tight community of characters in the novel, neither sees that this pattern in the novel, much like that in James's The Golden Bowl, might logically follow from the nature of the expatriate community they are living in. That is, these characters are largely cut off from a larger society and they by necessity must deal quite intensely with others of their own kind who live in their midst. It is for this reason, at least in this novel, it seems, that the characters might seem "as if they were specimens mounted against a backdrop."

But what are these people doing abroad, and what do they hope to gain, if anything, from their experiences there? These are relevant questions to ask any expatriate character, real or fictional. Each would respond, of course, in a way uniquely tailored to fit the particular case, and the speaker might bend or twist his account to subvert or disguise his real motives. This is often the stuff of which expatriate novels are made. All who live abroad are

there for some particular reason or purpose, admitted or not, conscious or otherwise, and the writer generally must account for his characters' presence in whatever place he sets them.

The Americans in The Reef are in Europe for various reasons--related to work, accident, or romantic attachments formed at some point in their lives. George Darrow, we have noted, is stationed in London as a member of the U.S. diplomatic corps. Darrow's mission, unlike Strether's which is connected with a certain citizen of Woollett, Massachusetts, has little function in the novel other than giving him a reason for being there, adding to his personal prestige, and supplying justifications for his comings and goings--often unpredictable and at short notice--at various critical junctures of the novel. Anna Leath is in France because her husband is there, and her husband is there because his mother had married the Marquis de Chantelle, who died and left her his chateau at Givre. How she happened to meet the Marquis we do not learn. We are told of Mr. Leath, though, that he had struck Darrow "as a character specimen of the kind of Americans as to whom one is not quite clear whether he lives in Europe in order to cultivate an art, or cultivates an art as a pretext for living in Europe" (4). He practiced painting and collected enamelled snuffboxes. In other words, he was one of those leisured expatriates who did not have to be much concerned about earning a living, but could devote his attention to the aesthetic wonders of the continent. Owen, Leath's son and Ann's stepson, seems to have been born into expatriation, having spent virtually all of his youthful years in Europe.

Wharton's novel is a superb one for opening this discussion on

the expatriate novel because in it are represented so many expatriate types. As mentioned before, one of the characteristics of the expatriate novel is that it often cuts across barriers of class, race, nationality, or sexual orientation. Right beside the Leaths we have the more indigent Sophy Viner. In fact Sophy's suitability as a wife for Owen Leath--because of her social background--becomes one of the major issues of the novel. Sophy's "purpose" in Europe, and the means by which she got there and remained (for five years prior to the action of the novel), are a bit improbable when plainly stated. "A schoolmate from the Rocky Mountains, who was taking her father and mother to Europe, had suggested Sophy's accompanying them, and 'going round' with her while her progenitors, in the care of the courier, nursed their ailments at a fashionable bath" (23). Sophy, a Jane Eyre-like waif, doubly orphaned, first by her own parents then by her guardian, "a drudge in a big banking house" who died leaving no provisions for her, is dumped in Europe when her friend Mamie Hoke elopes with a matinee idol and her parents precipitately return to New York.

A few of the minor characters in Wharton's novel are worthy of consideration, and may fill out our picture of the community, which often exists, in one form or another, in the expatriate novel, and of the life which springs from that unique sort of community. First, there are the Farlows, confirmed expatriates upon whom Sophy has depended for helping her in Paris. Sophy's hopes "hung mainly on the problematical good-will of an ancient comedienne, with whom Mrs. Farlow had a slight acquaintance . . . and who had once, with signs of approval, heard Miss Viner recite the *Nuit de Mai*" (39).

Her meeting with the Farlows she must continually postpone (at first the delay must be attributed to Darrow's negligence in sending a message from her to them) as her relationship with Darrow continues. They had also helped her "during the interregnum between the Hoke and Murrett eras," and it is to them Anna expects Sophy to return following her departure from Givre. The Farlows are described as being "an elderly New England couple, with vague yearnings for enfranchisement, who lived in Paris as if it were a Massachusetts suburb, and dwelt hopefully on the higher side of the Gallic nature" (38). Mrs. Farlow, recalling an occupation taken up by other expatriates in Paris, notably Janet Flanner, writes "Inner Glimpses of French Life" for an American journal. The Farlows are a recognizable type, sharing much in common, it seems, with Mr. and Mrs. Tristram who play a larger role in James's The American than do the Farlows in Wharton's novel. Mrs. Tristram, we are told,

lived in Paris, which she pretended to detest, because it was only in Paris that one could find things to exactly suit one's complexion. Besides, out of Paris it was always more or less of a trouble to get ten-button gloves. When she railed at this serviceable city, and you asked her where she would prefer to reside, she returned a very unexpected answer. She would say in Copenhagen, or in Barcelona; having, while making the tour of Europe, spent a couple of days at each of these places.⁷

Of Mr. Tristram, James writes:

His only aspirations were to hold out at poker, at his club,

to know the names of all the cocottes, to shake hands all round, to ply his rosy gullet with truffles and champagne, and to create uncomfortable eddies and obstructions among the constituent items of the American colony. (29)

The Farlows, like the Tristrams, seem to make much of knowing who all their compatriates in Paris are, and helping or obstructing their plots as they will.

Another of the more interesting of the minor American characters is Adelaide Painter, whom Madame de Chantelle calls down to Givre to help her battle the loathesome prospect of Sophy Viner marrying her grandson. Miss Painter is

a spinster of South Braintree, Massachusetts, who, having come to Paris some thirty years earlier, to nurse a brother through an illness, had ever since protestingly and provisionally camped there in a state of contemptuous protestation oddly manifested by her never taking the slip-covers off her drawing-room chairs. Her long residence on Gallic soil had not mitigated her hostility toward the creed and customs of the race, but though she always referred to the Catholic Church as the Scarlet Woman and took the darkest views of French private life, Madame de Chantelle placed great reliance on her judgment and experience. . . . (158-59)

Though she has been in Paris all these years, she has not, it seems, made any attempt to assimilate herself into French society. On the contrary: she uses her situation to sharpen a sense of difference

between her own values and those of the country in which she resides. She, in France, becomes more resolutely American, perhaps, than she would have been in South Braintree. The French she always refers to as "those people," yet the distinction she draws between herself and them is not simply drawn as a result of an ignorance of French customs. "She betrayed an intimate acquaintance with many of its members, and an encyclopaedic knowledge of the domestic habits, financial difficulties and private complications of various persons of social importance" (211). Of course, one would assume, if she did not like her voluntary exile, she could easily return to Boston, or South Braintree, or Truro, or Plymouth, Massachusetts. One gets the sense, though, as she speaks about "the difficulties of buying English tea in Paris and of the enormities of which French servants were capable," that she takes a kind of pleasure in being able to make these complaints, and that these contingencies and nuisances associated with this kind of shipwrecked existence are precisely what infuse her own life with its joie de vivre. It is clear, though, that while she lives in France she holds most precious her ties--through memory or through contacts with other Americans or through various American products--to America. She is in the habit of supplying exiled compatriots with "cranberries and brandied peaches from the American grocery in the Champs Elysees," (301) and upon her first meeting with Darrow she informs him that she "used to know one of your mother's cousins, who married a Tunstall of Mt. Vernon Street," and asks him, "'Have you been in Boston lately? No? I'm sorry for that. I hear there have been several new houses built at the lower end of Commonwealth Avenue and I hoped you could tell

me about them. I haven't been there for thirty years myself'" (210).

This examination of character reveals, especially in this last instance, how much drama in The Reef, as in other expatriate novels, revolves around the relationships between American characters. There is a broader dimension to the psychological action in the classic expatriate novel. In addition to sorting out their relationships with one another, they seem very often to be continually evaluating and assessing their relationship to their own country. The conflicts with their country, which they may have had while living there, or simply an extended process of defining the American character, are a part of the baggage they carry with them. They frequently employ a mode of thinking which Michael Seidel associates with "the exilic mind." That is, from across the borders imposed by exile, they reflect back upon and recreate a familiar, if imaginary, homeland.⁸ That connection with home is what anchors them. As British poet Alistair Reid writes of the expatriate:

An expatriate shifts uncomfortably, because he still retains, at the back of his mind, the awareness that he has a true country, more real to him than any other he happens to have selected. Thus, he is only at ease with other expatriates. They justify one another, as they wait about in the sun for the arrival of mail or money. Eventually they are driven to talk of plumbing, the ultimate sign of the superiority of their own civilization. Whatever they do or write or say has its ultimate meaning for them Back Home. "Yes, but you have to make it in Boston," I once heard from a fanatical expat-

riate. What's more, he said it in Spanish. ⁹

The irony in that last line suggests the sense of doubleness which almost necessarily accompanies living in a country other than your own, a doubleness which, we will discover, works its way into expatriate fiction in a number of ways. Certainly much of the interest in the expatriate novel lies in this action between the guest and the foreign environment, as the character stands astride the intercultural abyss. It is in these relations--with one's homeland and with the native environment--where we expect to find the lively interest in a form which records the trials and errors of characters' attempts to live differently somewhere else, or to live somewhere else in the same way they lived back home. No matter what choices are made or what ways are thrust upon them, there will always be a difference.

There are a number of ways in which this essential doubleness of experience is played out in The Reef--thematically and in the handling of form and point of view. It exists sometimes, as well might be expected, within the characters themselves. For example, there lies at the center of Anna's own being a fissure, between her quotidian existence and her ideal world, which she seeks in part to close through her life abroad. We learn in Book II of Anna's early yearnings. When, as a girl living in America, she had always, she thought, lived as though a "thin impenetrable veil . . . hung between herself and life." The narrator tells of Anna's girlhood surroundings:

In the well-regulated well-fed Summers world the unusual was

regarded as either immoral or ill-bred, and people with emotions were not visited. Sometimes, with a sense of groping in a topsy-turvy universe, Anna had wondered why everybody about her seemed to ignore all the passions and sensations which formed the stuff of great poetry and memorable action. In a community composed entirely of people like her parents and her parents' friends she did not see how the magnificent things one read about could ever have happened.

(85)

Anna is, from the start, (like Isabel Archer, or like Redburn or like dear ol' Peter) a prime candidate for expatriation. We are told that she had always felt a difference between herself and the other girls and that she had even maintained a ladylike distance from them. Several of these girls, whom she half envied, had fallen in love and sought the fulfillment of their romantic dreams at home, but in the end she saw "the heroines of these exploits returned from them untransfigured, and their husbands were as dull as ever when one had to sit next to them at dinner. . . . Her own case, of course, would be different. Some day she would find the magic bridge between West Fifty-fifth Street and life" (86-87). What Anna longs for and what she sees so evidently lacking in the world immediately surrounding her is a community of like-minded, kindred souls. Her ideal community, whose shape owes something to the force of an active imagination's interaction with books, would shun those cold and grim Puritan traits which she felt so much inhibited her own growth. When we read in A Backward Glance of Wharton's own

"longing to break away from the world of fashion and be with my own spiritual kin," we might rightly draw some parallels between the deeper desires of the writer and those of her heroine in this novel.¹⁰

We are subsequently told in unequivocal terms that Anna sees no chance of satisfying her desires at home. There is even some doubt that an effective fusion of dream-world and real life could take place anywhere.

It was in the visioned region of action and emotion that her fullest hours were spent; but it hardly occurred to her that they might be translated into experience, or connected with anything likely to happen to a young lady living in West Fifty-fifth Street. (85)

Eventually the strength of her desire leads her elsewhere in search of her ideal image. With her dream in mind--a dream which clearly implied an escape from her native country, its institutions of family and religion--Anna looks for her opportunities, anything which would take her closer to her dimly-formed ideal. Darrow was the first possibility she entertained, Fraser Leath the second. "She met him first in Italy, where she was travelling with her parents; and the following winter he came to New York. In Italy he had seemed interesting: in New York he became remarkable" (89). In Leath she thought she had found someone with her own tastes and values, as evidenced by his gifts for her--an anthology of French poetry and an 18th Century pastel.

When Anna marries, she and her husband move to France. For a

period of time the new environment, particularly the Chateau at Givre, served her as "a castle of dreams, evoker of fair images and romantic legend," but we have the very distinct impression that by the time her husband died and before she met Darrow again in London, the place had lost its freshness, its romantic appeal. It had become, simply through the day to day contact and routine, too much like home to sustain an atmosphere of romance. Her renewed acquaintance with Darrow and the exhilaration with which she anticipates his visit at Givre is an attempt once again to resuscitate her long-time dream, gone dormant. For whatever reason--perhaps her youth or the stultifying environment or both--in New York Anna had been unable to realize a relationship with Darrow. She dreamed in private of what things were to be like "but as soon as he reappeared her head straightened itself on her slim neck and she sped her little shafts of irony, or flew her little kites of erudition, while hot and cold waves swept over her, and the things she really wanted to say choked in her throat and burned the palms of her hands" (87). That she was then uncomfortable with passion, and still in the clutches of Puritanism, shows in the retelling of a story of her apprehension of Darrow's seductive looks to another young woman--arousing Anna's jealousy and disapproval. What she really wants, but never admits it, is for him to look at her so lasciviously. "All night she lay awake and wondered: 'What was she saying to him? How shall I learn to say such things?'" Yet, somewhat contradictorily, she had earlier mused that "if that was where romance and passion ended, it was better to take to district visiting or algebra!" (88)

Initially Anna is excited by the prospects raised by Darrow's re-entry into the picture. She quickly comes to view him as a person with whom she might forge a fulfilling union. The kind of union Anna has in mind, though, is still, it seems, one in which physical passion takes a back seat to intellectual and spiritual companionship. In other words, she is still fighting with her Puritan past which she thought she had left behind when she came to France. Passion is what she distrusts and her distrust of it drives a wedge between herself and Darrow. If he had slipped into temptation once, would he not--even perhaps when they were married--be susceptible to the same impulse? Of course she is also tormented by the way Darrow has dealt with Sophy--using her and tossing her aside rather callously. Anna's insistence on complete honesty, decency and monogamy leads her to doubt whether an ideal union can ever be satisfactorily met, with Darrow or with anyone else.

One feature of expatriate literature is that it often extends, compresses, or intensifies those individual psychological dramas related both to self and nation. Through their actions characters often reflect upon the extent to which they carry their own problems and national traits within themselves. It is, as it were, in Emerson's terms, that the traveler "carries ruins to ruins." By placing himself in a region of difference where his own values are radically thrown in relief, the expatriate must, in some way or another, come to terms with that new culture and define himself against the new background. We see, for example, Anna's Puritanism, quite clearly when it is set against a Gallic background.

One thing the new environment is prone to do is prompt analy-

sis which, in an Hegelian way, results in greater self-consciousness, or at least a new perspective on past relations. This process is certainly a response to the altered pattern of relations, and what happens to the self depends upon the nature of the character's experiences and interactions with his new setting. Naturally, the various strategies for responding to the new environment are given fictional form. Expatriation, as seems to be the case with Adelaide Painter, may turn some characters back in on themselves; they may become more American than they would be in their own country and they may have nothing or little to do with the country they reside in. Others it may push into direct, intimate contact with the foreign culture, to the extent where one's previous national identity may be lost, or absorbed by the new culture. Immersion and isolation are, then, two opposing strategies--neither mutually exclusive nor fixed--for dealing with the essential region of difference the expatriate inhabits. If Adelaide Painter represents one extreme (isolation), Madame de Chantelle, as already noted, is perhaps the American character in The Reef who has most completely been absorbed by the foreign environment.

As the self merges with the new culture, there are various outcomes. The expatriate who makes the crossing as completely and irrevocably as possible risks a certain loss of self; this may even be his intention. In rejecting or casting aside all that went into his formation, he faces a gaping void. T. E. Lawrence, in The Seven Pillars of Wisdom describes his experience with the Arabs as resulting in the loss of his English self, and a subsequent facing of the void within.

In my case, the efforts for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self, and let me look at the West and its conventions with new eyes: they destroyed it all for me. At the same time I could not sincerely take on the Arab skin: it was an affectation only. Easily was a man made an infidel, but hardly might he be converted to another faith. I had dropped one form and not taken on the other, and was become like Mohammed's coffin in our legend, with a resultant feeling of intense loneliness in life, and a contempt, not for other men, but for all they do. Such detachment came at times to a man exhausted by prolonged physical effort and isolation. 12

The description Lawrence offers, while vividly showing the dynamic at work, does not, I think, characterize the most typical experiences of American expatriates. Yes, there is the proximity to the void--where isn't it in American life and literature?--but perhaps with the notable exception of Nelson Dyar in Let It Come Down, this is not the drama which is most commonly played out. The American seems most often, as he extends himself toward other cultures, to find and pull towards him those aspects of the culture which he feels already inclined to. Mme de Chantelle's adoption of French ways, like Wharton's own, can be seen as a way by which the American could become more himself. So much as he absorbs, he seeks not to abandon his identity so much as to reshape it.

The point here is that no matter how he chooses to deal with

the situation, the expatriate must come to terms with the foreign culture. Perhaps the most intense form of this interaction, in life and in fiction, comes in the shape of the relationships expatriates have with members of the host culture. We shall see these kinds of heightened cross-cultural contact, for example, in Chad's involvement with Madame de Vionnet, in Nelson Dyar's involvement with both Hadija and Thami, in Lady Brett's affair with Romero and in David's relationship with Giovanni.

In The Reef the interaction between the American and local French values and customs does not seem to be highly prominent. The characters in The Reef, with a few exceptions which have been discussed already, spend relatively little time comparing their present environment with their homeland; nor do they seem to express much remorse, regret, or thrill as a result of being in the foreign context; nor do they interact much, in a way which recognizes difference or highlights irony, with the culture they have taken up residence in. Several factors may account for the reduced position this sense of doubleness plays in the novel. As already noted, the novel's central concern is Anna's relationship with Darrow and so long as that commands our attention, many other possible concerns fall aside. Furthermore, these Americans, as also mentioned previously, seem settled in France; they seem almost French at times, perhaps because of their long residence there. Consequently the kinds of misunderstandings likely to spring from the newcomer's contact with a fresh culture will be far fewer and of less interest. Another point to bear in mind again here is that Wharton populates her novel almost exclusively with Americans. So long as there are

no major French characters--as there are in the works of Henry James--the value conflicts will undoubtedly be less pronounced.

This is not to say that the doubleness is never apparent to readers, nor that it never reaches consciousness in the characters. Differences between American and continental values to take a subtle form in the novel, however. The differences might be noted first of all in the form the novel takes and the style it adopts; many readers of The Reef (affirming James's remarks in a famous letter to the author) have noted that its form and style are classical, Racinean, without the roughness, the "bagginess" with very often characterizes the American novel. Beyond the formal values, though, we can see some evidence in the work of a struggle between different sets of moral values. Soon after we meet Anna Leath and learn of her past history, for example, the narrator tells us something of her feelings about France, compared to America. In France she sees "a society at once freer and finer, which observed the traditional forms but had discarded the underlying prejudices; whereas the world she knew had discarded many of the forms and kept almost all the prejudices" (91).

One occasion on which American and continental values seem to clash is on the question of the suitability of Sophy Viner as a bride for Owen Leath. The nature of the clash is somewhat disguised because the division is between Americans--but between Americans who maintain their democratic attitudes toward the equality of men, and those who, having adopted more traditional views on the matter, think one should marry within his own class. The split is seen when Anna's views are compared to Madame de Chantelle's.

Anna's more American values show in her willingness, even eagerness, to have Owen cross class lines and marry Sophy Viner. In the same matter Darrow and Madame de Chantelle display more European views. "'I'm old-fashioned--like my furniture,'" Madame de Chantelle says to Darrow as she solicits his support for her opposition to the pair's plans (191-92). And Darrow earlier "was aware of cherishing the common doubt as to the disinterestedness of the woman who tries to rise above her past" (188).

Likewise, at a first glance, Wharton seems neither to have placed significant emphasis on the ironic situation of the expatriates, nor to have employed any unique narrative strategies to accent the nature of difference, or double consciousness. Yet, closer consideration of the novel, so carefully plotted and designed, yields many unexpected dividends. The first relates to Wharton's handling of point of view. Wharton's method resembles, to a certain extent, the one James employs in The Ambassadors, though James, of course, follows only one character throughout the novel. In The Reef the story is acquired through the reflecting consciousnesses of persons who are, in the words of E.K. Brown, in "close mental and moral relation to each other."¹³ Though the narration is omniscient throughout, it is always close to the consciousness of one of the two central figures, Darrow or Anna, producing in the swings between them (a little like the movement between places) a region of difference wherein lies, supposedly, a truer version of events than one gets through one consciousness or the other. Never does Wharton shift the perspective within a chapter. The action of the first book, Darrow's affair with Sophy Viner, we get, of course,

looking over Darrow's shoulder. At Givre, as noted earlier, we shift to Anna's perspective. Yet, many of the subsequent scenes at Givre (viz. those affording access to Darrow's interviews with Sophy) are again filtered through Darrow's consciousness.

What is interesting to note is how Wharton's method of shifting between the two consciousnesses accents or creates ironic situations. We find, for example, that Darrow at Givre, because of his status as outsider, lacks a great deal of knowledge about what is going around him that is readily available to those more familiar with the scene. His speculations regarding motives and causes for people's actions, hence, are quite often mistaken. Knowing far less than any of the other characters about the habits and patterns of living at Givre, the nature of established relationships and the subtle, unstated meanings of glances, absences, and tones of speech, Darrow is in a situation much like that of a foreigner in an unfamiliar landscape. Wharton uses this technique both as a means of creating suspense and of displaying dramatic irony. For example, perhaps the first important piece of information Darrow (and consequently the reader) lacks access to is that Sophy Viner is working at the Chateau. Even when he confronts the fact directly, he still is unaware that Miss Viner and Owen are making plans for an engagement. Unwittingly, then, Darrow responds to questions Anna puts to him concerning Miss Viner's character. Darrow (and the reader as well) is also unaware of the turns of Owen's or Anna's mind. He continually flips through possibilities, guessing at plausible explanations for people's reactions to events at various times; never, though, does he have certain knowledge. For example, at luncheon,

following his meeting with Sophy at the spring-house, "the first time that he had seen young Leath and Sophy Viner together since he had learned of their engagement," he appraises the gathering, finding a certain measure of constraint which he judges to be a response to Madame de Chantelle's disapproval of the union--and her absence from the meal. "So Darrow interpreted the tension perceptible under the fluent exchange of commonplaces in which he was diligently sharing. But he was more and more aware of his inability to test the moral atmosphere about him: he was like a man in fever testing another's temperature by the touch" (208).

Darrow's position as described in this last passage is clearly similar to the ironic situation of the foreigner in an alien culture, and Wharton's narrative strategy must to some extent be seen as a response to the problem of representing, in fiction, this ironic situation. She expressly propels the narrative using Darrow's consciousness in this section precisely to achieve this effect. Darrow doesn't know; neither does the reader, until, in their own time, facts come to light.

A charting of the paths of characters, moved either by their own will or by other powerful exterior pressures, from one place to another, reveals that ultimate design, the plot. As mentioned briefly in the introduction, the explicit acknowledgement of the essential nature of plots can reveal a great deal about the deeper meanings of a novel. We might begin an examination of The Reef's plot with Irving Howe's rather general characterization of Wharton's plots:

. . . most of her plots focus upon a clash between a stable

society and a sensitive person who half belongs to and half rebels against it. [my emphasis] At the end he must surrender to the social taboos he had momentarily challenged or wished to challenge, for he either has not been able to summon the resources of courage through which to act out his rebellion, or he has discovered that the punitive power of society is greater than he had supposed, or he has learned that the conventions he has assumed to be lifeless still retain a certain wisdom. Yet much of Mrs. Wharton's work contains a somewhat chill and detached sympathy for these very rebels in whose crushing she seems to connive. Her sense of the world is hardly such as to persuade her of its goodness; it is merely such as to persuade her of its force.¹⁴

Certainly this describes, in the abstract, the plots of Wharton's best known novels--The House of Mirth, Ethan Frome, and The Age of Innocence. And although it does not seem to describe what happens in The Reef very well, it at least forces us to identify the novel's uniqueness. A "stable society" we have represented in the life at the Chateau; and Anna Leath may one of those "sensitive people" who tries to live both inside and outside the moral boundaries inscribed by that order. But this does not tell us much about the most fascinating dynamics at work in the novel. In using the phrases "half belongs to" and "half rebels against" Howe seems to assume that the character stands within the society he is rebelling against. The terms might as well, though, describe the predicament

the expatriate finds himself in: he half belongs to home; his abandonment of home is most often seen, at least partially, as an act of rebellion. It is, in fact, the crushing force of society--which so often, as Howe notes, is responsible for demolishing characters--which the expatriate seeks to escape. What is most obviously absent in The Reef is the objective presence of that external society. It is not the power of society which presses in on Anna, or other characters (since they have by going abroad ostensibly separated themselves from their native society) so much as the undeniable facts of real life which threaten to sabotage an individually conceived idea of a moral universe.

When we look more specifically at the pattern of events in The Reef we notice a number of things. As with a great many novels, the narrative progresses as a result of a whole series of events which either block or enable the fulfillment of characters' romantic schemes. With the words of Anna Leath's telegram at the novel's beginning--"'Unexpected obstacle'"--this narrative principle is set into operation. This obstacle derails Darrow's intention, resulting in his affair with Sophy Viner. The affair, in one sense a consummation of desire, later itself becomes an obstacle when Darrow finds Sophy at Givre. His secret meetings with Sophy there, gauged by Darrow to alleviate any problems caused by Sophy's presence and ensure the continuity of his own relationship with Anna, prove later, when revealed by Owen, to be obstacles--events demanding Darrow's dishonest justification. All these obstacles, then, must be successfully maneuvered around or crossed over in order for the central romance between Darrow and Anna to stay alive. The various

meanings of the metaphor suggested by the novel's title should by now have some force. The reef is both a protection and a hazard. It could be thought of as breaking the harsh, buffeting storms which threaten the idyllic tropical island Paradise. If, though, you are on the outer side of the reef, it becomes that unknown jagged ridge, sharp and threatening, whose character cannot be easily plotted or mapped, which unexpectedly, at nearly any moment, might puncture the vulnerable hulls of the vessel carrying you toward some safe harbor. Darrow himself seems to recognize the possibilities of the metaphor for describing his own situation when he meets Anna, in Paris, toward the end of the novel and they are groping for a way to salvage their relationship. Of elements in the past which haunt Anna, he says, "'I don't know! It seemed such a slight thing--all on the surface--and I've gone aground on it because it was on the surface. I see the horror of it just as you do. But I see, a little more clearly, the extent, and the limits of my wrong. It's not as black as you imagine'" (314).

We come now toward the end of the novel, that final destination to which plot leads us, a point after which the total aesthetic effect of the work can be assessed, and the experiences of characters summed up and evaluated. The ending of The Reef, no matter how viewed, has always presented problems for readers of the novel. The central issues are left unresolved, and there is considerable doubt as to the intended meaning and aesthetic fitness of the final scene. Before trying to situate my own interpretation midst those proffered by other critics, it is probably necessary quickly to review the important details related to the ending.

When Darrow, called back to London by his diplomatic duties, leaves Givre, Anna, unhappy with the unsettled state of their relationship, takes the train to Paris with him. In Paris she meets with Owen who, smarting from the pains of separation from Sophy, is planning to travel to Spain with a friend. Sophy, she surmises, has been true to her word; she has not met Owen in Paris. While Anna is in Paris, rather than feeling greater certainty about her relationship with Darrow, she is continually perturbed by thoughts of Sophy Viner. After all, Paris is the city in which Darrow and Sophy had their fling. Anna sees her former rival everywhere. Finally she determines that "It was Sophy Viner only who could save her--Sophy Viner only who could give her back her lost serenity. She would seek the girl out and tell her that she had given Darrow up; and that step once taken there would be no retracing it, and she would perforce have to go forward alone" (360). This leads Anna, in what Blake Nevius calls "the regrettable final chapter" of the novel,¹⁵ to go off in search of Sophy. Sophy, however, has left Paris, and Anna's path leads ultimately only as far as her sister, a performer who lives in the "dingy" Hotel Chicago, in a bohemian atmosphere surrounded by a number of unidentified, rakish young men. Once Anna is ushered in to see Mrs. McTarvie-Birch, "she found herself in a dim untidy scented room, with a pink curtain pinned across its single window, and a lady with a great deal of fair hair and uncovered neck smiling at her from a pink bed on which an immense powder-puff trailed" (364). In the very short conversation which follows, Anna learns that Sophy has gone to India, taking up her old position with Mrs. Murrett. As Anna takes her leave and is walking

away we are left with the last lines of the novel, cried out by Mrs. McFarvie-Birch. "'Jimmy! Do you hear me? Jimmy Brance! and then, there being no response from the person summoned: 'Do tell him he must go and call the lift for you!'" (367)

It is indeed a curious ending. Why does Wharton end by bringing into the picture Jimmy Brance--a character we've most likely forgotten since he was mentioned, only in passing, by Sophy near the opening of the novel? The connection would be lost on Anna. Is it a trick, meant only for the reader? We begin to wonder when we turn back to that reference and read Darrow's response upon Sophy's first mention of his name:

"Just a moment: who on earth is Jimmy Brance?"

She exclaimed in wonder: "You were absorbed--not to remember Jimmy Brance!"

This, then, is the scene Nevius so strenuously objects to, saying that "with its depressingly narrow sense of human values, it is one of the most regrettable passages in Edith Wharton's fiction." (140) Apparently the reason it is, in a judgment I do not wholly share, so regrettable, is that it insists upon a "return to the status quo," and shows, along with other later novels and stories, "an almost ironclad rectitude in the treatment of ethical questions." (113) Nevius apparently forms his view as a result of what he considers to be "the gross unfairness" of Sophy Viner's treatment in the last chapter. That is, the announcement of the return to Mrs. Murrett. "The factors which in Mrs. Wharton's view weigh so heavily in Sophy's disfavor--her shabby antecedents, her pathetic

liaison with Darrow, her little social blunders, the fact that she powders her face--are apt to count negligibly in directing the sympathies of a more tolerant latter-day audience." (135)

Nevius suggests that modern readers might be unable to accept the fate of Sophy Viner. We might feel her return to entrapment unjust in relation to Darrow's, he contends. This view overlooks several important points. First, it tends wrongly to assume that Mrs. Wharton condones the nature of the world which, in her view, forces this kind of resolution. Furthermore, it ignores the fact that Sophy is not the only character who is returned to her cage at the end of the novel. Anna's own fate is scarcely one to envy. It seems that she will have to compromise her high ideals if she is to have a life with Darrow. I am reminded, as I think about the end of The Reef, of what Richard Poirier said about the ebb and flow of American fiction. "American writers," he writes in A World Elsewhere, "are at some point always forced to return their characters to prison."¹⁶

Just as mistaken is Carol Wershoven's conclusion that "it is Sophy Viner who emerges as the big 'winner' in the novel, because she has taken the risks that life in the real world involve, and because she has given--given her love to Darrow without hope of reciprocation, and given up all chance of the wealthy and pleasurable life Owen Leath offers so that Darrow can be happy."¹⁷ This view supposes that Sophy is a kind of Lambert Strether who by insisting, as a supreme gesture of renunciation, that she get nothing out of it, gets everything. But Sophy's fate at the end of the novel, unlike Strether's, is determined. She is to go back into the same cage she was trying to escape at the outset--employment under

Mrs. Murrett. Nor do we see any evidence that she has gained any of the vision which Strether gains. Bereft, with no resources of her own, she could hardly be called a "winner." One might even cringe at the use of such terms in assessing the positions of characters in a novel such as this one where it is not a matter of winning or losing, so much as surviving the best one can in a world which fails to conform to one's imaginings.

If the ending is meant to signify anything important, we might speculate that Brance is intended to serve as a reminder for us, to help us realize just what the cost of Sophy's renunciation has been. For in the end, as I have suggested, Sophy is just as single, penniless, and dependent as she was at the outset, and she must be all the more hardened to the prospect of romance after her temporary fling with Darrow and her unsuccessful courtship of Owen Leath. And the telegram from Mrs. Murrett at the end signals a return to the very trap she was seeking to escape at the beginning. Sophy's plight, though not as clearly tragic, might remind us in some ways of Lily Bart's in The House of Mirth. She is a victim; she is always being turned out of places.

Gary Lindberg has suggested that in Wharton's heroes and heroines we have no "images of the human spirit asserting itself in implacable, even if futile, resistance." In the end, he says, we are "affirmed in our weakness, shown that our limitations are inevitable, that genuine resistance to them only denies the roots of our personality."¹⁸ While we might be able to sense how Lindberg could arrive at this conclusion (there is an undeniable tragic and bleak quality to much of Wharton's writing), this characterization of her

work, especially in this novel, seems to leave out the "striving" element. That is, to say that the search for an ideal sense of order and freedom ends in a recognition of certain externally and internally determined boundaries is not to say that the search itself has no value, purpose or meaning. On the contrary. One feels, with Wharton's characters, that the struggle itself is, innately, an affirmation of purpose. Marilyn Jones Lyde realizes this value when she offers this analysis of Wharton's characters:

Mrs. Wharton's basic technique for creating her central figures is to endow them with certain qualities which fail to fit into the established social pattern but are yet related to it, in this way giving them a greater value and interest than the generality of persons possess.¹⁹

The disjuncture between Anna and her surroundings in the last scene underscores this message. Givre seems almost to be a setting created to fit Anna perfectly; out of that place, in the dingy hotel room, she is far away from that more ideal vision.

It is difficult, in the end, to determine exactly where we are. We are left, as is the case in so many expatriate novels, at a point of irresolution. The novel abruptly comes to a halt amidst the turmoil surrounding the relationship between Darrow and Anna, without suggesting a lasting solution. This may indeed precisely be the source of the ending's strength, despite the unconventional last scene. Anna's tragic dilemma involves the hazards of commitment, the problems involved with attachment. Hers is a struggle involving the weighing of the advantages associated with possession, against

those associated with renunciation. To choose to be with Darrow would involve a compromise of her moral code (which by insisting on integrity, allows for no compromise); to give him up once and for all would mean settling for a smaller sphere, retiring once again to the circumscribed existence of Givre. The tension between giving in, and holding back--putting her hand in his, or not--is continued throughout the last part of the novel. The night before Darrow's departure from Givre it seems as though everything is off. Yet the next chapter shows them on the train together. Once in Paris, however, Anna's jealousy springs up again, like a tiger, and her misgivings threaten to devour the relationship. When she finds out everything, she thinks, all will be fine. She believes she can live with whatever knowledge she discovers. When Anna thinks of Sophy, that reef which she is hung up on and doesn't seem to be able to cross over, in either direction, we read that "In that moment of self-searching she saw Sophy Viner had chosen the better part, and the certain renunciations might enrich where possession would have left a desert." (333)

The problem Anna has yet to solve at the end of the novel is the one she apparently has been trying to work out all her life: How can she reconcile her ideal of what she thinks life ought to be, with the real world around her? The matter takes on particularity in the question of what to do with Darrow. She must, somehow, reconcile the pure and noble Darrow she had once envisioned with the real Darrow, subject to human temptations. What she has to realize, in the end, is that "the Darrow she worshipped was inseparable from the Darrow she abhorred." The moral problem in The Reef is acute.

For the first time in her life Anna Leath is given no choice but to face certain moral complexities. The disclosure of the fact of Sophy and Darrow's relationship, no matter how hard she tries to suppress it, continually surfaces. She does try to escape. Darrow discerns her thoughts and responds: "You're afraid. . . . You've always said you wanted, above all, to look at life, at the human problem, as it is, without fear and without hypocrisy; and it's not always a pleasant thing to look at" (292).

Blake Nevius very neatly packages the conflict in the typical Wharton novel: the struggle between mobile characters, with dreams and desires, and fixed social groups, moral codes and standards. Wharton, he says, "tries to define the nature and limits of individual responsibility, to determine what allowance of freedom or rebellion can be made for her trapped protagonists without at the same time threatening the structure of society."²⁰ Of course, this drama involving what he calls the "trapped sensibility" can be acted out anywhere. In The House of Mirth, The Age of Innocence, Ethan Frome and many other works, Wharton's American characters confront the economic, social, and moral structures of their own native American society. Something quite different happens in The Reef. It is not so much the "structure of society" which the "trapped sensibility" is at odds with so much as the structure of the character's own sensibility itself. This, it seems to me, is one of the most distinctive elements of the novel, one which sets it apart from others of its writers' brood. What the expatriate novel very often shows is a "trapped sensibility" which by escaping has already sought to unburden itself of many of his trappings--the constricting values of his own society--only to find

himself constrained--not by the society he thought constrained him, but by his own nature, the set of values and principles he has assimilated into his own being.

The impact of expatriation on Edith Wharton's writing has never been fully appraised or appreciated. While the fact is nearly always acknowledged by critics of her fiction, its tangible effects are less often analysed. Some, particularly among her own contemporaries, interpreted her move abroad as an act of national betrayal, further evidence of her aristocratic, anti-democratic snobbery. Well known, for example, are Vernon Parrington's comments on Wharton which, though delivered with utmost seriousness in 1920, might strike us as rather comical today:

If she had lived less easily, if she had been forced to skimp and save and plan, she would have been a greater and richer artist, more significant because more native, more continental. But unfortunately her doors open only to the smart set; the windows from which she surveys life open only to the east, to London, Paris, Rome. She is one of our cosmopolitans, flitting lightly about and at ease with all who bear titles. And this the stay-at-home American secretly resents. . . . For Mrs. Wharton to spend her talents upon rich nobodies is no less than sheer waste.²⁰

Parrington's remarks have been sharply refuted by many who have called attention to the complexity of Wharton's works which not only often deal with people outside her own class, but also often treat the crassness of members of her own class with ironic disdain. Even

though Parrington's criticisms have few adherents today, their very extremeness make them a useful foil. One could very well argue, as indeed I do, that Wharton's cosmopolitan reach enriched and nourished rather than diminished her artistic achievement. It did so in a number of ways which have been implicit in the preceding discussion. First of all, we must not underestimate the importance of Europe for Wharton as a place where she could, perhaps free of some of the psychological pressures of her native society, put her pen to paper. While her writing career began in America, it grew and reached its maturity abroad. A second observation follows: Edith Wharton's expatriation changed the nature of her writing. It is senseless for us to speculate what her writing would have been like had she remained in Lenox, Massachusetts. We can safely say, however, that the content, if not the volume, of her oeuvre would have been much different than it is. One effect produced by her separation from America was a kind of aesthetic distancing. Like nearly all expatriates, Wharton never took her eye off her homeland. That Ethan Frome, The Custom of the Country, Summer, and The Age of Innocence--all novels set in and concerned with America--were written abroad is evidence of the extent of this preoccupation. Yet another effect, one which must be viewed as an enriching element, is the new subject matter and settings which she gained by virtue of her expatriation. Not only does The Reef owe a great deal to the move; so do Madame de Treymes, Son at the Front, The Children and various other novels and short stories. E.K. Brown has written of Wharton that "No novelist has painted with a more severe truthfulness the emptiness which threatens the lives of those who live

away from their own country." Citing Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Boykin of Madame de Treymes as examples, he goes on to say that "No type of character is more frequently met in Edith Wharton's fiction than the American expatriate whose life is a great void."²² Of course, we should remind ourselves that her American characters who stayed home were every bit as consumed by a void, if not more so, as were her sojourners.

Expatriation, it has been suggested, can be thought of as the child's escape from the dominion of the parent, and as an attempt to establish, elsewhere, a wholly new center of authority in one's self. The expatriate novel is bound, in some way, to internalize that sense of rupture. While the word "expatriation" connotes not only a movement away from one's country, but away from the father, various other figures depicting an unnatural separation or splitting off of an organic family unit are often used to describe the experience of expatriation. The Reef richly suggests a few. The first is orphanage, once again a figure denoting abrupt separation from natural parents. Sophy Viner, we may recall, is left adrift in Europe with no parents to return to. She is cut off and forced to piece together a life the best she can. It doesn't really matter where she is; she must begin again in any case. The figure describes expatriation well: absent are those critical footholds one can depend upon for support in one's own culture. The reader of The Reef might notice, too, a significant number of second marriages, and this figure--either marriage itself or second marriage--can also be used to symbolize the nature of the expatriate condition. Madame de Chantelle's second marriage is to the Marquis and that marriage

joins her not only to a new man, but to a new culture as well, one to which, over time, she develops tremendous loyalty. As Anna becomes Fraser Leath's second wife, she gives up an American past and associates herself with the solid French traditions of Givre. Either metaphor--orphanage or marriage--describes a condition in which there is both gain and loss. A past is not obliterated. Rather, a radically different present displaces it and casts it in a new relation.

In "Joy in the House," a story appearing in the collection Human Nature (1933), this question of loyalties to countries is quite clearly made analogous to those involving moral obligations to and love between human beings. The whole story, in fact, seems centered around the moral dilemma associated with love, adultery, and life abroad. Christine Ansley leaves her husband and daughter in America for a more romantic life abroad with a painter, Jeff Lithgow. The romance wanes as Mrs. Ansley is in close proximity to the real, material constraints of artist's existence. Disillusioned, and feeling guilty, she returns home, whereupon she discovers, from her husband, that Lithgow, shattered by her decision, has committed suicide. At some point, she went wrong, but she wonders where. She has erred twice, she realizes--first in leaving her daughter and husband, and second in leading the artist to believe that theirs was to be a true, and lasting relationship. The ironic twist is that the husband survives the act of adultery; the return to convention, though, is fatal for the lover.

Most critics judge the portion of Wharton's work produced after The Age of Innocence (1920) as inferior to her earlier work, and

some suggest that this might in part have been because she had completely lost touch with America. Other reasons, though, have been given as well (disillusionment following World War I, changes in her personal life and health, a need for money, exhaustion of material) and it is likely that any truthful accounting for the reason would have to take note of all these factors. As early as 1902, after the publication of The Valley of Decision, Wharton's historical novel set in Italy, Henry James, in a letter, had written that he wanted "to get hold of the little lady and pump the pure essence of my wisdom and experience into her. She must be tethered in native pastures, even if it reduces her to a backyard in New York."²³ And, his admiration of Madame de Treymes was qualified: "All the same . . . don't go in too much for the French or the Franco-American subject--the real field of your extension is here [meaning England]--it has far more fusability with our native and primary material."²⁴

It is not necessary to arrive at any absolute judgment as to the value of expatriation for Wharton's literary career; it is enough to try to describe the ways it affected her and her writing. This discussion of The Reef has been meant to do just that. Louis Auchincloss ends an intelligent introduction to one edition of the novel by suggesting that "The Chateau might have been a more appropriate title for it than The Reef."²⁵ By now we be in a position to judge Wharton's own choice as fortunate and fitting. Not only is the metaphor appropriate for the novel; it works well as a figure describing all the unforeseen difficulties which can befall one as one crosses the intercultural abyss.

Notes to Chapter One

¹Millicent Bell, Edith Wharton and Henry James: The Story of Their Friendship (New York: George Braziller, 1965), p. 269-70.

²Edith Wharton, The Reef (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 1. Subsequent references to the novel, noted in parentheses, will be to this edition.

³F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tender is the Night (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), p. 3.

⁴Edith Wharton, quoted in Bell, p. 126.

⁵Cynthia Griffin Wolff, A Feast of Words (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 208.

⁶Carol Wershoven, The Female Intruder in the Novels of Edith Wharton (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), p. 96.

⁷Henry James, The Americans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), p. 26. Subsequent references shall be noted in parentheses.

⁸Michael Seidel, Exile and the Narrative Imagination (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 2.

⁹Alastair Reid, Whereabouts: Notes on Being a Foreigner (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), p. 7.

¹⁰ Wharton, A Backward Glance (New York: Appleton-Century, 1936), p. 123.

¹¹ James Baldwin, quoted in Fern Eckman, The Furious Passage of James Baldwin (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1966), p. 120.

¹² T.E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom (New York: Penguin, 1962), p. 30.

¹³ E.K. Brown, "Edith Wharton: The Art of the Novel," in Irving Howe, ed. Edith Wharton: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, N.J., 1962), p. 98.

¹⁴ Irving Howe, "Edith Wharton," in Edith Wharton: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, N.J., 1962), pp. 16-17.

¹⁵ Blake Nevius, Edith Wharton: A Study of Her Fiction (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), p. 113. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

¹⁶ Richard Poirier, A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 29.

¹⁷ Wershoven, p. 104.

¹⁸ Gary Lindberg, Edith Wharton and the Novel of Manners (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1975), p. 175.

¹⁹ Marilyn Jones Lyde, Edith Wharton: Convention and Morality in the Work of a Novelist (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), p. 150.

²⁰Nevius, p. 113.

²¹Vernon L. Parrington, "Our Literary Aristocrat," in Irving Howe, ed. Edith Wharton: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 153.

²²E.K. Brown, in Howe, p. 63-64.

²³Henry James, Letters, ed. Leon Edel (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 396.

²⁴Henry James, cited in Wayne Andrews, intro., The Best Short Stories of Edith Wharton (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. xv.

²⁵Louis Auchincloss, introduction to The Reef (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. xii.

CHAPTER TWO

Strether's Double Consciousness

"Why don't he go home?" Waymarsh asks Strether in Book III of The Ambassadors, referring to Little Bilham, Chad Newsome's American companion in Paris. "Well, because he likes it over here" answers Strether.¹ If Waymarsh's question is applied more broadly to Chad himself and to Strether, Mrs. Newsome's representative in Paris, we have, in one form, the central theme of James's novel. Indeed, The Ambassadors might be thought of as the quintessential American expatriate novel. Utterly self-absorbed, stylistically and psychologically, it is, at its core, about the pull and attraction of the foreign environment. It chronicles the gradual conversion of one man, Lambert Strether, to an expatriate disposition and in the process exposes those essential forces responsible for the creation of that sensibility. In his backward glance at the novel, recorded in the Preface to the New York edition, James says of Strether that "he had come to Paris in some state of mind which was literally undergoing, as a result of new and unexpected assaults and infusions, a change almost from hour to hour" (6). Halfway through the novel, by the time Chad asks Strether whether he feels "the charm of life over here," Strether, whose answer to the question is "Immensely," has come to see some profit or value in life abroad (188). The Ambassadors, thus, might be thought of as a kind of apologia for the expatriate stance, a justification for or explanation of the preference for life away from the motherland: a stance which does not

deny national origins, but simply notes some value in or preference for living in a region of intensified difference.

It comes as no surprise that The Ambassadors, surely one of James's finest novels, has generated such a vast quantity of critical response. The novel's pivotal position, between two continents and between two centuries, has made it a natural touchstone for anyone interested in the 19th century or modern novel, in either the American or the European tradition. With some profit the work might also be viewed within the tradition of the American expatriate novel, for in The Ambassadors one finds clear evidence of the energy and ingenuity which James, our most confirmed expatriate writer, spent at uniquely shaping the novel in ways which aesthetically render the expatriate experience.

Of particular interest in the novel is Strether's development of a "double consciousness," an ironic sensibility. Life in a culture other than his own produces a mental condition in which James's hero is continually sorting out competing desires--to be here, to be there--and emerging preferences as the values, energies, architecture, customs, and manners of one culture are measured against the other. In the first phase of this process, we shall see, Strether takes it all in, gloriously and openly. His sense of the "other," not at all a part of his consciousness back in Woollett, must expand and take shape, and it does so after prolonged and continuous contact with the new culture and landscape. The self must then seek to redefine itself against the new environment. "America" never fades away for him, of course. It resides permanently in the mind, continually revitalized by all sorts of reminders

of what was left behind but remains. The art then is keeping the whole thing in balance. What Strether experiences is much along the lines James expressed in his 1877 essay, "Occasional Paris," reprinted in Portraits of Places (1883): "The consequence of the cosmopolite spirit is to initiate you into the merits of all peoples, to convince you that national virtues are numerous, though they may be very different, and make downright preference really very hard."² Some kind of understanding and sharpened definition--but what kind?--is supposedly the result of this experience.

I.

Although it means going back a decade in time, the move from The Reef (1913) to The Ambassadors (1903) is an easy and logical one. The friendship between Wharton and James is well documented, and critics have often said that The Reef is one of Wharton's most Jamesian novels, a judgment no doubt springing from the novel's foreign setting and its employment of Jamesian modes of handling point of view. James himself, in a letter to Wharton, proclaimed that "The whole of the finest part [of The Reef] is, I think, quite the finest thing you have done; both more done than the best of your other doing, and more worth it through intrinsic value, interest and beauty." In the same letter he went on to say that "your only drawback is not having the homeliness and the inevitability and the happy limitation and the affluent poverty, of a Country of your Own (comme moi, par exemple!)" It "leaves you more in the desert (for everything else) that surrounds Apex City. But you will say that you're content with your lot; that the desert surrounding Apex City

is quite enough of a dense crush for you, and that with the colon-nade and the gallery and the dim river you will always otherwise pull through. To which I can only assent--after such an example of pulling through as *The Reef*. Clearly you have only to pull, and everything will come."³ No doubt part of the reason we connect these two writers, beyond the matter of friendship, is that the two are both expatriates who share certain sensibilities and were guided by the belief that the form of the novel held enormous possibilities for displaying aesthetically the deepest moral struggles of human beings living in any society. Many critics, noting that Wharton has often been seen as a "lesser" Henry James, have justly reminded us to make our comparisons cautiously, distinguishing the different natures of their projects. Certainly one of the first things we are struck by, as we move from Wharton to James, is the sheer density of prose in the latter. The two novels, however, do lend themselves nicely to comparison.

The initial trajectories in *The Reef* and *The Ambassadors* are quite similar, revealing a familiar pattern of travel reflected in novelistic design--a movement from the less foreign, closer (geographically, culturally, and linguistically) English soil to the Continent. In *The Ambassadors* Strether moves from Chester, to London, to Paris, to the French countryside, and back to Paris; in the *The Reef* we move from London, to Dover, to Calais, to Paris, and back and forth between Paris and Givre. The nature of this move and the difference it implies is noted by Millicent Bell in her book on James and Wharton. "In England," she reminds us, "the American did not feel cut off from his beginnings; rather he felt himself simply

reaching back to earlier connections. The scene was familiar, even if one had never seen it before, and the language was still one's own--how important that was, for a writer! Had not Hawthorne called England 'our old home'?"⁴ An essential difference between the two novels, as suggested in the previous chapter, is that while Darrow and Anna and all the other expatriates in The Reef are, at the time of the novel, already confirmed expatriates, in James's novel we have the new arrival come to see just what is holding his compatriots abroad. England is certainly more strange for Strether than it is for Darrow for whom it is a kind of home from which he journeys out to France. Temporal elements, consequently, differ in the two novels. For Strether, whose impressions are changing "almost from hour to hour" and who ostensibly is anticipating a return to America, events unfold and are told in a more compressed time frame than they are in The Reef, where the ebb and flow of time is calibrated to the exigencies of the romance. What we have in The Ambassadors, then, primarily because of Strether's recent arrival, is a story of initial contact, in which home and abroad are very distinct and opposing terms which struggle for control over the mind. We see, in short, the making of Strether's double consciousness.

We notice immediately in this novel aspects of the expatriate novel delineated in the preceding chapter--notably foreign setting and American characters--whose presence affect Strether's state of mind. In the Preface to The Ambassadors James describes some of the thought processes leading, finally, to the determination of the central elements the novel was to consist of. Although in 1895 he

had noted that Strether (who yet was nameless) "may be an American-- he might be an Englishman," he says that deciding Strether's nationality (American) was easy. He would, furthermore, hail from New England, from the fictitious town of Woollett. There was also, for James, the question of where to place the main action of the novel. And though he selected Paris, he did so fully aware of the possible clichéd meanings this setting would carry with it. In the Preface James writes:

There was the dreadful little old tradition, one of the platitudes of the human comedy, that people's moral scheme does break down in Paris; that nothing is more frequently observed; that hundreds of thousands of more or less hypocritical or more or less cynical persons annually visit the place for the sake of the probable catastrophe, and that I came late in the day to work myself up about it. There was in fine the trivial association, one of the vulgarest in the world; but which gives me pause no longer, I think, simply because its vulgarity is so advertised. The revolution performed by Strether under the influence of the most interesting of great cities was to have nothing to do with any betise of the imputably "tempted" state; he was to be thrown forward, rather, thrown quite with violence, upon his lifelong trick of intense reflexion: which friendly test indeed was to bring him out, through winding passages, through alternations of darkness and light, very much in Paris, but with the surrounding scene itself a minor matter, a mere symbol for

more things than had been dreamt of in the philosophy of Woollett. Another surrounding scene would have done as well for our show could it have represented a place in which Strether's errand was likely to lie and his crisis to await him. The likely place had the great merit of sparing me preparations. . . . (7-8)

While James was aware of the various connotations associated with Paris, he yet knew that he had to find a place where what happened to Strether would be plausible. Its very triteness seems, upon James's analysis, to be in the city's favor. Furthermore, the writer knew the French capital sufficiently well to render it believably. The city is a suitable locale for the novel because it exposes Strether's sensibility to such a variety of new impressions to which he responds with "the play of wildness and the development of extremes" (6).

That The Ambassadors is a novel concerned with interactions between Americans, and consequently with American themes, is plain enough. During his brief stay in England, Strether spends most of his time with two persons--Maria Gostrey and Waymarsh, both Americans. He seems, given the evidence in the novel, to have met no Englishmen. He is charged with a mission and that mission, launched from America, is primarily what is on his mind. Once he has arrived in France he again makes contact not with Frenchmen, but with his compatriots. Waymarsh has come across the channel with him, Little Bilham he soon discovers in Chad's apartment, Miss Barrace appears out of the blue, Maria Gostrey catches up, and Chad comes back to Paris from Cannes. Later, of course, he must contend with the

Pocock clan, further proof that this is above all an American drama acted out in Paris. And always there is the ubiquitous presence of Mrs. Newsome, whose total physical absence from the scene seems only to increase her considerable power.

Throughout the novel, the countervailing forces of home and abroad push and pull, producing Strether's double consciousness. The whole arrangement of the novel is bent on showing the seduction of Lambert Strether. Events, encounters and impressions in the novel are carefully timed and structured to lead Strether gradually, and with a measured crescendo, to the point where his mental condition is so absorbed and infatuated with "Europe" that he cannot easily let go of it. That crescendo is obviously demonstrated in the spatial movement of the novel, from England to France, and in the arrangement of Strether's (and the reader's) meetings with other characters: Maria, Waymarsh, Little Bilham, Miss Barrace, Chad, Gloriani, Madame de Vionnet.

Guided by this notion of seduction, then, I want first of all to trace the path of Strether's mental processes upon his arrival abroad. What is there in Europe which is seductive? What elements in his experience of the European landscape and European life begin to work away in Strether's mind, altering his values and outlook? By trying to answer these questions we will learn more about Strether's mental transformation. To begin with, the pure novelty of travel provides the outsider with that freshness of experience which is itself an essential ingredient of romance. Upon his landing Strether finds every impression bathed in newness. He also feels a liberation of his spirit. From the first moment of landing

in Liverpool he becomes conscious of a "personal freedom as he hadn't known for years; such a deep taste of change and of having above all for the moment nobody and nothing to consider," a freedom doubtless associated with the sense of travel, the relief from familiar social patterns of home which the move abroad affords.

Release from obligations is accompanied by a welcome sense of leisure. This kind of freedom from a strictly ordered pattern of time, one generally revolving around the expectation that hours will be converted into dollars, is often part of the attraction of expatriation. As can be seen in works by Bowles, Hemingway, Henry Miller, James Baldwin, and Paul Theroux, it is one of the forces which often drives characters away from their homeland, or which makes them take readily to the new setting abroad. For the writer, the result of the sense of leisure is a growing openness to the manifold impressions around him, and the time to assess those impressions and transform them in his art. In James's novel we are frequently reminded that a more expansive conception of time is one of the elements of the new scene which seduces Strether. One of the more striking reminders comes once Strether has descended upon Paris. One morning on which Waymarsh and Strether are slated to meet for breakfast with Little Bilham, it occurs to Strether that following the meal his day will be free and he will still have ample time to wander about Paris. He "hadn't had for years so rich a consciousness of time." (76) The more time Strether spends in Europe, the more his sense of leisure expands. In the penultimate book of the novel, when Strether ventures out into the countryside we are told:

He hadn't yet struck himself, since leaving Woollett, so much as a loafer, though there had been times when he believed himself touching bottom. This was a deeper depth than any, and with no foresight, scarcely with a care, as to what he should bring up. He almost wondered if he didn't look demoralised and disreputable; he had the fanciful vision, as he sat and smoked, of some accidental, some motivated, return of the Pococks, who would be passing along the Boulevard and would catch this view of him. They would have distinctly, on his appearance, every ground for scandal. (316)

Geographic movement has, as it is so often prone to do, altered Strether's essential perceptions of time; time is measured and valued in different terms in different places. His experience of time in Europe, no doubt partially due to the fact of his not working in the conventional sense, is for Strether a reprieve from the utilitarian notions governing time's movement in New England.

It is, though, not an easy matter for the newly arrived ambassador to abandon, without a qualm, Woollett's quantitative means of temporal measurement which are ingrained in his being. Even as Strether is open and receptive to the new impulses he feels around him, what enters must take its place next to long-residing assumptions about how the world functions. He must reconcile, or be jostled by, two somewhat incompatible notions of the valuation of time. Strether's torn state of mind is often evident. Maria Gostrey, upon their walk in Chester, shortly after their fortuitous meeting, notices that he keeps looking at his watch, presumably

because he is wondering when Waymarsh will arrive back at the hotel, and she begins to read various interpretations into his actions:

"You're doing something that you think not right."

. . . "Am I enjoying it as much as that?"

"You're not enjoying it, I think, so much as you ought." (25)

The quarrel in Strether's mind is perhaps the same one Hawthorne wrote of in "The Maypole of Merrymount," the struggle between the gay, pagan revellers and the grim, gray Puritans. Here, though, the elements are noted as being affiliated with different continents. Strether is not unaware of the strictures his New England heritage places on him. In fact he often fears that the weight of his Woollett sensibility might be impeding the process of absorbing all that he is exposed to. When Strether tells Maria that he is from Woollett, Massachusetts, he does so with a noticeable tone of apology, such that Miss Gostrey notes in reply that "you say that . . . as if you wanted one immediately to know the worst" (24).

"Your failure's general." Maria says.

"Ah there you are!" he laughed. "It's the failure of Woollett. That's general."

"The failure to enjoy," Miss Gostrey explained, "is what I mean."

"Precisely. Woollett isn't sure it ought to enjoy. If it were it would. But it hasn't, poor thing," Strether continued, "any one to show it how. It's not like me. I have somebody." (25)

Strether's views on Woollett's abstemiousness are echoed by other American expatriate writers (Stein, Baldwin, and Miller, to name just three) as well as fictional American characters abroad who scorn their native country's narrow moral circumference. Pagany is the land they seek, Puritanism what they wish to leave behind.

A certain view of economics, as I have already implied, is inextricably associated with these attitudes toward leisure, time, and a *joie de vivre*. Strether's difficulty in freeing himself completely from temporal constraints has a great deal to do with the fact that he is on assignment, that his trip is being financed by parties back home which are expecting certain results--namely the speedy return of Chad Newsome. The language of finance--"pay," "purchase," "price," "loss," "gain"--doesn't easily escape the reader's attention. In fact James begins his use of economic metaphors immediately, at the story's outset. On the first few pages of the novel Strether is described as being "like a man who, elatedly finding in his pocket more money than usual, handles it a while and idly and pleasantly chinks it before addressing himself to the business of spending." These first hours, as long as possible, he chooses to spend alone, taking in pristinely, the air of Europe, putting off meeting with Waymarsh, his New England compatriot whom he had agreed to meet up with. But he is not able to enjoy things for long. That he is burdened with a double consciousness is shown in the first instance as Strether guiltily concocts stories which would hide from Waymarsh, if need be, his gratuitous enjoyment of the hours. What he feels he ought to do--go directly to Chester where he was to meet Waymarsh--he has chosen against in favor of

lingering in Liverpool on his own, to take in the experience of being abroad in a new land, with no one by his side to detract from an attention completely devoted to all the new sensations he was bound to feel. Strether's guilt no doubt comes from his awareness that his "mission" is being bankrolled, and hence all that he does should be justified strictly according to its connection to the success of the mission. Furthermore, in the face of his lingering Protestant work ethic it might be somewhat embarrassing for him to admit to Waymarsh that he is "getting nothing done." A bit of leisure on company time would be highly improper! "Punch the clock," is the motto in Woollett. Strether's skeptical attitude towards business is echoed by some of the other American expatriate clan, who seem to be escaping this dominant sensibility. Little Bilham, for example, admits to Strether, "I ought, I dare say . . . to go home and go into business myself. Only I'd simply rather die--simply" (111). One has in the rather dull Jim Pocock the very personification of what Bilham fears he might become were he to return.

This American propensity to ascribe a monetary value to everything, even priceless works of art, was something James readily noticed when he returned to America in 1904 after a twenty-year separation from his country. Stephen Spender captures James's sentiments when he writes: "The tying up of aesthetic values with money values tends to make the aesthetic values shift with those of the market. Thus money value comes to be a metaphor for aesthetic value more easily in America than in Europe, where people would hesitate to name the worth of a masterpiece which nevertheless they

might sell to America for a great price."⁵

Strether's self-proclaimed liberalism is liberal only by his own measure; he still measures by Woollett's standards. When interpreted by Maria's wider measure, his deviation is judged pathetically weak. It is useful, indeed, to think of Maria and Waymarsh as being the two poles between which Strether's consciousness must swing. While Maria, as we have suggested, is the guardian angel of potential expatriates, exposing them to those cultural artifacts--the theater, the architecture--which are bound to please, Waymarsh, particularly at the beginning of the novel, is the embodiment of "home" abroad: He is not expatriate material; his world is already complete without adding anything (short of the purchases which he will take back home with him), from Europe. As Strether determines, this American "had at the end of three months almost renounced any such expectation" of delighting in Europe's offerings (29). His ardent clinging to American ways can be seen quite evidently in his insistence on having beefsteak and orange juice for breakfast. Waymarsh is described as being "joyless," and "almost wilfully uncomfortable." While Waymarsh is pragmatic, looking on their walk in Chester at the windows of tradesmen, ironmongers, and saddlers, Strether is attracted to the tailors and stationers. Waymarsh the Puritan, as well, views the Catholic church with disdain. It was for him "the enemy, the monster of bulging eyes and far-reaching quivering groping tentacles--was exactly society, exactly the multiplication of shibboleths, exactly the discrimination of types and tones, exactly the wicked old Rows of Chester, rank with feudalism; exactly in short Europe" (38).

Besides being the Protestant philistine, Waymarsh is the visible reminder of Woollett's economic determination of success and failure. Prospective gain and loss feature in Strether's calculating ruminations on the values of one continent compared to those of the other. Embracing one set of values would seem to imply denying the other set, signaling a sort of loss either way. In simple terms, either Strether opts for carrying out his mission and ensuring his financial and marital position in America, or he decides that the richer cultural vision Europe offers is far more valuable than economic recompense. (That at least, at first, seems to be the choice, although in the end there is a possibility of a sort of synthesis, a third position.) In the determination of success and failure, which is raised again at the novel's end and which is a continual theme, Waymarsh is viewed, when Strether sits with him the first evening in the Chester hotel room, as a success, "in spite of overwork, or prostration, of sensible shrinkage, of his wife's letters [Waymarsh's wife, from whom he is separated, lives in European hotels and sends him abusive letters], and of his not liking Europe" (30). The note of irony should not be missed--one of those numerous occasions on which the author's presentation of Strether's reactions and thoughts calls into question their ultimate validity. His friend's financial success, we learn, is what really stirs Strether's envy, yet he knows less than his author the cost with which it is purchased. In the last scene of the first book, in a conversation with Maria Gostrey, Strether clearly gives voice to his awe for this kind of material success, so highly esteemed in Woollett. "He's a success of a kind that I haven't approached,"

begins Strether.

"Do you mean he has made money?"

"He makes it--to my belief. And I," said Strether, "though with a back quite as bent, have never made anything. I'm a perfectly equipped failure."

. . .

"Thank goodness you're a failure--it's why I so distinguish you! Anything else to-day is too hideous. Look about you--look at the successes. Would you be one, on your honour? Look, moreover," she continued, "at me." (40)

Here again the point to be made is that the standards of measuring quantities of all things alter, Strether notices, when he gets beyond the narrow parochial views which governed his home turf. The exchange is an interesting one, full of James's verbal wit and telling innuendo. Waymarsh's position is subjectively determined as Strether measures himself against this apparently commercially successful man who, Strether believes, must be living off his investments. He, on the other hand, feels as though he has worked as hard and gotten far less. He is, at the moment he speaks the words, dependent on someone else for his income. When he pronounces himself a "perfectly equipped failure," it is hard to tell, as usual, how much he is aware of the full impact of his words. If he doesn't at first realize the ambivalent status of material gain, Maria calls his attention to it, proclaiming the outcome of his life project a kind of successful failure.

In London, at the beginning of the second book of the novel, Strether's range of experience is expanded yet further, Maria Gostrey being the agent who stretches the elastic band of his consciousness. After their first meeting, Strether judges Maria "more thoroughly civilized" (more than whom he cannot say) and in London she continues to display before him her wider knowledge and finer sense of discerning subtleties. Planning for the future, thinking of consequences: these are the habits of mind which Strether appeals to Maria to relieve him of. What Maria, or Europe, shows Strether is a complement to himself, which could not be found in America. The comparative frame of mind, naturally so characteristic of the expatriate novel, is brought into play when Strether dines with Maria on the third night of their stay. The woman whose company he now enjoys he compares to the woman he left behind in Wollett, Mrs. Newsome.

He had been to the theatre, even to the opera, in Boston, with Mrs. Newsome, more than once acting as her only escort; but there had been no little confronted dinner, no pink lights, no whiff of vague sweetness, as a preliminary: one of the results of which was that at present, mildly rueful, though with a sharpish accent, he actually asked himself why there hadn't. There was much the same difference in his impression of the noticed state of his companion, whose dress was "cut down," as he believed the term to be, in respect to shoulders and bosom, in a manner quite other than Mrs. Newsome's, and who wore round her throat a broad red velvet band with an antique jewel--he was rather complacently sure it was

antique--attached to it in front. Mrs. Newsome's dress was never in any degree "cut down," and she never wore round her throat a broad red velvet band: if she had, moreover, would it ever have served so to carry on and complicate, as he now almost felt, his vision? (42)

The difference between Miss Gostrey and Mrs. Newsome is made all the more striking when Strether associates Maria with the Catholic Mary Stuart, just after the narrator has recollected Strether's one-time remark to Mrs. Newsome, comparing her, "with her ruff and other matters" to Queen Elizabeth! "Lambert Strether," we are told, "had a candour of fancy which could rest for an instant gratified in such an antithesis" (43). There are, of course, abundant reminders that we are here viewing the virtues of these women through Strether's colored perception, not from any objective position. What matters is that in Strether's comparison at this moment "abroad" is much more seductive than "home," and this scene prefigures and prepares us for that even weightier comparison Strether makes between Mrs. Newsome and Madame de Vionnet. The positioning of this "interim" guide, an American who has become Europeanized, is part of the necessary dynamic James orchestrates, all leading in a kind of crescendo up to Strether's meeting of Madame de Vionnet in Gloriani's garden.

The greater variety of types Europe afforded was for Strether, as well as for his creator, yet another attraction. At the theater in London he is struck by the spectacle, the grand manner of the audience, which, to his mind, were nearly as majestic as the actors

on stage. "Those before him and around him were not as the types of Woollett, where, for that matter, it had begun to seem to him that there must only have been the male and the female." Here in London "a series of strong stamps had been applied, as it were, from without; stamps that his observation played with as, before a glass case on a table, it might have passed from medal to medal and from copper to gold" (44). Even though we never learn the name of the play Strether sees, a detail easily overlooked is that in this play there is a "bad woman in a yellow frock" who makes "a pleasant weak good-looking young man in perpetual evening dress do the most dreadful things," a scene meant to prefigure both Strether's meeting of Chad (significantly in a theater), and the subsequent "proscenium" meeting of Chad and Madame de Vionnet in the countryside. The theatricality of the setting is immensely important for Strether who all these long years has had, in Woollett, such a shabby old stage to perform on. All this gives a wider range to Strether's already exercised imagination. The range of types in Paris is even broader than in the London theatre. "There were opinions at Woollett, but only three or four," we are told, "while at the Boulevard Malesherbes there was to be found a host of opinions, often including ones invented simply to enliven discussion and practice the imagination" (109).

By the end of the first book Strether, who moves from London to Paris, is already in the thick of things. The first we hear of Strether in Paris is that he has tried to see about his money, which presumably has been sent from Woollett to the Parisian bankers on rue Scribe. This act of abeyance keenly reminds Strether of the

job he has to do, and as we are admitted to his consciousness, we find him justifying his every move in terms of the "business" he is expected to do. These justifications, while serving Strether's own conscience, do not deceive the alert reader of the obvious delays Strether engineers, all in the name of "business." After all, though he may not have consciously realized it, he has begun to enjoy the freedom of living in Europe, and to conduct his business promptly would (besides ending the novel abruptly) mean his speedy return to Woollett, certainly an unappealing prospect for the freshly arrived Strether! In the meantime he is experiencing the best the city has to offer, walking the streets, going to the theater, taking in the views, staying up late, going to cafes. When Strether eventually does get his money and his letters, we are given a telling detail. He quickly leaves the bank, because it reminds him of the Woollett post-office, puts the letter in his "loose grey overcoat," a symbol of Woollett, and continues his encounter with Paris. Waymarsh, on the other hand, we are told, feels a particular affinity with the rue Scribe, and is prone to spend hours there catching up on the news from home. "Europe," we are told, "was best described, to his mind, as an elaborate engine for dissociating the confined American from that indispensable knowledge [that the bank was "a post of superior observation"], and was accordingly only rendered bearable by these occasional stations of relief, traps for the arrest of wandering western airs" (58). In either case--in this novel as well as others of its kind--the bank, connected to American accounts, is the vital lifeline for the expatriate, a fact of existence which slightly mitigates a sense of freedom an escape

engenders.

There are a number of other components which enter Strether's reckoning once he is in Paris, and we would do well to deal with each. There is, first of all, the magic of the city itself, Paris. We might recall, for a moment, that James himself recognized that Paris, "the most interesting of great cities" was a place where "people's moral scheme does break down." Ideal it was, then, as a setting for Strether's gradual transformation. The essential flavor of Paris is felt in everything about the city, "in the very taste of the soup, in the goodness . . . of the wine, in the pleasant coarse texture of the napkin and the crunch of the thick-crust bread" (71).

Paris has much the same meaning in The Ambassadors as it does in other American expatriate novels. We have already seen what role the city plays in The Reef and we shall return to it again, later, in The Sun Also Rises and Giovanni's Room. Gertrude Stein called Paris her "home town," and Frederick J. Hoffman, in the preface to the 1962 edition of The Twenties, writes that "When American writers go to Paris to write, Paris becomes in a limited sense a locus criticus."⁶ Joseph Beach notes that Paris was "for Strether, as it has been for many generations of Americans, and Englishmen too--the Ville Lumiere, the place where ideas are everywhere in circulation, and subject to free and animated discussion."⁷ Beach's comment is in response to a ripple of disagreement, begun by the perplexity F.R. Leavis voiced in The Great Tradition, concerning the tremendous value James placed on the symbol of Paris. "What, we ask, is this, symbolized by Paris, that Strether feels himself to have missed in

his own life? Has James himself sufficiently inquired? Is it anything adequately realized?"⁸ If Leavis indeed had been to the city perhaps he had not given himself over to any of its many invitations to pleasure. While Leavis's qualms seem to have been put to rest, discussion of the city's importance and significance has persisted. In a relatively recent evaluation of the function of Paris, Michael Seidel, after an interesting comparison between the story of Helen of Troy and The Ambassadors, has written that Paris represents "the same lure and threat to the ethos of America that Troy was for the Greeks." It is a place "where the material, enterprising world can be, at least, well lost."⁹ This interpretation certainly parallels the line I have been following. The real significance of Paris, in this novel and others, is that it creates a sense of difference. As Matthiessen writes (referring to the Lambert scene in the French countryside): "we have a sharp contrast between Strether's New England actuality and his long smothered French ideal."¹⁰ The presence of the two places in Strether's mind--one parochial and Protestant, the other cosmopolitan and Catholic--constitutes Strether's double consciousness.

For Strether, who has visited the city in his youth, Paris has an intensely personal meaning which is superimposed on the city's historical and cultural significance. This fact James again exploits to accent difference, for memory forces the middle-aged Strether to consider his rather paltry accomplishments in light of the hopes and dreams of his youth. The glaring difference arrived at is dramatized in the figure of the dozen or so lemon-colored volumes of literature which Strether, while walking the streets of Paris,

recalls having bought as a young man, brimming with the intention of making full use of them. Those books, he recalls, now lay at home, in Woollett, "stale and soiled and never sent to the binders" (63). From Paris, Strether gains perspective. He looks back on his accumulated life in America as a kind of blank, full of activity but producing nothing of lasting effect or value. But that nothingness begins to take on positive values. "The fact that he had failed . . . in everything . . . might have made . . . for an empty present; but it stood solidly for a crowded past. . . . It had been a dreadful cheerful sociable solitude, a solitude of life or choice, of community" (61). The sum of his activities added up, in the end, to his name on the green cover of the Woollett review.

The charm of Paris is no less felt by Chad than it is by Strether. Indeed there is little reason why we should not take Chad at his word when, the night Strether outlines his mission, he counters Strether's guess that there might be a woman keeping him in Paris by saying that no woman could stop him from going home when he wanted to leave. "'Don't you know how I like Paris itself?'" (100) This romance and passion for place, where place might even be thought of as substituting for the woman as the love object, is a frequent occurrence in expatriate literature. Irving's romance was with Spain, Hawthorne's with Italy, James had, like Strether, a number of competing loves, Stein and Wharton had France; Henry Miller, Paris and Greece and Crete; Bowles, Morocco. The exploration of foreign territory is analogous to taking on a new lover.

To the discerning sensibility the architecture of a place can either draw one to the place or make one feel immensely ill-at-ease.

Perhaps no writer was more keen than was James in sensing how deeply related architectural surroundings and the degree of individual expression are. Not only are architectural details and figures prevalent in his work, but he thought of the works themselves in architectural terms. It has, once again, to do with "a world elsewhere," but that matter for James goes much further beyond simply creating that place in style. His is a search for a land in which architecture matters, and one feels, especially on reading The American Scene, that James's critique of architectural space is somehow related to his expatriation. The Manhattan skyscrapers, risen since his departure twenty years earlier, he sees as blatant symbols of a society governed by crude economic calculation. He is often painfully reminded, as he sees with what ease and rapidity older buildings are demolished, of America's cult of impermanence. James's decision to live in Europe must be seen, in part, as a choice formed by architectural values.

Paris itself, its very lay-out, appeals to Strether. The new setting, in contrast so to what he had known in Woollett, captures his imagination and sustains him. We feel that he is at ease here and eager to find his way about the new place.

Strether, in contact with that element as he had never yet so intimately been, had the consciousness of opening to it, for the happy instant, all the windows of his mind, of letting this rather grey interior drink in for once the sun of a clime not marked in his old geography. . . . (120)

The old geography is figurative as well as literal. The greyness is

not merely the greyness of Woollett. It is also the greyness of age, of lack of imagination, and of a kind of cultural poverty. Paris is that new quantity pushing in on his consciousness, forcing him to adjust.

Strether is impressed by the character and moods of the individual residences he finds himself in as well as by the general atmosphere of Paris and its public architecture. His interest is produced partly by the sense of difference between the character of these buildings and those of Woollett, and, we gather, partly by an inherent architectural value in what he views. In quick succession, he visits the apartments of Chad, Maria Gostrey, and Little Bilham. Then there is Gloriani's garden and Madame de Vionnet's apartment. Of Chad's apartment, which leaves a great impression on Strether, our hero lets out, "Well, life can hold nothing better. Besides, they're things of which he's in charge" (74). At Little Bilham's our attention is drawn to "its delicate daubs and its three or four chairs, its overflow of taste and conviction" (84). Maria Gostrey's flat is in the Quartier Marboeuf. Into it "she had gathered, as she said, picking them up in a thousand flights and funny little passionate pounces, the makings of a final nest" (79). Her apartment--the quantity of objects and the extent to which it seems a "true" home more than a temporary landing spot--is a reflection of her longer tenure abroad.

Her compact and crowded little chambers, almost dusky, as they at first struck him, with accumulations, represented a supreme general adjustment to opportunities and conditions. Wherever [Strether] looked he saw an old ivory or an old

brocade, and he scarce knew where to sit for fear of a misappliance. The life of the occupant struck him of a sudden as more charged with possession even than Chad's or than Miss Barrace's; wide as his glimpse had lately become of the empire of "things," what was before him still enlarged it; the lust of the eyes and the pride of life had indeed thus their temple. It was the innermost nook of the shrine--as brown as a pirate's cave. (80)

For the expatriate the apartment or home takes on a more intensified meaning, because it is here where he establishes the intimate space where he can retreat and take refuge against the alien culture. A degree of comfort is, then, essential. Each of these is an expatriate residence, greatly reflecting the character of its inhabitant.

The metaphor used to describe Maria's apartment--"final nest"--is richly resonant. Here, even, away from her native home, she seeks as much as possible to form external surroundings which would conform to her values. Interesting in this context are Gaston Bachelard's thoughts on the psychology of space. A sense of home, he tells us, precedes our actual experiencing of home. In those terms, then, life becomes nothing less than a search for home. But we sense that the homes we live in, the spaces we inhabit, are fragile, or imaginatively we conceive of a home in which we would be safer, or in which we would be more at home. "A nest--and this we understand right away--is a precarious thing, and yet it sets us to daydreaming of security.¹¹ Expatriation, or voluntary exile, as ironic as it may seem, can be thought of simply as one more way by

which we search for shelter.

Leon Edel, in his excellent biography of James, persuasively submits some possible psychological motivations for the writer's exile. The theory is that older brother William had already carved out a very commodious niche for himself, leaving Henry little elbow room.

William, first upon the scene, had learned to take the world in his own large stride: he was quick, active, impulsive, nimble of mind, warming to experience. His brother, who had to include William among his elders, had learned in childhood to assert himself from behind a mask of deceptive serenity. Submerged and silent, Henry could find his freedom from family pressures and rivalries only by devious means; and there was always, later, escape to his writing desk.¹²

A later form of that escape, connected directly with writing, was expatriation, which clearly gave the younger brother a more ample space in which to maneuver.

A fuller notion of what an ideal space might be can be seen as Strether finds himself first of all in Gloriani's garden, the famous setting in Book V, and soon after that, in Madame de Vionnet's apartment. Gloriani's garden, a tiny plot of the pastoral in the center of Paris, is meant to represent an ideal arrangement of space:

The place itself was a great impression--a small pavilion, clearfaced and sequestered, an effect of polished parquet, of fine white panel and spare salloy gilt, of decoration deli-

cate and rare, in the heart of the Foubourg Saint-Germain and on the edge of a cluster of gardens attached to noble houses. (119)

The place, "far back from the streets and unsuspected by crowds, reached by a long passage and a quiet court," offers an ideal balance between the social and the private. It all "spoke of survival, transmission, association, a strong indifferent persistent order." The Italian sculptor Strether looks upon as a work of art himself. In the midst of a gathering of celebrities he is dazzled; he feels as though he must come up to a standard. Yet, he takes it all in:

Strether, in contact with that element as he had never yet so intimately been, had the consciousness of opening to it, for the happy instant, all the windows of his mind, of letting this rather grey interior drink in for once the sun of a clime not marked in his old geography. (120)

James so vividly shows the radically transforming effect of a fresh sunny, foreign landscape on Strether's "grey" New England interior.

Not much time passes before Strether visits Madame de Vionnet's apartment, the most seductive in a long line. Much like Christopher Newman, upon his visit to the Bellegarde's home, Strether, who is accompanied at first by Chad, is swept away by the old world charm of the place.

She occupied, his hostess, in the Rue de Bellechasse, the first floor of an old house to which our visitors had had access from an old clean court. The court was large and

open, full of revelations, for our friend, of the habit of privacy, the peace of intervals, the dignity of distances and approaches; the house, to his restless sense, was in the high homely style of an elder day, and the ancient Paris that he was always looking for--sometimes intensely felt, sometimes more acutely missed--was in the immemorial polish of the wide waxed staircase and in the fine boiseries, the medallions, mouldings, mirrors, great clear spaces, of the greyish-white salon into which he had been shown. . . . While his eyes turned after a little from those of his hostess and Chad freely talked . . . he found himself making out, as a background of the occupant, some glory, some prosperity of the First Empire, some Napoleonic glamour, some dim lustre of the great legend; elements clinging still to all the consular chairs and mythological brasses and sphinxes' heads and faded surfaces of satin striped with alternate silk. (145)

Strether's imagination obviously pulls away from himself. From the reality of Madame de Vionnet's apartment (which we cannot ourselves very well gauge accurately) Strether creates a France of the ancien regime which remains but in this private spot, withdrawn from the pedestrian world. In any case, this display of more traditional aristocratic values, manifest architecturally, is what so excites Strether's imagination.

James's architectural critique is by no means unique among American writers. One might recall Cooper's expressions of dismay at the depravity of American architecture in Home as Found, which we

shall look at in detail in a later chapter. And surely one of the most thorough appraisals of architectural value and human culture is Henry Adams's Mont-St. Michele and Chartres, a work which James might have felt, had he known it, expressed some of his own deepest sentiments. The European cathedrals of the Middle Ages, particularly the 13th century, in Adams's view, were products of a culture which balanced harmoniously the passionate pursuit of a common idea with economic prowess and energy. "The whole Mount still kept the grand style," Adams writes. "It expressed the Unity of Church and State, God and Man, Peace and War, Life and Death, Good and Bad; it solved the whole problem of the universe."¹³ In a society's architecture, both James and Adams felt, could be seen the most striking evidence of its values.

It is, of course, not only architectural space, which attracts Strether's attention in The Ambassadors. As much as anything, as we have already seen in the case of Maria Gostrey, he is attracted to the lifestyles of the expatriates he meets, which would, he senses, be very much different from what they are had they remained in America. Here, the importance of Strether's observation of Chad and his lifestyle and its impact on his thinking can scarcely be stressed too greatly. The Chad he meets in Paris is utterly transformed. Strether finds it impossible to conceive that a creation like this young man before his eyes could ever have been shaped entirely by a life in Woollett. Following his first meeting of Chad, at the opera, he ponders over just what it is which is so appealing about Chad. It is his refinement, his charm, his handsomeness, his carriage, his ability to discern subtlety.

Here already then were abounding results; he had on the spot and without the least trouble of intention taught Strether that even in so small a thing as that [entering the box] there were different ways. He had done in the same line still more than this; had by a mere shake or two of the head made his old friend observe that the change in him was perhaps more than anything else, for the eye, a matter of the marked streaks of grey, extraordinary at his age, in his thick black hair; as well as that this new feature was curiously becoming to him, did something for him, as characterization, also even--of all things in the world--as refinement, that had been a good deal wanted. (91-92)

The difference is this: "He had formerly, with a great deal of action, expressed very little; and he now expressed whatever was necessary with almost none at all." (97) Much in the same vein, in a letter to Edith Wharton, James stated the difference between life back there and life abroad as being "between a life led in trees, say, and a life led in sea depth, or in other words between that of climbers and swimmers--or (crudely) that of monkeys and fish."¹⁴

Later in the novel, when Strether finds himself "dished," we see that the allure of Chad's "knowing how to live"--of Chad himself--is what has most greatly led him to forsake his mission. The main reason Strether cannot bring himself, conscientiously, to bring off his mission successfully and expeditiously, is that he finds the Chad he meets in Europe, so "wonderful," so much more than he might otherwise be, and Mrs. Newsome's ambassador's fear, whether justi-

fied or not, is that the young man might suffer some kind of shrinkage upon his return. Paris is the proper stage for the young, suave cosmopolitan; Woollett is not. The more sympathetic the ambassador becomes to the virtues of the foreign capital, the more difficulty he has in pressing the claims of the party he is supposed to be representing.

There is, perhaps, another motivation behind Strether's delay. Even though he continues to insist that he must have nothing out of it for himself (to ease his sense of guilt, among other things), it is quite apparent that at the very least what he does wish to get out of it is a prolonged stay in Europe, a stay which might begin to effect the same kinds of changes in his own person that he believes the place has effected in Chad. He needs Chad to stay so that he can live through him. Never before, we are led to assume, has Strether felt so much alive and he is not eager to let go of that sensation. We might speculate--granted, with no surety--that had Strether kept with Chad that first evening--after he presented the young Newsome with the nature of his mission--that he may have gotten the young man's consent right then and there. When Chad suggests that he might have some questions to ask, Strether replies, "Oh, yes--easily. I'm here to answer everything. I think I can even tell you things, of the greatest interest to you, that you won't know enough to ask me. We'll take as many days to it as you like. But I want," Strether wound up, "to go to bed now." To which Chad responds, "'Really?'" (98) There is, already, at their very first exchange on the question, evidence of Strether's reluctance to persuade. The discussion is cut off with Strether's "I want to go

to bed now." Chad has seemed, before that, rather receptive. Who is to say that he might actually have been convinced to leave right then and there had the bearer of the message been more sure-footed, more insistent?

By the middle of the novel--the turning point in the hourglass shape which Forster noted--Strether has been seduced by the other side. In Book VII, when Strether receives the telegram from Mrs. Newsome, calling her ambassador home, Strether is confirmed in his desire to stay. He stalls, though the young Chad offers himself up to be taken away. The Ambassador, once he is THERE, begins to see the competing interests differently than he would were he at home, and relays the point of view home.

"You don't want to get back to Mother?"

"Not just yet. I'm not ready."

"You feel," Chad asked in a tone of his own, "the charm of life over here?"

"Immensely." Strether faced it. "You've helped me so to feel it that that surely needn't surprise you." (188)

II

So far we have been examining only one side of the picture--those forces contributing to Strether's growing notion of an "otherness" appealing enough for him to wish to adopt it or participate in it as much as he possibly can. Naturally, his American self does not, cannot, dissolve. America, in fact, remains a very important quantity in all of Strether's figurations. The emerging problems

Strether has in judging reality, which we shall soon address, are indeed an outgrowth of the kind of bicameral mind he develops.

There are a variety of ways by which James generates, abroad, the opposing term "America," to set against the distinctly foreign or European, and it is worth spelling them out clearly. Besides the economic links--the banks--which constantly remind Strether of his connection to the homeland (for James the writer it would have been his dependence on checks from his publisher), there are letters, memory, contact with compatriots, the visits from the Pococks. After taking care of his affairs at the bank, Strether, letters in hand (four of which are from Mrs. Newsome), makes his way in the fresh warmth of the lovely spring day, to the Luxembourg Gardens where finally, after much appreciation, he opens the envelopes and reads their contents. These letters, which he has anxiously awaited, dramatize the pressure of America (Mrs. Newsome in particular) on Strether's consciousness. They throw Strether into an immediate, unavoidable relation with his homeland. With them comes a pinch of guilt: he had stepped off the ship a week ago and had not yet done anything directly related to his diplomatic assignment. James's description of Strether's opening of the letters and his subsequent meditation on them brilliantly shows the operation of the double consciousness, the impingement in a concrete way of home on his newly found, liberated life abroad.

He read the letters successively and slowly, putting others back into his pocket but keeping these for a long time afterwards gathered in his lap. He held them there, lost in thought, as if to prolong the presence of what they gave him

[a sense of guilt? money? a job? connection?]; or as if at the least to assure them their part in the constitution of some lucidity. His friend wrote admirably, and her tone was even more in her style than in her voice--he might almost, for the hour, have had to come this distance to get its full carrying quality; yet the plentitude of his consciousness of difference consorted perfectly with the deepened intensity of the connexion. It was the difference, the difference of being just where he was and as he was, that formed the escape--this difference was so much greater than he had dreamed it would be; and what he finally sat there turning over was the strange logic of his finding himself so free." (59-60)

The ironies which surface in this fine passage are manifold: that the American goes to Europe, a more structured culture, to find freedom; that Mrs. Newsome herself has sent her ambassador there, in a sense sponsoring the newfound expression; that home is felt so much more acutely, as it could never be while one is there, when one is away.

Though we never see the contents of Mrs. Newsome's letters themselves as we do in other expatriate novels (In Pierre Loti's classic Aziyade, for example, letters to and from home actually comprise substantial portions of the novel.), we as readers are continually made aware of their power over Strether. When, later in the novel, Mrs. Newsome curtails her correspondence, her silence too reverberates with meaning for Strether. "It struck him really that he had never so lived with her as during this period of her silence; the silence was a sacred hush, a finer clearer medium, in which her

idiosyncrasies showed" (195). What is manifestly clear here and elsewhere is that Strether never loses sight of home. In fact, all that he does, he does with home in mind. As Strether admits to Maria Gostrey (who, in contrast to Strether, seems to think little of her homeland) quite late in the novel when his confidante inquires whether he is quite indifferent to Mrs. Newsome (read America), "'I've been, from the first moment, preoccupied with the impression everything might be making on her--quite oppressed, haunted, tormented by it. I've been interested only in her seeing what I've seen. And I've been as disappointed in her refusal to see it as she has been in what has appeared to her the perversity of my insistence" (297). His desire for her to see what he has seen is the motivation behind his prodigious letter-writing. Ironically, it is just those letters perhaps (or, as Strether imagines, a letter from Waymarsh warning Mrs. Newsome of her ambassador's errant behavior), and their tone of abandonment and utter, bedazzled enjoyment (at least that is what we might assume they suggested) which prompt the Pococks' rescue mission. Though he does all for home, home does not seem to appreciate it.

Memory, which may function either in conjunction with letters or operate more independently and unconsciously, unquestionably plays an exaggerated and unique role in the life of the expatriate. It is not, as it is most often in Proust, simply the past which is recalled; it is a distant place which is brought forward by whatever sensations trigger memory. "For an exile," writes Edward Said, "habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another

environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally."¹⁵ Michael Seidel makes the same point. From abroad America is reflected upon; it is a reference against which new impressions are gauged. Memory, which is often exercised more actively as a result of the heightened sense of difference, can be a means of holding onto previous selves tied to other places. For the expatriate, memory holds both the possibility of establishing links and identities with homeland and of bringing to consciousness striking differences between present and past landscapes.

Vladimir Nabokov's novel Mary, his first in English, demonstrates more vividly than does The Ambassadors the extent to which the expatriate novel can depend on memory. While set in Berlin in the late twenties, one feels always, as Ganin's memory involuntarily and consistently takes him back to the Russian landscape he knew in his boyhood and his first love in or with that landscape, that while in exile the real focus is the homeland. For whatever reason--perhaps because of the nature of his departure from America and the ever-present possibility for a return--James's use of memory is not nearly as strong as Nabokov's. There are, though, important flashes in Strether's mind which connect him, for a moment in space and time with his homeland: When he passes the book-sellers and remembers those yellow-covered volumes, purchased in Paris while he was there as a young man, sitting at home; when in the novel's penultimate book he journeys into the French countryside and recalls the Lambinet painting he nearly bought in a Boston gallery.

The presence of one's compatriots, with whom are shared a

common tongue, cultural experiences, and values, is another keen reminder of home. As already remarked, it is a tendency for foreign nationals to form colonies amongst themselves when they are abroad and this tendency is reflected in fictional representations of this kind of life. In the Nabokov novel just mentioned, for example, Ganin, the central character, lives in a boarding house populated with fellow Russian emigres: Anton Podtyagin, an old Russian poet who collapses from heart failure at the end of the novel, after losing his passport and with it his hopes for leaving Berlin for France; Klara, a full-breasted typist; Kolin and Gornotsvetov, two endearing homosexual ballet dancers, "both as giggly as women, thin, with powdered noses and muscular thighs; and, Alfyorov, a compatriot whom Ganin finds a detestible bore."¹⁶ In The Ambassadors, as in works by Wharton and Hemingway, the group of Americans in Paris is referred to as "the colony," a term which carries with it all the connotations associated with those earlier American colonies. Just as in those early colonies, expatriates bind together for protection (from the natives) and to buffer their impending loneliness. Strether never seems to be far from one of his countrymen. While he is in Paris, he stays in the same hotel as his compatriot, Waymarsh, and though the regularity of their relationship deteriorates through the novel, his nearby presence is always a reminder, not always a most pleasant one, of home. There is also Maria, then Little Bilham, and finally Chad: other Americans abroad. Something of the meaning of his compatriots to Strether can be felt from his response to a group of expatriates he meets at Little Bilham's. "The ingenious compatriots" James calls them.

He liked the ingenuous compatriots--for two or three others soon gathered; he liked the delicate daubs and the free discriminations--involving references indeed, involving enthusiasms and execrations that made him, as they said, sit up; he liked above all the legend of good-honoured poverty, of mutual accommodation fairly raised to the romantic, that he soon read into the scene. The ingenuous compatriots showed a candour, he thought, surpassing even the candour of Woollett; they were red-headed and long-legged, they were quaint and queer and dear and droll. (84)

These types were to Strether familiar enough to invite recognition and interaction; there was also though an appealing difference, which we shall note at greater length shortly, in the way they were able to live here from the way they would have lived at home.

Woollett comes to Paris in full force with the Pococks, and Strether, whose ineffectiveness as an ambassador is responsible for their descent upon the scene, has little choice but to take what is held out to him the best he can manage to. Strether sees at once that Sarah Pocock, Chad's sister, is her mother's special envoy, come out to see for herself what is keeping the two men. As he first sees her in the train car, Strether notes the resemblance between Sarah and her mother and at once "the woman at home, the woman to whom he was attached, was before him just long enough to give him again the measure of the wretchedness, in fact really of the shame, of their having to recognise the formation, between them, of a 'split'" (208). And, in the cab with Jim it is noted that

"having them thus come out to him was as if he had returned to find them" (210). The recognition of this "split," or this difference between himself and them, is a key element in the formation of a double consciousness.

From the moment of the Pocock's arrival Strether finds himself, either as a result of his own stance or the apprehensive views Sarah brings with her, on the outside of a relationship he had earlier thought himself a part of. Two carriages are used to convey the Pococks to their hotel, and James strategically places Sarah and her brother in one, Jim Pocock and Strether in the other. In Jim, Strether sees an American ready to abandon himself and his scruples to any vices and pleasures the city has to offer. It might seem to be an appealing sensibility, but in truth Jim personifies all that Strether loathes in the typical American character. This rather unflattering portrait of Jim is what we are handed:

Small and fat and constantly facetious, straw-coloured and destitute of marks, he would have been practically indistinguishable hadn't his constant preference for light-grey clothes, for white hats, for very big cigars and very little stories done what it could for his identity. . . Strether indulged him even while wondering if what Sally wanted her brother to go back to was to become like her husband.

(213-14)

Before the visit "he already felt her come down on him, already burned, under her reprobation, with the blush of guilt, already consented, by way of penance, to the instant forfeiture of every-

thing. He saw himself, under her direction, recommitted to Woollett as juvenile offenders are committed to reformatories" (201). When the Pococks first arrive, Strether feels more relief than fear, but it does not take Strether long to feel the extent of loss he might suffer should he sever ties completely with his homeland. He realizes in their presence "how little he had enjoyed the prospect of ceasing to figure" in the position of "the valued friend" of the family.

With the visit we see how far Strether has come. The effect of the visit on Strether is that he feels how incompatible the life of Paris is with the life of Woollett, and with his new standards of measurement Paris is judged the superior place to live. He hopes, unrealistically, that Sarah might also realize this difference and assess it in the same fashion he does. He maintains the possibility that Sarah might see, positively, what Paris has done for Chad, and concur with him that the young man's return would mean nothing less than an unfortunate imprisonment. (Is it not perhaps his own return, postponed by so many contrived delays, which so horrifies Strether?) Sarah does not see what Strether sees, however, and charges the former ambassador with gross neglect of interest. It all comes to a head in Strether's stormy meeting with Sarah toward the end of Book X: "What is your conduct but an outrage to women like us? I mean your acting as if there can be a doubt--as between us and such another--of his duty?" (276) It is clear from Sarah's outburst that Strether is viewed as no less than a traitor. He is no longer representing their interests as they would have them represented. "You can sacrifice mothers and sisters to her without

a blush, and can make them cross the ocean on purpose to feel the more, and take from you the straighter, how you do it?" (277) "Her" of course refers to Madame de Vionnet, to whom Strether has capitulated.

Beyond the letters, the banks, the memories, and the visits, there is that constant reminder of America--Strether himself. So omnipresent, in fact, is our hero, and so very much in front of us at every stage of the action, that we could fail to recognize the force of his fundamental American way of seeing things. Strether's very openness to experience, his moral sensitivity, his capacity for wonder--his "romantic readiness," as Nick Carraway would put it--are essentially American qualities. These aspects of his character may be said to contribute to the development of his double consciousness. It seems to be a capacity of the American consciousness, figuratively portrayed in Emerson's "Circles," to exhibit a readiness and desire to expand horizons. Strether, thus, becomes the exemplary ambassador, forever thinking of home, yet eager to feel intimately the pulse of the other side. The success of the mission, after all, may depend on his knowledge of that new scene.

III

In The Ambassadors James achieved supremely a means for representing the responses of consciousness as it encounters the foreign environment. I have tried to show, thus far, the tugs and pulls on Strether's imagination as it tries to accommodate both the new and the old. Strether takes in the new sensations Europe so

naturally offers him; at the same time he remains, as he must, an American born and bred in Woollett. In his book Exile and the Narrative Imagination Michael Seidel notes the results of this development:

It is precisely when the other or "alien" race gets under Strether's distinctly American skin in The Ambassadors that the complex and imaginatively textured European experience has the effect of reducing his perceived social, indeed, racial obligations to America and to the values James sees as nationally disposed.¹⁷

Once a double consciousness is formed, it is not easy to resolve the mental tensions it produces. Nor is it so easy to live, without any reservations, in one place or the other. There are always two places, and one is always, by comparison, felt to be lacking in something the other has. The whole novel inscribes sets of tensions--a struggle between home and abroad, a play between the younger and looser culture and the older, more wily and rigid one. How can a choice be made between two seemingly irreconcilable, competing interests? Or, indeed, need it be made? Just how does one learn to live in this region of difference, and at what expense or gain? By what means does James give these issues prominence in his fiction? These questions, of great importance to Strether and to readers of James's novel, are ones to which we now turn.

Difference is the key term. It is what Strether must contend with; it is what produces his double consciousness. Seidel, whose work depends upon this recognition of difference, writes that James

"works the very notion of difference into the generic constituencies of the novel's plot" (136). Not only in plot, but certainly also in theme and point of view the play of difference is seen. Our examination might begin with point of view in the novel, for it is by this means that we gain considerable insight into the operation of and nature of Strether's double consciousness. Already, in the discussion of Wharton, we saw how narration filtered through the consciousness of one character could create a sense of dramatic irony and that this means of narration could also nicely suggest the sensations an outsider experiences. James consistently uses this method in The Ambassadors. As is well known, Strether's consciousness guides the whole of the novel. Though there were to be, James tells us in the Preface, "other persons in no small number . . . to people the scene Strether's sense of these things, and Strether's only, should avail me for showing them; I should know them but through his more or less groping knowledge of them, since his very gropings would figure among his most interesting motions" (8-9). James represented Strether's consciousness such that the reader feels the twists and turns of Strether's mind supposedly close to the way the character himself felt them. Indeed the handling of point of view is wholly appropriate since the essential drama of the story is a drama of consciousness. Percy Lubbock, taking his cue from James himself, has commented on the unique manner in which point of view was handled in the novel, noticing, in addition to the fact that we are close to Strether's consciousness, that the subtle hand of an authorial presence arranging and sequencing the story in such a way that "the author could not imaginably

figure there more discreetly."¹⁸ "The Ambassadors," Lubbock writes, "is a story which is seen from one man's point of view, and yet a story in which that point of view is itself a matter for the reader to confront and to watch constructively" (420). To say that the story is "seen from one man's point of view," of course, does not mean that an authorial presence, moral and aesthetic, is not to be felt.

One of the effects of this means of narration is a heightening of the ironic effect, an aspect of expatriate fiction which was announced as a leitmotif in the discussion of The Reef.¹⁹ Nicola Bradbury in Henry James: The Later Novels notes and describes the relation between the manipulation of point of view and the ironic effect in The Ambassadors: "The use of a narrative consciousness neither strictly limited to the awareness of the protagonist nor wholly independent and 'reliable' serves to contain this 'irony' as well as to focus the interaction of social and literary codes with the author's and reader's imaginative understanding."²⁰ So close to Strether's own consciousness, we find ourselves often in doubt as to just how much we ourselves know about what is happening. That is, we are primarily privileged to interpretations of events which we judge to be Strether's, and those interpretations can very often unsuspectingly be adopted by the reader as Truth. Of course, at some time the reader must part company with Strether. Especially after a first reading, he is able to apprehend things in advance of Strether, and hence feel his mistaken assumptions. The apprehension of the irony is made possible in part by James's own positioning of symbols in the narrative which the reader can, if he is percep-

tive, read more accurately than Strether. Once Strether's judgments are doubted there is little to hold on to, and the reader must himself grasp for meaning. When Madame de Vionnet and Chad are gone from Paris at the same time just prior to the arrival of the Pococks in Paris, for example, Strether makes no connection between the two events. The alert reader, however might at least have some suspicions which are confirmed by comments Chad later makes regarding Madame de Vionnet's attitudes toward the whole affair and his proclamation (even suggestive) to Strether that his mother's ambassador does not know HOW wonderful Madame de Vionnet is. We, as readers, are likely to assume considerably more intimacy between Madame de Vionnet and Chad than Strether will admit.

We might have various reactions to the way in which Strether accommodates himself to his changed circumstances. The most generous interpretation given to Strether is one typified by a very early critic of James, Joseph Warren Beach, who writes that the true subject of the novel

is the matter of free intellectual exploration in general, of the open mind in contrast to the mind closed and swaddled in prejudice and narrow views. Under another aspect this is seen to be again the inveterate contrast between the cosmopolitan and the provincial, between the European and the American outlook. Strether's discovery of the open mind is his discovery of Europe. It is Europe that teaches him how many and how delicate considerations are involved in the solution of his problem,--how much depends on facts and

"values" not to be lightly determined in advance.²¹

Beach's notion, then, is that Europe "opens" Strether to experience which his whole moral apparatus must adjust to. It is not Europe itself which is responsible for what happens; it is, rather, the interaction of two quantities--the American sensibility and the European reality. In this region of difference, then, Strether's mind must situate itself. One response to difference, the one taken up by Waymarsh, of whom Miss Barrace says "I show him Paris, show him everything, and he never turns a hair," (125) is to shut out new facts and take a comfortable refuge in previously held parochial prejudices. Strether's strategy, rather, is to take it all in. While he cannot leave Woollett completely behind, at least he can breathe deeply the Parisian air and see what effect it will have on his being. An expanded vision, potentially, could be the result. Beach, in speaking of Strether, refers to his "maturity and independence," "his sympathetic and discriminating quality of mind." Suspension of judgment, in this view, might be held as a necessary means of gaining the wider vision. "He must not be bullied or hurried into a decision by his own interest or by any moral prejudice or anxiety," Beach writes, defending Strether's strategy. Strether's is a project for developing an intelligence "used for the eventual benefit of the moral passion," and hence, "it must not be warped by any moral pressure; it must be left absolutely free to reach its own conclusions." (Beach, 269-70)

This most generous of interpretations which can be put on Strether's experiment stresses the final outcome of Strether's double consciousness and downplays the large quantity of foolishness

in the project. Any adventure, the prime example being Don Quixote's, which fearlessly and insistently resists facts, in favor of building another kind of imaginatively created world, risks being judged by those outside as a foolhardy enterprise. What we shall find, in looking at Strether's case, is an amazing amount of error and truth produced in this expanded region of difference between cultures, between sensibilities, between fact and imaginative construct.

The nature of Strether's misguided interpretations are both non-specific (that is, ones which are bound to occur in any human contact) and specific to the expatriate condition. Nicola Bradbury sees the relationship between Strether's ironic situation and his expatriate condition. "In The Ambassadors," she writes, "Strether's misunderstandings arise from his attempt to 'place' the Parisian situation in a New England framework of moral judgement, and to interpret the behaviour of those in Paris according to the patterns of New England custom and prejudice" (Bradbury 40). Strether's being caught up in an ironic situation has a great deal to do with his being in a foreign environment in which he must continually interpret signs and nuances he only imperfectly perceives. As an aging Woollett specimen he finds himself ill-suited in many ways for accurately reading scenes and determining meanings. The mission of the ambassador is to report on what is going on in Paris--what is really going on, but that for Strether is a tricky business. His views of events are influenced by his parochial New England frame of mind, his imaginative fancies which readily and wildly flap about in Europe, his lack of perceptiveness, or his stubborn insistence on not seeing the truth--or indeed all four elements. And yet, again

ironically, these very qualities are ones which contribute to his greater appreciation.

The point is easily admissible: Strether very often does not know what is going on. The extent to which Strether does not see can be shown by any number of examples. An early one is Strether's conversation with Waymarsh just after he has been in Chad's apartment and met Little Bilham. Waymarsh maintains that Strether should have come away from the place knowing something; not to have found out certain facts about Chad was pure negligence. Particularly, Strether should have been able to tell, upon being in his quarters, whether or not Chad was living with a woman. Strether confesses that he knows nothing, and moreover exults somewhat in his naivete:

"Well," said Strether almost gaily, "I guess I don't know anything!" His gaiety might have been a tribute to the fact that the state he had been reduced to did for him again what had been done by his talk of the matter with Miss Gostrey at the London theatre. It was somehow enlarging. (72)

Strether, wholly taken in by the freshness of the place, the charm of the life, the balcony and the youth of the American he spoke with (Little Bilham), just doesn't see, or doesn't want to see, what others seem to see. What strikes one here, though, is the great sense of gaiety and delight Strether has at not seeing things so concretely as others. He fails to see because he is so busy making things over into something else (on the blue guitar), enlarging his views and thinking how best to frame them. Seeing too clearly would demand a premature fixing of vision.

One could say, then, that an ironic disposition is the logical outcome of a double consciousness, and the region for error or insight seems to grow, rather than lessen, the more Strether comes to know--or think he knows--the ways of Europe. In this region of difference Strether often struggles to maintain his balance. Toward the end of Book VII, it is noted that "the increase of his darkness" was associated with "the quickening . . . of his tune" (195). When the Pococks come he finds that it is difficult to maintain "a full tone . . . in the absence of a full knowledge" (202). Strether's grip on reality begins to slip; he has increasing difficulty making sure determinations. This, for Strether at least, is a consequence of the mental changes he has been going through. James very neatly presents us with the operation of Strether's mind in an authorial interpretation of the hero's response to a conversation he is participating in with Miss Barrace and Little Bilham. "If Strether had been sure at each juncture of what--with Bilham in especial--she talked about, he might have traced others and winced at them and felt Waymarsh wince; but he was in fact so often at sea that his sense of the range of reference was merely general and that he on several different occasions guessed and interpreted only to doubt" (78). Strether, unaccustomed as he is to the modes of discourse around him, does not readily ascribe fixed meanings to the signifiers in conversation; consequently, his mind is forced to speculate, to entertain, all at once, a multitude of possibilities, each a tentative truth.

In his refusal to judge, Strether, often left adrift with no firm references, seems simply to muddle through. Halfway through

the novel Strether's naivete is so obvious that it is impossible to ignore. At the beginning of Book VI, Strether is still unable to make out that it is Madame de Vionnet whom Chad is interested in, not the young daughter, Jeanne. Not thinking things through very clearly, but giving others, literally, the benefit of the doubt, he commits a kind of treason, promising to save Mme de Vionnet, who wants his help in presenting hers and Chad's case to the Woollett constituency. There is a lot of talk about truth, but it is truth which Strether finds most elusive, as the following conversation shows so clearly, nearly comically, when Strether asks her how he is to keep Mrs. Newsome at bay.

"Simply tell her the truth."

"And what do you call the truth?"

"Well, any truth--about us all--that you see yourself. I leave it to you."

"Thank you very much. I like," Strether laughed with a slight harshness, "the way you leave things!"

But she insisted kindly, gently, as if it wasn't so bad. "Be perfectly honest. Tell her all."

"All?" he oddly echoed.

"Tell her the simple truth," Madame de Vionnet again pleaded.

"But what is the simple truth? The simple truth is exactly what I'm trying to discover." (150)

To Vionnet, who begs him to find out the "facts," Strether feebly replies that he can't know the truth because he is "a stranger." In

the next scene, at Chad's, Strether, still at bay, seems more and more to be on the outside--on the outside of Gloriani's nobility, on the outside of Jeanne's youth and elegance. He is still obsessed with "innocent attachments" and finds himself "moving verily in a strange air and on ground not of the firmest" (158). He suggests that Little Bilham marry Jeanne--a suggestion all at once preposterous (yet highly imaginative!) because it seems so out of line with facts as others view them.

Apparently Strether is bent on having Little Bilham married off because after the absurdity of this scheme is shown up, he proposes another innovative match--this time to Maimie Pocock, as a way of taking Maimie off Chad's hands and leaving him free to deal with Madame de Vionnet. The evidence Strether has for arriving at this plan is slim indeed--a remark made by Maimie, on Strether's coming upon her unexpectedly, admitting her anticipation of a visit from Little Bilham.

"But do you know," Strether asked, "if Chad knows--?" And then as this interlocutor seemed at a loss: "Why where she has come out."

Little Bilham, at this, met his face with a conscious look; it was as if, more than anything yet, the allusion had penetrated. "Do you know yourself?"

Strether, not feeling the whole purport of Little Bilham's question, muddles on: "There I stop. Oh, odd as it may appear to you, there are things I don't know" (259-60). Yes, as odd as it may appear to us!

Strether's problem of knowing, as we have noted, is related to his status as an outsider, not only an outsider in a foreign environment, but an outsider when it comes to the intimate circles of family and friendships. When he goes with Chad to meet the train that the Pocock's are arriving on we see Strether's double bind. He tries to read the signals of those in the family--and can't quite tell how everybody is sizing one another up because he is not well acquainted with the subtle codes of that familial system. In the cab, with Jim (Chad strategically has put them together while he himself rides off with the women, probably to get the scoop), his mind is terribly active, sorting through data, trying to come to conclusions as to how the Pococks are taking in the scene--Chad, himself, Paris. And, as he receives only unsatisfying responses from Jim, he begins to contemplate, really for the first time, the possibility that his own assumptions have been, all the way along, delusions.

Of what use would it be than that they had come?--if they weren't to be intelligent up to that point: unless indeed he himself were utterly deluded and extravagant? Was he, on this question of Chad's improvement, fantastic and away from the truth? Did he live in a false world, a world that had grown simply to suit him, and was his present slight irritation--in the face now of Jim's silence in particular--but the alarm of the vain thing menaced by the touch of the real? Was this contribution of the real possibly the mission of the Pococks?--had they come to make the work of observation, as

he had practised observation, crack and crumble, and to reduce Chad to the plain terms in which honest minds could deal with him? Had they come in short to be sane where Strether was destined to feel that he himself had only been silly? (212)

So obvious for Strether has been Chad's improvement, that he finds it difficult to believe that others cannot see what he has seen. The recognition of these differing views sets in motion a process of self-doubt: If they don't see what I have seen, perhaps I have been wrong. And on the question of Chad's improvement, though we may be prone to share Strether's evaluation, precisely because it is, seen through his eyes, so intense and compelling, we can never be sure that this is the "right" view. The novel tends, in fact, to challenge the very notion that there is one right view. Strether continually asserts that he wants to make things "right" (stable, morally correct), but we wonder whether he ever can. All he can do is try, and James seems at least to place considerable value on his hero's effort, no matter how futile it may seem.

Part of the trouble Strether has in making correct determinations is, as we have seen, related to his imperfect understanding of the moral system he has found himself thrown into (so unlike Woollett's it is) and the meanings of words used to describe the moral condition. Again, rather than jump to conclusions based upon his imperfect knowledge of events, he chooses not to presume things, and defers firm judgments based on what the face of things suggests. Refreshing as this perspective is, the strategy of delay very often makes Strether appear extremely dense; that is the risk he takes.

There is certainly a linguistic problem Strether is dealing with, related to a moral problem. Strether's trouble in judging differences between his own linguistic system and that which he finds himself in abroad is pointed up quite early in the novel, when he meets Chad, whom he is immensely charmed by, and tried to reconcile this image with the one he had conjured of him in Woollett.

He had been wondering a minute ago if the boy weren't a Pagan, and he found himself wondering now if he weren't by chance a gentleman. It didn't in the least, on the spot, spring up helpfully for him that a person couldn't at the same time be both. There was nothing at this moment in the air to challenge the combination; there was everything to give it on the contrary something of a flourish. (102)

Refinement and corruption are mistakenly, for Strether, at this point, two separate quantities which he cannot imagine acting in tandem in the same body.

As he tries to determine for himself just what the nature of Chad's and Madame Vionnet's relationship is, his difficulties are even greater. The Woollett concensus, arrived at without any actual viewing of the facts, is that there is a woman holding Chad. Strether knows what Woollett, with its strictly Puritanical moral codes, judges as "good" and "bad." His compatriots (notably Little Bilham and Maria Gostrey), tempered by the climate and light of Paris, seem to use words differently--nay, they even seem to have reconciled themselves to a new moral system!--and our hero has some difficulty discerning their meanings. In the exchange between

Strether and Maria Gostrey, just after he has met Chad, there is a fair bit of comedy as the newly arrived ambassador struggles to find out just what, or who, is responsible for having produced the marvelous changes in Chad. Maria "sees" at once; Strether is several steps behind. They have, thus far, concluded that the woman must be more than "a mere wretch." Maria takes it up and hands it to Strether:

"There must, behind every appearance to the contrary, still be somebody--somebody who's not a mere wretch, since we accept the miracle. What else but such a somebody can such a miracle be?"

He took it in. "Because the fact itself is the woman?"

"A woman. Some woman or other. It's one of the things that have to be."

"But you mean that at least a good one."

"A good woman?" She threw up her arms with a laugh. "I should call her excellent!"

"Then why does he deny her?"

Miss Gostrey thought a moment. "Because she's too good to admit! Don't you see," she went on, "how she accounts for him?"

Strether clearly, more and more, did see; yet it made him also see other things. (107)

This is only a fragment of the long conversation, but enough, I think, to demonstrate the nature of Strether's process of understanding. During his conversations with Maria and Little Bilham,

Strether continually is forced to turn over in his mind the phrases "good," "free," "happy," and "virtuous." As he does so, his own way of viewing things gradually adjusts. In the parlance of Paris "good" is taken to mean, among other things, morally or aesthetically excellent.

Later, after Strether has met Madame Vionnet, he probes Little Bilham, still trying to find out how respectable the woman is, and the nature of the involvement. We find, though, that Bilham and Strether are using words to mean different things; consequently, Strether doesn't find out much of anything for sure. Strether begins by saying,

"I understand what a relation with such a woman--what such a fine friendship--may be. It can't be vulgar or coarse, anyway--and that's the point."

"Yes, that's the point," said little Bilham. "It can't be vulgar or coarse. And, bless us and save us, it isn't!"

(166)

The same words--vulgar, coarse, refined--are used but each speaker is attaching different meanings to them. Strether's impulse is to take "good" in its Woollett currency. The word implies an innocence that it doesn't for Bilham, who has left the narrow confines of that town, particularly after acknowledging the shortcomings of moral definitions. Strether, still bound by the moral-linguistic patterns of Massachusetts, uses "vulgar" or "coarse" more or less the way we imagine Mrs. Newsome would. "Virtuous" in his books means Platonic: No sex involved--presumably like his own relationship with Mrs.

Newsome. For Little Bilham the whole relationship--simply because it is a relationship between two discreet, tasteful, wonderful human beings--would be anything but immoral. At this point it is difficult to tell (as it often is!) just what Strether sees. It is possible that he is giving in somewhat to the scene, for he insists on seeing Madame de Vionnet's influence as being a "moral lift."

Strether is able to maintain his romanticized views for a surprisingly long time. Every so often he feels the tickle of a doubt, but not until his day in the French countryside, very late in the novel, are facts so blatant that he must take them in and restructure his picture. In fact, what makes this famous scene so powerfully dramatic is that he has so long insisted on his innocent, open-minded view. As we might recall, the scene, which is so carefully crafted to show the workings of the romantic mind, opens with Strether's impromptu train ride into the French countryside. He has acted on a desire to contact a fresh reality, that of the French rural atmosphere, "which he had hitherto looked only through the little oblong window of the picture-frame. It had been as yet for the most part but a land of fancy for him--the background of fiction, the medium of art, the nursery of letters; practically as distant as Greece, but practically also well-nigh as consecrated." (301) But where did Strether first get his idea? How did the romance begin to form? We are told of how, in Boston, some time in the past, Strether had fallen in love with a landscape painting of the French countryside, by the painter Lambinet. The price demanded for the painting was more than Strether could afford. And yet, years later "the little Lambinet abode with him as the picture he

would have bought--the particular production that had for him for the moment overstep the modesty of nature." The memory of that vision is what stays in his mind and Strether admits that actually seeing the thing again "just as he had seen it in the maroon-coloured, sky-lighted inner shrine of Tremont Street," might produce "a drop or a shock." The image has taken on a power of its own in Strether's imagination, which appropriates by appreciating the object and framing it in memory rather than purchasing it.

Strether's trip to the countryside, then, is motivated by a desire to find, in reality, a scene corresponding one which he had found in art. The adventure is enriched by the powerful sense of the past, pulled into prominence by memory. When he finally finds that spot he is searching for, with all elements (the poplars, river, church and the village) in their proper places, he finds "it was what he wanted: it was Tremont Street, it was France, it was Lambinet." In other words, at least for a moment Strether feels the ideal fully in front of him, an ideal embracing America and France, held in balance within "the oblong gilt frame" (302). It is in this free and leisurely state of day-dreaming that "he had the sense of success, of a finer harmony in things; nothing but what had turned out as yet according to his plan." His mind, out in the open air and free from the constant influences of others, begins to concentrate on Madame de Vionnet, and appraise the ground he has gained with her during his recent visits. We get the clear impression that, however much he may be holding back, he is falling--or has fallen--in love. He even is creating imaginary conversations in which the woman downplays her relation with Chad and suggests that

their own has so much more possibility.

Still very much in his interior theater of romance, he returns to the Cheval Blanc at six in the evening, where he has planned to dine. The narrator tells us that

though he had been alone all day, he had never yet so struck himself as engaged with others and in midstream of his drama. It might have passed for finished, his drama, with its catastrophe all but reached: it had, however, none the less been vivid again for him as he thus gave it its fuller chance. He had only had to be at last well out of it to feel it, oddly enough, still going on.

This is the point in the novel, we feel, when Strether is stretched as far as he can go without snapping or breaking. His imagination takes him as far as he has been by his conjuring of the romantic possibilities between himself and Madame de Vionnet. More than that, we are told that nowhere else had Strether felt so intensely the differences between where he was and home. The Cheval Blanc, with its leisurely mood, its sublimity, its cullinary offerings, its pure, unadulerated Frenchness, is as far as he has gone. And he is, as we already noted, wholly on his own, with no Gostrey or Bilham with whom to compare notes.

In the passage just cited there is something of an anticipation of catastrophe. The moment at which the frame is broken, when Strether's untethered imagination is pulled in with a jolt, is of course one of the best-known moments in all James's fiction. When the boat first enters the picture, "containing a man who held the

paddles and a lady at the stern, with a pink parasol," Strether sees it as the one needful thing, the element which, up to this moment, his frame had not included. As long as the picture remains picture--purely aesthetic--this is the view Strether maintains; when, however, the people move so close that their identity and relation cannot be denied, the aesthetic dimension is broken, the charged dramatic content bursts the gold frame and the on-looker must come face to face with a long-neglected reality: Chad and Mrs. Newsome have been in the boat together all along, and Strether has not taken it in on such a conscious level before.

The moment of recognition indeed could have led to catastrophe, but disaster is averted as the parties involved quickly adjust themselves to the new, unexpected reality. Once Strether has identified the two passengers, so romantically conceived and, to his eye, so intimately connected, he quickly appraises the situation.

Strether became aware, with this, of what was taking place--that her recognition had been even stranger for the pair in the boat, that her immediate impulse had been to control it, and that she was quickly and intensely debating with Chad the risk of betrayal. He saw they would show nothing if they could feel sure he hadn't made them out; so that he had before him for a few seconds his own hesitation. It was a sharp fantastic crisis that had popped up as if in a dream, and it had had only to last the few seconds to make him feel it as quite horrible. (308)

Strether's solution--to play as loudly and openly as possible his

surprise at the encounter, and not give any sign of moral disapprobation--is perfect. Again, Strether is able to take things in without being thrown out of kilter. The expressions of surprise release the pressure and all go off to dine together, no one admitting, at least on the surface of things, the slightest embarrassment. Strether seems to favor lucidity, the rarefied air of optimism, to what would seem to be its stark alternative--cynicism and bitterness. Later that night, when he returns home and reconstructs the scene he is bothered by the sense that the performance, the disavowal of intimate ties, was all, as remarkable as it was, built upon a lie. Though "the quantity of make-believe involved," is what most upsets him, there is, beneath it all, the sting left by witnessing an idyllic intimacy which he is distinctly not a part of.

IV

"Then there we are!" Strether announces in the last line of the novel in his final conversation with Maria Gostrey. In Book XII, between the scene in the French countryside and this pronouncement, come conversations Strether has with Madame de Vionnet, Chad, and Maria, in which he sounds them out and tries to feel just where he is. But the question readers are usually inclined to ask at the end of the novel is, "Where is Strether?" We are left wondering, perhaps, whether a final assessment can be made about where his double consciousness has led our hero. Earlier in the novel Strether, in a conversation with Waymarsh says that if his errand doesn't succeed, he will be nowhere. Indeed, that is where he seems to be now. Chad, even earlier, has suggested that the old man might

be "dished." He has, by the close of the novel, left behind Mrs. Newsome, the source of his financial support, and chosen not to be attached to either of the other two women--Maria and Marie (transfigurations of Mary the Mother?)--who supposedly might have taken him in had he been interested. In that same conversation with Miss Gostrey, in which she confronts Strether on the state of affairs between him and Mrs. Newsome, Strether admits that he had "morally and intellectually" got rid of her even while he was home. "But somehow over there I didn't quite know it." Strether stumbles upon a truth concerning the rupture when Maria suggests that what he had come over for were "surprises." "'That's just her difficulty,'" Strether replies. "'that she doesn't admit surprises. It's a fact that, I think, describes and represents her; and it falls in with what I tell you--that she's all, as I've called it, fine cold thought. She had, to her own mind, worked the whole thing out in advance, and worked it out for me as well as for herself. Whenever she has done that, you see, there's no room left; no margin, as it were, for any alteration. She's filled as full, packed as tight, as she'll hold, and if you wish to get anything more or different either out or in--'" Strether gives a lot here. He has, by rejecting Mrs. Newsome (America) who admits no surprises, chosen in favor of romance. The paradox strikes us again: in Mrs. Newsome's scheme of things "there's no room left; no margin, as it were, for alteration." In order freely to develop a personal vision, Strether suggests, you must abandon her. That is the implication. What Strether must feel, in the form of Sarah, is a kind of blackmail and what he realizes is his dependency. Going back means giving in,

becoming dependent, suffering humiliation, admitting he had been in error, shrinking. Staying, however indefinite the stay might be, is a choice for freedom.

It could be argued, in fact, that in getting nothing, Strether gets exactly what he has claimed to want throughout the novel. (To Maria, at one point, he says, "What I want is a thing I've ceased to measure or even to understand.") By refusing to choose between the various women, Strether in fact gets what Chad, who must choose between Madame de Vionnet and his mother, cannot have. Ironically, though he may be left with nothing, he has at the same time everything. The view that Strether, by renouncing associations, by refusing to give in to one party's interest, has it all imaginatively, is promoted by Poirier, who suggest that James's character-observers "in being freed from the pressure of any environment but that of the mind from which they issue" (128).

Viewing and taking it in is the alternative given to acting. Strether seems to realize that there are some pay-offs in his decision, demonstrated, for instance, toward the beginning of Book XI, after what we take to be a nearly irreparable rupture between Strether and Sarah.

All voices had grown thicker and meant more things; they crowded on him as he moved about--it was the way they sounded together that wouldn't let him be still. He felt, strangely, as sad as if he had come for some wrong, and yet as excited as if he had come for some freedom. But the freedom was what was most in the place and the hour; it was the freedom that

most brought him round again to the youth of his own that he had long ago missed. He could have explained little enough to-day either why he had missed it or why, after years and years, he should care that he had; the main truth of the actual appeal of everything was none the less that everything represented the substance of his loss, put it within reach, within touch, made it, to a degree it had never been, an affair of the senses. . . . It was in the outside air as well as within; it was in the long watch, from the balcony, in the summer night, of the wide late life of Paris, the unceasing soft quick rumble, below, of the little lighted carriages . . .

(281-2)

This shows something like Strether's own assessment of things. Though he is cut off, he feels an immense sense of freedom, that freedom being related to the severance. His expedition abroad has created a change in him, making a return--were he even to consider the option as tenable--unlikely in the immediate future. When Madame de Vionnet lobbies Strether, against his going home and for his remaining near them, she argues, "Where is your 'home' moreover now--what has become of it? I've made a change in your life, I know I have; I've upset everything in your mind as well; in your sense of--what shall I call it?--all the decencies and possibilities" (321). Certainly Strether has gotten "signals" that his performance as an ambassador has been received with something less than delight, but to the reader's knowledge there has been no ultimatum to the effect that were he to come home he would be cast off. Nonetheless, he has reached the conclusion for himself, by the end of the novel,

that there is nothing for him in Woollett. In his last conversation with Maria Gostrey, in the last chapter of the novel, Maria probes him on this question. "Is there nothing he [Chad] can do that would make you patch it up?" After a pause Strether replies, "There's nothing any one can do. It's over. Over for both of us." He goes on: "Too much has happened. I'm different for her" (343). The changes within him have produced the difference which cannot be patched up. Mrs. Newsome (Woollett, America) is for him "the same." "She's more than ever the same. But I do what I didn't before--I see her." Strether has, at the end, all these people saying "there is nothing in the world I wouldn't do for you." And, he says, I know, but I must, nonetheless, go it on my own--"to be right" as he says, ambiguously to Maria.

The relatively open ending of the novel has led to considerable critical speculation on this question of Strether's fate. The question often leads toward a judgment of the success or failure of Strether's mission, which is measured in terms of gain and loss. The question is whether Strether's loss of favor, and severance of source of income is in some degree compensated by a gain in a fuller vision or greater imaginative capacity. Frederick Crews represents the most generous interpretations of Strether's position: "Neither Woollett's abstemious Puritanism nor Paris' amoral secularism can account for the sense of Life that Strether has achieved through the expansion of his social and moral awareness."²² Likewise, Richard Poirier suggests that Strether's "variety of impressions" will "sustain" him in his future life (139). This is Poirier's fuller interpretation:

. . . the book makes us feel that his [Strether's] generosity has been betrayed by the materials--like Chad--on which it has expended itself. People really ought to try to live up to such an imagination of them as Strether's--that finally is what the book asks us to believe, not anything so tiresome as that Strether has failed to be in touch with reality. (136)

For better or worse, Strether has, by the end of the novel, decided clearly on an ethos which calculates gain and loss in other than monetary terms. "What he has come to see," writes Wegelin, "is that the precepts of Woollett will not serve as guides for the moral evaluations of Paris, since they are part of the localism of manners and therefore subjective. . . . What his adventure teaches him is the fallibility of Woollett's 'sacred rage' and, more important, the beauty of another mode of living--or, to borrow William James's words . . . , the beauty of 'the attained social character of European civilization.'"²³ Similarly, Bradbury suggests that by the end of the novel we see Strether finally, arrived, after his essential dialectic operation, at "a consciousness which will free him from both worlds" (41).

Not all critics are so convinced that the tally comes out in Strether's favor. Matthiessen, for example, toward the end of his discussion of The Ambassadors, asks, "But what does Strether finally make of his experience?" and finally hazards an answer: "The burden of The Ambassadors is that Strether has awakened to a wholly new sense of life. Yet he does nothing at all to fulfill that sense."²⁴

My own view closer to one submitted by Michael Seidel: "His

[Strether's] steamship ticket may return him to America, but his sensibility, as James implies, has made him a permanent exile" (Seidel 163). Earlier in the discussion he writes that Strether "finds himself having rejected the sharp facts of Woollett but excluded from the vivid facts of Europe" (158). Seidel sees Strether insisting on freedom, or at least the illusion of freedom, and his rejection of women is a part of that. "What Strether has is what he has fervently argued for, the illusion of freedom; the freedom itself is secondary for him. To choose a course of action that involves, indirectly or not, choosing a woman is to bend Strether's imagination out of shape" (160). Most readers agree, as James it seems would have them, that Strether has "come out on the other side." Just what "the other side" is never seems to be resolved however. The question is an important one for James, for Strether and for most serious expatriate fiction. The expatriate, for a period of time, leaves something behind; he at the same time places himself in a close relation with something new. Once that move has been effected, a complete cross-over in one direction or the other is difficult if not impossible. What one is often left with, then, is an "other side" which is neither of one world nor the other. It is an "other side" whose most menacing version is a gaping abyss. It is "as if life has moved beyond that realm where destiny follows choice" (Seidel 136).

Should Strether ever return to America we might imagine that his response would be similar to that of an earlier James hero, Christopher Newman, when he, after being seduced by the wiles of Europe, came home. Newman, pursued by the idea of a failed romance

and no longer throwing himself into commercial activities, is bored and restless.

He had nothing to do here, he sometimes said to himself; but there was something beyond the ocean that he was still to do; something that he had left undone experimentally and speculatively, to see if it could content itself to remain undone. But it was not content: it kept pulling at his heart-strings and thumping at his reason; it murmured in his ears and hovered perpetually before his eyes. It interposed between all new resolutions and their fulfillment; it seemed like a stubborn ghost, dumbly entreating to be laid. Till that was done he should never be able to do anything else. ²⁵

We have seen, in the examination of the Lambinet scene how close Strether comes to a catastrophic collapse of romantic ideas. In the end, though, he has, for the duration of the novel at least, narrowly avoided a collapse. He does so by insisting on keeping alive the possibilities for romance, for the bridging of difference. For Strether the blunt realities have become so forceful that they have had to be reckoned with, yet he has not given in to those pressures. The difference is, then, something to be lived with. That is the hard reality of the matter. The situation Strether faces at the end of The Ambassadors is rather like that Anna Leath faces at the end of The Reef. Both characters had, for the greater portion of the respective novels, been living lives governed by a romantic image of the other. For Anna it was the image of Darrow as a man whose integrity was impeccable. For Strether it was his

romantic conception of Madame de Vionnet and Chad--the nature of their "virtuous" relation and his relations with both of them. At the end of either novel what we see is the collapse of romantic illusions, upon the recognition of some unappealing truth, and a yet unclearly defined decision on the part of the central characters (Anna/Strether) to carry on somehow in the face of it all. Northrop Frye notes how the romantic moves towards the ironic. As it does so, he submits, "the opposite poles of the cycles of nature are assimilated to the opposition of the hero and his enemy. The enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor, and youth."²⁶ These are precisely the terms Strether must, in his ironic posture, hold in balance the best he can.

The effects of ironic imbalance, what Paul de Man refers to as "the dizziness of irony," are not always easy to judge.²⁷ It would seem as though in its most positive dimension, irony might lead to redemption. The character might, realizing the fallacies upon which he had based his views, move on to embrace a more truthful vision of his circumstances. This is what de Man had in mind, I believe, when he suggested that irony has not completed its work before there is a recognition. There is a fall, followed by the realization of error, after which the character is able to pick himself up, laugh, and brush himself off. At its best, an ironic awareness, by cautioning one about making hard and fast conclusions, creates a kind of mental dialectical process which dances between the "real" and the "ideal," between the way things actually operate and the way we would have them operate. The ironic mode, even as it pulls us into arbitrariness,

ness, has the potential of sharpening our critical perceptions; in Empson's words "it combines breadth of sympathy with energy of judgment."²⁸ And D.C. Muecke's image for describing the state of mind is that of "a gyroscope that keeps life on an even keel or straight course, restoring balance when life is being taken too seriously or . . . not seriously enough, stabilizing the unstable but also destabilizing the excessively stable."²⁹ The possession of an ironic sensibility, in other words, can afford one a great deal more maneuverability in the world of ambivalent meanings than does a strictly literalist view of things. If there were any problem with Woollett, it was that things were too clearly spelled out and arranged, and consequently there was little room for the roaming of imaginative fancy. Not knowing leaves the question open. It is a way of buying time. It allows Strether to justify his inaction. Sure knowledge, on the other hand, demands some kind of response. "You can't make out over here what people do know." Strether yields up, at one point, and one might sense that this is not stated as a complaint, but as an happy explanation for his own strategy of delay. Strether doesn't want to know for sure, for were he quickly to apprehend the facts in their crystal clarity his mission would have to come to an end.

All this presumes that the damage caused by the character's fumbings has not been too great and that the adjustment following realization--perhaps subsequent to the collapse of romantic illusions or the realization that there are laws outside our own small subjective determinations--and fails to see any dangers associated with the stance. It is easily imaginable that living too long with

uncertainty could result in a perpetual spinning; a lack of bearings; a thrusting of the text and the character into a kind of indecisiveness, or role of observer; a hesitancy at asserting one's self in an environment where one's actions could so easily run amuck.

Our hero in James's novel is left straddling the gulf between two competing truths; that is where his double consciousness leads him. When William Empson notes "the fundamental impulse of irony to score off both the arguments that have been puzzling you, both sets of sympathies in your mind, both sorts of fool who will hear you; a plague on both their houses," it would almost seem as though he were speaking of the guiding impulse in The Ambassadors and offering a plausible response to that question we posed earlier: Just where is Strether in the end?

V

One reason James may have been especially fond of this novel is that Strether's dilemma--a choice between two continents--was his own as well. If James did not seriously take up the notion of returning permanently to America, at least he thought considerably about what expatriation had done to him, particularly after his trip to America in 1904-1905. That he had become quite a different person than he would have become had he remained in the United States was clear enough. But lurking behind this certainty was a more haunting question: Would he perhaps have been "better off" had he stayed in his native land?

This issue is intriguingly taken up in James's 1907 story, "The

Jolly Corner," in which the main character Spencer Brydon returns to New York, his home, after an absence of thirty three years and meets his ghost-like double--himself having grown up in America. In that story, Brydon muses over what would have become of him had he not gone away for so many years; in this interpretation, expatriation has been a severing of connection, a kind of "blight" in which the plant, accustomed to his native soil, had not had the opportunity to bloom properly. "It comes over me that I had then a strange alter ego deep down somewhere within me, as the full-blown flower is in the small tight bud, and that just took the course, I just transformed him to the climate, that blighted him for once and for ever."³⁰ When Brydon meets his doppelganger he "took him in; with every fact of him now, in the higher light, hard and acute--his planted stillness, his vivid truth, his grizzled bent head and white masking hands, his queer actuality of evening-dress, of dangling double eye-glass, of gleaming silk lappet and white linen, of pearl button and gold watch-guard and polished shoe" (343). Brydon finds the image horrifying, yet the bystander remains, as is so typical in James, quite uncertain about whether that revulsion stems purely from the image that other projects or from an image subjectively determined by Brydon himself.

The consideration of this story is apropos in the context of this discussion of The Ambassadors: recall that the central concern among those in Woollett--the one which has been responsible for sending Strether on his mission--is that Chad Newsome might stay abroad so long that he simply would become so habituated to a life abroad that he would not never give himself over to the idea of

returning. Chad, when he returns, is expected to step into the role of the American entrepreneur, and were we to project an image of Chad in the future after his business career in America, he might, at the age of fifty five, appear very much like that horrifying specter Brydon encountered. James is interested in what would happen to characters when they were transported to new environments and placed in new soil, with fresh influences. This kind of experimenting, which is seen very clearly in "The Jolly Corner" is, to a great extent, the modus operandi in The Ambassadors. Chad and Strether can easily be seen as versions of the same character. Strether had been to Paris for a brief time, after his engagement to be married, but had not stayed long enough to be influenced by it. Rather he returns to New England, marries, and lives a fairly normal life. In Chad, twenty years his junior, Strether recognizes an earlier version of himself. This version, though, rather than returning to Woollett and marrying after his trip to Europe, stayed in Europe, spent time there, absorbing it. For the fifty-five year old Strether, now left with nothing besides his name on the green cover of a mediocre literary magazine, the sight of the lively, suave, debonaire Chad is a vivid reminder that his own life has gone by uneventfully, that it all amounts to so very little. Between Chad and Strether there is something of the homosexual dynamic. Before Strether is a vision embodying the elements he most craves and lacks--youth, promise, charisma and money; the true impulse is not to LOVE the other, but to transform himself INTO that image. That alone would placate the very acute sense of depravity and longing the middle-aged voyager feels. Life abroad certainly seems to have

suiting Chad; it may be that Spencer Brydon (a little like James himself) has simply stayed away too long to think about returning and adapting.

The notion of returning to America was, for James, even in his later years, always an imaginative possibility. His attitudes towards this idea are expressed in 1913, when after again being urged to return home, he wrote to his sister:

Dearest Alice, I could come back to America (could be carried back on a stretcher, to die--but never, never to live. . . . You see my capital--yielding all my income, intellectual, social associational, on the old investment of so many years--my capital is here, and to let it all slide would be simply to become bankrupt.³¹

The abundant use of financial terminology--"capital," "income," "investment," "bankrupt"--suggest the extent to which an assessment of gain and loss so habitually reverts to what one finally is left with, materially, in one's pocket. Though passages like this one may not be absent of irony, James recognizes that his very material, the sources of his fiction, lie in his adopted residence; in moving he would risk a great loss, a kind of death.

Yet, despite the firm commitment not to return, there is always that inextricable tie. James never relinquishes his American identity. (Not even a revocation of citizenship erases the distinguishing traces of national origin.) James's writing was for America, just as were Strether's letters, and with his homeland he often had an uneasy relationship, suffering sometimes the criticisms of

those, even in his own family, who chided and blasted him on charges of desertion or disloyalty. "And I've been as disappointed in her refusal to see it as she has been in what has appeared to her the perversity of my insistence," a line Strether uses to describe his reaction to Mrs. Newsome, as well could express James's own disappointment in his native land's inability to appreciate his stance, his project. The lines have been drawn between America and Europe, and James's decision to live abroad, justifiably or not, was often considered a judgment on the respective values of the two cultures.

This stance, for James as well as for Strether, was an uneasy one. That the writer often had misgivings can be understood. Hamlin Garland, in Roadside Meetings, recalls Henry James telling him in 1906 (roughly during the period of the writing of "The Jolly Corner") that if he had it to do over again he would have tried to be wholly an American.

"If I were to live my life over again," he said in a low voice, and fixing upon me a sombre glance, "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 of Europe and America which you see has proved disastrous. It has made 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."³²

The precision of this description may well be questioned, given its source, yet this sentiment would surely be a natural for one who had

spent the bulk of his life, by his own will, away from his native land. In The Ambassadors what we have is a picture of the process leading to this exilic condition in which one feels wholly at home neither one place, nor another. After a substantial period of being away there comes a natural impulse to weigh and measure what it all adds up to. Has there been a gain? A loss? What is one to make of it all?

Notes to Chapter Two

¹Henry James, The Ambassadors, ed. S.P. Rosenbaum (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1964), p. 73. This is the text of The Ambassadors which I am using and subsequent references to pages will be in parentheses.

²Henry James, "Occasional Paris," in The Portable Henry James, ed. Morton Dauwen Zabel (New York: Viking, 1956), p. 500.

³Henry James, letter to Edith Wharton, quoted in Millicent Bell, Edith Wharton and Henry James: The Story of Their Friendship (New York: George Braziller, 1965), p. 273-75.

⁴Millicent Bell, p. 125.

⁵Stephen Spender, Love-Hate Relations: English and American Sensibilities (New York: Vintage, 1975), p. 54.

⁶Frederick J. Hoffman, The Twenties: American Writing in the Postwar Decade, rev. ed. (New York: Viking, 1962), preface.

⁷Joseph Warren Beach, The Method of Henry James (Philadelphia: A Saifer, 1954), xlviii.

⁸F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (New York: New York University Press, 1963), p. 161.

⁹Michael Seidel, Exile and the Narrative Imagination (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 137.

¹⁰F.O. Matthiessen, F.O. Henry James: The Major Phase (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 36. (First published in 1944 by OUP.)

¹¹Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 102.

¹²Leon Edel, Henry James, 5 vol. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1953-1972), v. 2, p. 135.

¹³Henry Adams, Mont-St. Michel and Chartres (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 50.

¹⁴Henry James, letter to Edith Wharton, in Letters of Henry James, ed. Percy Lubbock, 2 vol. (New York: 1920), 2:57.

¹⁵Edward W. Said, "The Mind of Winter: Reflections on Life in Exile," Harper's, September 1985, p. 55.

¹⁶Vladimir Nabokov, Mary, tr. Michael Glenny (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 5.

¹⁷Seidel, p. 144.

¹⁸Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), p. 167.

¹⁹For a wider ranging discussion of irony and expatriation, see Allen Hibbard, "Some Versions of Ironic (Mis-)Interpretation: The American Abroad," Alif (Cairo) v. 8, p. 67-87.

²⁰Nicola Bradbury, Henry James: The Later Novels (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 8.

- ²¹Beach, p. 266.
- ²²Frederick C. Crews, The Tragedy of Manners (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 55.
- ²³Christof Wegelin, The Image of Europe in Henry James (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1958), p. 99, 101.
- ²⁴Matthiessen, p. 38, 39.
- ²⁵Henry James, The American (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), p. 361.
- ²⁶Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 188.
- ²⁷Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in Blindness and Insight, 2nd ed., (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 212.
- ²⁸William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p. 62.
- ²⁹D.C. Muecke, Irony and the Ironic (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 4.
- ³⁰Henry James, "The Jolly Corner," in Eight Tales from the Major Phase (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 324.
- ³¹Letter to Alice James, cited in Edel, Henry James, v. 5, p. 504.

³²Hamlin Garland, Roadside Meetings (New York: 1931), p. 461.

CHAPTER THREE

Transformation

The first two chapters, dealing with The Reef and The Ambassadors, clearly set up terms for identifying and discussing the expatriate novel as a form. Since very often our judgments of a particular work are colored or determined by our expectations of what the thing ought to be, it is useful to lift these expectations to the surface. As we know, genres have their histories; some die out, as a consequence of a kind of natural selection, and others evolve, shaped by the wits and intentions of authors and the opportunities and constraints of history. In Wharton and James we have seen mature versions of the American expatriate novel. They are products of a more cosmopolitan America than their predecessors knew; they also had behind them fledgling flights into the form, upon which their maturity doubtless depends. Hawthorne's The Marble Faun, while by no means the most perfect example of an expatriate novel, is one of the earliest versions produced by an American writer and we can feel in its crude form a potential realized only later. When Henry James, speaking about Nathaniel Hawthorne's sojourn in Italy, pronounces that "an American of equal genius, imagination, and, as our forefathers said, sensibility, would at present inevitably accommodate himself more easily to the idiosyncrasies of foreign lands," we can assume that James himself is that more accommodating American.¹

Indeed, The Marble Faun, while an exceedingly interesting experiment, registers a certain uneasiness or discomfort with the

expatriate stance. Neither the form of the novel nor the ideas it puts forth seem to affirm the advantages of expatriation that many other writers, including the first two in this study, have realized. Nor does the work seem to balance the demands or address the opportunities which the new landscape presents to the novelist. There seem to be competing interests pulling against one another, tensions which never find satisfactory formal or thematic resolution. While The Marble Faun is by definition an expatriate novel, the discussion which follows will show that it might be a kind of anti-type, in which the value of an extended sojourn away from one's homeland is questioned. We might wonder when, at the novel's end, Hilda and Kenyon begin to conclude that their contact with foreign air might have had some corrupting affect on their innocent natures, how much that sense of doubt reflects the author's own feeling about his stay abroad and the success of the single novel he chose to set outside his native New England.

Hawthorne's residence abroad, and hence the existence of The Marble Faun, had its origin in reasons which were fundamentally political and economic. The New England writer went abroad to fill the post of American Consul in Liverpool, in 1853, accepting an appointment made by President Franklin Pierce, perhaps as an expression of appreciation for the campaign biography Hawthorne had written for his longtime friend. Hawthorne was burdened, as he always seemed to be, by demands of work and the necessity to earn a living for him and his family. At once, then, we are able to draw a distinction between the circumstances of Hawthorne's expatriation and those of, say, James and Wharton, both of whom were substantial-

ly freer agents (though not without their economic interests and psychological ties), and more at home in Europe as a result of their earlier travels. This distinction may, by revealing some of the psychological/historical forces around the making of the novel, help us understand this somewhat problematic novel. The very nature of his work--a literal representative of the U.S. government--no doubt complicated Hawthorne's sense of mission, personal desires perhaps being overridden by diplomatic duties. Unlike Strether, the ambassador who, in a sense, had to be recalled because in the face of a personal flowering of youthful exuberance he seemed to have neglected his assignment, Hawthorne seems not to have let go. This reluctance or inability to go over to the other side, figuratively, may to some extent explain the novel's incongruence.

Like other writers in this study, Hawthorne hoped that his overseas tour might supply him with useful literary material. He had planned to set a work of fiction set in England, but never completed the project. He did, however, write a novel--the last of his four major novels--set in Italy. Just as he had before, in The Scarlet Letter, he wished to situate the novel in "a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other." ² In a well-known statement in his Preface to The Marble Faun, Hawthorne, speaking about himself in the third person, describes the attraction of the foreign locale.

Italy, as the site of his Romance, was chiefly valuable to him as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where

actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and must needs be, in America. No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land.³

Hawthorne's words echo ones Cooper wrote in his Preface to Home as Found ("for this country, in its ordinary aspects, probably presents as barren a field to the writer of fiction, and to the dramatist, as any other on earth; we are not certain that we might not say the most barren."⁴) and are themselves echoed by James in his famous remarks about castles, manners, public schools, and aristocracy in his book on Hawthorne.

So extraordinarily similar are these statements by the most prominent American expatriate novelists of the 19th century that we should consider just what they add up to. The common complaint concerns the difficulty the writer of fiction has in a land with no accretion of history or manners, but there is also an implied reference to a struggle between the artist and his society. In his essay "The American Literary Expatriate," R.P. Blackmur notes how an understanding of this struggle is essential for understanding the dynamics of expatriation. Although Blackmur's ultimate concern is the American expatriate of the twenties, he considers the phenomenon as a whole, stretching back to Hawthorne and Cooper. The reason, he suggests, for the exodus of American writers has something to do with "the peculiar relations between the artist and the social

institutions of the modern world,"⁵ and while this may seem especially cogent when considering the lost generation of the twenties, as the treatment of The Sun Also Rises in the next chapter will show, Blackmur indicates that it was just as true for Hawthorne, shown clearly in the narrator's explanation in The Marble Faun of why these American artists were in Rome:

One of the chief causes that make Rome the favorite residence of artists--their ideal home which they sigh for in advance, and are so loath to migrate from, after once breathing its enchanted air--is, doubtless, that they there find themselves in force, and are numerous enough to create a congenial atmosphere. In every other clime, they are isolated strangers; in this land of art, they are free citizens.⁶

Two primary forces, Hawthorne indicates, draw expatriates to Rome: the art treasures, and the presence of a sufficient number of fellow expatriates to form a community wherein one could feel a degree of warmth and familiarity. When Hawthorne uses the phrase "free citizens," it seems that what he implies is a degree of familiarity, as much or more than the loosening of ties to native habits and philosophies. Doubtless, this free atmosphere--in contrast to the Puritan community which pressed in around Hester Prynne--was what the author himself hoped he might find in Italy.

Blackmur writes of the expatriate: "His society did not feed him either because of an unwillingness, an inability, or a disability within himself; and he had therefore to create a society in his imagination." Or, he elaborates, "he could not find in America the

values that he needed for his art" (72). In Blackmur's view, what the expatriate artist cannot find in America is a quantity related to his own self, and what the individual judges necessary societal sustenance for the production of art. That one thing needful, we might assume, is a shared belief in the value of art itself.

Though this rationale for expatriation--the struggle of the artist to find sustenance in his own society--indeed would be a credible one for Hawthorne, who in so many instances had made that struggle the theme of his American fictions, it does not figure in remarks he made in his Preface to the novel. As his main reason for setting his romance in Italy, Hawthorne submits that the American landscape, the American scene, lacks those elements which contribute to the success of the romance. This is sensible enough. Others have given the same reason--desire for romance either in their life or their work--for leaving the country. Yet, in the case of Hawthorne a certain irony can scarcely escape us. While for most of the writers I deal with the expatriate experience was one which arguably was an impetus pushing their creative talents to horizons they would not otherwise have reached, we might agree with James who wrote in his early study of The Marble Faun that

The whole thing is less simple and complete than either of the three tales of American life, and Hawthorne forfeited a precious advantage in ceasing to tread his native soil. Half the virtue of The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables is in their local quality; they are impregnated with the New England air. (444)

Like Strether in The Ambassadors, Hawthorne, who was nearly sixty when he finally made it to Italy, may have struggled to be nimble and youthful enough to transform his imaginative excitement successfully into real capital.

I

When we begin to read The Marble Faun we immediately recognize it as a member of its type. After the invocation of the figure of the human soul, "its choice of Innocence or Evil close at hand," we are offered a vista of Rome and reminded of its layers upon layers of history--Etruscan, Roman, Christian, Modern. In this foreign setting Hawthorne rather awkwardly places the four central characters ("It might be that the four persons whom we are seeking to introduce were conscious of this dreamy character of the present . . ."): two American artists Kenyon and Hilda, Miriam the woman of ambiguous origins, and Donatello the young Italian who seems half puppy dog, half human. Both of the Americans are, like many of their compatriots of that time, in Italy to study the country's art.⁷ Hilda, a forerunner of Daisy Miller, is described as "a slender, brown-haired New England girl, whose perceptions of form and expression were wonderfully clear and delicate." (10) The presence of Donatello, who so resembles the Faun of Praxiteles, in an opening scene reminiscent of that of James's The American, at once distinguishes Hawthorne's novel; in few other American expatriate novels do we find, from the start, a non-American character so intimately connected to the scene.

Of course, we can see why Hawthorne would have been excited

about the possibilities an Italian setting afforded him, possibilities which seemed unattainable in the landscape of his native American. There were all the monuments and great works of art and architecture to describe (and describe them he did); there was the added color contributed by foreign visitors and Italian peasants; there was the Catholic sensibility, present everywhere; there was singing and dancing and (especially when we get to the Tuscan countryside) the great delight in the nectar of Bacchus, wine. Above all, as nearly all critics of the novel have noticed, there is the great historical breadth which the place offers. Hawthorne thus viewed the difference between an American setting and a European much in the way James did. Speaking of the suitability of Rome as a setting for the novel, R.W.B. Lewis writes:

The action has to do with the discovery of time as a metaphor of the experience of evil. Rome is thus the best imaginable setting; nothing in the New World could match it. What was wanted, for the maximum effect, was maximum antiquity--a symbol coexistent, if possible, with the temporal order itself: and Rome is identified in the story as "the city of all time."⁸

Along the same lines, yet hinting at a difference between Hawthorne's American fiction and this Italian novel, John McWilliams writes:

The energy, blackness, and intelligence that once constituted the American Puritan character are now associated with Rome,

Catholicism, and Europeans. As Rome embodies the decay and historical guilt once prominent in Salem, so Hilda and Kenyon represent the health of an Adamic America.⁹

This distinction between what Hawthorne is able to do in his fiction set in America and his fiction set abroad is an important one. One recalls for example that in The House of Seven Gables the beginnings of the Maule's curse were traced to the old Puritan, Col. Pyncheon. But, it stopped there. Now, with the greater expanse of time Hawthorne could take his long-time preoccupation with the origins of evil even further back through history, closer and closer to Adam, and its mythical, temporal sources. Both Lewis and McWilliams rightly see the geographic displacement in The Marble Faun as being analogous to the historical displacement in so many of his American fictions; they may even have understood the potentialities of the Italian scene better than the author himself.

The Italian setting is, then, clearly what distinguishes The Marble Faun from his other, American novels. Though in this novel one immediately notices the characteristic preoccupations of Hawthorne, there is a great deal more going on. The foreign setting both interferes with the smooth flow of plot and at the same time affords new opportunities. As we saw in The Ambassadors, the inevitable identification of difference--between American and other--is a major concern of the novel. Whether it be the country's geography, cultural habits, religious beliefs or cultural heritage, Hawthorne is continually comparing the Italian scene with the American. In this sense the novel might well be thought of as being within the context of the on-going cultural project of defining the nature of

the American self which the country's literature has always been absorbed by.

There can be no question about the kinds of opportunities the Italian landscape made available for the American writer who provided the literary prototype for sin, adultery and penance. The problematic matter for readers of the novel (and we can imagine the matter might have taunted its writer as well) is the extent and nature of Italy's presence in the novel. There is, as will become quite apparent in the ensuing discussion, considerably more of Italy in The Marble Faun than there is France in The Reef or The Ambassadors. Hawthorne clearly wants a vivid Italian presence in his novel; he wants Italy to be felt on every page. No doubt his choice to make Donatello appear on the first page is a product of this conception. But even though Donatello is present and we know, if for no other reason than his name, that he is Italian, he never takes on the flesh-and-blood quality of a live character. He remains always flat, rather like the allegorical figures of Spenser's The Fairie Queene, a symbol rather than a human being with a complex psychology. Other Italians pass in and out of the novel, too, but they seem just to pass through. Hawthorne, perhaps constrained by the dictates of allegory, never gets beyond a stereotyped image of the Italian. For example, when Kenyon, back in Rome toward the novel's end, finds Hilda missing, his investigations at her apartment bring him in contact with her Italian neighbors. They are described as "amiable" and

their sharp and nimble wits, caused them to overflow with

plausible suggestions, and to be very bounteous in their avowals of interest for the lost Hilda. In a less demonstrative people, such expressions would have implied an eagerness to search land and sea, and never rest till she were found. . . . Their energy expended itself in exclamation, and they were content to leave all more active measures to Kenyon . . .

(275)

This is all we see--generalized impressions from a distance. Along the same lines, just a few pages later, the narrator relates, with respect to the Italians:

Their words are spoken with strange earnestness, and yet do not vouch for themselves as coming from any depth, like roots drawn out of the substance of the soul, with some of the soil clinging to them. There is always a something inscrutable, instead of frankness, in their eyes. In short, they lie so much like truth, and speak truth so much as if they were telling a lie, that their auditor suspects himself in the wrong, whether he believes or disbelieves them; it being the one thing certain, that falsehood is seldom an intolerable burden to the tenderest of Italian consciences. (278)

These are clearly the words of an outsider, someone who, as attracted to the place as he was, never felt very comfortable with Italian manners and customs. Or, returning to a point made earlier, the stance may in some way have been a consequence of the writer's perceived obligation to uphold his own country's interests. The sentiment is one which leads the novel in the direction of the

choice its American characters make in the end--a choice to return home, where they might once again feel at home.

A great deal of the novel's activity, if not its drama, concerns the competing interests of home and abroad, though in a very different way than they figure in James's The Ambassadors. The comparative dimension of The Marble Faun has a broad sweep, covering a wide range of issues and subjects. Geography and climate are perhaps the most basic features Hawthorne surveys. As Kenyon journeys through the Tuscan countryside, very often he is taken back to the hills of New England, and the novel significantly takes us through a full year in this country, yielding frequent comments on the nature of seasonal transitions. Winter in Italy, Hawthorne notes, was a particularly harsh period, a judgment rendered perhaps because people from Northern regions expected the place to be warm.

. . . in New England, or in Russia, or in a hut of the Eskimos, there is no such discomfort to be borne as by Romans in wintry weather, when the orange trees bear icy fruit in the gardens; and when the rims of all the fountains are shaggy with icicles, and the Fountain of Trevi skimmed almost across with a glassy surface; and when there is a slide in the piazza of St. Peter's, and a fringe of brown, frozen foam along the eastern shore of the Tiber, and sometimes a fall of great snowflakes into the dreary lanes and alleys of the miserable city. (257)

While winter in Italy was, in Hawthorne's view, worse than in Northern climes, spring was more magnificent. Both of Hawthorne's

descriptions of the Italian spring, the one toward the beginning of the novel and the one toward the end are glowing and appreciative. Here is the first:

The advance of vegetation, in this softer climate, is less abrupt than the inhabitant of the cold North is accustomed to observe. Beginning earlier--even in February--spring is not compelled to burst into summer with such headlong haste; there is time to dwell upon each opening beauty, and to enjoy the budding leaf, the tender green, the sweet youth and freshness of the year; it gives us its maiden charm, before settling into the married summer, which, again, does not so soon sober itself into matronly autumn. In our own country, the virgin spring hastens to its bridal too abruptly. But here, after a month or two of kindly growth, the leaves of the young trees, which cover that portion of the Borghese grounds nearest the city wall, were still in their tender half-development. (72)

Judgments do not, in the comparisons, fall squarely or consistently on one side or the other. In fact, I believe that we will find The Marble Faun as ambivalent as any other novel on the relative merits of either culture. In the tally, the positive features of the foreign culture--or life abroad--never, in this novel, quite outweigh those of America. Neither Hawthorne nor his American characters were convinced expatriates. Certainly, we see nothing of the seduction by, and giving in to the other side that we see in Strether's experience in Paris.

From our reading of The Marble Faun we do get a sense of Hawthorne's appreciation of some aspects of living abroad, however, and one of the things, predictably, which he seems to have wanted to enjoy (but perhaps never could) was a release from American Puritan values. As Ernest Earnest writes, "Italy was a sensuous experience which the New England moralist tried desperately to deal with. It was too hallowed by history and tradition to be rejected out of hand."¹⁰ The escape from small-town values, the ones which spelled out the punishment for Hester Prynne, is a reason many expatriates give for their leaving. It may be that the society they move to is no freer; rarely could that be the case. What the foreigner often feels in his temporary or adopted domicile, however, is that because he is a foreigner he is not expected to conform so rigidly to whatever social mores dominate his adopted society. He also feels relieved of political responsibilities tied to citizenship. At home he would be expected to toe the line because he was undeniably a member of that social order, and his deviance from its values would be considered an unforgiveable offense, with inescapable consequences. In The Marble Faun Hawthorne writes:

Rome is not like one of our New England villages, where we need the permission of each individual neighbor for every act that we do, every word that we utter, and every friend that we make or keep. In these particulars, the papal despotism allows us freer breath than our native air; and if we like to take generous views of our associates, we can do so, to a reasonable extent, without ruining ourselves." (77)

Hawthorne also makes a good deal of the merry-making of the Italians, and when he does so it is, either implicitly or explicitly, compared to the attitude of the grim Puritans who squashed the Dionysian revellers of Merry-Mount. In the chapter "The Sylvan Dance" a whole crowd of peasants, a few English tourists, German artists, Romans, and French soldiers join Donatello and Miriam as they dance to the tunes of local musicians. "The sole exception to the geniality of the moment, as we have understood, was seen in a countryman of our own, who sneered at the spectacle, and declined to compromise his dignity by making part of it." (63) In this Mediterranean culture Hawthorne recovers the value of festival and delight and we might sense that for him this Sylvan dance (or the Carnival celebration at the novel's end, which is symmetrical to it) serves much the same purpose the Spanish festivals and bullfights do for Hemingway.

As Hawthorne views his Roman surroundings there is plenty of evidence that in his musings he must often have thought that this city was a creation of a set of values quite distinct from American ones. James and Adams are certainly his heirs in this respect. There is, with Hawthorne, a deep-seated frustration with his native Puritan values which, in his view, stymie artistic creativity. We might recall the author's lament in "The Custom-House" where he bemoans the esteem with which his Puritan ancestors would hold the writer.

"What is he?" murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. "A writer of story-books! What kind of a business

in life,--what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation,--may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!"¹¹

In his Italian novel, the same attitude comes through in a rather indulgent, satirical exchange between Kenyon and one of his compatriots as they are standing in front of the Fountain of Trevi.

"What would be done with this water-power," suggests an artist, "if we had it in one of our American cities? Would they employ it to turn the machinery of a cotton-mill, I wonder?"

"The good people would pull down those rampant marble deities," said Kenyon, "and, possibly, they would give me a commission to carve the one-and-thirty (is that the number?) sister States, each pouring a silver stream from a separate can into one vast basin, which should represent the grand reservoir of national prosperity." (102)

An undercurrent of a political character flows beneath these remarks, which should make us recall, again, R.P. Blackmur's comments cited earlier. Over and over again we hear the cry of the expatriate: My nation does not value art. It only values what is economically useful. At the base of it, there is oftentimes an uncomfortable quarrel with the very nature of democracy, for Hawthorne is aware, on some level, that the public monuments of Rome would not have been raised by a democratic regime. Architectural grandeur is very often associated with political imperialism or tyranny--a will like that of Julius Caesar's to build public monuments as signs of

personal power and glory. The Colisseum, we would be well to remember, was built by Emperor Vespasian. Hawthorne's political stance might be characterized much in the way Arthur Schlesinger characterized Fenimore Cooper's. Cooper, he says, was torn between "two pervading revulsions: on the one hand, the self-constituted aristocracy of the American Whigs, with their pretensions and snobberies, their servility toward the British, their hatred of 'that monster' General Jackson, and their scorn of the lower classes; on the other, the menace of the democratic demagogue."¹² Like Cooper, who we shall consider in greater depth in the final chapter, Hawthorne was rather ambivalent, often uncomfortably so, when it came to questions involving democracy, aristocracy and artistic values.

In the preceding discussions of The Reef and The Ambassadors we saw that Catholicism was an important aspect of the European scene which has been set next to a predominantly Protestant America. In neither novel, though, is the Catholic atmosphere so pervasive as it is in this novel set in the capital of Catholicism. Here again a comparative spirit, heightened by the writer's expatriation, leads to greater attention to and efforts to define these differences. Hawthorne, perhaps our most perceptive critic of Puritanism, assessing the older faith in terms of the newer one, is discernibly fascinated by the papacy even though he will never fully let go of the native faith of Salem. The allure of Catholicism is manifestly evident. There is, first of all, an implicit link the writer draws between the artistic creations of the Renaissance and the mode of faith at the time. Raphael, Fra Angelica and Guido were all imbued with the Catholic spirit. The belief in angels, saints and madon-

nas--all of which Hawthorne takes great delight in describing--had something to do with the tremendous creative energy of the High Renaissance. Hawthorne was attracted, in Italy, to the same kind of cultural conditions (also Catholic) which Henry Adams saw at work in Medieval France. Of St. Peter's the narrator exclaims,

The roof! The dome! Rich, gorgeous, filled with sunshine, cheerfully sublime, and fadeless after centuries, those lofty depths seemed to translate the heavens to mortal comprehension, and help the spirit upward to a yet higher and wider sphere. Must not the faith that built this matchless edifice, and warmed, illuminated, and overflowed from it, include whatever can satisfy human aspirations at the loftiest, or minister to human necessity at the sorest? If Religion had a material home, was it not here? (240)

The Catholic culture, Hawthorne suggests, left behind a far richer artistic and architectural legacy than Protestantism, with its innate distrust of representation and valorization of utility, could ever hope to achieve. The beauty, order and ritual of Catholicism are set against the starkness, eclecticism and formal laxity of Protestantism.

Beyond the outward displays of faith, the inner, theological dimensions of Catholicism figure in the novel in very important ways. Catholic responses and attitudes towards Providence, fate and sin are continual preoccupations of the narrator, which, we sense, are extremely closely aligned with, if not identical to, those of Hawthorne. When Donatello suggests to Kenyon that he might become a

monk in order to seek complete penitence and mortify the flesh, Kenyon is alarmed. "'A monk . . . is inevitably a beast!'" he exclaims. (184) After the exchange between the American and the Italian, the narrator steps in with:

An Italian, indeed, seldom dreams of being philanthropic, except in bestowing alms among the paupers, who appeal to his beneficence at every step; nor does it occur to him that there are fitter modes of propitiating Heaven than by penances, pilgrimages, and offerings at shrines. Perhaps, too, their system has its share of moral advantages; they, at all events, cannot well pride themselves, as our own more energetic benevolence is apt to do, upon sharing in the counsels of Providence and kindly helping out its otherwise impracticable designs. (185)

Typically, Hawthorne is at the same instant critical of either system. They have their silly shrines and offerings; we have our foolish belief in free will.

Sin, guilt and penance are among the novel's main themes, and the American characters and their Italian counterparts (and Miriam, whatever nationality she is) handle sin and knowledge of wrong-doing quite differently. Donatello, after the murder, takes refuge in his religion. Even though no confession or penance is ever enough to erase completely the crime, it is at least a salve to his burden. We see him, on his journey with Kenyon, praying at every chapel and shrine while the American sculptor looks at the architecture and the stained glass windows. The difference between the two faiths is

nowhere more dramatically illustrated than in the scenes showing Hilda's attempt to ease her conscience. The two chapters "Altars and Incense" and "The World's Cathedral," though short, leave the reader with some of the most enduring images in the novel. Even though her participation in the crime has only been as a witness, Hilda nonetheless is deeply, almost melodramatically, affected by what she has seen. "Had the Jesuits known the situation of this troubled heart," the narrator tells us, "her inheritance of New England Puritanism would hardly have protected the poor girl from the pious strategy of those good fathers" (235). During the summer in a Rome virtually empty of foreigners, she visits Catholic places of worship, yet always, though aware of the potential for absolution inherent in Catholicism, she feels as though she is an outsider. In one instance she looks on while a young Catholic prays and weeps before a shrine. "If this youth had been a Protestant, he would have kept all that torture pent up in his heart, and let it burn there till it seared him into indifference," we are told (237).

Despite the fascination and appeal, Hilda never gives herself over to Catholicism. She does, though, on one occasion come very near doing so. Upon entering St. Peter's one day, more wholly impressed by its magnificence than she has ever been before, she finds herself in the area of a large number of confessionals, those "small tabernacles of carved wood, with a closet for the priest in the center; and on either side, a space for a penitent to kneel, and breathe his confession through a perforated auricle into the good father's ear." Overcome with grief and guilt ("Oh, help! Oh, help! . . . I cannot, cannot bear it!"), she finds a confessional labeled

"PRO ANGLICA LINGUA" and pours out her secret to the priest. All turns out very badly, however. After Hilda has confessed, the priest reveals himself, notes her unfamiliarity with the ritual, finds that Hilda is Protestant ("I am of New England, and was bred as what you call a heretic," she admits to the priest) and invalidates the confidential nature of the confession, saying that he would be obliged to inform the proper authorities of the crime she has confessed to being a witness to. The chapter ends with Hilda's refusal of the priest's proselytization. After bringing the American heroine right to the verge of conversion, Hawthorne retreats with a fairly severe indictment of the priesthood and the notion that any mortal could be empowered with the forgiveness of sins. The Pilgrim spirit of New England is remarkably resilient. Hilda remains a daughter of the Puritans.

We are told, again by the narrator, that so complete and perfect is Catholicism that it could only have been designed by Providence. Yet, like other things in Rome, it has become decadent and corrupt. "Its mighty machinery was forged and put together, not on middle earth, but either above or below. If there were but angels to work it, instead of the very different class of engineers who now manage its cranks and safety valves, the system would soon vindicate the dignity and holiness of its origin" (235-6). Time and time again, especially through the voice of Kenyon, Hawthorne critically views the functioning of the Catholic church, particularly its priests, who, somewhat like in Voltaire's Candide, take quite a beating in the novel.

We can see, then, that as critical as Hawthorne is of American

values, by no means does he uncritically embrace Italy and all it stood for. In fact, the very characteristics which made Rome suitable for his romance--its age, its antiquity, its ruins, its layers of culture--made it ultimately, in Hawthorne's view, a suspicious source of decadence. Hawthorne is fairly ambivalent in his judgment of Italy, just as he was about England, his "old home." Very often we find, through the residue of that older civilization, a clear and pristine image of New England projected. We hear Kenyon, for example, tell Donatello: "You should go with me to my native country. . . . In that fortunate land, each generation has only its own sins and sorrows to bear. Here, it seems as if all the weary and dreary Past were piled upon the back of the Present." (208) While Kenyon's remarks may not mirror very accurately those of an author who himself felt so burdened by the sins of his father, they might suggest how shallow, how remarkably light, a New England past was in comparison to the Italian past which seemed to lead, in an uninterrupted line, directly to Eden itself. If the Present was vulgar and deformed, as it certainly often appeared to Hawthorne, his view was that this deformity had its historical origins. In as much as Hawthorne's views are reflected in Kenyon's, however, they begin to reveal amazing resemblance, in the foreign light, to the views of the past which Emerson presents in "History" where we read that "all history becomes subjective," and where the "Here and Now" replaces the "There and Then."

The author's native prejudices surface unexpectedly yet with a great deal of regularity. As Kenyon and Donatello pass through an Italian village, on their way to a meeting Kenyon has arranged

between Miriam and Donatello (who has no knowledge of the plan) the narrator comments:

The Italians appear to possess none of that emulative pride which we see in our New England villages, where every householder, according to his taste and means, endeavors to make his homestead an ornament to the grassy and elm-shadowed wayside. . . .

An artist, it is true, might often thank his stars for those old houses, so picturesquely time-stained, and with the plaster falling in blotches from the ancient brickwork. The prison-like, iron-barred windows, and the wide-arched, dismal entrance, admitting on one hand to the stable, on the other to the kitchen, might impress him as far better worth his pencil than the newly painted pine boxes, in which--if he be an American--his countrymen live and thrive. But there is reason to suspect that a people are waning to decay and ruin the moment that their life becomes fascinating either in the poet's imagination or the painter's eye. (204)

And Hilda toward the end longs for "that native homeliness, those familiar sights, those faces which she had known always, those days that never brought any strange event." Hers is a longing, perhaps shared by her creator, for an image of home, projected from abroad--a place simply where one would not feel a foreigner. More eager she is to return than Strether, Darrow or Anna Leath.

II

Henry James's criticisms of The Marble Faun, which appear in his volume on Hawthorne, written and first published in England, have, in keenness and insight, perhaps not been surpassed by contemporary critics of the novel. He notes that the novel "is a part of the intellectual equipment of the Anglo-Saxon visitor to Rome, and is read by every English-speaking traveller who arrives there, who has been there, or who expects to go," and later notes that

He has described the streets and monuments of Rome with a closeness which forms no part of his references to those of Boston and Salem. But for all this he incurs that penalty of seeming factitious and unauthoritative, which is always the result of an artist's attempt to project himself into an atmosphere in which he has not a transmitted and inherited property. (444-445)

James helps us identify what it is that often bothers us about Hawthorne's novel. In America, he could almost take landscape for granted. The description of setting takes up a small proportion of his American novels--The Scarlet Letter, Blithedale Romance or The House of Seven Gables--yet we (perhaps especially his American readers) feel the presence of that landscape so intensely. The freedom from this burden to deal with landscape allows the deeply psychological, allegorical aspects of these American novels--and the characters themselves--to stand out clearly, since the background is so sparse, yet so telling, so organic to plot and character. When

there is description, as in the scenes of The Scarlet Letter which are set in the forest, it strongly reinforces the psychological drama of the moment. The forest is that place between community and wilderness where individual passion and moral constraint vie most evidently with one another.

We might readily agree with James that there is in The Marble Faun too much landscape. Profuse are the examples where descriptions of landscape seem inordinately to interrupt the narrative. One such comes in "The Suburban Villa." Donatello has entered the garden and we are told by the narrator that he is taking in a deep breath of air. Then the narrator's attention is diverted by the fountains, the sarcophagus, the pillars, the arches, the statues and the pines. Two pages pass before we return to Donatello: "But Donatello felt nothing of this dreamlike melancholy that haunts the spot." (54) Again in the chapter titled "A Stroll on the Pincian" Hawthorne quite typically seems to forget his characters while he describes the scenery. After telling us what sorts of people we would expect to find there, he sums up with: "Here are beautiful sunsets; and here, whichever way you turn your eyes, are scenes as well worth gazing at, both in themselves and for their historic interest, as any that the sun ever rose and set upon." (71-72)

James's suggestion that Hawthorne's novel served the needs of English travellers to Rome helps us locate another kind of tension in the work. While we have already noted the author's ambivalent stance with respect to the interests of America and those of Italy, it seems as though there is also an disjunction between the demands of two competing impulses, each associated with a particular genre.

The vehicle of the travelogue or guide book collides with that of the romance or allegory. Hawthorne himself describes his purpose in his preface, as "merely to write a fanciful story evolving a thoughtful moral." He states that he "did not propose attempting a portraiture of Italian manners and character." He is true to the first of his stated purposes: We do indeed get a "fanciful story." But, in addition to that, we certainly do get, as already amply demonstrated, quite extensive and detailed panoramas of Roman and Tuscan landscapes.

In the following assessment James puts his finger on the tension, one between verisimilitude and romance, which has been a troublesome feature of the novel in the eyes of many readers.

The fault of Transformation [the title under which the novel was published in England] is that the element of the unreal is pushed too far, and that the book is neither positively of one category nor of another. His "moonshiny romance," he calls it in a letter; and, in truth, the lunar element is a little too pervasive. The action wavers between the streets of Rome, whose literal features the author perpetually sketches, and a vague realm of fancy, in which quite a different verisimilitude prevails. This is the trouble with Donatello himself. His companions are intended to be real-- if they fail to be so, it is not for want of intention; whereas he is intended to be real or not, as you please. . . . And since I am speaking critically, I may go on to say that the art of narration, in Transformation, seems to me more at

fault than in the author's other novels. The story straggles and wanders, is dropped and taken up again, and towards the close lapses into an almost fatal vagueness. (447)

The exaggerated fanciful elements in Hawthorne's fiction are evident enough: the mystery surrounding Donatello's ears (Are they furry, or are they not?), the chance appearance of the specter in the catacombs, the unclear relationship between the specter and the Capuchin monk, the impression of the specter seen in the Guido sketch of the dragon, etc. All these we might think of as in keeping with Hawthorne's conception of romance, particularly as stated in the Preface to The House of Seven Gables. In distinguishing the Romance from the Novel he suggests that the latter aims "at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience," while the former, the Romance, "has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation." But even Hawthorne, while giving himself license, notes that the writer ought "to mingle the Marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor."¹⁴ What James and other critics assert is that in The Marble Faun there is too liberal a dose of the Marvellous.

The kind of tension we find in The Marble Faun, between the demands of Romance and those of the travelogue, resembles what Fredric Jameson, in his book The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, calls generic discontinuity. Jameson suggests that forms "are reappropriated and refashioned in quite different social and cultural contexts." In generic discontinuities,

those intersections where the demands of one genre impinge on those of another, we see the "conflict between the older deep-structured form and the contemporary materials and generic systems in which it seeks to inscribe and to re-assert itself."¹⁵ For Jameson, the writing of narrative becomes a means by which those contradictions are tentatively, or "symbolically" resolved. The discovery of generic discontinuities should not, in his view, be an end in itself; it simply is one means by which to reveal the wider historical conflicts and contradictions in operation at the time of the writing. "The novel," he writes, "is then not so much an organic unity as a symbolic act that must rewrite or harmonize heterogeneous narrative paradigms which have their own specific and contradictory ideological meaning." (144)

Having identified the forms--the Romance and the travelogue (itself a displaced version of Romance)--which are "inscribed" or transformed in the expatriate novel, a relatively new form, what remains to be done is to enquire at greater length just what each of these two forms encode, what contradictory impulses are formally and symbolically pulled together. Let us start with Romance. We might recall the idea of quest-romance as put forward by Harold Bloom in his first essay in The Ringers in the Tower. "Romance," he writes, "is a journey toward home. . . . Or, romance is a journey toward a supreme trial, after which home is possible."¹⁶ In his own discussion Jameson says "romance develops . . . under the sign of destiny and providence, and takes as its outer horizon the transformation of a whole world." (142) Even though these two critics have different axes to grind, the definitions or explanations of romance are

compatible. "A journey home" certainly is applicable to the kind of romance Hawthorne writes. Whether it be in his novels with American settings, or this one set in Italy, home--that dreamed of place of comfort and sublime rest--is the ultimate destination. That journey home, in his case, is very often a journey back in time, an attempt both to examine the origins of present cultural ills and recover a sense of past ancestry which, because of the preponderant weight of the present, risks being lost. In The Marble Faun that journey home, ironically, involves a journeying away from home.

Romance is a natural myth-making activity of a culture in need of discovering and exploiting its past just at the moment that past is becoming inaccessible. In Hawthorne's case that past which was being lost was of an idyllic and pastoral nature, a point dramatized by Leo Marx in The Machine in the Garden. The discussion in Marx's first chapter, "Sleepy Hollow, 1844" centers, in fact, around an entry in Hawthorne's notebooks depicting a peaceful natural scene interrupted by the piercing shriek of a locomotive. The motif, Marx writes, "is a variation upon the contrast between two worlds, one identified with rural peace and simplicity, the other with urban power and sophistication," and thus it can be thought of as being a part of a pastoral tradition extending back to Virgil's time.¹⁷

Thus we might tentatively interpret Hawthorne's move abroad as yet one more attempt to capture that lost harmony between self and nature, and to preserve that relation in fictional form. The author's recognition that the two realms are, and perhaps have always been, since the Fall of Man, split does not make the journey any less compelling. Man's very nature draws him to try and effect

a union. One of the ways this theme works its way into The Marble Faun is in the form of a dialectic between pastoral and urban. Rome, the city tainted by the crime, sandwiches the central, more relaxed, less crowded portion of the novel set in the Tuscan countryside. After his irreversible encounter with Sin (significantly in the city), Donatello returns to his home in the country, perhaps hoping that nature will soothe his grieved soul, but when Kenyon finds him there, he is yet grim and overcome by melancholy. Donatello's servant blames this transformation on the city. "Ah, yes, signore . . . it is even so, since he came back from that wicked and miserable city. The world has grown either too evil, or else too wise and sad, for such men as the old Counts of Monte Beni used to be" (164). And within a page the narrator himself laments a lost age:

It is the iron rule in our day to require an object and a purpose in life. It makes us all parts of a complicated scheme of progress, which can only restir arrival at a colder and drearier region than we were born in. . . . No life now wanders like an unfettered stream; there is a mill wheel for the tiniest rivulet to turn. We go all wrong, by too strenuous a resolution to go all right. (165)

This passage, with its reference to "a mill wheel for the tiniest rivulet to turn," echoes the sentiment expressed in the notebook entry cited by Marx. In the rural Italian countryside the American writer sees some lingering presence of that Arcadian life and charm "which is scarcely to be found in the daily toil of other lands"

(201). There is, in the pastoral, something profoundly universal. That is, each age to some extent experiences this sensation of loss.¹⁸ What is the peculiar property of modern writers, beginning with the Romantics, is that the threat of an increasingly mechanized environment may have been more acute than it had ever been before. Part of the Romantic quest, the search for a home to which expatriation certain should be thought to be connected, is transformed into a search for less industrialized, more primitive cultures, where the pastoral has been left intact (prior to the invasion of plastic buckets, ghetto blasters, bank cards, and unsightly power plants, chemical products industries, lumber mills and petroleum refineries).

We have said, then, that romance often is an attempt to recover a sense of loss and it seeks, as its end, in Jameson's terms, the "transformation of a whole world." The travelogue, the other genre which I have suggested collides with the Romance in The Marble Faun, is what Northrop Frye would call a displaced version of the Romance. It, too, as writing, is based on a journey, which, in its most ideal manifestation, might transform at least the world of the writer if not the world of its readers. The travelogue has a few important distinctive elements which should be kept in mind. To begin with, it is most often thought to be quite firmly rooted in a tangible reality. A trip was taken and the person taking the trip writes about it. What is written, then, generally purports to give a fairly accurate description of what has been encountered, such that if a person went to the same place and took the same route there would be a degree of recognition. Of course, the details need not

be accurate, they must only seem to be fairly plausible. In his brief discussion of the form of the travelogue in Abroad, Paul Fussell puts it this way: The travel book (his preferred term) "in its purist, is addressed to those who do not plan to follow the traveler at all, but who require the exotic or comic anomalies, wonders, and scandals of the literary form romance which their own place or time cannot entirely supply."¹⁹ Travel writing must be seen, then, as an enterprise wherein the author seeks to extend himself, geographically and perhaps even intellectually, and then packages something which his "own place or time cannot entirely supply."

Hawthorne was writing The Marble Faun in an age during which, as Ahmed Metwalli has pointed out, travel books were among the most popular genre in America. N. P. Willis, John L. Stephens, George William Curtis, Bayard Taylor and John DeForest are just a few whose travel books were consumed with relish by their American audiences.²⁰ That Hawthorne may have been influenced by the genre, particularly as he himself became a traveler, should not be surprising. Indeed, the expatriate novel could be considered an offshoot of the travel book; it certainly makes use of many of its primary inventions. The important difference, surely, is that it purports, to a far lesser extent, to be grounded in actual experiences of actual places. In other words, rather than conform completely to the sequence and exigencies of a trip, the novel allows for a wider ranging aesthetic.

We might, for a moment, contemplate the larger cultural dimensions of travel and travelogues, just as we have for the Romance,

before concluding what this all means for the expatriate novel. The mid 19th Century was a great period of travel for a number of reasons. The country as whole, after its very intense colonial period and the time before, during and after the War for Independence, gradually turning its attention toward the world outside. The ability to travel often depends on a certain accumulation of capital, and this condition of greater economic prosperity in America also encouraged travel. The traveler both depends upon technology and rather perversely promotes the technologies which he bears and which bear him. Also, for the American characters in Hawthorne's novel, as well as for a great many in real life, travel was a means by which the relatively isolated American could come to know, first-hand, the artistic splendors of Europe and return, with that knowledge, or even the objects themselves, to install culture in their native land. In other words, it was, in its incipient phase, a benign form of cultural imperialism: travelers journeying outwards from their homes in hopes of finding something of use for themselves, and in their paths leaving their residues, their scents, the trails of their voyages which others, upon reading, might seek to follow. Metwalli puts it this way: "The fact that they conveyed information of various kinds in an entertaining context gave travel books much prominence and popularity in an age which was not only thirsty for knowledge but intent on disseminating it" (24). He later notes that the act of travel for Americans of this period might also be thought of in relation to the process of establishing a distinct national identity:

He [The American] was self-conscious of what he lacked as an entity of his own: culture, experience, and cosmopolitanism. . . . By posing as a representative of America, which he believed to be morally and politically superior to the Old World, he could bolster his own ego and extract a deep sense of pride in his identity. (28)

These words apply very well to Hawthorne, the writer of The Marble Faun, and help us see him in a continuum leading to James and Wharton.

In what has been said so far, ways have been implied in which the expatriate novel can be thought of as a socially symbolic act inscribed in narrative. It symbolizes the desire of one culture, in this case the American, to recover something of an elusive dream. In so doing, it may, as Blackmur suggests, also have some redeeming cultural value: "Perhaps we may say that in the American experience of this period the expatriate as a type--whether he returned or not--almost uniquely served a major social function; almost alone as a class he made it possible for America to see the disorder and the confusion and the rich possibilities of the world of which America was a continuing and emergent part" (70).

In the travelogue the journey itself shapes the form. The writing in some way (even if not chronologically) follows the outlines of the trip, and it is guided by the traveller, who most often relates his experiences in the first person. Like its ancestor the prose romance, the expatriate novel's plot is often determined, as was quite clearly indicated in the discussion of The Reef, by the chance encounter (Darrow's meeting of Sophy, then Sophy's reappear-

ance at Givre). Miriam's discovery of the specter in the catacombs of Rome--an unexpected reunion--or Miriam's unexpected appearance at Monte Beni, or the reunion of Miriam and Donatello in the square in Perugia: all serve much the same purpose as do chance encounters in Sidney's Arcadia or Spenser's The Faerie Queene. Without those meetings the novel would lack any power of propulsion, for these recognitions, and the fatalistic quality of sin and crime which they represent, set all else in motion. As a hybrid of the Romance and the travelogue, the expatriate novel manipulates aspects of each. As Kenyon says at one point in The Marble Faun, "The incidents of a journey often fling people together in the oddest and therefore the most natural way" (197). All this opens into a number of philosophical questions which impinge on narrative scope and design. How much of an individual's fate is determined by the journey and how much does the individual shape the journey? To what extent do the formal constraints and conventions of genre determine the author's own trajectory? One of Hawthorne's central thematic concerns in the novel, one which arises again in Bowles's Let It Come Down, is the extent to which characters can indeed separate themselves from actions around them. Ultimately in this novel the trajectory of narrative/destiny takes characters along a path which, despite their own desires and plottings, leads them back to the very things which they had hoped to escape.

It is not always easy to derive a simple allegorical meaning from The Marble Faun. Just as he does in his American novels, Hawthorne presents a moral issue, a problem, for our consideration. Here that problem concerns the nature of evil and original sin, and

whether it is possible to separate oneself from knowledge of evil. Hawthorne takes it as given that man will go outside the moral boundaries society imposes, and that the fall is inevitable. As R.W.B. Lewis, describing the pattern of Hawthorne's fiction, puts it, "the self-moving individual who is made to confront that 'other'--the world or society, the element which provides experience" (111). That experience is naturally accompanied by knowledge and that knowledge contains knowledge of sin. None of the characters in The Marble Faun is a native of Rome, the first setting in the novel and, significantly, the site of the murder which initiates Donatello, as agent, and Hilda, as witness, of the workings of evil. (Miriam, we are led to believe, has already, at the story's beginning, an acquaintance with Evil.) An understandable response, in the face of this, would be an isolationist posture; if we never went outside ourselves we would certainly never encounter evil. But that, alas, is not only naive, it is impossible, suggests Hawthorne who, given Lewis's drawings of the lines of debate at the time--into the parties of Hope, Memory and Irony--would fit into the last, noted for its "sense of the tragic collisions to which innocence was liable (something unthinkable among the hopeful), and equally by an awareness of the heightened perception and humanity which suffering made possible (something unthinkable among the nostalgic)" (7-8).

The early version of Donatello, a symbol of man before the fall--light, cheerful, expressive and naive--is an attractive vision. Yet, ironically, this rather nostalgic picture of an Adam before the fall can be created only by man who has been banished from the garden. It is clear that despite the deep attractions of a

prelapsarian world, Hawthorne at the same time recognizes that its recovery is but an idle dream. He even entertains, as seen in his comments on Donatello, that the world AFTER the fall might have its advantages. Following his withdrawal from Rome to his hereditary home of Monte Beni, the narrator offers us this description:

He now showed a far deeper sense, and an intelligence that began to deal with high subjects, though in a feeble and childish way. He evinced, too, a more definite and nobler individuality, but developed out of grief and pain, and fearfully conscious of the pangs that had given it birth. Every human life, if it ascends to truth or delves down to reality, must undergo a similar change; but sometimes, perhaps, the instruction comes without the sorrow; and oftener the sorrow teaches no lesson that abides with us. (180-181)

The author reveals the same attitude toward the plausible benefits of this knowledge in judging Kenyon's bust of Donatello, which has inadvertently captured that look of knowledge of sin but which was "now illuminated with a higher meaning, such as the old marble never bore" (189).

So absorbing are these issues that they are still being debated toward the end of the novel. In one of his last conversations with Hilda, Kenyon addresses the matter, ending still, only in a question:

"Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him. Is sin, then--which we deem such a dreadful blackness in the universe--is it, like sorrow, merely an element of human

education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his?" (312)

While Hawthorne takes us to the point where the traditional categories, or opposing sides, in Romance--Good and Evil, or Us and Them--seem to break down, he finally shies away from actually making that crossing. The figure who sins and must painfully find his way in that new, altered state, is not American, but Italian, an observation McWilliams makes in his treatment of The Marble Faun in Broken Lines. "In previous fictions," he writes, "Hawthorne created a New England at least as ghost-ridden as old England; from within the perspective of Rome, however, Hawthorne accepts his countrymen's treasured assumptions that the blessed American Republic is the sole exception to a fallen world." He goes on to say that the American characters, Hilda and Kenyon, "are to be made aware of the Old World's evil, but are not personally to experience it: they must see sins without committing them" (124).

This indeed is the case, though not perhaps to the extent McWilliams would lead us to believe. Miriam is the source of sin, and Donatello the murderer. Though the two Americans are not directly involved with the crime themselves, they are affected insofar as they come in contact with the guilty parties themselves. And if there is one overriding message in Hawthorne, especially in this novel, it is that isolation is no protection from the workings of sin. A subsidiary point Hawthorne seems to make is that one need not actually do evil to know it. By placing his American innocents

abroad in the position he does, we might reasonably assume that he does so with hopes that they might grow out of their naivete without being irreparably harmed by a direct encounter with Evil.

Another distinction should be made here: The two Americans do not respond in the same way to the knowledge of evil. Hilda, though she is made a witness to the crime, self-righteously will not sully her hands. When Miriam comes to visit her, the young American Puritan youth, so insulated from the ways of the world, will have nothing to do with the partner to crime, lest she herself might be contaminated. Yet it very well could be argued that should Hilda at that time have offered to be an ear to her friend's sufferings, her involvement might have curbed the awful force of evil. The absurdity of Hilda's isolationist posture is evident. She came upon the crime only by chance and her subsequent separation from the physical embodiment of crime (Miriam) does not seem to mitigate in any way the amount of guilt and anguish the young maiden suffers.

Kenyon, though he has not seen what Hilda has, seems to have-- philosophically, at least--a wider sense of the world and the workings of evil. As an artist, he has not had to participate in everything in order to feel what is going on. During his stay at Monte Beni with Donatello, a murderer, Kenyon, sensing horror eating away at Donatello's soul, yet not knowing precisely what the deed might have been, does his best to try and console his friend. Kenyon, in his role as a mediator, might remind one, in fact, of an American Secretary of State, charged with bringing about a peaceful solution to an impossible disagreement. When Kenyon learns of Miriam's presence at Monte Beni he plans for a meeting between her

and Donatello. Later, when he returns to Rome he works to effect a reconciliation between Hilda and the dear friend she has shunned. During this period of negotiations Hawthorne offers some very interesting portions of dialogue, indicating that the moral problem in this novel is precisely that of The Ambassadors: The proclivity in Woollett to distinguish rigidly right from wrong. Hilda is revolted even by the mention of Miriam's name, tainted as she is, and especially because she has communicated to Kenyon that he should seek in herself a greater confidence and friendship. "What manner of woman can she be, who, after sharing in such a deed, can make it a topic of conversation with her friends?" she objects.

"Ah, Hilda," replied Kenyon, "you do not know, for you could never learn it from your own heart, which is all purity and rectitude, what a mixture of good there may be in things evil; and how the greatest criminal, if you look at his conduct from his own point of view, or from any side point, may seem not so unquestionably guilty, after all. So with Miriam; so with Donatello. They are, perhaps, partners in what we must call awful guilt; and yet, I will own to you-- when I think of the original cause, the motives, the feelings, the sudden concurrence of circumstances thrusting them onward, the urgency of the moment, and the sublime unselfishness on either part--I know not well how to distinguish it from much that the world calls heroism. (261-62)

Hilda continues to reject the notion for a while, unable to comprehend "how two mortal foes, as Right and Wrong surely are, can work

together in the same deed" but then begins to doubt the rectitude of her rejection of Miriam. "Who more need the tender succor of the innocent, than wretches stained with guilt!" (262, 263).

Kenyon, in the end, emerges with a substantially more pessimistic view than does Hilda, which is what we might expect to accompany a more Manichean world view. In the midst of the conversation we looked at earlier, on the nature and effect of the Fall, Kenyon puts an interpretation on the course of events as they have happened through the novel:

"It seems the moral of his story that human beings of Donatello's character, compounded especially for happiness, have no longer any business on earth, or elsewhere. Life has grown so sadly serious, that such men must change their nature, or else perish, like the antediluvian creatures, that required, as the condition of their existence, a more summer-like atmosphere than ours." (312)

To this, our "hopeful and happy-natured Hilda" replies, "'I will not accept your moral!'"

At the novel's end we see the Americans longing for the green innocence of their own native land. They have seen, and now it is time for them to leave, for they have not found the world such a warm, innocent and hospitable place. Rome is dreary and corrupt and there is a fear that if they stay there, they may become too much infected by its stagnant atmosphere (as Daisy Miller does!) America, the America they had chosen to expatriate themselves from, is again a kind of beacon, a place of sweetness and light. Just after

the narrator has told us of their decision to marry one another he says

. . . they resolved to go back to their own land; because the years, after all, have a kind of emptiness, when we spend too many of them on a foreign shore. We defer the reality of life, in such cases, until a future moment, when we shall again breathe our native air; but, by and by, there are no future moments; or, if we do return, we find that the native air has lost its invigorating quality, and that life has shifted its reality to the spot where we have deemed ourselves only temporary residents. Thus, between two countries, we have none at all, or only that little space of either in which we finally lay down our discontented bones. It is wise, therefore, to come back betimes, or never. (313)

This expression we find, in slightly different form, in Hawthorne's notebooks; we might think it a legitimate concern of the author. We find ourselves, at the end of this novel and at the end of a sojourn abroad, much in the same position Strether is in at the end of The Ambassadors, asking what has been gained and what has been lost, and fearing, that when all the figures are tallied, they might show a deficit. There is always the worry that one will stay away too long. As Paul Theroux put it, "Americans have the easiest time of living overseas, since we are envied, and we live in an age where half the world wants to emigrate. We can always go home, and it will always be fantastic. Who else can say the same with such certainty? I enjoy living in other countries, but I have a horror

of dying abroad and being buried in foreign mud."²¹

The whole of The Marble Faun is an exploration of the meanings and consequences of going forth, in the classical romantic sense, or as is the case here, in one of its permutations, expatriation. The feeling of being cut-off creates a desire to be connected--to Europe, to the Past, or to some ideal notion of Home. But that act of trying to connect again can result in a surprising sense of separation, rather than the relieving connection which is expected. That separation or exile can be, as it has been for James, Conrad, Nabokov, Naipaul, Bowles and many others, a necessary rupture healed in the creation of fiction. For Hawthorne, separation was never an unambiguous proposition. When the New England writer penned the following description of Hilda he may have had his own career in mind as well as hers:

Hilda, in her native land, had early shown what was pronounced by connoisseurs a decided genius for the pictorial art. . . . Had Hilda remained in her own country, it is not improbable that she might have produced original works worthy to hang in that gallery of native art which, we hope, is destined to extend its rich length through many future centuries. . . . We know not whether the result of her Italian studies, so far as it could yet be seen will be accepted as a good or desirable one. (42)

This is the kind of ambivalence which marks the novel, to the extent to which it is difficult to determine what judgments should be made. More than most others of its kind, The Marble Faun, as we have seen, contains within it the evidence of a number of strains and tensions

between elements of a dialectic which is never satisfactorily resolved: Romance and travelogue, self and other, Good and Evil, America and Italy. The elements are brought together insofar as they exist side by side in the same frame, but ultimately they are kept apart. The novel pulls back, rejecting the kind of transformation Strether is so willing to submit himself to, and insisting on keeping America and Italy separate, fearing that goodness and vigor might be contaminated by corruption and stagnation.

Notes to Chapter Three

¹Henry James, Hawthorne in Henry James's Literary Criticism (New York: The Library of America, 1984), 442-43. Further references will be to this edition.

²Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, ed. with intro. by Harry Levin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 38.

³Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun or The Romance of Monte Beni, intro. David Levin (New York: Dell, 1960), 22-23.

⁴James Fenimore Cooper, Home As Found, intro. by Lewis Leary (New York: Capricorn, 1961), xxi-xxvii.

⁵R.P. Blackmur, "The American Literary Expatriate," The Lion and the Honeycomb (New York: Random House, 1956), 64. Further references will be to this edition.

⁶Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun, intro. Neil H. Fisher (New York: Airmont, 1966), 92. References to The Marble Faun will correspond to this edition.

⁷For more on American expatriate artists and writers during this period, see Ernest Earnest, Expatriates and Patriots: American Artists, Scholars, and Writers in Europe (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968), and Joy S. Kasson, Artistic Voyagers: Europe and the American Imagination in the Works of Irving, Allston, Cole, Cooper and Hawthorne (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

⁸R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 122. Further references will be to this edition.

⁹John P. McWilliams, Hawthorne, Melville, and the American Character: A Looking Glass Business (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 124. Further references will be to this edition.

¹⁰Earnest, 173.

¹¹Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, p. 12.

¹²Arthur Schlesinger, quoted by Lewis Leary in his intro. to Cooper's Home As Found.

¹³Ralph Waldo Emerson, "History," in Selected Essays, Lazar Ziff, ed. (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 153, 154.

¹⁴Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of Seven Gables, ed. with intro. by Milton R. Stern (New York: Penguin, 1986), 1.

¹⁵Frederic Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 141.

¹⁶Harold Bloom, The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 3.

¹⁷Leo Marx, The Machine and the Garden: Technology and the

Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 19.

¹⁸For more general treatment of Pastoral see: Harold Toliver, Pastoral Forms and Attitudes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); and, of course, William Empson Some Versions of Pastoral (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950).

¹⁹Paul Fussell, Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 203.

²⁰Ahmed Metwalli, The Lure of the Levant: The American Literary Experience in Egypt and the Holy Land: A Study in the Literature of Travel, 1800-1865 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983; rpt, 1973).

²¹Paul Theroux, quoted in Banana Republic catalog, 1987.

CHAPTER FOUR

Looking for the 'Good Place': Trout Fishing in Spain

Just before returning to New England Hawthorne wrote a letter to Ticknor which included the following almost wistful musings on his life abroad:

The sweetest thing connected with a foreign residence is, that you have no rights and no duties, and can live your own life without interference of any kind. I shall never again be so free as I have been in England and Italy.¹

Some seventy years later, a modern American writer whose name has almost come to symbolize a whole generation of American expatriates crafts a classic conversation on expatriate life which takes place between Bill Gorton and the novel's narrator, Jake Barnes, while the two are on a fishing expedition in the Spanish Pyrenees.

"You know what you are? You're an expatriate. Why don't you live in New York? Then you'd know these things. What do you want me to do? Come over here and tell you every year?"

"Take some more coffee," I said.

"Good. Coffee is good for you. It's the caffeine in it. Caffeine, we are here. Caffeine puts a man on her horse and a woman in his grave. You know what's the trouble with you? You're an expatriate. One of the worst types. Haven't you heard that? Nobody that ever left their own country ever wrote anything worth printing. Not even in the newspapers."

He drank the coffee.

"You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see? You hang around cafes?

"It sounds like a swell life," I said. "When do I work?"²

These two statements provide a segue between two novels which might seem to have little in common other than the nature of their origin (the expatriate experience) and the first letter of their authors' surname. This conversation from the middle of Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises condenses so many of the issues which have received our attention thus far. We feel, both in the passage from Hawthorne's letter and the Hemingway dialogue, what by now should be recognized as an overarching expatriate theme: the desire to experience abroad a breadth of freedom beyond what America herself has given. Annette Baxter's description in her book on Henry Miller captures the sense of Europe readers of The Sun Also Rises often feel:

To declare for Europe was to declare for life lived on a profounder level of experience; but the declaration implicit in the act of exile meant more than the specific quality of the life lived abroad. For that life was different from that the exiles had known in America chiefly in the sense it gave of a new psychological freedom.³

The "swell life" of the expatriate, with its sense of "a new psychological freedom," is associated in this novel with a life of leisure (a la Strether), unbridled libidinal energy and consumption of spirits. Jake Barnes, like Nathaniel Hawthorne, is also trying to write while he is abroad. In fact, he clearly is in Europe in order to write. While Hawthorne's literary ambitions contended with his diplomatic obligations, Hemingway's journalistic work was a more satisfactory complement to his literary aspirations. His reasons for being in Europe not only account for the writing of the novel, but, as we shall see, they become dominant thematic concerns.

Hemingway's novel, which could be and probably has been used as a handbook for some prospective expatriates, encapsules the mythical appeal of the seemingly free and untethered expatriate lifestyle. It would be hard to miss the ironic coloration in the conversation, however. "It sounds like a swell life," the seasoned expatriate replies, at the end of Gorton's description which both glamorizes and offers a critique of his friend's lifestyle abroad. As long as it sounds good--especially for the writer whose job it is to make things sound good--it has some redeeming qualities. But, Gorton registers a considerable amount of doubt about the whole business, even challenging the common association between expatriation and writing: "Nobody that ever left their own country ever wrote anything worth printing." Behind Gorton's query, "Why don't you live in New York?" which echoes Waymarsh's question about Little Bilham in The Ambassadors--"Why don't he go home?"--there is a certain skepticism about the whole venture. So, while there is the suggestion of the exhilaration associated with the idea, if not the reality, of living differ-

ently somewhere else, the underbelly of expatriation is also exposed. Gorton, again the devil's advocate, suggests that "fake European standards have ruined" Barnes and that he has "lost touch with the soil." The fear of ruin or contamination should be familiar following both an examination of the Pocock's visit to Paris and poor Hilda's excursions in Rome. Gorton's charges cannot be fully countered. Barnes has indeed lost touch with the day to day happenings in his native land--he doesn't necessarily know what is in vogue at every moment, which stars are rising and falling--but he has not, he cannot, lose touch with all that America means to him. His memory will not allow him to do that. And, in fact, so much of what Barnes does, and where he goes, seems to be tied to his desire to recover, in the European theater, some of what he knows or fears he has lost in America. In his search for 'the Good Place,' Jake does find some of what he is looking for. But he also continually must come to grips with the flipside of that freedom he seeks--constraints both new and familiar. As the Romance in The Sun Also Rises shifts and is redefined it is perhaps saved from tragedy only because it is able to veer toward an ironic recognition of a certain impasse, similar those at the ends of The Ambassadors and The Reef, which is judged simply to be a condition of modern life. The novel seems, in fact, to totter on that sharp edge separating exhilaration and despair.

I

In his book on The Twenties Frederick Hoffman perceptively identifies the source of power in The Sun Also Rises as the isolation of its expatriate characters. In Hoffman's words, the novel

"reveals the men and women who lived in this closed, secular world isolated from tradition for what they genuinely were; above all it shows them working painfully for an adjustment, with all the problems of adjustment increased and intensified."⁴ Of course, the theme of alienation, thought to be synonymous with the modern condition, is a major one throughout American literature, seen in works by writers as diverse as Melville, Hawthorne, Kate Chopin, and Truman Capote. The difference between these works and Hemingway's novel, is that in Hemingway's case the sense of isolation and alienation is created by, or at least heightened by, the expatriate condition. The orbit of the expatriate, cut off from his native tradition, naturally is this "closed, secular world" Hoffman speaks of. It can be argued as well, as it has in this book, that the problems and behavior of these characters in this microcosm of American culture stand out, as though in bas relief, in this alien environment.

From the very beginning of the story, when Jake Barnes describes Robert Cohn, we are in the midst of a constellation of characters who are isolated from their pasts. Consider the opening of The Sun Also Rises: "Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton. Do not think that I am very much impressed by that as a boxing title, but it meant a lot to Cohn." It is, I think, rather significant that Hemingway begins the novel in this manner. (In his original draft there was a considerable chunk of material before this.) It immediately establishes the importance of Cohn, as a preoccupation of the narrator. Cohn, or thinking about Cohn, is what seems (as the novel now stands) to be the genesis of the story's telling. The salient issue for Jake is Cohn's credi-

bility, or the credibility of his story that he was a middleweight boxing champion at Princeton. The two characters--Jake and Cohn--are thrown together by their mutual condition as American expatriates. They have no great affection for one another, though Cohn does admire Jake and think of him as his "best friend." What they share is their Americanness, the fact that they both live in Paris, their comparable age, and their tennis game. Jake has to check the story of Cohn's background; all he knows for certain is what he sees in front of him--a man lopped off from his past.

At the same time, a great many differences come into play from the start. Perhaps the recognition of difference (and the awkward split it implies) is the narrator's real preoccupation. There will, before long, be all sorts of differences between the narrator and his environment, and between the narrator and other characters, notably Cohn; but here in the opening pages it is Cohn's own sense of difference which is noted--his Jewishness. "No one had ever made him feel he was a Jew, and hence any different from anybody else, until he went to Princeton" (4). The point to be noticed is that a sense of difference does not come into play radically until one is uprooted from a homogeneous world, where everyone looks, talks and thinks like you do, and placed in the midst of a lot of people who don't look, talk or think like you do. Cohn's sense of separateness is of the same quality Barnes feels as an expatriate, and right from the start Cohn seems to serve as a kind of mirror for Jake. He, too, is away from home, feeling the awful impotence natural when living amidst a group of people who share neither his beliefs nor his values nor his language. This, if nothing else, Jake and Cohn

share. They are both outsiders, though each handles his situation quite differently. Cohn acts boldly, often imprudently, and unselfconsciously. Jake stands aside, takes it in, and later tells the story, thus coming to share Cohn's occupation--writer, teller of tales.

One of the ironies, in a novel which has so many, is that Robert Cohn who is the most active and potent of the bunch of expatriates, is also the character with the least amount of self-insight in the novel. He writes a novel, he seduces Lady Brett, but he is either not able to see, or to accept what is going on around him. He seems only gradually to absorb Mike's anti-Semitic remarks and jealously motivated insults. He is also slow to acknowledge that he has been displaced in Lady Brett's affections by the young Spanish matador. When he does realize, he goes wild with rage, rage partly at himself for not knowing what was going on earlier.

Cohn's posture is seen, in fact, very early in the novel. He has been appealing to Barnes to accompany him to South America. What is going through Cohn's head is that he has lived a lot of life and still has the sense that there is more to it than what he has gotten. He also is thinking that time is running out for him; he has to get it in now before he grows old. He's been reading The Purple Land by W.H. Hudson. "'The Purple Land' is a very sinister book if read too late in life," the narrator comments. "For a man to take it at thirty-four as a guide-book to what life holds is about as safe as it would be for a man of the same age to enter Wall Street direct from a French convent, equipped with a complete set of the more practical Alger books" (9). Like Don Quixote, who has been reading too many tales of the knight-

errant, Cohn's conception of reality has been clouded by a veil of romantic illusions. Travel would supply that needed Romantic ingredient. Cohn's error--much like Gatsby's, incidentally--is in his unwavering belief in romantic possibilities. His error is in thinking that a new place would allow him a chance to erase his personal past and start all over again. Jake realizes this fallacy and passes this piece of advice on to Cohn, fruitlessly.

"Listen, Robert, going to another country doesn't make any difference. I've tried all that. You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There's nothing to that.'

'But you've never been to South America.'

'South America hell! If you went there the way you feel now it would be exactly the same. This is a good town. Why don't you start living your life in Paris?' (11)

This exchange, very early in the novel, shows so sharply the differences between Jake and Robert Cohn. In the face of the War and his losses of virility and doomed romance, Jake has developed a sense of irony which allows him to cope with what would seem, by all judgements, to be a very miserable situation. Cohn, on the other hand, continues to be driven, against all reason, by his conviction that the world he imagines can be realized in this world--even if he must force it into existence. If Cohn might be thought of as a Gatsby-like character, then a comparison between Jake Barnes and Nick Carraway might be in order as well. Both, as tellers of the story, are attached observers who, in the end, get nothing besides their stories. Or, Jake might

also be thought of as a later version of Strether, who, as we have already seen, insists always on "getting nothing out of it."

The historical context surrounding the novel doubtless also contributes to this sense of alienation and difference. If it is difficult to imagine that The Sun Also Rises was written just twenty years after The Ambassadors and barely ten after The Reef, because his style and the world Hemingway portrays seem so distinctly modern, we need only remind ourselves of the event which, more than any other, separates Hemingway's generation from the one preceding it--World War I. All the action in The Sun Also Rises occurs in the backwater of the War. Hoffman calls the work the author's "best war novel," the rationale obviously being that all the characters, the world even, is suffering from a post-war malaise, the most painful and continuous reminder, of course, being Jake's tragi-comic impairment (Hoffman, 102). The War, Malcolm Cowley tells us, was what initially brought many American writers to Europe.⁵ It was, thus, part of that process of isolation, driving a wedge between some of these men and their country. A longing, a nostalgia for past action, must in part have driven some veterans and erstwhile ambulance drivers back to Europe--that and a growing sense of native restlessness. "Those who had grown up in the war, or in its shadow," Robert Penn Warren writes, "could look back nostalgically, as it were, to the lost moment of innocence of nature and purity of emotion."⁶ The war signified America's coming of age, its movement from Innocence to Experience. In the face of this, Hemingway's heroes demonstrate fairly feeble attempts to come to grips with the responsibility. Heroic possibilities seem to give way to a kind of dullness and

ennui. The difference felt is a difference between an active period in the past and the relatively dull present, into which characters attempt to recover a sense of urgency and vitality. Memory, and the act of writing, is one means of attempting to recover that loss.

Jake Barnes, like his literary cousin Dick Diver in Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night, has sought a landscape in which heroic action might be possible, and upon arrival on the scene questions the possibility, or the value, of heroism, particularly as he witnesses Cohn's impulsive actions. Most of Hemingway's and Fitzgerald's characters seem to be looking for a place in which they can exercise the greatest degree of freedom from social, biological, political obligations. As suggested in the introduction, the move abroad often is an attempt to do just that. It literalizes what Poirier identifies as the tendency of American writers to create a 'place elsewhere' stylistically. "It could be said," Poirier writes, "that the theories of literary and stylistic independence, articulated if not originated by Emerson, were gradually transmuted into an ideal of heroic character asserting its independence of oppressive environments and of prefabricated social styles."⁷ This is precisely Jake Barnes' struggle. The continuous playing burden in The Sun Also Rises is that had Jake not been injured in the war (had he been biologically whole) or were he to find the ideal arena or sphere for action, he could be, in the old sense of the word, a hero.

The themes of impotence and loneliness are further heightened by the use of the first person, especially with Jake serving as narrator. The kinds of limitations imposed by the use of the first

person narrative, and the way in which Hemingway confronts and surmounts those limitations, reinforce the play between freedom and constraint. Jake always tries to jockey himself into a position where he can in some way be potent, yet those attempts never pan out. He tells the story almost as though he is an outsider, though he has been every bit as involved in the actions as anyone else. In presenting the drama as he does, he seems bent on trying to get outside and understand those forces which jostle him about. The attempt to understand, though, for Jake as perhaps for James's Strether, does not result in a strengthening of the heroic posture. The problem of Jake's impotence, thus, is only complicated by his role as teller. The act of telling might be thought of as a final attempt to overcome the sense of impotence and meaninglessness.

Handling a first person narrative is a tricky business. The narrative, like that of the conventional travelogue, is centered around the "I" which has experienced things and is therefore restricted by what the narrator himself has seen, thought, known beforehand, heard from others, or embellished upon. The journey cannot very well go on without him since he is the principal participant in the action he is inscribing. The traveler, as he sets out on his voyage with the expectation of writing, and later as he puts together his story, is his own Romantic Hero.⁸ The Sun Also Rises, both in its means of narration and in the way it moves from place to place, greatly resembles the travelogue--in many respects more so than The Marble Faun. That its designs--indeed, even the outlines of some of its characters--should be recognizable should come as no surprise. The novel had its origins, as Carlos Baker and others

remind us, in an actual trip Hemingway and friends made to Spain in 1925.⁹ The novel, however, is clearly fiction. With aesthetic interests in mind, the writer has whittled and carved away at the large and formless body of real experience to give it fictional form and expression. The most basic shape is that of the trip actually made. That, given cuts and alterations, remains the novel's backbone.

As we know, the versions of reality we are allowed to see-- what is revealed and what is concealed--ultimately hinge on decisions a writer makes with respect to narrative technique. The means of telling a story can either allow or prevent the penetration of certain world views into the story's drama. Extremely lucid are the comments offered on this matter by Henry James in his "Preface" to The Ambassadors where he describes the mental process he went through in determining just how to tell the story, through Strether's consciousness but not using the first person.

Had I, meanwhile, made him at once hero and historian, endowed him with the romantic privilege of the 'first person'-- the darkest abyss of romance this, inveterately, when enjoyed on the grand scale--variety, and many other queer matters as well, might have been smuggled in by a back door. Suffice it, to be brief, that the first person, in the long piece, is a form foredoomed to looseness, and that looseness, never much my affair, had never been so little so as on this particular occasion. . . . It may be asked why, if one so keeps to one's hero, one shouldn't make a single mouthful of 'method,'

shouldn't throw the reins on his neck and, letting them flap there as free as in 'Gil Blas' or in 'David Copperfield,' equip him with the double privilege of subject and object--a course that has at least the merit of brushing away questions at a sweep. The answer to which is, I think, that one makes that surrender only if one is prepared not to make certain precious discriminations.¹⁰

One can sense here what James was after: a means of telling which would give him a great deal of latitude, whereby he, as the artful arranger of material, could maintain control, yet dip in and out of his hero's consciousness at will. The realm of vision in his novel (The Ambassadors, in this case), arguably, is much greater than it would have been had he resorted to the first person. Upon viewing James's remarks one can identify some of the well-known constraints of the first-person narrative. It is prone to produce a "looseness" and lack of variety (in voice, tone, attitude and perspective one would assume). In addition there is the inability to "make certain precious discriminations." We indeed saw in The Ambassadors how much, in the way of ironic effect, James was able to achieve as a result of being able to be both outside and inside Strether's mind.

Hemingway did, to use James's metaphor, "throw the reins" on the neck of his hero and let them flap freely. Yet the reader of The Sun Also Rises is not likely to feel the "looseness" James speaks of. James, of course, is right about the strictures first narration places on a writer. We must remain, at all times, with one character, and experience, primarily, that character's vision of the world, subjective as it is. What potentially, as James notes, could become an

intrinsic weakness in the ability to show, as comprehensively as possible, the multiplicity of truths, does not seem to show itself as a weakness in The Sun Also Rises, as, say, it does in The Green Hills of Africa where the method of the first person quite blatantly sets up a distinction between "me" and "them," the nameless, black Africans. One of the differences between The Green Hills of Africa and The Sun Also Rises is that we feel that while Jake's view is undeniably subjective, he realizes that his perspective is not the only one available. He can call someone a "bastard," thus making a judgment on a character, while admitting at the same time that the character might have redeeming traits. Likewise, in forming his attachments, he is aware that his princesses--seen either from his own perspective or an outside one--are not without their flaws. The first person narrative works in The Sun Also Rises precisely because we feel that Jake's vision--his knowledge of what goes on around him--is greater than that of any of the other characters in the novel, if for no other reason than that it is his story and in the telling of it he has gained that vision.

Sometimes, in fact, we are likely to forget that we are seeing things through only one man's eyes, so objective and all-encompassing the presentation seems to be. Whether it be in presenting landscape or dialogue the "I" often seems to disappear. At random, I open to the following conversation:

"I say. You don't know what it's meant to me to have you chaps up here."

"We've had a grand time, Harris."

Harris was a little tight.

"I say. Really you don't know how much it means. I've not had much fun since the war."

"We'll fish together again, some time. Don't you forget it, Harris."

"We must. We have had such a jolly good time."

"How about another bottle around?"

"Jolly good idea," said Harris.

"This is mine," said Bill. "Or we don't drink it."

"I wish you'd let me pay for it. It does give me pleasure, you know."

"This is going to give me pleasure," Bill said.

Later Jake does quote himself, but does so smoothly, as if he is merely one of the characters in the act. Almost any other piece of dialogue, or almost any other description, would show the same kind of distancing. Jake gives himself no special status, hence we get the impression that he considers himself no better nor no worse than the others. This way Hemingway is able to show Jake's own ironic (and self-pitying) view of his own situation.

II

As we have seen, particularly in the discussion of The Ambassadors, the experience of life abroad can be a kind of experiment in fashioning a kind of self different from the one which would have developed had one spent all his life in his native land. The project often begins with the conception of an idea of self which might be more wholly realized somewhere else; often the idea is attached to a

particular place which, it is imagined, would facilitate the growth of that ideal self. This process of transformation, then, is influenced both by the place one resides, the nature of experiences one has, and the character of the expatriate community. In the reformation of self there is always a conscious and unconscious abandonment of past habits and values, and a conscious and unconscious adoption of new ones. As one leaves a place, there is often a desire to leave something behind; as one arrives in a new place, there is likely a desire to acquire new dimensions. Each place seems ready-made for the infusion of certain kinds of actions and certain thematic associations. In The Sun Also Rises place serves both psychological functions for characters and literary functions related to plot and theme. The pattern of the novel reflects a kind of restlessness and searching associated with the pervasive American attitude that if we don't like it one place, we can move on somewhere else where things might be better.

It is easy enough to detect the nature of pressures place exerts on, and opportunities it presents to, the American characters as the novel opens. Hemingway's Paris is not James's, nor is it Wharton's. Paris is THE modern city. It is a city of taxis, bars, cafes, concierges and hotels. We move fluidly, effortlessly, from the Cafe Select to the Dingo to the Hotel Crillon and so on. These expatriates get around the place with considerable ease. For the expatriate, things are transient. A sense of limbo prevails. No one seems prepared to leave, though they follow with interest the news from home, yet neither does anyone seem eager to settle down in the city and make it a permanent home. That, indeed, would run counter to the essence of modernism which is itself a kind of rootlessness. It has become a

critical commonplace to think of Hemingway's Paris as just another version of the image of the wasteland which gained credence after WWI. Andrew Hook, for example, like many others notes the "sense of sterility, . . . of aimlessness and emptiness, of the failure and loss of values" which dominates the first portion of the novel.¹¹ Certainly this is one of the major tensions of the novel. Characters are trying to find a comfortable spot to settle in--the right person as well as the right place--and all the possibilities for commitment--either to place or to person--seem to close off before they materialize. Leonard Lutwack suggests that "The work of these writers [of the lost generation], from one point of view, is an attempt to develop strategies for placelessness."¹² Paris held out certain opportunities that no American city could offer, and the city was a catalyst for the expression of certain sentiments which could not be felt so keenly elsewhere.

Paris seems to represent for Jake both order and randomness. The sense of randomness he gains simply with the unpredictability of encounters. The sense of order he derives in part from the nature of economic exchanges. This Jake realizes toward the end of the novel when, after the fiesta, he crosses the border and goes back into France, to Bayonne and Biarritz, for a short while. "It felt strange to be in France again. There was a safe, suburban feeling." One felt sure of exchanges.

Everything is on such a clear financial basis in France. It is the simplest country to live in. No one makes things complicated by becoming your friend for any obscure reason. If you

want people to like you you have only to spend a little money. I spent a little money and the waiter liked me. He appreciated my valuable qualities. He would have been glad to see me back. I would dine there again some time and he would be glad to see me, and would want me at his table. It would be a sincere liking because it would have a sound basis. I was back in France. (233)

A certain expenditure, in France, predictably led to a commensurate, predictable return, while in Spain, we feel, there was always, particularly during the fiesta, a predominant sense that anything was possible. That spontaneous atmosphere was what attracted Barnes to Spain, though once that atmosphere becomes heavily charged, he is happy to be back on this safe ground. Ironically, he soon decides to cross the border, to return to San Sebastian, in Spain, exchanging that French sense of order for a less predictable environment. The border crossing shows the Jake's continual dance between order and chaos, solitude and society. Despite an acknowledged need for stability, he doesn't seem to be able to control an impulse which lures him, yet again, into a less structured realm. (Lady Brett, we must remember, is still in Spain and this might be part of the reason he is pulled back.)

At Irun we had to change trains and show passports. I hated to leave France. Life was so simple in France. I felt I was a fool to be going back into Spain. In Spain you could not tell about anything. I felt like a fool to be going back into it, but I stood in line with my passport, opened my bags for the

customs, bought a ticket, went through the gate, climbed onto the train, and after forty minutes and eight tunnels I was at San Sebastian.

As expatriate locale, Paris/France holds out both specific and non-specific advantages. These Americans in the French capital are relieved of the responsibilities and commitments associated with living in their own country; neither are they expected to participate fully in French life, for they are, after all, foreigners.

Paris, as wonderful as the city is, cannot satisfy all the needs of the spirit. In Book II of the novel the reader experiences a great relief as Jake, Cohn, Bill Gorton and company, decide to leave Paris and go south for a fishing expedition in the Basque region of northern Spain. The two central locales in Spain--the Irati River and Pamplona--answer to quite different psychological needs, and supply something which neither Paris nor America could offer. And yet, what we find is that the Spanish landscape, particularly during the fishing trip itself, is conflated with the American landscape, producing a powerful sense of home abroad. Once the novel crosses into Spain, the openness of space is felt immediately. One has merely to look at the pages to see the difference. In Paris there is little landscape (after all we are in the city), and people always bumping into one another. There is a lot of dialogue. In Spain, landscape takes over. Conversations become longer and more intimate (sometimes violently so!). A simple formulation would be that Paris is the modern, urban dimension of life, Spain the rural and traditional. "This is country," Gorton says when he gets out towards the Irati River. Of course this simple division, as we

shall see, belies much.

The famous set piece in which Jake and Bill Gorton remove themselves as far as possible from the maddening crowd and go trout fishing on the Irati River, near Burguete is at the center of The Sun Also Rises. The conversation this chapter opens with is drawn from this section of the novel. For five days, they are away in a pastoral world, Jake digging for worms, the two drinking liberal quantities of wine, fishing, playing bridge with an Englishman, Harris.

The placement of the discussion of this novel just after that on The Marble Faun allows us to make some interesting comparisons between the trajectories of the two works. Both begin in an urban environment (Rome/Paris) in which the American characters have been living for a period of time. The characters have an established pattern of life in the city and daily go about their business (Hilda and Kenyon to their studios/Jake Barnes to write his newspaper stories.) In this first locale the complication of the novel is presented (the appearance of the specter/Jake's impotence, his love for Lady Brett and the jealousy between the male characters). There is then a flight, a journey from that urban environment towards a more loosely constructed, pastoral setting (Tuscany/Spain). Women are left behind and the principle action in this section involves a kind of male-to-male comradery (Kenyon-Donatello/Barnes-Gorton). The women (Miriam/Lady Brett) follow. There is a final complication (Lady Brett's seduction of Romero/Hilda's mysterious disappearance) and a movement back toward the place of the story's origin (Rome/France). Hilda and Kenyon are married off and decide to end

their sojourn in Italy; we don't know what will happen to Jake and Lady Brett, but marriage seems out of the question and there is no talk yet about going home to America or England. It would not take much more effort to find similar structural affinities between The Sun Also Rises and The Reef and The Ambassadors. Beyond the acknowledgement that Tuscany and the Basque region of Spain are both pastoral settings, what happens in those sections, not to mention the styles of either writer, are of course quite unique.

The trout fishing episode of the novel, as has often been noted, bears a great resemblance to "Big Two-Hearted River," a story which Hemingway wrote (in Paris) a year or so before The Sun Also Rises. The Spanish setting is what, at first glance, distinguishes the scene in the novel from its precursor. A comparison, then, might lead to a greater appreciation of how the foreign setting works. Barnes and Gorton strive to rediscover America abroad, yet in doing so remaking it so that it conforms more perfectly to their idealized visions of what they would have liked America to be, yet wasn't. While "Big Two-Hearted River," set in the regions of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, had to be read straight, the whole business of trout fishing in Spain--performing a quintessential American ritual abroad--is full of irony. A soldier who stops them is suspicious of their rod-cases.

"What's in there?" he pointed to the rod-case.

I opened it and showed him. He asked to see our fishing permits and I got them out. He looked at the date and then waved us on.

"Is that all right?" I asked.

"Yes. Of course." (109)

Typical is the deadpan delivery. Not to be missed is what the exchange suggests: These Americans are not on their own turf. Their mission is not wholly consonant with their locale. They are looking for America--or a deep part of themselves which is tied to the concept of America--in Spain. This episode, which so poignantly evokes a presence of home on the foreign scene, performs much the same function for Jake that Mrs. Newsome's letters serve for Strether. ("It struck him really that he had never so lived with her as during this period of her silence.") The irony is, then, that the experience of America can be felt as powerfully on foreign soil because of the gaping sense of absence, as it could be at home.

Beyond their common focus on fishing, we can realize a more fundamental parallel between the Upper Michigan and the Spanish stories. They both demonstrate the same function of landscape or place. Jake and Gorton are looking for "the good place," just as was Nick Adams. In both pieces, places (as well as familiar activities done in those places) serve a revitalizing, restorative function that people can never supply. Eudora Welty, in an essay called "Place in Fiction," written in 1956, observes this quality in Hemingway's fiction:

whatever the scene of his work, it is the places that never are hostile. People give pain, are callous and insensitive, empty and cruel, carrying with them no pasts as they promise no futures. But place heals the hurt, soothes the outrage,

fills the terrible vacuum that these human beings make.¹³

This suggests another important difference between the American story and the set-piece in the novel. Unlike Nick in "Big Two-Hearted River," the narrator of The Sun Also Rises travels with a companion, fellow American and long-time friend Bill Gorton. Nick has deliberately sought (as the burnt town image at the story's opening significantly underscores) a place of solitude in nature, away from any reminders of society and real connections with human beings. With no one else around, he can concentrate, as the narrative does, on each move and action he makes--the making of stakes for his tent, the preparation of his skillet, the threading of a grasshopper on his hook. Gorton and Barnes are also set apart from the portion of human society which they have most to do with at the time; in Burguete they find temporary reprieve from all the antics and complications involving Cohn, Michael and Lady Brett. But, they do have one another, and in this foreign setting, the two are drawn to one another. They share their foreignness, their nationality and a desire to satisfy their romantic dreams. Consequently while in "Big Two-Hearted River" not a word is spoken, in the trout fishing episode in The Sun Also Rises dialogue is interspersed with periods of introspection and silence. In the exchanges one senses a deep level of sympathy, even love, which arguably is facilitated by their expatriate condition.

That romantic desire to connect emotionally with another person again is a part of the expatriate matrix. Certainly the need is universal, but it is likely that the wish to repair a connection, or find a connection, is made all the more acute due to the separation

from homeland. Sometimes, in fact, as for example in Giovanni's Room or Two Serious Ladies, the move abroad is made expressly in search of a greater range of relationships. We sense that in The Sun Also Rises one of the things which all the characters are looking for is a place where they can relate to people differently than they had been able to previously. The expatriate often tries to reconstitute a society which conforms more to his ideal notion of community. As we shall see later, this involves a rejection of certain elements of American culture, which Barnes is at times reminded of.

The search for the "good place" or the "right person" is often a sham. The relationships between these expatriates are, to put it mildly, troublesome. The relationship between Jake and Brett is strained by Jake's impotence, by Brett's waywardness. Jake and Cohn are tennis pals, but lack any deep sympathy for or knowledge of one another. But, abroad or at home, you end up settling for what you have. In Paris Cohn, sorting through his own rocky relationship with Frances, says to Jake, "You're really about the best friend I have, Jake.'" "God help you, I thought. 'Forget what I said,' I said out loud. 'I'm sorry.'" (39) One is condemned, abroad, to depend upon one's compatriots, no matter how hideously flawed they are.

As imperfect as these relationships are, one could hardly imagine a configuration of characters such as we have in The Sun Also Rises on American soil. It is their mutual condition, a la deriva, which facilitates meetings and interactions. As in The Reef, we notice that characters who may not have had much to do with

one another in America (Robert Cohn and Jake Barnes, for example--or Cohn and Lady Brett), do abroad. Despite their radical differences, they have more in common with each other than they have with others around them. Sometimes the condition of expatriation can strip away cultural trappings and enable two characters to say things more openly to each other than they could imagine saying to one another in their native land. Here are Gorton and Barnes doing something very American in the heart of Spain. It is difficult to tell just where one country leaves off and another begins. It seems almost as though they have found a place which transcends national boundaries. After sparring back and forth on the nature of irony and pity and expatriation and impotency, Gorton says to Jake, "'Listen. You're a hell of a good guy, and I'm fonder of you than anybody on earth. I couldn't tell you that in New York. It'd mean I was a faggot'" (116). The two then go off fishing, rod-case and nets over their shoulders, and two bottles of wine in a rucksack. Even in this foreign country, or perhaps especially in the foreign country, these two characters are able to realize an idealized version of American experience which would have been difficult to attain in America.

Yet in The Sun Also Rises the two cannot get away completely. This idyllic place, which offers a temporary, sublime haven, cannot offer indefinite refuge. Memory and the expectation of what will come after this interfere. The specter of Robert Cohn looms over their conversations, and at the most distant point, on the fishing trip, the question of love and women comes up.

We lay with our heads in the shade and looked up into the

trees.

"You asleep?"

"No," Bill said. "I was thinking."

I shut my eyes. It felt good lying on the ground.

"Say," Bill said, "what about this Brett business?" (123)

Bill's mention of Lady Brett ruptures the idyllic scene in the same way that the appearance of Madame de Vionnet and Chad shatters Strether's dream vision in the French countryside. Yet, the subject of Brett is quickly dropped and the episode continues in the original spirit.

With respect to this novel and the Roncesvalles fishing scene, Leslie Fiedler writes, "It is in the trout stream of Burguete that Jake and Bill immerse themselves and are made whole again and clean; for that stream links back to the rivers of Hemingway's youth, the rivers of upper Michigan, whose mythical source is the Mississippi of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn."¹⁴ The comparison with Twain is certainly appropriate, for one who knows the scenes of Jim and Huck floating down the Mississippi on their raft is likely to recall those scenes when reading the trout fishing passages. In both, the two male characters are indulging in some boyhood dream of freedom from social restrictions, the codes of the shore. This comraderie between Gorton and Jake, and between others in the novel Fiedler uses to press his theory on the inability of American writers to write of mature, heterosexual love. "In Hemingway," he writes, "the rejection of the sentimental happy ending of marriage involves the acceptance of the sentimental happy beginning of innocent and inconsequential sex, camouflages the rejection of maturity

and of fatherhood itself" (305). Though this formula grossly simplifies things, one cannot deny that the novel follows this pattern. Overall, Fiedler seems to trivialize this struggle, seeing little value of flight, of the desire to maintain a youthful innocence. In the quest romance the journey is not an end in itself, but a part of a process of gaining distance then returning. Barnes's is a search for a place elsewhere. It is a search for the pre-existing Eden in America (R.W.B. Lewis) and for the unmarred pastoral world (Leo Marx). The quest or departure here and elsewhere in expatriate literature is most often triggered by some basic quarrels with "back home." The expatriate experience must be seen as a part of a dance between points, in which the self is trying to find a place--a "good place"--in which it can best perform.

An interesting dimension of Fiedler's analysis is that it sees the action of this novel, the bull fights and the romantic conflicts, all within the American context. The so-called drama of the American West, according to Fiedler need not actually be set in the American West. In his reading of the novel, then, he rightly notes that though set on foreign soil, the novel is concerned primarily with American issues and themes:

One must not be confused by the exotica of expatriation: bullfights, French whores, and thes dansants. Like the American East, Paris in Hemingway's book stands for the world of women and work, for "civilization" with all its moral complexity, and it is presided over quite properly by the bitch-goddess Brett Ashley. The mountains of Spain, on the

other hand, represent the West: a world of male companions and sport, an anti-civilization, simple and joyous, whose presiding genius is that scarcely articulate arch-buddy, 'good, old Bill.'" (350)

After their fishing trip, Gorton and Barnes move back to Pamplona and hit the saloons. According to Mark Spilka, Pamplona "stands roughly to Burguete as the swamp in 'Big Two-Hearted River' stands to the stream."¹⁵ Pamplona is still country, but the arrival of Lady Brett and Mike Campbell from San Sebastian, and the presence of Robert Cohn provide new complications. Through his portrayal of Pamplona, with its air of Catholicism, sensuality, festivity, bullfight and death, one feels that Hemingway was able, by contrast, to suggest what America lacks. In Pamplona, Hemingway replays that classic drama presented in "The Maypole at Merry Mount," only this time he celebrates the triumph of the pagan revellers over the "grim Puritans" of Hawthorne's tale. The setting of the action at the time of the celebration of San Fermin, or the running of the bulls, is an implicit statement on what Hemingway imagined to be the dominant social values in America. The kind of Dionysian rite described in the novel would never have been witnessed in the American scene, especially during Prohibition:

It kept up day and night for seven days. The dancing kept up, the noise went on. The things that happened could only have happened during the fiesta. Everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences. (154)

And all this time, everyone was drunk.

Of course, there is some risk attached to the bacchanalian orgy. The story is told in the novel of a young man, twenty eight years old, gored by a bull at the entrance to the ring. With the bullfight itself comes the omnipresent specter of death. In fact the artistry of the matador, Romero, is judged by how close to that zone of danger around the bull he works. The heightened sense of danger in the setting parallels--perhaps even in some way exacerbates or contributes to--the turmoil and chaos in the human relationships. Jake gives way to the pressure on his code of honor, and acts as pimp for Lady Brett. Cohn, his illusions shattered, proves his boxing abilities by delivering stunning blows to Jake and Romero. "In Hemingway's novels confrontation with death is much more than a test of character, even than a test of courage," Stephen Spender writes. "It is existence tested by dissolution. If you have not faced death, you have not existed and if you have faced it, you are a lord of death."¹⁶

Even though Pamplona is a dangerous place, and ultimately one Jake cannot stay in long, there is an undeniable thrill in being there. He finds there something he could not find in his own country--the poignant and omnipresent force of death. As Octavio Paz perceptively notes in his comparison between the American and the Mexican character, the American "not only has no desire to understand [death], he obviously avoids the very idea."¹⁷

A main theme in Hemingway's novel, one which places it in squarely in the modernist tradition, is the struggle with belief. Throughout the novel Barnes, a nominal Catholic, continually

wrestles with the meaning of religion in the modern world. Again, the foreign setting calls this need to mind. Surrounded, in Spain, by a pervasive sense of belief, he feels most acutely his agonizing emptiness in the face of his desire for some kind of religious faith. The portrayal of this theme could not, we might reasonably assume, be nearly so effective were it set in Nebraska or Nevada. This is seen in one of the well-known passages of the novel, as Jake approaches the cathedral in Pamplona.

At the end of the street I saw the cathedral and walked up toward it. The first time I ever thought the facade was ugly but I like it now. I went inside. It was dim and dark and the pillars went high up, and there were people praying, and it smelt of incense, and there were some wonderful big windows.

He kneels down to pray, and starts praying for all sorts of materialistic things. Realizing this, he regretted that he "was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it, at least for a while, and maybe never, but that anyway it was a grand religion, and I only wished I felt religious and maybe I would the next time" (96-7). When Bill later on the Burguete trip, asks Jake what it means to be Catholic, Jake simply replies "I don't know."

Catholicism functions in The Sun Also Rises much the same way it does in The Marble Faun. In both novels Catholic faith is the most traditional Christianity has to offer. Its rituals, confessions, incense and vast cathedrals tend to make its descendent

protestant branches look simple and impoverished. Hilda, while seduced by the faith, rejects it in favor of her native protestantism. Jake, a Catholic to begin with, seeks refuge in the cathedrals of his native faith and finds them hollow and meaningless for his modern circumstances.

By the end of the second book, by far the longest book of the novel, things are in a state of total disarray. Brett has taken up with Romero. Cohn the former champion boxer has revived his skills, knocking out Jake, pulling a few to Mike, and clobbering his rival the young Spanish matador. In the beginning of the short third book, a kind of coda, Mike, Jake and Bill are getting ready to Pamplona. The fiesta is over. It's time to move on. This place, like others before it, has not been enough to hold restless spirits. The three men, oddly without the woman whom they've been chasing, hire a car, go to Bayonne, on to Biarritz, gamble, drink, drive some more, then return through Saint Jean de Luz, dropping Mike off, to deliver Bill to the train. The farewells are short and sweet: "Good-bye, you chaps," "So long, fella," "So long, kid."

Just as the expatriate wishes to discover and come to know more intimately a new environment, and start afresh, he wants also to leave behind, parts of America--the banality of everyday life and language, wholly materialist values, meaningless relationships, and so forth. Any reminder of what he sought to leave behind is jarring. It interrupts his sublime experience of exile, and reminds him that he is still, after all, connected to those things. His deepest fear might be that he is no different from the objects of his scorn. Various places in the novel Jake and his friends encoun-

ter vivid reminders of parts of America which he finds intolerable and detestable. Margaret Fuller, writing from Rome in 1847, made distinctions between three different types of Americans one was likely to encounter abroad. Fuller's formulation may help us see just what Hemingway (in the character of Barnes) was objecting to. The first kind of American abroad was "the servile American--a being utterly shallow, thoughtless, worthless . . . His object in Europe is to have fashionable clothes, good foreign cookery, to know some titled persons, and furnish himself with coffee-house gossip . . ." The second kind was the conceited American, and the third, the thinking American who "is anxious to gather and bear back with him every plant that will bear a new climate and new culture."¹⁸ In the same vein, James in the preface to The Reverberators talks about what he terms "passion-less pilgrims"--those Americans who wander around Europe and see it all as toy--to be consumed--not to be cultivated or affected by it. In The Art of the Novel, he talks about those for whom Europe was a "painted and gild holiday toy," its purpose "to be relinquished, sacrificed, broken and cast away, at the dawn of any other convenience."¹⁹ These unimaginative travelers, seem, when we meet them in Hemingway's novel, to be versions of the "grim pilgrim," come to Europe to pass judgment on the Young Goodman Brown's who have slipped away from the community to participate in the witches' play.

In The Sun Also Rises Jake is often thrown into situations with other Americans he would just as soon not have to deal with. Even though Jake characteristically does not say much about those encounters, the reader gets a clear sense of his attitude. Hoffman brings

out this when speaking of Jake's fellow journalists in Paris, Woolsey and Krum.

Woolsey and Krum, fellow journalists in Paris, ride in a cab with Jake Barnes for a short while. They are family men; they live in the suburbs; their ambition is to live in the country and have a car. Like so many Americans in Paris in the 1920s, they are suburban middle-class husbands and fathers mildly curious about the dives across the river ('The Dingo, that's the great place, isn't it?'), but the inhabitants of another world. They and the Knights of Columbus tourists on the trip to Spain are curious specimens of normality, which serve to underscore the separateness of Jake Barnes and his friends. (Hoffman 102)

That other world, the world of normality, is precisely what the expatriate hoped to leave behind. Woolsey and Krum represent for Barnes those confining structures he had hoped to escape--the institutions of marriage, work, artlessness and unimaginative social relations. Jake's attitude is seen when he visits a restaurant he had once frequented and the proprietress, Madame Lecomte remarks, "You never come here any more, Monsieur Barnes." His reply is simply, "Too many compatriots." (76)

The other scene Hoffman refers to above takes place on the train going south from the Gare d'Orsay in Paris (when it actually was a train station) to Bayonne. Jake and his companions have no choice but to talk with fellow-Americans who share their compartment--tourists who no doubt would fit in Fuller's first category.

In our compartment were a man and his wife and their young son.

"I suppose you're Americans, aren't you?" the man asked.

"Having a good trip?"

"Wonderful," said Bill.

"That's what you want to do. Travel while you're young. Mother and I always wanted to get over, but we had to wait a while."

"You could have come over ten years ago, if you'd wanted to," the wife said. "What you always said was: "See America first!" I will say we've seen a good deal, take it one way and another." (85-86)

The accent is perfectly rendered, so recognizably American and so recognizably spoken by a particular kind of American. One's nationality stands out, in striking relief against the foreign landscape, and compatriots, desiring contact with the familiar, seek out their own kind. They have an uncanny ability to spot one another in a foreign crowd. Language and shared culture draws people together. You run into people and have to talk with them simply because you're both American, or both British, or both speak French while everyone else is speaking Greek. If you don't talk with them, it is near treason--deserting your own culture and going over to the other side. It's expected you'll support one another since you feel as though you are up against so much else.

The American tourist takes up where he left of, noting that there are a lot of Americans on the train and this is why they cannot get an early serving in the dining car. They find out they

will have to wait until the fifth round. Jake views the American arrogance, which he has a measure of himself, scornfully. "Pilgrims. Goddam Puritans," Bill mutters. Then the man starts up again.

"What part of the States you boys from?"

"Kansas City," I said. "He's from Chicago."

"You both going to Biarritz?"

"No. We're going fishing in Spain."

"Well, I never cared for it, myself. There's plenty that do out where I come from though. We got some of the best fishing in the State of Montana. I've been out with the boys, but I never cared for it any." (86)

In the last section of Book III, after Barnes has said good-bye to Mike and Bill, he ducks back down to Spain, to San Sebastian, deliberately to be alone, intending to cleanse himself of the whole experience of the fiesta. He describes his movements in great detail--he reads the newspaper, swims, drinks coffee, meets a troupe of French cyclers, dines, swims again, sits in the sun--but never, directly at least, does he describe his feelings. We can only feel, between the lines, the great effort Jake is making to forget it all. A telegram from Lady Brett, a plea to be rescued in Madrid, interrupts his intense solitude, and Barnes rushes off to save her. Madame de Vionnet, too, it will be remembered, wanted Strether to save her. Jake, like Strether, makes a valiant effort, but soon finds the forces against him too great for success.

In the novel's last scene, after a meal with a lot of food and a

lot of drink, Jake and Lady Brett are driving through the streets of Madrid in a cab.

"Oh, Jake," Brett said, "we could have had such a damned good time together."

Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me.

"Yes, I said. "Isn't it pretty to think so?"

These last lines of the novel, Mark Spilka says, in what is probably the conventional reading of them, "confirm [Jake's] total disillusionment." (Bloom 117) "As Barnes now sees, love itself is dead for their generation." Certainly these last lines seem to underscore one of the primary themes of the novel: the agony of loving and not being able to do anything about it. That is to read Jake's lines ironically. What would happen, though, if we were also to consider the straightforward meaning of these lines? Jake's last line is not so far, in nature and meaning and ambivalence, from Strether's "So there we are." "Isn't it pretty to think so?" read literally simply states the value of the imaginary projection of a life which might have been, to place beside a world of shattered possibility. Memory or imagination often is generated in the face of disillusionment, which is not so "pretty" a prospect. In fact, this aspect of Hemingway might be added to the elements which Penn Warren notes in drawing an affinity between Hemingway and Wordsworth. (Their attraction to the simple character and their brand of romantic anti-intellectualism were the main points made by Penn Warren.) The

irony of impotence is that the very contemplation of it can lead to a kind of potency, a determination to do something, however meager.

The expatriate, in going abroad, is in the Romantic sense, very often seeking "the good place." That place would be one which gave the person (writer or character) the greatest imagined ability to exercise his talents and act freely. So long as one remains "at home" that possibility can be maintained. Once that imagined possibility has itself been tried and exhausted, disillusionment is perhaps the only logical response. Jake Barnes may indeed seem disillusioned at the end of the novel, but we might remind ourselves that he has been disillusioned throughout the novel. If there is an irony implicit in the end of the novel it is the same as that we find in Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode": The experience of disillusionment and impotence, while potentially devastating, has supplied the subject matter for the work of art Jake later comes to write. What he has is memory, and when he says "Isn't it pretty to think so?" he might actually be reflecting, somberly, that even to have lived through this experience--not that he would have chosen to--has given him something in return. As I have already suggested, his position is much like Strether's. Both men, as men who are left bereft, adrift as a result of rejecting (Strether) or not being capable of (Jake) commitment, in a sense are able to have it all. The difference between the two positions is that for James/Strether that stance is a choice, whereas for Hemingway/Barnes it is a necessary corollary to living in a modern, fragmented world.

Notes to Chapter Four

¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Letters, ed. Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, Norm Holmes Pearson (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1984), II. p. 96.

²Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 115. Subsequent references, noted in parentheses, will be to this edition.

³Annette Baxter, Henry Miller: Expatriate (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1961), p. 4.

⁴Frederick J. Hoffman, The Twenties: American Writing in the Postwar Decade, rev. ed. (New York: Viking, 1962), p.106. Subsequent references, noted in parentheses, will be to this edition.

⁵Malcolm Cowley, Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s (New York: Viking Press, 1951).

⁶Robert Penn Warren, "Ernest Hemingway" originally published in Robert Penn Warren: Selected Essays (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966). Rpt. in Modern Critical Views: Ernest Hemingway, Ed. and intro. by Harold Bloom (New York, Chelsea House, 1985), p. 36.

⁷Richard Poirier, A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 29.

⁸For some of the points presented here I am indebted to my colleague John Rodenbeck, who is currently working on a critical

study of the travelogue, and has kindly shared with me his thinking on the subject.

⁹Carlos Baker, Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story (New York: Bantam, 1970), pp. 144-154.

¹⁰Henry James, The Ambassadors, ed. S.P. Rosenbaum (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1964), p. 10-11.

¹¹Andrew Hook, "Art and Life in The Sun Also Rises, Ernest Hemingway: New Critical Essays, ed. A. Robert Lee (London: Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1983), p. 54.

¹²Leonard Lutwack, The Role of Place in Literature (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), p. 216.

¹³Eudora Welty, The Eye of the Story (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 131-32.

¹⁴Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death and the American Novel (New York: World Publishing Co., 1962), 350-51.

¹⁵Mark Spilka, "The Death of Love in The Sun Also Rises," from Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels, ed. by Charles Shapiro. 1958 Wayne State University Press. rpt. in Bloom, p. 113.

¹⁶Stephen Spender, Love-Hate Relations: English and American Sensibilities (New York: Vintage, 1975), 265.

¹⁷Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico, tr. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove, 1962), p. 22.

¹⁸Margaret Fuller, in The Tribune 1847, quoted in Spender, p. 8,9.

¹⁹Henry James, The Art of the Novel (preface to The Reverberators), intro. R.P. Blackmur (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 189.

CHAPTER FIVE

Another Kind of Silence: Paul Bowles's Let It Come Down

Richard Pattenon opens his recent study of Bowles with the claim that "Paul Bowles is perhaps the most resolutely expatriate American writer since Henry James."¹ One feels, as with James, that the demands of being a writer, as he conceived them, led Bowles to establish a home away from home. Living abroad not only seems to have provided him with a certain psychological freedom, but the very experience of living and traveling in another culture gave him the thematic material for his stories and the new landscapes were themselves to become perhaps the most striking element of his fiction. Bowles has often said of fiction that all begins with place. And place, for Bowles, most often means a place abroad. Except for a handful of short stories, virtually all of Bowles's fiction is set outside the United States. Though any of Paul Bowles's four novels (particularly the three set in North Africa--The Sheltering Sky, Let It Come Down, and The Spider's House) would be suitable to discuss within the context of the American expatriate novel, I have chosen Let It Come Down, his second novel, partly because it has not received the critical attention it deserves and partly because the nature of the novel will, I believe, allow an extension of many of the issues which have already been raised in this study. Three quite significant concerns surface in this novel, ones which in various ways we have discussed in the previous novels: the importance of landscape, the psychological dimension of expatriation, and

the handling of narrative.

I

As we move to the work of Paul Bowles, we encounter a fictional experience quite different from any dealt with in the first four chapters. Clearly, Bowles belongs to the expatriate tradition. Yet there is something which sets him apart from his precursors. One thing we immediately feel in reading Bowles is that the world he is writing in and about is not that of James or even Hemingway. Let It Come Down was first published in 1952, nearly fifty years after The Sun Also Rises. The most important intervening event, of course, was World War II, which transformed, again, America's relations with the world. During this time period, the American writer who journeys to the Third World voluntarily gives up a certain amount of comfort and ease, reversing the usual dynamics associated with patterns of movement and emigration. And, in this period, as much as ever, when the American goes to the Third World (or anywhere, for that matter), he is a visible symbol of the political power and economic prosperity of his homeland. These Americans, writers or otherwise, following in the paths of their nation's imperialistic ventures, rather like their British counterparts Forster and Orwell, often find themselves awkwardly caught between defending and condemning the system which has produced them.

Not only does Bowles take us into a new era, he also introduces us to a new landscape. The backdrop for his fiction is not Europe, whose fictive possibilities must have seemed to have been exhausted by his time. His, then, is a search for new landscape, a fresh,

unexplored and exotic culture against which his expatriate Americans can define themselves. Place--both as setting for novels and stories, and sites which enable the process of writing--are tremendously important for Bowles. In his preface to the latest edition of Let It Come Down, Bowles tells the story of the beginning of his work on the novel. It all started with place:

The book was begun in what was perhaps an unusual manner. In December 1949 I boarded a Polish freighter in Antwerp, bound for Colombo. We entered the Strait of Gibraltar at night, and I stood on deck watching the flashes of the lighthouse at Cape Spartel, the northwestern corner of Africa. As we sailed eastward I could distinguish the lights of certain houses on the Old Mountain. Then when we came nearer to Tangier, a thin fog settled over the water, and only the glow of the city's lights was visible, reflected in the sky. That was when I felt an unreasoning and powerful desire to be in Tangier. Up until that moment it had not even occurred to me to write a book about the international city. But I went below, got into my hard bunk, and started a scene which took place on the cliffs beneath which we had just passed. This was not the beginning of the book, but it served as a point of geographical contact, from which I was able to work backward and forward in time.²

The writing of the novel continued over the next several years, portions being written in India, Tangier, during Bowles's travels through Morocco, Algeria and Spain, and finally in the Rifian town

of Xauen. "In the absolute silence of the mountain nights, I accomplished what I had hoped to be able to do when I reached this place in the book. I shut off the controls and let Another Kind of Silence guide itself, without supplying any conscious direction. It went as far as it could go, then stopped, and that was the end of the book" (8). It would indeed be difficult to imagine the novel going beyond the harrowing, gratuitous violence of the penultimate scene. Let It Come Down, like most of Bowles's fiction, takes us to the edge of our familiar world and leaves us there, tottering, without a clue as to how we are to get back.

The primary setting of Bowles's novel, Tangier during the period just after the war, during which it was an international city, is immensely important for this novel. One of the themes running through this study, we should recall, is that particular foreign settings at particular moments in time carry with them particular meanings and provide the writer with certain possibilities which he may consciously or unconsciously exploit. Tangier has been a critical point of contact between Islamic East and predominantly Christian West. Tangier, too, though perhaps less so than in many of Bowles's fiction, is to a great extent, an exotic locale. The novels we have examined thus far have all been set in Western Europe, a relatively familiar setting. When Americans were in Europe, even when they were in countries whose language they did not share, they could always feel some comfort knowing that in a sense America was an extension of Europe; Europe had, during the Renaissance, imaginatively made America a possibility and America's heritage, as her offspring, was her heritage. Not so with Morocco, with

its radically different language, religion, customs and cultural history. The exotic locale, when approached from a Western perspective, is often associated with primitivism and escape from a mechanistic culture; with the erotic impulse; and with the free-play of the imagination.³ While the exotic locale, like the more familiar foreign settings such as England and France, supplies a sense of difference, that difference between cultures is much greater. The results of this difference, which is felt in a more conspicuous presence, are various: The loss of the comfort which comes with being surrounded by known, familiar cultural signs; a sense of excitement (sexual or intellectual) associated with being somewhere so vastly different; greater room for misunderstanding, hence, as is often the case in Bowles, the possibilities for Gothic horror or the genuinely bizarre.

Since the mythical struggle between Antaeus and Hercules, Tangier has been an embattled intersection of West and East. In Points in Time Bowles presents a series of vignettes most of which involve European contact with Morocco at various times in history.⁴ If there be any unifying theme of this small book it might be that the crossroads has most often been a scene of bloodshed. In one story, which reputedly took place early in the 16th century, Fra Andrea, a Franciscan friar, has come to know a Moslem and is invited to his hometown, Fez. By the time the friar, with two of his Catholic brothers, reaches the city, there has been a change in power. Left with no contacts, he seeks companionship in the Mellah where he sharpens his theological prowess with a few Jewish Rabbis. In the end two Jewish Rabbis who, smarting both from the friar's

theological arrogance and from their miserable experiences with Catholicism in Spain, turn him in. Fra Andrea is arrested, accused of being a sorcerer, tortured and finally impaled on a lance. In another vignette we are reminded that during the heyday of the Spanish Armada, off the Barbary coast pirates made a business of plundering ships. "The seas are full of Nazarene ships, they said. There are enough for all. It is pleasing to the Most High that the riches of the infidels should be returned to Islam" (29). The stories, whether they be of interactions between Moroccan and Moroccan, or Moroccan and Westerner or Moroccan Jew and Moroccan Muslim, chronicle deception and struggle for independence.

Because of its strategic position at the South Gate to the Mediterranean, Tangier has had a long history of being batted about by the major powers. Steps toward making Tangier an international city began before WWI, but were not completed until after the war. Throughout this century the French, the English, the Spanish, the Germans, the Italians, and the Americans all have tried to exercise control over the city. Following WWII, the city found itself with an international government, arranged by France, U.S., England and the Soviets, with the Americans playing a greater role than it previously had, largely because of the country's position after the war, the legacy of its North African campaign, Roosevelt's meetings in Casablanca, and so forth. Near the end of Points in Times Bowles translates the lyrics of a popular Moroccan tune of the fifties which dramatizes the American presence:

Ayayayay! Nothing good is going to come of this.

The Americans were here.

The people grew rich,
Most of all the women.
Even the hags tore off their veils
And filled their mouths with chewing-gum.
Men waited in vain for their wives.
Handsome faces and green eyes
Had spirited them away.
And the girls parted their hair
And wore French skirts.
They wanted to be with the Americans.
And you heard only Hokay, hokay.

With its low taxes, low import duties, free money market and easy banking laws, post-war Tangier became a haven for all sorts of opportunists and desperadoes. American columnist Robert Ruark told his readers that the people he met in Tangier, particularly at a notorious bar called Dean's (still to be seen in Tangier), were "smugglers, fugitives from justice, and people who were being paid by other people to stay out of England."⁵ He said that Tangier "contains more thieves, black marketeers, spies, thugs, phonies, beach combers, expatriates, degenerates, characters, operators, bandits, bums, tramps, politicians and charlatans" than any other place he had ever visited (Vaidon, 247). Brion Gysin has said that there is no real business in Tangier, only monkey business. No wonder that Bowles was attracted to the place and saw it as offering tremendous possibilities for fiction. In the novel we get this description of the International City:

Every day in Tangier several new companies were formed, most of them with the intention of evading the laws of one country or another, and every day approximately the same number failed. And the reasons for their failure or success had very little to do with the business acumen of those connected with them. If you were really a winner you found ways of intercepting your competitors' correspondence, even his telegrams; you persuaded the employees at the French Post Office to let you have the first look at letters you were interested in seeing, which was how you got your mailing lists. You hired locals to break into other companies' offices and steal their stationery and examples of their directors' signatures for you; and when you sent your forged replies regretting your inability to supply the merchandise you prudently went all the way to Tetuan in the Spanish Zone to post them--only no customs official at the frontier got them away from you because somehow you were not stripped naked like the others, and the seams of your clothing were not ripped open. (147)

Into this scene walks Nelson Dyar. Let It Come Down, like The Ambassadors, opens with the arrival by sea of its protagonist. The nature of Dyar's arrival, though, immediately shows up the difference the Moroccan setting makes. As Dyar waits in the rain for the customs house to open,

A half-dozen disreputable Moroccans had already caught sight of him from the other side of the fence and were shouting at him. "Hotel Metropole, mister!" "Hey, Johnny! Come on!" "You

want hotel?" "Grand Hotel, hey!" It was as if he had held up his American passport for them to see. (17)

There are few passengers arriving that night and so the fresh American arrival must fend off single-handedly the host of predators with whom he could never hope to make himself understood nor whom he could ever hope to understand.

This is just the first signal that the place Dyar has landed in is neither familiar nor friendly. When he arrives, significantly at night, in the rain, he feels little if any of that liberating thrill that Strether, having escaped from the narrow confines of New England, feels upon arriving in England. Dyar realizes that now there is "no turning back" and that he has no choice other than to accept his fate. In the taxi ride from the port to his hotel (not knowing the name of any particular hotel, he leaves the choice to the driver) looking out the window, "straining to see the darkness beyond the wet panes, he felt for the first time the despair and loneliness he thought he had left behind" (18). The narrator relates Dyar's thoughts as he is sitting in bed in a third rate shabby hotel with no electricity, that first night. "He had renounced all security in favor of what everyone had assured him and what he himself suspected, was a wild goose chase" (19).

What we see here is the suddenness with which a highly romanticized vision of an experience abroad is displaced by a vision of doubt and impending horror. Or perhaps the element of terror simply transforms the nature of Romance. This theme is typical in Bowles. What seems to be implicitly born out in his tales--and we will see

it at work in Let It Come Down--is that the desire for escape and the journey away from home often leads characters not toward self-fulfillment, but toward self-annihilation. Or, at least, the traveler, or voluntary exile, flees one trap simply to find himself in another, perhaps more inextricable, more dangerous one.

Nelson Dyar registers some fairly common expatriate complaints about his homeland, America, the place he is running away from. He feels, first of all, that romantic desire to see beyond one's own provincial reaches. This desire, readers of Melville's Redburn will remember, was infused in the young Redburn as he meditates, in church, on a stranger in their midst, the man from "Stony Arabia." From that incident later grows the would-be traveler's "vision of a date tree."⁶ Once the idea gets into Redburn's head, everything about him rushes to reinforce his longing--the European furniture in his home, oil paintings his father has brought back from Paris, portfolios of colored prints from abroad, the "copy of D'Alembert in French," and finally the memorable model ship, that fragile vehicle which might convert dream to reality. "As years passed on, this continual dwelling upon foreign associations, bred in me a vague prophetic thought, that I was fated, one day or other, to be a great voyager. . . . And I have no doubt that this presentiment had something to do with bringing about my subsequent roving" (12).

The journey most often begins with, or is a product of, some kind of fantasy or day-dream, a deeply held view that things are too dull at home and could be vastly more interesting elsewhere. The impetus for Isabel Archer's move abroad can be credited to the same source as Redburn's--an active imagination. Like Redburn, Isabel is

first shown in the Albany home which her deceased parents have left behind. The difference between Redburn's and Isabel's flight might be that Melville's young hero moved on his own accord, while James's heroine, in a sense, had to be set in motion by an external force. One day while Isabel is reading a book with, it seems, not much attention ("It had lately occurred to her that her mind was a good deal of a vagabond"), her Aunt Mrs. Touchett descends upon the old house and, after a bit of conversation proposes to take her young niece to Florence.⁷ This suggestion triggers an expression of relief from Isabel's sister who, uneasy with her sister's dreaminess, might have been in some doubt how the young girl's life would turn out. "Well, she ought to go abroad. . . . She's just the person to go abroad," is Mrs. Ludlow's reply (31). It is the unpredictable dimension of Isabel's imagination which makes her sister so eager to approve of the scheme. "Her imagination was by habit ridiculously active; when the door was not open it jumped out of the window" (32).

Nelson Dyar's situation is not drastically different, it seems, from that of either Redburn or Isabel Archer. Similar forces seem to be driving them all. Dyar's case, when we look at it, may be somewhat more acute, however. That is, he chooses to leave America not only because of some whimsical desire to travel in some exotic land (although this is an element in his figuring); he seeks as well, in going abroad, to drive a wedge between himself and his family, his father in particular. Within the opening pages of the novel the narrator, supposedly tracing the protagonist's thoughts that first evening in the hotel room as he reflects on just where he

is and how he got there, fills us in on the character's background. During the depression, when he was twenty, he had gotten, with his father's help, a job in the Transit Department of a bank. A heart murmur prevents him from going off to fight in the war, and the routine of activity at his job becomes more and more boring, more and more intolerable.

"I'm fed up!" he would cry, a little hysterically. "I've stood at that damned window in the bank for ten years now. Before the war, during the war, and after the war. I can't take it any longer, that's all!" And when the suggestion was made that a visit to a doctor might be indicated, he laughed scornfully, replied: "There's nothing wrong with me that a change won't cure. Nobody's meant to be confined in a cage like that year after year. I'm just fed up, that's all."

"Fine, fine," said his father. (20)

Implicit in what we are told of Dyar is the same critique of a mechanistic, modern economic system, and the Protestant work ethic, which we found in The Ambassadors. Beyond this--or should we say compounding this--is Dyar's struggle with his parents. Clearly the psychological explanations for expatriation discussed in the introduction figure prominently in Nelson Dyar's case, as they do for the narrator/central character in the next chapter on James Baldwin. We are told that Dyar, who still lives under his parents' roof, cannot abide what he interprets as parental interference in his life, their constant criticisms, and their inability to understand him. His father authoritatively is always telling Dyar to exercise more, get

out and play tennis, or go fishing or dancing or something--anything!--to get rid of this persistent ennui.

"If you live the way you should it ought never to give you any trouble. I mean your attitude. That's unhealthy. I think the whole generation's unhealthy. It's either one thing or the other. Overdrinking and passing out on the sidewalk, or else mooning around about life not being worth living. What the hell's the matter with all of you?"

No wonder Dyar wanted to leave home. "Although he lived with his parents," we are told, "he never discussed with them the way he felt; it was they who, sensing his unhappiness, came to him and, in vaguely reproachful tones, tried to help him. He was polite with them but inwardly contemptuous. It was so clear that they could never understand the emptiness he felt, nor realize the degree to which he felt it" (21). Unlike Redburn who, in some ways saw his travels as connected to a recovery of his father, Dyar's exodus clearly is an attempt to bury his. The oppressive dominance of the father certainly is part of Dyar's problem, from which he sees no solution but escape. The father does not offer enough. He has other plans for his son than those his son has for himself. The young Dyar feels, at home, a constricting of space and the imminent loss of the Oedipal battle. Partly in disgust and partly in hopes that he might find his "real" father, or his "real" home, he flees.

One October day while Dyar is walking down Fifth Avenue in New York his eye is caught by the display in the window of a travel agency. It pictures a large ship and a tropical beach with palm

trees and an imitation turquoise sea. Beside it, a sign: "BOOK NOW FOR WINTER CRUISES." This triggers an improbable thought. Pressed by his desire to escape, Dyar thinks of Jack Wilcox, an acquaintance of the family who has set up a travel office in Tangier. Why not write to him offering him his services? It couldn't do any harm.

The idea of leaving for Morocco takes hold in Dyar's mind because he immediately sees it, in the way described in the introduction to this work, as a means by which he can realize his vague, romantic yearnings. The idea of going to Morocco is infinitely more exciting to him than staying close to the known, despised, banal life in New York. When the notion of romance is coupled with Dyar's battle for authority with his father, the forces pushing him away from home become powerful enough to propel him. The nature of this struggle definitely connects him to the same American tradition which has produced Huckleberry Finn and Nick Adams.

Dyar's progression invites comparison to that of his author. Bowles himself left the University of Virginia for France (where he studied musical composition with Nadia Boulanger and subsequently met Gertrude Stein) without his parents' knowledge when he was about seventeen. In his autobiography, Without Stopping, he writes "At that point I fully expected never to see my family again."⁸ Over and over, in his fictional and autobiographical writings, Bowles displays the desire to be rid of the influence of father, of family. He tells, in dramatic detail, of his belief that when he was a child his father tried to kill him. At the heart of his short story, "The Frozen Fields," is a young boy's distrust and fear of his father. A more recent story, "Julian Vedren," tells of a son's murder by

poison of his parents, as a kind of revenge for their suppression of his youthful impulses.

We should not conclude, of course, that expatriation as a course of action fulfills the needs of the searching libido. While its very novelty may supply the actor with a quantity of drama previously lacking, the situation is not without its traps. Once in the new place, the traveler or expatriate is bound to discover that he has not escaped his own self, and that even the new place can soon become entangled by myriad unwanted relations, the persistence of old habits, and money worries--in sum, all those "mundane" aspects of life one wished to leave behind. Such is the situation, in fact, Nelson Dyar finds himself in. Within a day or two after arriving in Tangier, he finds himself caught up inexorably in more relationships, more mysteries than he had been involved in back in New York. He is beholden to Jack Wilcox who, using his travel agency as a front, is going to use the naive Dyar to help him with an illegal currency deal. He has become a part of the imaginative fantasies of Daisy Valverde, a rich socialite. He has struck a friendship with Thami, a young Moroccan. He has fallen for a young Moroccan prostitute whom one of his compatriots, a woman by the name of Eunice Goode, has already laid claim to. And he has accepted a check, supposedly for prospective espionage, from a Russian agent. From this trap, Dyar is forced to flee further from civilization, further from rational constraints.

II

The structure and design of this novel is also unique among expatriate novels. The plot of Let It Come Down, as I have indicated, reveals, alternately, the process of becoming ensnared or snarled in human relationships and of trying to break free from those forms. Bowles achieves this effect and facilitates the movement of plot through the aid of various means of manipulating point of view, which often allow for interesting juxtapositions between the views of the American expatriate and the local Moroccans with whom he comes in contact. In order to see just how this operates, I would like to begin by looking at the narrative scheme Bowles sets up in the first book of the novel, called "The International Zone," whose narrative structure very deliberately shows a whole series of planned rendezvous and unexpected meetings, and by so doing, the gradual making of the web of human relationships Dyar becomes caught up in.

Bowles's notes on the novel, particularly on the first section, show how consciously designed this novel is.⁹ The whole novel is written from the omniscient point of view, yet the writer, notably in "The International Zone," shifts the focus of narration from character to character. The first scene of the novel, which we have already viewed in part, focuses on the American protagonist Nelson Dyar as he arrives in Tangier and checks into the Hotel de la Playa. By the end of the chapter he has gotten through to Jack Wilcox on the phone and plans are made for the two of them to dine that evening with the Marquesa de Valverde, who becomes the focus of the next chapter, beginning: "Daisy de Valverde sat at her dressing

table, her face brilliant as six little spotlights threw their rays upon it from six different angles."

Into this scene, at the suggestively named Villa Hesperides, walk Jack and Dyar. Daisy, a wealthy socialite married to a Spanish Marquis who had fled Franco's Spain, serves structurally--if not thematically--much the same purpose Maria Gostrey serves in The Ambassadors. There are, of course, differences, one of them being that the relationship between Dyar and Daisy does not remain as innocent as that between Strether and Maria. Like Maria with Strether, however, Daisy adopts a maternal tone with Dyar, the tone of one knowledgeable in the ways of the territory the young novice is just entering. "How do you like our little International Zone?" she asks and upon hearing that Dyar had just arrived, responds,

"My dear, you've got so much ahead of you! So much ahead of you! You can't know. But you'll love it, that I promise you. It's a madhouse, of course. A complete, utter madhouse. I only hope to God it remains one." (28-29)

Daisy, the first woman Dyar meets in Tangier, is the only character, other than the protagonist himself, who manages to make it to the final pages of the novel, where she appears quite unexpectedly and, again like Maria, tries to rescue our poor hero, saying, before she learns the worst, that despite his gross transgressions he could be received back into the community without losing too much.

Bowles manages in this chapter to separate Dyar and Daisy from Wilcox and the Marquis, by contriving a scene involving a sick cat in need of a shot which Dyar helps Daisy administer. It is while

they are alone that Daisy raises the first doubt in Dyar's mind about the propriety of Wilcox's work. The business isn't booming, she notes, and wonders aloud what his employer could possibly want with him. Looking at the young American's hand, she marvels at how empty it looks. "This empty quality in him pleased her. It was rather as if he were naked,--not defenseless, exactly--merely unclothed, ready to react, and she found it attractive; men should be like that. But it struck her as strange that she should think so" (35).

The scene at the Valverdes' ends when Wilcox and Dyar get a taxi which takes them back to the town. Dyar, awake with the sensations of a fresh arrival, rather than going back to his own hotel chooses to walk off into the night, the storm still raging, open to more adventures.

Bowles, more than any other writer we have looked at so far in this study and perhaps more than any other American expatriate writer (possibly excepting James), takes us across the line dividing cultures. In Bowles's fiction, the outsider is always the outsider, but often the narrative design allows us at least to enter the lives of those in the other culture. The character may never be able to cross--his efforts, if indeed he makes them, are nearly always doomed by the myriad obstacles prohibiting understanding--but the reader at least is afforded a view of life from that other, indigenous perspective. This is seen most evident in The Spider's House where the whole of the first book focuses on the life of a young Moroccan, Amar, in Fez during the struggle for Moroccan independence. Later in the novel the Moroccan boy meets Stenham, an American

expatriate, in a cafe, and the two threads of the narrative, symbolizing two distinct cultural perspectives, are woven together. Throughout the book Bowles renders a believable and seemingly faithful view of Moroccan life--its patterns, its religious beliefs and customs.

In the third chapter of Let it Come Down Bowles, on a somewhat smaller scale, achieves the same effect, as he brings together the American arrival and a young Moroccan. As we begin reading the chapter for the first time ("Thami was furious with his wife: she had a nosebleed and was letting it drip all over the patio.") we have no idea at all who this character is, nor what his role in the novel will be. The orchestrator of the plot, the writer, however, is going to arrange a meeting, a chance meeting, between Thami and Nelson Dyar before the night is out. Thami naturally has even less of an idea about what is going to happen to him at this point than we do. (Such is the difference between living a life and reading a novel. In reading we expect and anticipate plots, because we come to narratives with assumptions of literary methods and intentions. We expect connections to be made and lead to something, even though we may not know, at first, just what they will lead to. Life, we generally feel, is more fluid. What will happen is less clearly written in front of us.) Already, at this point, we see emerging the tension between determinism and free will, which is underscored by Bowles's narrative strategies. When compared to The Ambassadors, for example, this novel displays a fundamentally different attitude to the concept of individual freedom, which may be conditioned in part by the novel's Islamic context and the author's exposure to

various strains of modern existential philosophy. As carefully plotted as we feel James's novel is, we feel that Strether makes his own decisions, that he basically has the power within himself to determine his own direction and fate. Such is not the case with Nelson Dyar in Let It Come Down, where actions seem generally to be determined by forces--authorial, social or natural--outside the protagonist's control.

In the description of Thami which we are given, we get enough to realize that there is a kind of natural affinity between him and the American. They are fated--by natural sympathy and authorial design--to meet. It is written, as it is often said in the Arab world. Thami, like Dyar, is feeling the pressure of social structures. At the moment we first see him he is seeking relief from his wife and his crying young baby. "That was the worst part of being married, unless one had money--a man could never be alone in his own house; there was always female flesh in front of him, and when he had had enough of it he did not want to be continually reminded of it" (40). We find out, in bits and pieces throughout the novel--right up to the end--more about Thami's life. As a young boy in a wealthy family he was favored by his father. His older brothers, though, deprived him of any inheritance. As an adolescent he began smoking kif, drinking and whoring, becoming such an embarrassment that his family finally barred him completely from their home. Contrary to custom and manner he decided to marry a young peasant girl he had met at the annual religious festival of Moulay Abdeslam, after openly courting her.

A great deal, then, connects Dyar and Thami thematically,

though just as much separates them culturally. As readers we feel the sympathy even before the two meet, as Thami steps out of the house, into the rain.

Now he wanted to get out of the house. At each moment it seemed to be raining harder. So much the worse, he thought. He would go anyway. He pulled his raincoat down from the nail where it hung, put on his shoes, and without saying a word, went out the door into the street. Only when he had shut it behind him did he notice that there was a violent wind to accompany the downpour. (43)

Without explicit comment by the narrator, we recognize the storm as the same one which has been raging ever since Dyar arrived in Tangier, and Dyar himself, at the same moment, the moment the first chapter leaves off, has chosen the unprotected regions outside, beneath the storm, rather than the warmth and security of a hotel room. Rooms and houses, as Patteson has noted, are often used by Bowles as metaphors of shelter and repression. "That which lies outside," writes Patteson, "is presented as potentially hostile and threatening, yet the barriers, the shelters, erected to keep the danger out are insufficient" (3).

Thami's psychological state makes him open to an encounter with Dyar, the Westerner. In effect, he already knows the Westerner better than the Westerner knows him, because of the years of contact and influence. When Eunice Goode, another American expat, meets him later she finds Thami "exactly the sort of Moroccan she most disliked and habitually inveighed against: outwardly Europeanized

but inwardly conscious that the desired metamorphosis would remain forever unaccomplished, and therefore defiant, on the offensive to conceal his defeat, irresponsible and indolent" (133). Even though he is a kind of outcast in his own society, Thami is nonetheless imprisoned by its values and assumptions. He is Moroccan and shares in all that it means to be Moroccan every bit as much as Dyar is American and shares in all that it means to be an American.

We do not always get such insightful views of others looking at Americans as we get in Bowles. Here, for example, are Thami's thoughts on Europeans, filtered through the narrator:

It was typical of Europeans, he thought, to lose courage and give up all their plans the minute there was a chance of getting themselves wet. They were more prudent than passionate; their fears were stronger than their desires. Most of them had no real desire, apart from that to make money, which after all is merely a habit. But once they had the money they seemed never to use it for a specific object or purpose. That was what he found difficult to understand. He knew exactly what he wanted, always, and so did his countrymen. Most of them only wanted three rams to slaughter at Aid el Kebir and new clothing for the family at Mouloud and Aid es Seghir. It was not much, but it was definite, and they bent all their efforts to getting it. Still, he could not think of the mass of Moroccans without contempt. He had no patience with their ignorance and backwardness; if he damned the Europeans with one breath, he was bound to damn the

Moroccans with the next. (44)

Thami's images of the West are imperfect, containing distorted, stereotypical views as well as cogent, critical perceptions. His views of his own country, shaped in part by feelings of inferiority toward the West, are not flawless either. The region of difference, we can see, is great, and it is in this vast space of speculation and error which the two minds, Dyar's and Thami's, operate, as each continually tries to determine what is going on in the other's mind. In this interaction between two cultures lies a great deal of the excitement in Bowles's fiction.

The actual meeting between Dyar and Thami is carefully crafted. Dyar, the last we saw him before the narration shifted to Thami's perspective, set off walking in the rain. Thami's own walk in the rain leads him to refuge in the Zoco Chico, a kind of Cabman's shelter, where he sits down at a table on which he spots a pack of Chesterfields, nearly full. The moment is worth taking a closer look at:

The waiter arrived. Thami gave his order. Pointing at the cigarettes he said: "Yours?" The waiter looked vaguely around the cafe, his forehead wrinkled with confusion, and replied that he thought the table was occupied. At that moment a man came out of the washroom and walked toward Thami, who automatically started to rise in order to sit somewhere else. As the man reached the table he made several gestures indicating tht Thami remain there. "That's okay, that's okay," he was saying. "Stay where you are." (45)

So, the two threads are drawn together by fate, an accident planned by the narrator, along the lines of Darrow's meeting of Sophy Viner in The Reef. As Aristotle writes in the Poetics, there is great delight in the meeting which is both surprising, yet obviously plotted.

Thami speaks fairly good English and so the two are able, at least, to take refuge in a common tongue. How long have you been here? Where are you from? The usual questions asked of the visitor. "'What a wonderful thing to be an American!'" Thami exclaims to Dyar, when he finds out his nationality. "'Yes,' said Dyar automatically, never having given much thought to what it would be like not to be an American. It seemed somehow the natural thing to be" (46). The meeting, the encounter with such a radically different mind, produced by such a radically different culture, forces Dyar to consider, on some level, what it means to be American. He was in a hurry to escape, and finds the new experience exhilarating, but beyond that, he is still not consciously aware of what it is he is fleeing or why he is running away from it.

Once Bowles brings the two characters together, he is able to move back and forth between the two consciousnesses, indicating the vastly different perspectives they represent. Towards the end of the chapter, after another Moroccan has accosted Dyar in the cafe, they set off together to see a pornographic film, Dyar being led by the Moroccans without a clear idea of what he is in for. Thami insists on going along, not because he is interested in the film, but because he is inclined to protect the naive American. The narrator portrays Thami's feelings on the matter, again showing us,

rather realistically, a fairly typical Moroccan Muslim speculating about what might go on in a Western, Christian mind.

Since Thami had the Moroccan's utter incomprehension of the meaning of pornography, he imagined that the police had placed the ban on obscene films because these infringed upon Christian doctrine at certain specific points, in which case any Christian might be expected to show interest, if only to disapprove. He found it not at all surprising that Dyar should want to know about them, although he himself was as totally indifferent as he would have expected Dyar to be had they treated of the question as to whether the pilgrim at Mecca should run around the Qaaba clockwise or counter-clockwise. (47-48)

Thami falls asleep while Dyar watches a flick about nuns and priests.

The fourth chapter begins much like the third. We find ourselves with a wholly new character who as yet has no relation to the lives of any of the other characters. This time the character is Eunice Goode, an American, overweight, lesbian and alcoholic, a seasoned expatriate with visibly poor tastes in matters of dress. During the first portion of the chapter we are taken through the passages of her thoughts, habits and recent events in her life. She rereads an entry in her journal which might well serve as Bowles's own credo for fiction:

"There is something in the silly human mind that responds

beautifully to the idea of rarity---especially rarity of conditions capable of producing a given phenomenon. The less likely a thing is to happen, the more wonderful it seems when it does, no matter how useless or even harmful it may be. The fact of its having happened despite the odds makes it a precious event. It had no right to occur, yet it did, and one can only blindly admire the chain of circumstances that caused the impossible to come to pass." (52-3)

We learn of Eunice Goode's recently begun affair with Hadija, a young Moroccan prostitute, whom Goode goes off to fetch, in the driving rain, at her usual spot at the Bar Lucifer.

She could hear the wind roaring outside, and the rain streamed down the long French windows of the dining room. "I shall get soaked," she thought, but the prospect was in no way a deterrent. On the contrary, the storm rather added to the drama in which she was convinced she was about to participate. She would plod through the wet streets, find Hadija, there would be an awful scene, perhaps a chase through the gale up into a forsaken corner of the Casbah or to some solitary rock far out above the strait. And then would come the reconciliation in the windy darkness, the admissions and the promises, and eventually the smiles. (61)

It is, of course, the same storm Dyar and Thami have braved. The very fact of Eunice Goode's inclusion in the narrative, let alone the mention of the storm, predetermines her meeting with Dyar. We need wait only to find out when and how they will meet.

In the fifth chapter the number of threads being woven has increased, accompanied by a greater density of human contact. When he arrives in Tangier Dyar is unencumbered by any human relationships; within twenty-four hours he is trapped. While each of the first four chapters is governed primarily by a focus on a single character the fifth chapter is broken up into a number of scenes, as if to show the way in which these lives have become inextricably connected. The fifth chapter consists of a series of montages, short cinematic scenes which give us glimpses of the various lives we have dipped into, and, dramatically, show us how they converge. "It looked like a bright spring day. The sun shone on the laurel that lined the garden path where Sister Inez strolled, clutching her prayer book" (62). Where are we here? It may take a moment or two to place ourselves: Watching the porno flick that Thami and Dyar began watching when we last saw them at the end of chapter three. In the next clip we see Eunice Goode walking into the Bar Lucifer where she expects to find Hadija; suspicious that Hadija might be on the job, drunk, she barges towards back rooms reserved for customers, vomits, passes out and is stuck into one of the rooms. Jump cut: Thami and Dyar enter the Bar Lucifer. Dyar lays his eyes on Hadija and by the end of the scene goes off with her into one of the back rooms. The next shift of scene is to Eunice Goode as she wakes up to the sounds of love-making in the compartment next to hers: a male compatriot and Hadija. Threatened by the intrusion, she vows to take Hadija away--to some place (she never thinks through this very clearly) where no one will be able to disturb their paradise (her paradise at least, for we never know for sure what Hadija

thinks of Eunice).

The activities and focus in these first few chapters of Let It Come Down, I think, suggest some important implications. It is no accident that we see both Eunice Goode and Nelson Dyar whoring in Tangier. It happens as a result of mutually reinforced expectations of a drama which both cultures expect will be played out. Thami is taken to a porn flick because the Moroccan has been conditioned to expect that this is what the Westerner wants. Morocco is a traditional scene of the enactment of Westerners' sexual fantasies: It is commonly said that they go there to do what they wanted to do, but couldn't, back home. This convergence of the erotic and exotic, so often seen in the works of Bowles and other Western writers who go to the Orient (Loti, Flaubert, etc.) is doubtless facilitated by the economic and political supremacy which the western traveler carries with him.

The seemingly pedantic plot summary which has led us to this point is not, I think, superfluous, for the novel is not well-known. These events are recounted, with particular emphasis on how they are narrated, to demonstrate the narrative strategies Bowles uses to show Dyar's increasing complex web of human relationships, the ways in which different perspectives are incorporated into the novel, and the issues which arise. Chapters six through nine, leading us up to the end of the first book, work toward achieving the same purposes we have been discussing. Dyar unwittingly is drawn by Wilcox into a black market money deal, he accompanies Hadija to a cave off from the beach one day, and Eunice Goode has begun making arrangements with an acquaintance Madame Jouvenon to trap her rival in an es-

pionage scam. She suspects Dyar might be tempted by money, since she overheard him squabbling with Hadija over the price of her services.

At the center of the novel is the question of control: How much does one control one's own destiny and how much is it controlled by external forces? The question may apply to the writing of the novel as well as to the fate of its protagonist. While it is questionable how much control Dyar had over his own life in America, he seems to have even less in control in Tangier. At least he knew the ways of his own country and probably could maintain the fantasy that he could, if he really wanted to, do anything he wanted to. In Morocco, where there is no one he can trust, where he doesn't understand the language and where he has no family, it is difficult if not impossible for him to believe that he has control over his destiny. He seems rather to be led into situations than to choose them. The course of events themselves seems to sweep him along. Dyar begins to think of the effect Morocco has had on him in a scene which takes place about a week after his arrival. Just after he has gone to the American Legation, and collected a letter from his mother, he finds a place to sit down "in that peculiarly unreal state of mind which can be induced in the traveler by the advent of a letter from home" (141). After reading the letter (after mentally being transported to America) he looks around him and the degree of difference between this foreign country and home is startling. He sees a poor, disease-ridden boy carrying a chicken, "Coca-Cola signs in Arabic script," and the bazaar with its odd assortment of goods: "truncated bamboo tubes filled with kohl, an infinite variety of

roots, resins and powers; rams' horns and porcupine skins, heavy with quills, and an impressive assortment of claws, bones, beaks and feathers." In the midst of all this,

He still felt coreless--he was no one, and he was standing here in the middle of no country. The place was counterfeit, a waiting room between connections, a transition from one way of being to another, which for the moment was neither way, no way. (143)

With its Cola-Cola signs and heavy European influence this place is not totally strange. Yet any sense of familiarity is deceptive and superficial, so radically overwhelming the scene's sense of strangeness. At any rate, whatever he sought when he left America--some kind of fulfillment--still evades him.

In a world of "winners" and "victims" (the terms Dyar tends to see the world in) he is clearly a victim since things happen to him. He is acted upon more than he acts. Others initiate things more than he does. He neither chooses which hotel to stay in, nor does he arrange for the evening with Daisy. It is chance, or the natural action of events themselves, more than his own power of will, h brings him in contact with Thami, Hadija and Eunice Goode. The existentialist formulation, as much as Bowles has been influenced by Sartre and Camus, does not work very satisfactorily in Dyar's case. If it did work, Dyar could, in Sartre's terms: choose to be free, take his own fate in his hands and seek personal fulfillment. Or, along the lines Camus proposes, he could continue to act as though his own life mattered, knowing full well the proposition of man's

freedom is absurd. Dyar's quest for freedom is problematic, however. Most often he is jostled about by what other people decide, and fits in with their schemes, rather than trying to create the possibilities himself. When he does decide for himself (the choice to go to Morocco, the choice to call Wilcox the first evening, the choice to abscond with the money), the choice leads, generally, to greater restriction rather than to greater freedom. It is almost as though the freer he tries to be, the more he finds himself under the control of forces more powerful than himself.

Ironically, the points in the novel where Dyar feels most free occur when he is lost; when he is as unconnected as he can be. Toward the end of the second book, "Fresh Meat and Roses," Dyar has Thami lead him again to the Bar Lucifer. He had never gone there on his own, unescorted. He tries to remember the way through the labyrinthine streets of the Medina, so that later in the evening he can retrace his steps on his own, and find Hadija. In the night he makes his way "in what seemed to him the right direction":

At one point he stopped a man in European clothes and said: "Bar Lucifer?" It was a long chance, and he did not really expect a useful answer. The man grunted and pointed back the way Dyar had just come. He thanked him and continued. It was rather fun, being lost like this; it gave him a strange sensation of security,--the feeling that at this particular instant no one in the world could possibly find him. Not his family, not Wilcox, not Daisy de Valverde, not Thami, not Eunice Goode, not Mme. Jouvenon, and not, he reflected final-

ly, the American Legation. (168)

This moment, as illusive and elusive as it is, is something like those moments Poirier describes in A World Elsewhere, where writers manage somehow manage to fulfill their romantic yearnings by creating a world-in-the-novel where characters can, for a short time at least, act outside the constraints of history, biology and nationality. Dyar's perpetual journeying outward is, in other words, can be thought of as being very much in the American tradition. D.H. Lawrence's comments on Nick Adams could just as well apply to Bowles's hero: "One wants to keep oneself loose. Avoid one thing only: getting connected up. Don't get connected up. If you get held by anything, break it. Don't be held. Break it, and get away. Don't get away with the idea of getting somewhere else. Just get away, for the sake of getting away. Beat it!"¹⁰

By this time in the novel, Dyar, were he to know what was going on, was anything but free. Nonetheless, he acts as though he is. Low on funds, he has accepted a check from Mme Jouvenon for the promise of doing espionage work against the Americans in the future. The scheme is one Eunice Goode has devised and she has already paid a visit to the Legation, informing them of Dyar's activities. We know this, Dyar doesn't.

As he is lost, going down one narrow street, then the next, the narrator reveals his hero's thoughts: "If only he found the right series of connections he could get from one place to the next, but only by going through the buildings themselves" (169). Finally he gives up all hope of finding the Bar Lucifer and seeks instead "to escape from his cage, to discover the way out of the fly-trap, to

strike the chord inside himself which would liberate those qualities capable of transforming him from a victim into a winner" (169).

The sensation produced by the journey through the labyrinth in the Medina is, of course, only temporary. By the time Dyar gets out of the maze, he is thinking--again like a victim--that he could simply turn himself in to the American Legation, confessing all and pleading that he really hadn't thought it through and that he had needed the money. Temporary as this experience is, it in some way prepares Dyar for the break he makes the next day, which takes place in the third book of the novel, "The Age of Monsters."

Omniscient narration continues to be used for showing a multiplicity of points of view, in the same way we saw in The Reef, though perhaps not so strictly formalized. "The Age of Monsters" begins rather like a fugue with a short dip into the dream-worlds of the four central characters of this section--Wilcox, Daisy, Thami, and Dyar. Within a few pages we enter the tossings and turnings of the night worries of each; the spacial juxtaposition of the passages, their temporal unity, unites the characters before the drama actually begins. On the night before the great money exchange is set to take place Wilcox wonders if there are any uncovered tracks. "The fear that one of them [the Larbi gang] might somehow learn of Dyar's connection with him had been uppermost in his mind" (175). Her husband gone to Casablanca, Daisy spends a restless night worrying about intruders. Thami, home late, hears the baby cry, the early morning call to prayer at the nearby mosque, the crowing of cocks and thinks of getting to the bank in the morning--to get money for the boat he has been wanting to buy; money which Eunice Goode

has given him as blackmail. Finally, Dyar has difficulties sleeping in his cramped, air-less room, worrying about the directions his life has taken, wondering how he could ever gain control, or to what end it was all for.

What transpires that day, the stretto of the fugue, happens--as so much happens in this novel--as a result of a series of unplanned, unforeseen occurrences. Arriving too early at Ramlal's, where he was to pick up the money, Dyar decides (yes, decides) to go to the beach where under the hot sun he lies naked in a boat half buried in sand "in a state of self-induced voluptuousness" (182). It is fairly late by the time he gets back to pick up the money. A complication arises when he takes it to the bank as arranged. They won't take five-pound notes: something to do with monetary restrictions. Dyar would have to take the money to a black market money-changer, get pesetas, then the bank would buy back the pesetas. After making that transaction, by chance he passes by the cafe Thami habitually frequents. That is when, after hearing of Thami's recent purchase of a boat, Dyar begins to formulate his next plan to take the money and run. He does not leave town, however, before returning a call from Daisy de Valverde and making arrangements to see her that night.

The further we read, the more we notice how innovative this novel is and how different it is from other expatriate novels. In most expatriate novels, it seems, characters seek to maintain at least modest contact with the country they have left. In Let It Come Down, however, the trajectory is ever outward, in an almost frantic effort to obliterate connections and memories. Dyar decides

to escape, with his money, from Tangier--a kind of second expatriation characteristic of Bowles's characters who tend to move farther away from Reason and Civilization--as a way to try to assert control over his destiny, and move away from the forces which have created him. No longer will he have to be responsible to Jack, who pays his salary, to Daisy whose phone calls he must return, to Hadija whose sexual attraction lures him, to Jouvenon who has involved him in political espionage. In Tangier he has inadvertently become as entangled as he had been in America.

When he pulls away from land that night, he again he feels in control of his own fate, very much like he had when he was lost in the Casbah, looking for the Bar Lucifer:

He was responsible for the fact that at the moment he was where he was and could not be elsewhere. There was even a savage pleasure to be had in reflecting that he could do nothing else but go on and see what would happen, and that this impossibility of finding any any other solution was a direct result of his own decision. He sniffed the wet air, and said to himself that at last he was living, that whatever the reasons for his doubt a moment ago, the spasm which had shaken him had been only an instant's return of his old state of mind, when he had been anonymous, a victim. He told himself, although not in so many words, that his new and veritable condition was one which permitted him to believe easily in the reality of the things his senses perceived--to take part in their existences, that is, since belief is

participation. And he expected now to lead the procession of his life, as the locomotive heads the train, no longer to be a helpless incidental object somewhere in the middle of the line of events, drawn one way and another, without the possibility or even the need of knowing the direction in which he was heading. (230)

Of course it is not long before he realizes, again, the impossibility of an existence completely free from external constraints.

Following Dyar's decision to escape, the mood and scope of novel change. When, in the last book, "Another Kind of Silence," we are in the boat with Thami, the Jilali and Dyar; when we climb up the muddy, steep back of Djebel Musa, through the rain, with Thami and Dyar; when we are in the small cottage which the two take refuge in, in the Spanish Protectorate--we are primarily in Dyar's consciousness. The narrator assures us of this. In other words, Dyar's insistence on greater control--which is reflected in the greater self-consciousness of the narrative--is so strong that it does not allow for the intrusion or consideration of points of view other than his own.

This greater subjectivity may account for why this last section is increasingly surrealistic. We are closer to Dyar's consciousness and that consciousness is besieged by a totally alien landscape (he doesn't know where he is; Thami has guided him), is often under the influence of kif, is paranoid that Thami will discover that his briefcase is chuck full of wads of money, and is generally worried about what devious plans Thami may have in store for him. (He cannot imagine the Moroccan's innocence.)

Various ironies emerge, of course. Dyar imagines himself most free when he is in the riskiest positions he has ever been in. Therein, perhaps, is the thrill of living on the edge. Dyar has made choices which assert his own independence, but those choices have catapulted him into a position of looming danger and doom. The small launch he is in could overturn, or the motor could conk out any time, and he entertains this possibility. At any time one of the two Moroccans he is with could do something drastic, and he is aware of this too. He also keeps expecting to be overtaken by a speedier boat, a representative either of Wilcox or the American Legation. The irony is perhaps more blatant when Dyar and Thami reach their final destination, a day's hike from the coastline below Djebel Musa. There they are installed in a small cabin belonging to Thami's wife's family. In Patteson's perceptive reading of Bowles's fiction, this cabin is yet one more example of a shelter, a fragile human artifice, which promises safety, yet refuses to yield it.

The farther Dyar retreats from social order and constraint, and the more subjective are his thoughts. Consequently he has more difficulty reconciling his inner and outer worlds. When in the mountains, leaving the cabin against Thami's orders, he wanders about and sees the landscape as utterly foreign, void of meaning, so far it lies beyond his sphere of understanding:

There were only the multiple details of the bright landscape around him. He studied them attentively; it was as though each hill, stone, gully and tree held a particular secret for him to discover. Even more--the configuration of the land

seemed to be the expression of a hidden dramatic situation whose enigma it was imperative that he understand. It was like a photograph of a scene from some play in which the attitudes and countenances of the players, while normal enough at first glance, struck one as equivocal a moment later. And the longer he considered the mysterious ensemble, the more undecipherable the meaning of the whole became. He continued to smoke and stare. "I've got to get this straight," he thought." (253)

He is smoking Thami's kif. Straight, we might assume, means in alignment, and Dyar uses it much in the way that Strether does. I've got to work it all out, find out the order of things, where I fit in, and decide what to do next, he thinks to himself. One might rightly wonder if Dyar is in any state to straighten itself out. When he sits on the hillside thinking of his whole life, his childhood, his work in the bank, he concludes that the mistake he made was in not accepting the real constraints it imposed on him. A group of Berbers passes by. How did he get here? By what logic? By the improbable course of the narrative, which he fell into and which carried him unwittingly from one point to the next.

The tension between society and individual is as taut in this novel as it is in The Scarlet Letter. After wandering away from the hut and finding himself lost, Dyar is almost instinctively pulled, no doubt in no small measure because of his growing appetite, towards society again. He finds himself in what he senses is the village of Agla, the home of Thami's relations, where he satisfies his hunger on "soup, chickpeas stewed with lamb, and skewered liver"

(263). The town does not, however, provide him with the comfort and security he had been expecting:

He had imagined the town would be something else, that somewhere there would be a place he could go into and ask for information; he had counted on the town to help him as a troubled man counts on a friend to give him advice, knowing beforehand that he will follow whatever advice he gets, because the important thing is to do something, to move in any direction, out of his impasse. Once he had been to Agla, he had thought, he would know more about his situation. (265)

Dyar's fear and paranoia more deeply drive in the wedge between himself and a more objective reality, as by night he walks through the streets of this utterly foreign town, and imagines that he is being followed, that others are plotting to pounce upon him at any moment.

Nonetheless, he admits "there was some comfort in being back among people" (268). Just as in the scene in the Medina of Tangier, Dyar seems oddly most at home in the most foreign and (from our perspective) exotic places. Drawn by the primitive rhythm of drums and wheezing melody of a flute, Dyar finds himself in a cafe, completely surrounded by a group of white-turbaned Arabs. We are not told so (Dyar himself may not know) but we can assume that we are in the middle of a Hamadsha or Jilali ritual. There in front of him Dyar sees

a man, his hands locked firmly together behind him as if they

were chained there. Until this moment he had been writhing and twisting on the floor, but now slowly he was rising to his knees, turning his head desperately from side to side, an expression of agony on his tortured face. Even when, five minutes later, he had finally got to his feet, he did not alter the position of his hands, and always the spasms that forced his body this way and that, in perfect rhythm with the increasing hysteria of the drums and the low cracked voice of the flute, seemed to come from some secret center inside him.

(269)

Here--where the attention of everyone in the room is intensely focused on the mystical ritual, where all are chanting "Al-lah, Al-lah," and consequently, in the absence of their reactions to him--he feels less a stranger. He is served tea, a lighted kif pipe is thrust in front of him. In short, he finds himself the beneficiary of that traditional Arab hospitality which welcomes the outsider into his midst and gives him drink and shelter. The man who is in the center pulls out a knife, and to the chantings of "Al-lah" and the incessant throbbing of drum-beats, lacerates each of his arms, each slash measured to the beat. Then, with his tongue, again in rhythm, the man licks the blood from his wounds. In the ecstatic accelerando he shifts to his legs. Dyar's sense of reality already blurred, he looks on, with no pressure to determine which world it belonged to and gradually begins to think of himself as a participant in this ritual.

In a world which had not yet been muddied by the discovery of

thought, there was this certainty, as solid as a boulder, as real as the beating of his heart, that the man was dancing to purify all who watched. (271)

As he walks away from the cafe he feels himself fortified, and determined that he must find a way to deal with whatever complication he next meets. The scene points to the desire to recover a kind of prelapsarian primitivism (or mystical sense of being?) in the face of a highly rational, modern world. This motif of Dyar's expatriate experience certainly is radically different from those found in Bowles's precursors--Hawthorne, James, Wharton and Hemingway.

Dyar, again by narrative design or chance, encounters Thami later that night in the town plaza. "Home again!" Dyar exclaims when they get back to the cabin. There, under the influence of the majoun (whose effects Bowles brilliantly gives literary form to in some of the best hallucinogenic passages literature has to offer) and perhaps emboldened by the Jilali ritual earlier in the evening, Dyar gratuitously drives a nail into his companion's head while he is asleep. Thami's step-father had warned him when he found out that his son was harboring a foreigner ("Melikan? . . . And where is Melika?"), that "only bad things can happen when Nazerenes and Moslems come together" (261). In this case his premonition was right.

By killing Thami, Dyar becomes a fugitive and completely cuts off all possibilities of a return to society. When in the novel's last scene Daisy Valverde, in jodhpurs, tracks down Dyar and appeals to him that he return, there is no question of the matter in his

mind. If it were only the money, it might be possible, but there is the murder, which Daisy, when she begins her appeal, knows nothing about. "You know damned well what a mess you're in," she says to Dyar, trying to convince him to return. "And you're not going to get out of it without some help." Dyar considers the offer but rejects it because though a solution "it was not the right one, because it would undo everything he had done." (289-90) Daisy leaves, the rain still falling, and Dyar remains behind, alone. "A place in the world, a definite status, a precise relationship with the rest of men. Even if it had to be one of open hostility, it was his, created by him" (292).

It is superfluous to contemplate, and indeed difficult to imagine, what Dyar's fate could be should his life extend beyond the end of the novel. The protagonist seems, at last, to be boxed into a predicament from which he simply cannot escape. Bowles has taken Dyar, and his novel, as far as he possibly can. He takes the human condition to the point where Sartre's play No Exit, which Bowles translated and gave its English title, begins.

Notes to Chapter Five

¹Richard Patteson, A World Outside: The Fiction of Paul Bowles (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), ix.

²Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down (Santa Barbara, California: Black Sparrow, 1980), 7. Subsequent references will be to this text.

³These differences between familiar and exotic landscapes and their use in fiction I develop in my article "Tender is the Night and The Sheltering Sky: The Meanings of Familiar and Exotic Settings," Abhath al-Yarmouk (Irbid, Jordan), forthcoming.

⁴Paul Bowles, Points in Time (London: Peter Owen, 1982).

⁵quoted in Lawdom Vaidon, Tangier: A Different Way (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977), 246-47. Graham H. Stuart's The International City of Tangier, 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1955) provides another good historical overview of the city.

⁶Herman Melville, Redburn (New York: Library of America, 1983), 10.

⁷Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), 28.

⁸Bowles, Without Stopping (New York: Putnam, 1972), 86.

⁹Paul Bowles Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin.

¹⁰D.H. Lawrence, p. 93.

CHAPTER SIX

Coming Out on the Other Side

James Baldwin's Giovanni's Room is a novel which is, at its core, about the reconciliation, or the attempt at reconciliation, of complex and conflicting attitudes toward sex and homeland. The story in the novel is told within the span of a night, as the narrator, a young American named David, prepares to leave Southern France for Paris. The occasion of its telling, we learn, is the eve of Giovanni's execution, and the motive behind its telling, especially at this moment, is not only to recall sharply his love affair with Giovanni, the young Italian he met in Paris while his fiancée, Hella, was traveling in Spain, but also to relieve his sense of guilt for the murder Giovanni was convicted of committing, and for Giovanni's immanent death.

The form and occasion of this eligiatic and somewhat sentimental confession comme memoir, then, determine, to a large extent, its concerns. The memoir or confession generally begins with a survey of the present in which the narrator, assessing his own condition, for better or for worse, says "Here I am," then moves back in time, resting at formative spots of time, often moving forward chronologically to bring him up to the point where he begins/ends. In retracing portions of his life, the teller's object seems to be to achieve an understanding of those energies which drove him and at least a dim view of the pattern of his whole life, up to the moment of telling. A whole series of questions guide the narrative logic: "How did I get to this point? What were the significant events

which brought me here? What passions seized me? What important choices did I make?"

One of those important choices the narrator of Giovanni's Room notes, one which ultimately led to his connection to Giovanni, was the decision to move abroad, a choice he talks about fairly early in the novel. He begins with a recollection of his emotional state in America and leads up to how that may have led to his flight.

What happened was that, all unconscious of what this ennui meant, I wearied of the motion, wearied of the seas of alcohol, wearied of the blunt, bluff, hearty, and totally meaningless friendships, wearied of wandering through the forests of desperate women, wearied of the work which fed me only in the most brutally literal sense. Perhaps, as we say in America, I wanted to find myself. This is an interesting phrase, not current as far as I know in the language of any other people, which certainly does not mean what it says but betrays a nagging suspicion that something has been misplaced. I think now that if I had had any intimation of the self I was going to find would turn out to be the same self from which I had spent so much time in flight, I would have stayed at home. But, again, I think I knew, at the very bottom of my heart, exactly what I was doing when I took the boat for France.¹

Looking back on former choices, the narrator is able to ascribe motives for and consequences of actions more perceptively than he would have been able to at the time of their occurrence. Fearing

intimations of the self which he felt himself becoming, he fled, hoping that the escape would lead to the formation of a new self, one that would be different from that which would have emerged had he stayed in America. Once abroad, though, he was forced to realize the large portion of himself which was unalterable, the basic existential person separate from romantic ideas of what he thought he might possibly become.

The narrator, hoping to gain a sense of sexual and intellectual liberty, had left America in search of a culture whose values more closely matched his own, a sense of sexual and intellectual liberty. In so doing he had hoped to leave behind those things he thought of as being horribly restrictive: the banal quotidian life, his father, society's judgment. For all its appeal, the project has its share of folly. It would be impossible for him to sever himself completely from his own makings. America had created him, and left its permanent imprint on him; while abroad he still remained financially dependent on his father. Nonetheless, the narrator seems to admit that he, a little like Chad Newsome, is somehow changed by his expatriation, that although this new self was always a latent possibility and had its undeniable American origins, the residence abroad--particularly the French setting--did something to him which America never could have done. At the very least, it provided him with a distance from the forces of production, which allowed him more easily to reflect on, and analyze, the process of his own making. Though the precise nature of David's conflict is unique, it is similar in kind to the quests and experiences of characters in other expatriate novels--Strether's, Jake Barnes', Nelson Dyar's, to

name a few examples. Each, it seems, in his own way and with varying degrees of success, must bend the thrill of freedom to realistic constraints, and try to fit himself into the new picture of things.

The beginning of Giovanni's Room, structurally, is the moment of the story's telling, the present vantage from which the solitary teller will survey his past. With these lines the novel opens: "I stand at the window of this great house in the south of France as night falls, the night which is leading me to the most terrible morning of my life." (1) The house, just outside a resort town, was one which he and Hella, his erstwhile fiancée, had rented in Paris "from photographs, some months ago. Now she has been gone a week. She is on the high seas now, on her way back to America" (5). As he looks out the window, before recreating scenes of the more distant past, he quickly skims over a few details regarding his meeting with Hella, a brief mention of Giovanni, and reflections on the nature of love and sincerity. The conditions surrounding him are important and may in a significant way facilitate the story's telling. First of all, the story teller is alone. Secondly, he is removed, geographically, from the settings most associated with his most important relations--Paris, and America.

Within pages, memory pulls the narrator back to his family and childhood in America. In his attempt to identify those connections or those elements which brought him to this point, the episode he first speaks of is what seems to be his first homosexual experience, which apparently had lain repressed. He seems to realize, as the experience is recalled and reviewed, that the force of that powerful

energy, diverted or rechanneled, had perhaps been one thing which had pushed him away from home--as though he was hoping both to escape or deny his homosexuality and/or to discover a morally neutral territory, a more tolerant atmosphere (not under parental eyes) where he would feel freer to explore this only dimly admitted, yet potent, dimension of himself. On some level, he connects the memory of his experience with Joey to his relationship with Giovanni. The reader, especially once he has gone further into the novel, can see similarities in the ways David has handled the two situations. In both, a deep yet morally unacceptable desire has been recognized and given in to, then the object of attraction and love--the young man--is coldly cast aside in preference for a way of living condoned rather than condemned by society. As he tells the story, he begins to face the truth in all its unpleasantness.

There is something fantastic in the spectacle I now present to myself of having run so far, so hard, across the ocean even, only to find myself brought up short once more before the bulldog in my own backyard--the yard, in the meantime, having grown smaller and the bulldog bigger. (7)

The unpleasant truth the narrator begins to face--the bulldog which has grown larger--is not just the stark undeniability of his homosexuality (although we certainly feel this is a part of what the bulldog represents), it is the fact that his own sexual conflict and mishandling of love--his inability to decide what he wants and his moral qualms in the face of his powerful needs to be loved--have been responsible for the misery (in Giovanni's case, perhaps even

death) of several other people.

In confession there is, in the attempt to relieve guilt, the search for where it all began. In Christian mythology sin begins with Eve biting into the apple. David's image of the fall, his personal version of the garden scene, is of a somewhat different nature, however it is not unrelated. "I think it began in the shower," the narrator of Giovanni's Room says, as he begins to tell of his experience with Joey (8). The adolescent homosexual deflowering, boyish and tender as he recalls it, leaves behind a residue of guilt, guilt which we are led to believe blocks the true and natural expression of feeling. In recalling the episode with Joey, the narrator remembers thinking fearfully of what Joey's mother would think when she found the sheets stained, or what his own father would do if he found out. All these fears determined or at least greatly affected the way in which the narrator, shameful, fearful and guilty, coldly pulls away from Joey.

Then I, who had seen him that summer, nearly every day until then, no longer went to see him. He did not come to see me. I would have been very happy if he had, but the manner of my leavetaking had begun a constriction which neither of us knew how to arrest. When I finally did see him, more or less by accident, near the end of the summer, I made up a long and totally untrue story about a girl I was going with and when school began again I picked up with a rougher, older crowd and was very nasty to Joey. And the sadder this made him, the nastier I became. (13)

The early experience established a pattern. This is precisely the approach David takes with Giovanni when Hella returns to Paris from Spain where she has gone to sort out her feelings toward him. He gives in to his longings and homosexual passions so long as they are unseen--specifically, in Giovanni's claustrophobic little room, or more generally, abroad--but is ashamed and frightened of what he might lose (in esteem, in respectability) were they to become widely known, especially to those whose judgment counts most--family and compatriots. So when Hella comes back, at once David turns his back on the Italian, pretending nothing has happened between them. Just as in the childhood episode, he almost sadistically tortures his accomplice in the act and takes refuge in a girl. In the process all three suffer. After relating the story the narrator clearly draws the connection between that event in the past and his present state: "I began, perhaps, to be lonely that summer and began, that summer, the flight which has brought me to this darkening window" (13-14).

David's is the kind of moral dilemma we so often find in the fiction of James or Wharton, where a choice in favor the pursuit of individual romantic yearnings so often results in pain, or even tragedy, for everyone involved; yet the decision to restrain desire also leads to suffering from the nagging thought that one has cut himself off from widened dimensions of experience. Analogous, for example, is a memorable moment in Wharton's Age of Innocence when Newland Archer is escorting Madame Olenska back from the Pennsylvania terminus, and he shares with her his vague and powerful longing that they might still have a life together. Madame Olenska, the

realist, asks whether he intends for her to be his mistress. Archer replies, "I want somehow to get away with you into a world where words like that--categories like that--won't exist; and Madame Olenska presses him: "Oh, my dear--where is that country? Have you ever been there?"²

While Wharton's novel, written abroad and set in America, is not an expatriate novel, this conversation between Newland Archer and Madame Olenska helps to demonstrate the connection between the expatriate situation and conflicts between freedom and constraint. The naive Newland here, who seems to me to be in a situation very much like some American expatriates before they leave their country, believes that there still might be a real, geographic place where the two might live, without punishment, outside the boundaries of social codes. Madame Olenska, who is familiar with two continents, takes a more cynical, realistic view of things, closer to the one we will later see taken by Giovanni, in Baldwin's novel.

From the experience with Joey, the narrator moves to consider the nature of his relationship with his father. The conflict between the son and the father, which we have already recognized in other works of expatriate fiction, especially in Let It Come Down, seems to have been crucial in David's choice to leave America. His mother had died in his childhood and he can conjure only a very dim image of her. His father, thus, partly because of the absence of a mother, takes on horrifyingly large proportions in his life. In his earliest recollection of his father David pictures him sitting "reading his newspaper, so that, desperate to conquer his attention I sometimes so annoyed him that our duel ended with me being carried

from the room in tears" (16). David then recalls another incident-- an argument between his father and his aunt Ellen, his father's older sister, who helps in raising him. The argument which David remembers overhearing is about the kind of moral influence the father is having on his son, and takes place one night when his father comes home drunk. "Do you really think," Ellen charges, "that you're the kind of man he ought to be when he grows up. . . . He is growing up, you know . . . which is more than I can say for you" (20). As in the "family romance" scenario, David grows up and sees his father's faults in stark relief, hating the father all the more when he feels any hint of those faults in his own being.

"Perhaps he had supposed," writes the narrator, "that my growing up would bring us closer together--whereas, now that he was trying to find out something about me, I was in full flight from him. I did not want him to know me" (23). This description casts the struggle between father and son in the framework of an adolescent stage in the process of growing up. Faced with the grating presence of an overbearing and inconvenient authority, the subject either endures the tyranny or seeks to adjust his relation to the power. Outright rebellion is one means by which the relation can be altered; escape is another.

These uncomfortable, unyielding conflicts (with his sexual identity and with his father) are revealed as being motives for David's escape to France. The second chapter, following these examinations, is devoted to the story of his first meeting of Giovanni, during his second year in Paris.

It is always risky to establish parallels between the life of

an author and the fictions he creates. One of the suppositions behind this book, however, has been that the fictional representations of at least some writers have depended upon the biographical fact of expatriation. It is necessary, then, often to glance back and forth between the fictions and the lives which produced them. Though Giovanni's Room is not, strictly speaking, an autobiographical novel, there are, not so surprisingly, a number of parallels between the conflicts in Baldwin's own life and those confronted by the narrator of the novel. Connections, furthermore, are easy to make since Baldwin has left abundant statements concerning his own life and affairs. No doubt the homosexual theme is as prominent as it is because the issue was one Baldwin himself was forever grappling with. Baldwin, too, continually gave vent in fictional and non-fictional form to the same kinds of animosities toward his own step-father as those his narrator describes. Significantly, a working title of one of the first novels Baldwin tried to write was In My Father's House. We might reasonably assume that the work would have contained some of the father-son tensions which are seen in Go Tell it on the Mountain where the young John Grimes rebels against his authoritarian step-father, Gabriel.

Early in "Notes of a Native Son," an essay which begins with the fact of his step-father's death and tries to reflect on the causes of his father's failures and bitterness and the son's responses then and at the time of the writing, Baldwin writes: "We had got on badly, partly because we shared, in our different fashions, the vice of stubborn pride. When he was dead I realized that I had hardly ever spoken to him."³ Some sense of tension between acknow-

ledged differences and similarities seems to lie at the root of the conflict. While he lived in his father's house, and thus had an undeniable relation to it, he did not feel a natural sense of belonging to the structure of life within. The analogy between this relation and the relation between Baldwin's race and America is too striking not to comment on it. James Baldwin was a step-child to David Baldwin in the same way that his race has lived in the domicile of an unchosen, white dominated society.

Baldwin's own move abroad, when he was 24, was for him, as it was for the narrator of Giovanni's Room, one step plotted to escape from or try to reconcile the conflicting parts of himself. "By the time I was twenty-four," Baldwin has said, "I realized that there was no point in my staying in the country at all. If I'd been born in Mississippi, I might have come to New York. But, being born in New York, there's no place that you can go. You have to go out. Out of the country. And I went out of the country and I never intended to come back here. Ever. Ever."⁴ With his flight, he deliberately removed himself--physically, at least--from the webs of relationships which controlled him, hoping that as he did so--as he stood aside, as he extricated himself--he might be able better to reflect back on the nature of what had been going on at home. Just as David finds, from Southern France, an interesting vantage point from which to view his life, Baldwin uses Paris as a place from which to contemplate the meaning of his past experience in America.

For Baldwin, just as for the narrator of Giovanni's Room who tells us at the outset of the novel that he hoped to "find himself," the move abroad must be seen as a part of an effort to establish a

clearer identity. An essential part of this question of identity for Baldwin, one which does not concern the white narrator of Giovanni's Room, is his blackness. Indeed, the racial dimension of his expatriation distinguishes Baldwin from other writers in this study. Fern Eckman has suggested, in fact, that Baldwin was by virtue of his blackness and his life in a subculture so separate from the dominant culture, a sort of expatriate even before he left the country. His Harlem, writes Fern Eckman, was "geographically part of the U.S. but sociologically an island surrounded by the rest of the country" (4). From his autobiographical writings we can see that Baldwin feared that were he to have stayed in Harlem, he could have been crushed, by the pain and bitterness which result from living in continuous oppression or daily facing the scourge of racism. "I left America because I doubted my ability to survive the fury of the color problem here," he writes in "The Discovery of What It Means to Be an American."⁵ His attempt to get OUT of Harlem was, ironically, motivated by the same factors which have, up until now, attracted people TO America--the desire to escape the stigma of poverty and racial prejudice, flee authoritarian influences, and find freedom. Elsewhere Baldwin has said:

I felt that I was left alone in Paris--to become whatever I wanted to become. That is was up to me, y'know. I discovered--I began to--I could write, I could think, I could feel, I could walk, I could eat, I could breathe. There were no penalties attached to--these simple human endeavors. Even when I was starving, it was me starving. It was not a black

man starving. The trouble I got into in Paris was me. And there was no wall between--between my trouble and myself, as there always had been here. This was me. And, if I fucked it up, it was me. It wasn't . . . some weird abstraction called 'The American Negro.' (Eckman, 118)

The concern for self-discovery reaches beyond the issue of race to touch upon what it means to be an American, a condition which includes, Baldwin has continually pointed out, black and white. The principle at work in the process of seeing one's self in relation to one's country is the same, for Baldwin, as it is for seeing one's self in relation to race: As long as you remain among your compatriots, in your own country, it takes considerable imaginative effort to determine the extent to which your personality participates in something which might be termed national character. In his essay "The Question of Identity," pondering the presence of so many Americans in post-World War II Europe, Baldwin writes, "What one wants to know at bottom is what they came to find: to which question there are at least--as many answers as there are faces at the cafe tables" (105). The one unifying thing, Baldwin goes on to say later in his essay, is that

The American in Europe is everywhere confronted with the question of identity, and this may be taken as the key to all the contradictions one encounters when attempting to discuss him. . . . This prodigious question, at home so little recognized, seems, germ-like, to be vivified in the European air, and to grow disproportionately, displacing previous

assurance, and producing tensions and bewilderments entirely unlooked for. (113)

What Baldwin seems to be saying here--a notion which is confirmed by readings of other novels in this study--is that the problems of self are foregrounded in a foreign context. While it is certainly true that American literature as a whole has been concerned with the problems associated with the definition of what is uniquely American, the question looms somewhat larger, and takes on greater intensity and urgency in the case of the expatriate.

It has already been implied, in what has been said, that the act of definition and development of consciousness which is prone to accompany expatriation involves a dialectical process. Baldwin's own moves, intellectually and geographically, much like those of the narrator in Giovanni's Room, suggest a dialectical operation whose ultimate end, whether wholly attained or not, is an understanding (if not a reconciliation) of the various forces, or terms, and the means of trying to achieve that vision and understanding, resemble Hegel's prescription for gaining self-consciousness: Posit a horizon, a place beyond yourself from which you can look back on yourself more objectively. Expatriation is a literalization of this strategy. Seen as a kind of dialectic, then, it is a means of trying to identify and reconcile various opposing terms. In "Notes of a Native Son," Baldwin writes: "Hidden . . . in the heart of the confusion he encounters here [Paris] is that which he came so blindly seeking: the terms on which he is related to his country, and to the world" (115). For Baldwin, among these inherently conflicting values which produce tension in the individual are:

self-nation; self-history; black-white; homosexuality-heterosexuality; egotism-desire for love and attachment; rebellion-conformity; romance-security; father-son; internal being-external appearance. In the dialectical process, as Frederic Jameson describes it, the opposed terms are brought together such that "for a fleeting instant we catch a glimpse of a unified world, of a universe in which discontinuous realities are nonetheless somehow implicated with each other and intertwined, no matter how remote they may at first have seemed."⁶ Paradoxically, however, while expatriation may offer a place outside from which to view what one had been in the midst of, it by the same token--by affording that glimpse of differences, and by creating a new place which then must somehow itself be reconciled with "home,"--exacerbates or heightens the schism. What we will want to consider, as we continue the discussion of Giovanni's Room, is just how successful the outcome actually is for the characters in this novel.

We have looked at the factors leading up to expatriation. Once in Paris, David begins to form a life more in line with his imaginative desires. Abroad, in Giovanni's Room, as in many expatriate novels, is a neutral territory on which romantic encounters can take place more easily than they might otherwise, with little consideration of their permanence or the consequences of interaction. After all, the stay abroad is at first usually seen as being temporary. The narrator of Giovanni's Room meets both of the central figures, the two primary objects of his romantic interests, in Paris. Against both of these characters, in a region where the heterosexual and homosexual possibilities are explored, he begins to define

himself. Within the first few pages of the novel we are told of Hella, a fellow American whom he meets in a bar in St. Germaine de Pres. She is flirtatious, laughing, drinking and casting looks about. The early nights of his relationship with Hella he recalls in a way which conveys the great quantity of freedom David felt, away from his country, apparently without social constraints.

And these nights were being acted out under a foreign sky, with no one to watch, no penalties attached--it was this last fact which was our undoing, for nothing is more unbearable, once one has it, than freedom. (6)

After their relationship has continued for some time, Hella, who never seems to become a full-bodied character in the story, decides she must go off to Spain to see just how deep her feelings for him are. David's "undoing," it would seem, has something to do with the nebulous sense of commitment in the relationship--both on his part and hers. It is while she is gone that he begins, once again with an exciting sense of freedom, his relationship with Giovanni. The irony is that while the narrator undoubtedly has some very deep desire for an intimate relationship with a man, many of his comments make us feel that he would have preferred, had he known ahead of time what it would lead to, that his impulses had been held in check by social moral pressures.

The narrator, starting with the second section of the novel, recounts his first meeting with Giovanni in considerable more detail than his meeting with Hella. Short of money, he calls up Jacques, an older Belgian-American businessman he knows would not mind his

company. They go to a bar in the milieu (a euphemism for the gay area) where Giovanni, whom neither has known before, is tending bar. Jacques' interest in the bartender is acknowledged first, but it is David and Giovanni who are quickly fascinated by one another. But even as the attraction builds and becomes obvious to those around, David denies it, eager that he not be publicly identified in this manner; the admission would be uncomfortable; it would thrust him outside. It would mean that he would be forced to reform his conception of his own identity. By the end of the evening, though, David, encouraged by Giovanni's interest in him, has given in to his own desires. It is a letting go which we are led to believe perhaps would not have happened had David remained in America. As Giovanni reports to him a conversation he has had with Guillaume, the owner of the bar, whom he later murders, "'He said that you were just an American boy, after all, doing things in France which you would not dare to do at home'" (157).

There is, in the relationship between Giovanni and David, an interesting play of likeness (both expatriates in Paris, both attracted to one another, both having had women) and difference (one Italian, realist; the other a naive, idealistic American), which operates somewhat like that between Dyar and Thami in Let It Come Down. Transported from their native countries, both men recognize in one another a kind of natural sympathy. Both, as outsiders, praise the city they live in, yet conspire together against the place which will never grant them the legitimacy her natural citizens enjoy. Even though in some respects David and Giovanni are in Paris on equal footing (both are poor), David's position as an

American distinguishes him. He comes invested--only by chance, one might say--with the power of his country. He comes with the Marshall plan, the dollar, Hollywood, TV. And, just as we noticed with Hilda and Kenyon in The Marble Faun, nationality can substantially and irrevocably shape a person's philosophical outlook.

In their first conversation in the bar of les folles the two begin to identify one another by defining differences, origins. Finding that David is from America, from New York, Giovanni presses him to say whether New York is more beautiful than Paris.

"Oh, no," I said, "no city is more beautiful than Paris--"

"It seems the very suggestion that one could be is enough to make you very angry," grinned Giovanni. "Forgive me. I was not trying to be heretical." Then, more soberly and as though to appease me, "You must like Paris very much."

"I like New York, too," I said.

He goes on to say New York is beautiful, but "in a different way." In trying to explain the difference he resorts to the classic formulation of American and European differences. New York he describes as being "modern" and "new" compared to Paris, which is "old." In New York, David explains, one feels a tremendous sense of electric energy, of things in the making, of looking toward the future. Giovanni is not wholly satisfied with the distinctions.

"I don't see why the world is so new for Americans," said Giovanni. "After all, you are all merely emigrants. And you did not leave Europe so very long ago."

"The ocean is very wide," I said. "We have led different lives than you, things have happened to us which never happened here. Surely you can understand that this would make us a different people?"

"Ah, if it had only made you a different people!" he laughed. "But it seems to have turned you into another species." (49-50)

The two in their conversation continue to define differences-- general national traits and attitudes which members of any nation share to some extent. Against or through Giovanni, the American is defined. He suggests that pain, love and death are things that Americans don't believe in. His comments on what he takes to be the American treatment of time echo some of Strether's observations as he renews his contact with European sensibilities:

"The Americans are funny. You have a funny sense of time--or perhaps you have no sense of time at all, I can't tell. Time always sounds like a parade chez vous--a triumphant parade, like armies with banners entering a town. As though, with enough time, and that would not need to be so very much for Americans, n'est-ce pas?" and he smiled, giving me a mocking look, but I said nothing. "Well, then," he continued, "as though with enough time and all that fearful energy and virtue you people have, everything will be settled, solved, put in its place." (51)

For Baldwin, as earlier it had been for Henry James, the European, seasoned by a long history, is characterized as the realist

while the American is the naive upstart, with abounding optimism and a tendency to oversimplify. Certainly this characterization holds for Giovanni and David. We feel, as the narrator tells us the story, that the Italian always understood more about what was going on--including the possible tragic outcome of their relationship--than did David who seemed either not to get so involved with life and love that it could hurt him, or not to admit that there were enduring consequences to his present actions. Not strongly imbued with a sense of the past, the American, with so little behind him, can only with a large quantity of imagination, think of himself as being a part of the expansive continuum--the up's and down's of the histories of empires, poverty, war, triumph and despair. It is easier then for him to maintain his optimistic attitude, his belief in choice, free will and human progress.

Giovanni's determinism, presented for us in the first conversation he has with David, is likewise understandable given his own cultural context--post-war Italy, peasant upbringing, direct knowledge of death and suffering, the long history of his native country: "The big fish eat the little fish. That's all. The big fish eat the little fish and the ocean doesn't care." David counters this realist philosophy, saying one can choose either to eat or be eaten, that the big fish (a metaphor for the rich and powerful among men and nations) might not eat the little fish. "To choose! . . . Ah, you are really an American. J'adore votre enthousiasme!" "In my country," David continues, explicitly filling the metaphor with political content, "the little fish seem to have gotten together and are nibbling at the body of the whale." "That will not make them

whales," Giovanni replies, "The only result of the nibbling will be that there will no longer be any grandeur anywhere, not even at the bottom of the sea" (51-52). At the base of Giovanni's position seems to be a distrust of the whole democratic experiment, that a system of government which sought to equalize power was either desirable or possible.

Both David and Giovanni are imprisoned or restrained or influenced by the philosophies which guides them. A more concrete metaphorical demonstration of the notion of constraint and freedom is seen in the use of architectural structures within the novel. In Giovanni's Room, just as in Let It Come Down, rooms act as symbols for the structures we build around us and live in. David, like Nelson Dyar, feels the twin contradictory impulses--to build a relationship, yet to remain free to move as he pleases, as his romantic whims dictate. He becomes frightened when he sees the concreteness of the walls he is living within--he's aghast that he's been boxed in--and then plans to flee. We might assume that David never expected the rather dazzling romance with Giovanni to be anything other than that--a dazzling romance. Significantly nearly a quarter of the space in the novel is devoted to the memory of the first evening with Giovanni--the magic of the meeting.

Giovanni's room is the space to which the two retire, together, the first night. It is the private sphere of love-making set away from prying eyes. The room the narrator remembers strikes one as being extremely claustrophobic, a dim ghost of romance: "The room was small, I only made out the outlines of clutter and disorder; there was the smell of the alcohol he burned in his stove" (94).

When the door closes behind them, when the division between the outer and the inner is sharp and real, when the act has gone beyond the first phases of inconsequential flirtation, the narrator at once doubts whether this is a place he wants to be, and the tone and texture of the narrative changes.

He locked the door behind us, and then for a moment, in the gloom, we simply stared at one another--with dismay, with relief, and breathing hard. I thought, if I do not open the door at once and go out of here, I am lost. But I knew I could not open the door, I knew it was too late; soon it was too late to do anything but moan. (94)

Of course, Giovanni's room, though it clearly serves a realistic function in the novel, might be thought of, in psychological terms, as that repressed, chaotic world of Id: the only door allowing escape would be death, or a return to Ego.

The act of stepping inside, which had its beginnings, oddly enough in some kind of dream of romantic adventure and freedom, results in greater isolation from the larger, more expansive outside world. Giovanni's room, where the two live together almost as fugitives, is not only small, but its walls are thick, impenetrable and intransigent; it admits little light which might nourish them; they live alone in their poverty and have no visitors. "I scarcely know how to describe that room," the narrator says when he recalls its familiarity.

To begin with, the room was not large enough for two, it

looked out on a small courtyard. "Looked out" means only that the room had two windows, against which the courtyard malevolently pressed, encroaching day by day, as though it had confused itself with a jungle. (123)

Significantly, the windows remain closed and are obscured by a white polish Giovanni has put on them, further asserting a division between what is out there and what is in here. David goes on with the description, which I think is important to recount:

One of the walls was a dirty, streaked white where he had torn off the wall-paper. The wall facing it was destined never to be uncovered and on this wall a lady in a hoop skirt and a man in knee breeches perpetually walked together, hemmed in by roses. The wall paper lay on the floor, in great sheets and scrolls, in dust. On the floor also, lay our dirty laundry, along with Giovanni's tools and the paint burshes and the bottles of oil and turpentine." (123-24)

The image of the sheets of wall paper with the male and female figures among the roses clearly evokes the kinds of futile attempts to rid one's self of the dominant heterosexual ideal; even as one removes one's self to the most private quarters, it is there.

The sexual conflict fundamental to the novel, is, it seems to me, analogous to the figure of expatriation. Homosexuality can be seen as a figure for expatriation or expatriation a figure for homosexuality. That is, just as the narrator is at sea between two continents he is at sea between two patterns of sexual behavior, and the lifestyles associated with each. Homosexuality, like expatria-

tion, might be considered a deviation from (and indeed a threat to) normal behavior. Each is a flight away from supposedly natural, family patterns. Each is often interpreted as a criticism of the traditional lifestyle and, as such, a rejection of the father. Each suggests a choice between life in one place or in one manner and life in another place or in another manner--a choice often affected by sets of pre-existing psychological predilections. Homosexuality/heterosexuality, like home/abroad, are analogous opposing terms of the dialectic David struggles with. Homosexuality is the 'other side' which he wishes to explore, come to know. It is, as he expresses once, the foreign element residing in him--a kind of submerged, repressed, mysterious region of otherness: "It is trapped in the room with me, always has been, and always will be, and it is yet more foreign to me than those foreign hills outside" (14). The outside--whether it be the heterosexual ideal or the memory of home--continues to insinuate itself despite the barriers. The same kinds of intrusions of thought occur in either case. What one chooses to leave behind is, nonetheless, always present. What one had thought was outside, really has been internalized. Even as one moves abroad, perhaps with the idea in mind that one is going to start afresh, the other side (Mrs. Newsome) keeps her quiet, relentless vigil.

Once David has moved into the room with Giovanni, they periodically try to modify the structure, make it more comfortable, suitable for two. Yet the modifications are slight and their powers of conceptualization are hardly strong enough to overcome difficulties and achieve the desired effect. The structure is too solid and

unremitting to be altered by their own hands and minds alone. The narrator recounts:

He had some weird idea that it would be nice to have a bookcase sunk in the wall and he chipped through the wall until he came to the brick and began pounding away at the brick. It was hard work, it was insane work. . . . Perhaps he was trying, with his own strength, to push back the encroaching walls, without, however, having the walls fall down." (167)

Predictably, David cannot live long with Giovanni in his room before he becomes restless and longing, once again, for escape. The walls of Giovanni's room, like the boundaries of his own country, become too confining. They lock him into a cramped existence he is not at home in. By the time David finds himself inside Giovanni's room, the problem of inside and outside, like a set of Chinese boxes, has become quite complicated. When David was inside America he felt outside, so he went outside. Inside France he is undeniably an outsider. He seeks refuge inside Giovanni's room, but sees himself, more than ever, as a sexual outlaw.

Parallels between the metaphorical representation of David's problems in this novel, and Nelson Dyar's in Let It Come Down have already been noted. There are also striking similarities between the way the two characters respond to the feeling of constriction and a narrowing of possibilities. When things begin to get bad in a relationship, or when one gets in a tangle, the impulse, in both cases, is to escape. And when the narrator recalls the following

conversation we might also think of The Sun Also Rises and Jake's wish to be away from Paris, out in the country.

"What are you thinking?" asks Giovanni.

For a moment I was frightened and I was also ashamed.

"I was thinking," I said, "that I'd like to get out of Paris."

"Where would you like to go?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Anywhere. I'm sick of this city,"

I said suddenly, with a violence that surprised us both.

"I'm tired of this ancient pile of stones and all these goddam smug people. Everything you put your hands on here comes to pieces in your hands." (169)

The new structure--Giovanni's room/expatriate life in Paris--has become dull, its limitations have become apparent, and the easy solution is simply a repetition of the formula which brought him here. The position David is in is similar to the one Baldwin describes in talking about fellow American expatriates in Paris, in "A Question of Identity":

Their rejection of the limitations of American society has not set them free to function in any other society, and their illusions, therefore, remain intact: they have yet to be corrupted by the notion that society is never anything less than a perfect labyrinth of limitations. (114)

While Hella, partially as a result of her experiences and thinking while abroad, revises her assumptions regarding the nature of freedom ("I began to realize it in Spain," she says, "that I wasn't

free, that I couldn't be free until I was attached--no, committed--to someone." 184), David refuses any hint of limitation. Like Nelson Dyar, he would rather try naively to escape one structure simply to be imprisoned by another--or still by the one he was trying to escape. Paradoxically, every flight binds David more tightly to what he has left behind. He finds, for instance, that "in fleeing from [Giovanni's] body, I confirmed and perpetuated his body's power over me" (212). The book itself is proof of the power memory of those things we have left behind has on our present lives.

David is continually unable to live within any structures, love and death being two forms of constraint he refuses to admit. This, as Giovanni noted, may be a difference between American and older cultures. In America one feels a sense of space so vast as to allow continual making and abandonment. The abandonment is felt as one crosses parts of America and sees old homesteads, deserted and left to the caprices of nature, a poplar tree still growing beside the weather-worn dwelling in a dried up lawn near a dried up creek bed. There was not enough there to support much human life. In such desolation it was a wonder they even found enough hope to sustain their building. Finally they had to move on, or perish.

Once David is there, on the other side, where apparently his desires have taken him, he wants to return--to recover his balance, to lean more toward security and conformity. Ironically, he has to rebel in order to realize his need for security; he has to escape in order to seek conformity. Walking along the Seine one day he thinks of those who have committed suicide, thinks of the comforts of being in the family. He does want children, and recognizes his dilemma.

"I wanted to be inside again," he says, within the light and safety. . . . I wanted a woman to be for me a steady ground, like the earth itself, where I could always be renewed." (152) Hella's return from Spain (Had she not left the affair with Giovanni would never have occurred, David notes) provides the opportune moment for the break--that and a certain measure of financial independence in his father's promise to send money.

David, no doubt afraid of what Giovanni's response might be, doesn't mention Hella at all the first month of their time together in Giovanni's room. When he does speak of her for the first time, he intentionally minimizes the extent of his involvement with her. Giovanni listens skeptically. The more David speaks about Hella, the larger his own moral ideas rise to the surface of his consciousness and Giovanni is able to see clearly and distinctly behind the words and their distortion of the truth. Giovanni is trying to find out what David's attraction to this woman is all about (his own opinion of woman is rather callous, bordering on misogynistic) and why Hella is in Spain.

"If she were in Paris now," I said abruptly, "then I would not be in this room with you."

You would possibly not be living here," he conceded, "but we would certainly be seeing each other, why not?"

"Why not? Suppose she found out?"

"Found out? Found out what?"

"Oh, stop it, I said. "You know what there is to find out."

He looked at me very soberly. "She sounds more and more impossible, this girl of yours. What does she do, follow you everywhere? Or will she hire detectives to sleep under our bed? And what business is it of hers, anyway?"

"You can't be serious," I said.

"I certainly can be," he retorted, "and I am. You are the incomprehensible one. . . . Chez toi everything sounds feverish and complicated, like one of those English murder mysteries. To find out, to find out, you keep saying, as though we were accomplices in a crime. We have not committed any crime." (117-18)

This conversation is important for what it shows about David's moral ideas. When confronted with oppositions David can only admit one or the other quantity. What he cannot see is the possibility for what Giovanni calls the vie pratique ("To arrange, mon cher, la vie pratique, is very easy--it only has to be done. Sometimes things go wrong, I agree, then you have to arrange it another way" 120). He must choose. He will have Hella or Giovanni. He must be (or act) heterosexual; or, he must be (or act) homosexual. There is no middle ground, no third term. This either/or way of thinking David applies to other matters as well. One must either be totally free or totally imprisoned. One must be totally open or live a life of hypocrisy and deception. One must be old or young. Things must be clean or dirty. One must either be inside or outside. One must be here or there. What the novel demonstrates is that this way of thinking in absolute terms, with no possibility for synthesis and advance, leads to a standstill--an impass--checkmate--and often to

tragedy. In order to work properly there must be, in the dialectical process, a means of reconciling the two opposing or conflicting terms. This does not mean that the conflict dissolves; it merely ensures that its nature keeps shifting.

This kind of dualism, the development of a double consciousness which throws moral systems into disarray, is frequently associated with the expatriate situation. David's problem, which is partly a problem in conceptualization, is akin to Strether's in The Ambassadors. When Little Bilham assures Strether that the relationship between Chad and Madame de Vionnet is indeed a virtuous attachment, Strether can conceive of virtue only as meaning "clean" and "non-sexual." Little Bilham's notion of virtue, on the other hand, perhaps playfully reacting to what he perceives to be Strether's likely construal of the term, is not so narrowly defined in absolute terms. Whether sex is or is not involved may be of less consequence in a determination of virtue than would be other matters such as honour, respect and discretion. David's problem is not so much in misunderstanding the meaning of words, but in associating words and ideas with specific acts and conditions of being. In his own mind he carries with him the idea, for example, that homosexuality is bad, unclean and evil. No wonder when he sees it in himself he has a problem! David's notions, and a powerful, almost angry, critique of them, are evident in a speech Giovanni launches into after he has been wounded by the cold, sharp manner in which David had severed their relationship upon Hella's return to Paris.

You do not . . . love anyone! You never have loved anyone, I

am sure you never will! You love your purity, you love your mirror--you are just like a little virgin, you walk around with your hands in front of you as though you had some precious metal, gold, silver, rubies, maybe diamonds down there between your legs! You never will give it to anybody, you will never let anybody touch it--man or woman. You want to be clean. You think you came over here covered with soap and you think you will go out covered with soap--and you do not want to stink, not even for five minutes, in the meantime, . . . you want to leave Giovanni because he makes you stink. You want to despise Giovanni because he is not afraid of the stink of love. You want to kill him in the name of all your lying little moralities. And you--you are immoral. You are, by far, the most immoral man I have met in my life. Look, look what you have done to me. Do you think you could have done this if I did not love you? Is this what you should do to love?" (206)

Giovanni's attack (which resembles D.H. Lawrence's slashing remarks on Americans and cleanliness in his introduction to Edward Dahlberg's Bottom Dogs) comes after David, as though grasping for a lifeboat, has climbed aboard Hella--and completely and ruthlessly turned his back on Giovanni. When, very awkwardly, Hella and Giovanni meet, David's manner disavows any previous intimacy, and when Hella asks him who this Giovanni character is (she seems to suspect something; at the time of their meeting Giovanni is with Jacques whom she dislikes because of his gay manner) David, just as he has done before with Giovanni, lies, and covers up, as though it

were something to be ashamed of. "Giovanni, I want you to meet my fiancée. Mlle. Hella. Monsieur Giovanni." Jacques, perhaps spitefully, invites the two to join him and Giovanni for drinks since they are all "old friends." When the invitation is refused he says to David, somewhat sarcastically, "You must bring Hella to dinner at my house one night. . . . There is no need to hide your fiancée from us" (190).

Once they are alone, Hella asks David who Giovanni is. He replies:

"We've been sharing a maid's room out at the end of Paris."

"Then it wasn't very nice of you," said Hella, "to go off for so long, without any warning."

"Well, my God," I said, "he's only my room-mate. How was I to know he'd start dragging the river . . . "

David continues to lie to Hella, all in the interest both of securing her trust and affections, which he fears might send her running from him in alarm, and to veil from himself some frightening truths he would rather not admit. This works, to some extent. At least, it puts off the day of reckoning. David convinces Hella to run off to the south of France, and rent a house with him. He wants not to be reminded of the past. He wants not to be reminded of Giovanni. His flight from Paris, like his flight from America, was meant to help him erase his past and its haunting indiscretions.

But this escape, an attempt to swing the pendulum back toward respectability and conformity, works no better than his previous escapes. Again he finds himself facing the "bulldog"--himself and his

homosexual longings. No more can the house in the south of France contain him than could Giovanni's room. By the time of events told at the end of the novel, David has, clearly, "come out" on the other side--in both the Jamesian and the contemporary senses of the phrase. Truth has a way of asserting its head through even the most sordid mass of lies and deceptions. In the south of France Hella, probing the cause of his growing sense of unhappiness, begins to discover fragments of the truth, guessing first of all that Giovanni had been in love with him and that David might feel guilty. But David says nothing about the extent of their involvement. Hella only realizes the whole truth when she finds David in a gay bar in Nice.

"I'll never understand it. . . . That sordid little gangster has wrecked your life. I think he's wrecked mine, too. Americans should never come to Europe . . . It means they never can be happy again. What's the good of an American who isn't happy?" (242)

Hella's note of moralism sounds like something we might expect from Mrs. Newsome, should she ever be given a chance to speak for herself. Prolonged contact with Europe (or perhaps with any place overseas) likely leads first to the development of a double consciousness, then to a collapse or readjustment of values. Mightn't it be better, Hella wonders, much like Hilda and Kenyon at the end of The Marble Faun, if the naive American vision were simply preserved intact rather than be subjected to such external pressure?

To the very end, David has lied to Hella, and, he says, to

himself, about Giovanni. By the time the story is told, David feels some mixture of guilt, remorse and belated love toward Giovanni. While he is absorbed nostalgically by the thought of Giovanni, however, he rejects or kills the love which is being extended to him at the moment, Hella's. His fate, which he has a glimpse of once, is to be left adrift with only his vague desires and the nagging memories of two people who had loved him and whom he had hurt. "When my fingers began, involuntarily, to loose their hold on Hella," he says toward the end of the novel, "I realized that I was dangling from a high place and that I had been clinging to her for my very life" (232).

The final scene of the novel depicts the narrator's present condition. It is morning, after the night during which the story has been told (to an unspecified audience). His bags are packed and he stands before a mirror in which he sees not only himself, but imagines seeing Giovanni as they take him away to be executed. The images shift back and forth between Giovanni--his confession, his progression toward death--and himself, his essential desires ("the bulldog in his own backyard") which carried him to this point. "And I do not know what moves in this body, what ths body is searching," he wonders. "It is trapped in my mirror as it is trapped in time and it hurries toward revelation" (247). On the last page of the novel he turns away from the mirror and steps outside the door, vowing that he must rely on the grace of God to carry him through. There is, beyond this, a fresh horizon, yet what its nature will be is outside the novel's frame.

Two interpretations might be given to the narrator's state of

being at the end of the novel. In many respects, David seems, not withstanding the two affairs he has had, to be in a situation much like the the one he was when he left America. He is left, literally, face to face with himself, ready to continue his life's plot in a new direction. On the new course which he sets off on, he would--just as in the Hegelian dialectic--necessarily carry with him the accumulated quantity of his past history, despite whatever contingencies he meets along the way. Hence it would involve, to some degree, a repetition of patterns already established. There is not clear evidence that David, at the end, has found a way out of his adolescent narcissism. It may be as true of him now as it was when Giovanni charged, that he doesn't love anyone, that he never has and never will, and that his mirror is his only love.

There is also, though, the possibility that should David continue his life beyond the end of the novel, he might be able to surmount some of the problems he has with Ego. It might just be, though we cannot be sure, that he has, by looking at the mirror or objectifying his tale, gained some kind of "consciousness of consciousness," which has led to an awareness of the major forces which drive him, if not the capability to alter them.

The American expatriate novel often ends at a moment of crisis, or just after. Things are not always resolved within the novel. Faced with the collapse of romantic expectations, after the foreign environment has been taken in, the expatriate can choose between two courses of action: To stay on, or to return to America. Though at the end of The Reef the issue of Darrow and Anna's relationship is not settled, there is no mention of a return home. France, by this

time is Anna's second home, and we assume she will stay on, with or without a second marriage. At the end of The Marble Faun, it will be remembered, Hilda and Kenyon are all too eager to return to America. For Strether and for Jake Barnes the geographic resolution is less clear. Strether is, at the end of The Ambassadors, still adrift: He could, for all we know, stay on in Europe, eaking out some kind of existence; or, he could, be it reluctantly, catch a ship back to America. Though Jake Barnes expresses no intention to return, neither do we see him, at the end of The Sun Also Rises, as being at all settled. It could be that both of these characters have found a neutral ground and accommodated themselves to a life midst a play of opposing terms.

The issue of the return, implicit throughout this book, will be central in the next chapter. However, before taking it up there, squarely, I would like to consider the meanings of "home" in Giovanni's Room and for Baldwin himself as his thoughts turned more and more back toward America. For the American characters in Giovanni's Room a return to America becomes more and more a consideration as time advances. Once the possibilities abroad seem to have become exhausted, once the new culture and landscape has lost its initial charm, attention once again is often turned homeward. Hella already has sailed by the time the action of the novel closes, after pleading with David to go, too, to marry, to settle down, to "live some place." David is on his way to Paris and though he does not say what he plans to do, there are earlier mentions of homesickness and the desire to return. The morning after meeting Giovanni, in fact, after their first night together in the room, he

remembers having thought:

I ached abruptly, intolerably, with a longing to go home; not to that hotel, in one of the alleys of Paris, where the concierge barred the way with my unpaid bill; but home, home across the ocean, to things and people I knew and understood; to those things, those places, those people which I would always, helplessly, and in whatever bitterness of spirit, love above all else. . . . I saw myself, sharply, as a wanderer, an adventurer, rocking through the world unanchored. I looked at Giovanni's face, which did not help me.

(92)

Besides David's own desires, there are pulls from home. David once gets a letter from his father, similar to those we might expect Mrs. Newsome would have written to Strether:

Dear Butch--

aren't you ever coming home . . . I think you have been away long enough . . . my guess is you're going to be sorry one of these fine days that you stayed over there, looking at your navel, and let the world pass you by. (131-32)

Giovanni, unlike David, cannot imagine that going home--for either of them--would be a satisfying solution at all. One time before their break, Giovanni and David are talking about places to go, thinking that a particular place might work a kind of magic on a person. David suggests that Giovanni might like to go home--back to Italy--but Giovanni rejects the idea, saying, "I don't think I have

a home there anymore." David counters by saying that he would like some time to return to America, Giovanni says, "You will go home and then you will find that home is not home anymore" (170). As usual, Giovanni's view is considerably more realistic than David's.

David's search, like that of many expatriate characters, is for a real place where he might live a life more in line with what he conceives to be his ideal way of living. Everyone seems to want home, a place which would give the sensations of belonging and security. The trouble they have is trying to find out where home is located. David seems to realize the problem, even if just for a moment, at one point in the novel. Just after he has gotten the letter from his father, David, walking along the boulevard, passes a sailor, to whom apparently he is attracted. Words in a letter from his father ("Is it a woman, David? Bring her on home.") run through his mind nearly concurrently and the juxtaposition of thought and sight lead to an epiphanic moment regarding the nature of home.

He [the sailor] seemed--somehow--younger than I had ever been, and blonder and more beautiful, and he wore his masculinity as unequivocally as he wore his skin. He made me think of home--perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition.

(133)

Home has both spatial and temporal dimensions. What one loses in time one may hope to recover in space. To locate Eden as a point at the beginning of time puts it outside our reach during our earthly existence; to believe in its geographic dimensions (the possibility of an earthly paradise) leads one in search of the ideal place.

Home, then, as David seems to recognize here, may not be a place where one surely and permanently resides. It might be a way of being, a habit of mind, a state of equilibrium, an attitude. When we ascribe the term to a place we thought was home (as we shall see in the Effinghams do in the following chapter) we may find, when we return there, that the feelings we had which made the place home are gone--no mother, no father, neighbors dead, apartment houses gone up next door. We have grown older. In theological terms the impulse is to locate the ideal home temporally as much as spatially. Eden is the original home, the condition or state from which we have fallen. Heaven is the Promised Land (spatial) after death (temporal), and this place is countlessly, in Biblical references, in anthems, in spirituals, referred to as home. ("I looked over Jordan and what did I see, comin' for to carry me home?")

Consideration of Giovanni's Room, as well as expatriation in general, as we have already noted, reinforces the thesis R.W.B. Lewis presents in The American Adam. The narrator acknowledges, early in the novel, the irrevocability of the loss of Eden: it naturally accompanies the process of aging and growth, but at the same time he notes that upon the realization of that loss, our whole lives might be spent in feeble efforts to recover it (recover=bury again; find again).

It's true that nobody stays in the garden of Eden. . . .
Perhaps everybody has a garden of Eden, I don't know; but they have scarcely seen their garden before they see the flaming sword. Then, perhaps, life only offers the choice of

remembering or forgetting it. Either, or: it takes strength to remember, it takes another kind of strength to forget, it takes a hero to do both. People who remember court madness through the pain, the pain of the perpetually recurring death of their innocence; and the world is mostly divided between madmen who remember and madmen who forget. Heroes are rare.

(37)

The play of remembering and forgetting is perhaps the central dynamic in the story David tells, and it might be that his is a struggle to avoid madness by attaining that heroic posture described here--a balance between remembrance and the interment of memory. The act of narrative construction arguably achieves that balance. In Giovanni's Room we have Baldwin's fullest fictional expression of life abroad. The story, as we have found, is unresolved. In search of a resolution, an extension of the dialectic begun in the story, we must turn elsewhere, to Baldwin's own life and to other literary expressions. Like some of his characters in Giovanni's Room, Baldwin more and more began to look homeward. France, he realized, as free as it seemed upon his arrival, had its own forms of racial discrimination. He began to question whether he really wanted to spend the rest of his life in France, away from his native culture and family. Furthermore, his sojourn had had some of the dividends he had hoped to gain when he first set out. He had become more mature and his works, which he had written abroad, had begun to win him considerable praise among his countrymen. Baldwin flirted for some time with the idea of returning to America. His pilot run, in 1952, was brief and disappointing. When he came back in 1954 he

felt more comfortable and was able to stay for nine months, pointing the way for his more permanent return several years later.

The turns of the mind connected with the prospect of going back to America, not surprisingly, began to find fictional form. "This Morning, This Evening, So Soon," which first appeared in The Atlantic Monthly in 1960, is a fine story concerned primarily with the anxieties of homecoming. The narrator, a black American singer who has lived in France for twelve years, worries about his reception back home, on the eve of his departure. He remembers that he has left his home, Alabama, to escape the agonies of racism, and is haunted by the thought of "home" and what his Swedish wife Harriet and their seven-year old son will experience there. Paris, he says is "the city which saved my life . . . by allowing me to find out who I am."⁷

The story heightens the ambivalent feelings the returning expatriate has--anticipation and cautious glee; dread and horror. The irony is that while the journey home should be thought of a journey toward happiness and freedom (for the white passengers aboard the ship, the narrator imagines it is such a journey), the singer sees it as a journey back into the bondage which he had once sought to escape.

Another fairly well-known, widely anthologized story by Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues," which first appeared in Mademoiselle in 1958, says something about life on the inside and life on the outside and is worth recalling in this context. While there is no direct reference to experiences abroad, those experiences, I think, might be credited for some elements of the story, perhaps even to

its genesis. Sonny, whose story his brother tells, is picked up for peddling heroin and serves a term in prison. Sonny's time in prison--living in a marginal condition, locked outside of the mainstream, in contact with two distinct and different worlds which must be bridged somehow--might be thought of as analogous in some ways to being abroad. When Sonny is released from prison, for example, he, like the returning expatriate, sees familiar things with bulging eyes. His brother, from whose point of view we get the story, describes Sonny's reactions as they drive up past Central Park to their old neighborhood in Harlem just after Sonny's release.

So we drove along, between the green of the park and the stony, lifeless elegance of hotels and apartment buildings, toward the vivid, killing streets of our childhood. . . . As the cab moved uptown through streets which seemed, with a rush, to darken with dark people, and as I covertly studied Sonny's face, it came to me that what we both were seeking through our separate cab windows was that part of ourselves which had been left behind. It's always at the hour of trouble and confrontation that the missing member aches. ⁸

The concern, voiced here by Sonny's brother, for trying to find a part of past selves which the passage of time had buried should remind us of David's thoughts on remembering and forgetting.

"Sonny's Blues," like Giovanni's Room is about attempts at and problems with reconciliation. Central is the reconciliation between two brothers, each bound to the other yet each having chosen radically different ways of trying to deal, as members of a minority

group, with the dominant culture. Sonny has landed in prison after having been pushed toward and succumbed to a life of drugs and crime. His brother, perhaps no more successful, has mimicked the values and habits of the white bourgeoisie, moving out of Harlem into a new apartment building. ("It hasn't been up long. A few days after it was up it seemed uninhabitably new, now, of course it's already rundown.") The building is a parody of the clean American life. There is the desire to escape what he was, but not the means.

Sonny doesn't escape. Not only can't he, but he refuses to. Clearly his resolution is more satisfying than any found by the narrator of Giovanni's Room. His existence on the margins of society is a source of power for him and when his marginality is denied or when, as his brother tries to do, he is pushed in toward the center of society, he loses his power. When Sonny is really on the outside, he is able to sing the blues. Otherwise, he exists in an excruciating limbo between the black and white man's world. "'Sometimes, you know, and it was actually when I was most out of the world, I felt that I was in it, that I was with it, really, and I would play or I didn't really have to play, it just came out of me, it was there'" (116). Baldwin's own position, it seems, is much like Sonny's. Living on the outside, whether it be as a black, a homosexual, or an expatriate (and Baldwin was all three!) can result in the shaping of a unique perspective on mainstream society. Most critics of Baldwin relate his vision to his social circumstances. For example F.W. Dupee writes: "The transforming process in Baldwin's essays [and one need not limit it to this genre] owes something to the fact that the point of view is a Negro's, an out-

sider's."⁹

Playing the blues--that is, artistic expression--is the essential term which reconciles the dialectic, which saves the person caught in its clutches, from an obliterating bitterness. In the fine ending of the story, Sonny's brother, who has never approved of his brother's playing, appears at the bar where he is doing gigs. Sonny plays the blues and he plays from his soul. His brother can tell how much he's loved by the audience because he has found a way to express their deepest yearnings, feelings which they themselves have never found means for expressing. He is the artist. Sonny's brother orders him a drink and when it is put on the piano, the two exchange a glance which seems to dissolve the distance between them.

The themes we have seen in Giovanni's Room and "Sonny's Blues" are also evident in the first novel Baldwin wrote upon his return to America, intriguingly titled In Another Country. In this more ambitious, sprawling novel, set for the most part on American soil, Baldwin increases his cast of characters and explores, with a vengeance, all possible sexual combinations between male and female, black and white. None of the relationships seem to work, with the possible exception of that between Eric, a bi-sexual American and Yves, his French boyfriend, once a male-prostitute. There is in this novel, in Eric's relationships, something we might imagine would approximate the kind of life the narrator of Giovanni's Room was seeking. It is all at once bi-sexual and transcontinental. In other words, Eric can have his cake and eat it too. One wonders, however, just how realistic the situation is.

In the face of striking contradictions the burdens for recon-

ciliation are overwhelming. In the operation of dialectic thought the first step is a keen acknowledgement of those opposing terms. The image of a totality may come only in a momentary flash. From abroad, as his Notes of a Native Son shows, Baldwin was able to form, if not actually live out, this vision of wholeness. Here, for example, he contemplates America's past and its present:

What is overwhelmingly clear, it seems, to everybody but ourselves is that this history has created an entirely unprecedented people, with a unique and individual past. . . . The truth about this past is not that it is too brief, or too superficial, but that we, having turned our faces so resolutely away from it, have never demanded from it what it has to give. (115)

Tragedy, it would seem, according to Baldwin, and as seen in Giovanni's Room, lies in the denial of, or the unsatisfactory integration of, the opposing term. Hope, conversely, lies in the possibility for reconciliation.

Notes to Chapter Six

¹James Baldwin, Giovanni's Room (New York: The Dial Press, 1956), p. 31. Subsequent references are to this edition.

²Edith Wharton, The Age of Innocence (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 290-291.

³James Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son (New York: Bantam, 1968), p. 71. Subsequent references are to this edition.

⁴James Baldwin, quoted in Fern Eckman, The Furious Passage of James Baldwin (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1966), p. 113.

⁵James Baldwin, Nobody Knows My Name (New York: Dial Press, 1961; Dell, 15th printing 1970), p. 17. Of interest here is Michel Fabre's Rive Noir: De Harlem a la Seine (Paris: Lieu Commun, 1985), a literary and cultural history of American blacks in Paris.

⁶Jameson, Marxism and Form (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 8.

⁷"This Morning, This Evening," in Going to Meet the Man (New York: Dell, 1966), p. 135.

⁸"Sonny's Blues," in Going to Meet the Man (New York: Dell, 1966), 94-95.

⁹F.W. Dupee, "James Baldwin and the Man," in James Baldwin: A Collection of Critical Essays, Keneth Kinnamon, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 12.

A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of the earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories . . . may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood.

George Eliot, Daniel Deronda

"Oh! he who has never been afar, let him once go from home, to know what home is. For as you draw nigh again to your old native river, he seems to pour through you with all his tides, and in your enthusiasm, you swear to build altars like mile-stones, along both his sacred banks."

Redburn, upon returning to New York harbor

"Why, you will go home and then you will find that home is not home anymore."

Giovanni to David in Giovanni's Room

CHAPTER SEVEN

Exiles Return: Home As Found

Looming before all but the die-hard expatriate there is always the possibility of a return, a prospect which is entertained with various quantities of dread, hope, and fear. If things are going badly abroad, or if the sheen of romance has become dull or the quality of difference has been worn smooth by daily contact, a return might be thought to hold possibilities of renewed romance, economic gain, or even psychological relief. But lurking behind those expectations will be the fear that in one's homeland one will be out of step, that one will go home, hoping to feel the sensations of the warm and familiar only to discover that the advance of time

has changed the landscape and made a foreigner of the native.

No study of expatriation or expatriate literature would be complete without some consideration of this theme--the return or the anticipated return--which has surfaced in many of the works already dealt with. There is indeed a body of literature which has been produced by returning expatriates, which very directly deals with the return and registers their sensations upon renewed contact with their native land. Henry James's The American Scene is one. Henry Miller's The Air-Conditioned Nightmare and Malcolm Cowley's The Exile's Return are others. James Fenimore Cooper's Home as Found, around which the discussion in this last chapter will center, is one of the earliest tales of an American expatriate's return, and one of most complete fictional renderings of the experience. Cooper's "ur-text" contains, both explicitly and implicitly, so many of the kinds of reactions latter day repatriates were to express.

I

The concept of a return is general, yet each particular enactment of a return is a variation on that universal theme; each takes on its own shape, color and tone, depending upon the general character and mood of the exile at the time, the course of history and his own reputation at home and abroad, and the expectations which accompany the journey back. Certainly timing has a great deal to do with it and perhaps one generalization which could be made is that the longer the period of expatriation, the more difficult seems the return. The most confirmed expatriates--James, Stein, Wharton, Paul Bowles--have chosen not to return, not to face the wretched adjust-

ment that would be called for after twenty, thirty, or forty years abroad, or to make their returns temporary--a coming up for air, so to speak. One senses, as one visits Paul Bowles in Tangier, that this, as much as anywhere, is his home. "Do you plan to go back?" he is sometimes asked. "Why should I?" he replies, saying that even though Tangier has gotten worse over the years he doubts whether he would be able to find a more agreeable place to live, and that watching things get worse gradually, under his daily scrutiny, is somehow easier than being confronted all at once with twenty years' worth of change.

We might recall, in this context, the advice offered in Hawthorne's The Marble Faun:

The years, after all, have a kind of emptiness when we spend too many of them on a foreign shore. We defer the reality of life, in such cases, until a future moment, when we shall again breathe our native air; but by and by there are no future moments; or if we do return we find that the native air has lost its vigorating quality, and that life has shifted its reality to the spot where we have deemed ourselves only temporary residents. Thus between two countries we have none at all, or only that little space of either in which we finally lay down our discontented bones. It is wise therefore to come back betimes, or never.¹

Hawthorne apprehends well enough the condition of double consciousness, being suspended, so to speak, between two ways of being. He, furthermore, imagines a point (which he himself never reached)

beyond which a return would be difficult, if not impossible.

The return, in some measure, might be interpreted as a kind of failure, especially if the pilgrim comes back without whatever it was (the holy grail? money? peace of mind? increased horizons? a book?) he had gone off to find. Or, it may too seem a failure when the repatriated citizen discovers that the vision of life he brings with him from abroad can never be satisfactorily adapted to the native environment. Malcolm Cowley's Exile's Return chronicles the experience of a whole generation as they explored abroad and wrestled with their homecomings. Cowley notes that the gulf many expatriates of the twenties had felt separating themselves from their culture before their departures had only widened by the time they began contemplating the task of reconciling themselves to their homeland. If they had thought they shared few values with their countrymen before, they shared even fewer now. They came back to find the country run by bankers, corporate executives and advertising men who had not the slightest bit of aesthetic appreciation, or at least so they thought. To the world of Dreiser's Financier, they brought their high ideals--Art for Art's Sake, Dada, and Parisian attitudes toward life. In this world they sought a place, yet it was far from easy. "Five months after my return from Europe," Cowley wrote, "I was dispirited, exhausted, licked--by Mr. Smith and Mr. Boyd and the quarrels among my friends, but most of all by myself, by my efforts to apply in one country the standards I had brought from another."² Simply put, the place they sought existed nowhere, except, perhaps, as Cowley notes, in their youth. What they sought to recapture was "a quality remembered from childhood, a

sense of belonging to something, of living in a country whose people spoke his language and shared his interests." But,

Now he had ceased to belong--the country had changed since the new concrete highway was put through; the woods were gone, the thick-growing hemlocks cut down, and there were only stumps, dried tops, branches and fireweed where the woods had been. The people had changed--he could write about them now, but not write for them, not resume his part in the common life. And he himself had changed, so that wherever he lived he would be a stranger. (214)

They could not, he writes, "draw the strength that lies in shared convictions." It is not surprising that they had not, during their time abroad, become any more like their compatriots at home. Alfred Schutz in his fine classic essay, "The Homecomer," describes the situation:

The homecomer . . . expects to return to an environment of which he always had and--so he thinks--still has intimate knowledge and which he has to take for granted in order to find his bearings in it. . . . But those at home . . . lived together through this changing world, experienced it as changing in immediacy, adapted their interpretive system, and adjusted themselves to the change.³

On Independence Day 1921 Harold Stearns left New York for, after finishing the compilation of Civilization in the United States, a work containing contributions from some thirty American intellec-

tuals many of whom spoke about the cultural wasteland in the country. On January 30, 1932 Stearns set sail from Europe on an American freighter, homeward bound. Expatriation had not been treating him too well. He had, in his last years in Paris, lost many jobs and many teeth. Friends had died and he had landed in the American Hospital in Neuilly suffering from bouts of blindness, caused, doctors finally discovered, by tooth problems. "With no teeth, few friends, no job, and no money"--down on his luck, one might say--he began thinking of a return.⁴ Stearns' period of isolation abroad, however, ended happily with a renewed sense of patriotism. Not everything America had produced, Stearns discovered, were mere "ugly ducklings." Rather, there was much to appreciate in her efficiency, her zeal, her spirit of enterprise and the innate sense of hope that lay in the land.

There have been, and will be, then, a whole range of experiences upon the exile's return, ranging from the tragic (epitomized in the story of Harry Grew Crosby) to the triumphant (along the lines of Washington Irving's). Cowley tells the story of Crosby in the last chapter of his chronicle:

Harry Crosby and his wife arrived in New York during the first week of December 1929 and Hart Crane gave a party for them in his room on Brooklyn Heights. It was a good party, too; Harry smiled a lot--you remembered his very white teeth--and had easy manners and, without talking a great deal, he charmed everyone. On the afternoon of December 10 he borrowed the keys to a friend's studio in the Hotel des Artistes. When he failed to answer the telephone or the

doorbell that evening, the friend had the door broken down and found Harry's body with that of a young society woman, Mrs. Josephine Bigelow. (246)

It may not be, however, that the return had anything directly to do with the suicide. Crosby's wife Caresse asserted that he may have committed suicide because he was so ecstatically happy.

Washington Irving, after 17 years abroad, returned in 1832 and wrote of his feelings of relief and joy in a letter:

Can I be content to live in this country? . . . What sacrifice of enjoyments have I to reconcile myself to? I come from gloomier climes to one of brilliant sunshine and inspiring purity. I come from countries lowering with doubt and danger, where the rich man trembles, and the poor man frowns--where all repine at the present and dread the future. I come from these to a country where all is life and animation; where I hear on every side the sound of exultation.⁵

In Exile and the Narrative Imagination Michael Seidel suggests that return, be it an actual or purely imaginative return, is an integral part of exile. "For the exile," he writes, "native territory is the product of heightened and sharpened memory, and imagination is, indeed a special homecoming."⁶ It has been seen in works earlier discussed how a conception of home impinges on the experience abroad and that home--through letters, memory, or meetings with compatriates abroad--involuntarily and arbitrarily breaks into, perhaps even dominates, that foreign experience. The expatriate

experience, and consequently the form of writings which come out of that experience, are often shaped by the sharp reflection of home as seen from the new locale. It is the literal return of the exile, though, which concerns me here in this chapter, and the discussion which follows will reinforce one of the main theses promoted throughout these pages--that expatriation has often afforded the writer unique vistas from which he casts a critical glance back at his own homeland. The difference between home and abroad is more clearly seen perhaps upon the return home than upon the arrival in the foreign country. As one arrives abroad the freshness of the foreign setting and the new manners and customs absorb the observer's attention. Upon the return, however, the eye takes in a landscape it expects to be familiar and notes quickly those alterations, sometimes subtle, sometimes vast and alarming, which have taken place, or it recognizes those innate often elusive (and sometimes annoying) indigenous characteristics which now stand out sharply following a long period of absence.

The prototype of the return of the exile, as Seidel and everyone else who writes on exile or homecoming points out, is in The Odyssey. "So many of the adventures of Odysseus," writes Seidel, "try to dim the hero's homeward compulsion by making exilic space a substitute for the home island" (11). The Sirens, Calypso, the Scylla and the Charybdis all lure Odysseus away from his purported destination, yet ultimately none succeeds. The return is fated. The so-called substitutes simply cannot fulfill all the needs that the imaginative construction of a homeland fulfills. Ithaca, however, once finally reached by the hero, is infested with suitors.

The tired hero, expecting a triumphant welcome, sadly sighs and begins to set his house in order.

A native prototype for the return of the exile can be found as well. Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle, after a twenty-year exile of sleep, finds himself, like Homer's Odysseus, returning home to a place at once familiar and strange. Waking from his long sleep he finds the barrel of his gun rusted and its stock worm-eaten. Returning to his village he finds he knows no one, nor does anyone know him. Styles of dress, changed dramatically during his absence, make his fellow citizens seem like foreigners. He finds the village itself barely recognizable. "It was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. . . . The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity."⁷ His own home, once he locates it, is in ruins, and above the door of the old Dutch inn hangs not the likeness of King George III, but that of General Washington.

From a consideration of The Odyssey and "Rip Van Winkle" might be extracted the essence of a story of return. The first and most obvious element, it seems, is that of temporal separation. The hero must have absented himself from his native land and naturally the longer the absence, the more dramatic will he find the picture changed upon his return. Odysseus had been away for twenty years or so, about the length of Rip's long slumber. The hypothetical question from which Irving's magical romance seems to have sprung--What would happen if a man were, by some magical means, temporarily

removed from the lifeblood of his own native American culture, for a twenty-year span in the midst of which occurred the Revolutionary War?--becomes, in the case of the expatriate, a very real issue.

The exile's return may also be accompanied by spatial comparisons. Naturally, the repatriated observer will not only compare things "then" to things "now," but things "here" to things "there"--wherever he has been. His impressions will be colored by the emotions and experiences he brings from his exploits abroad. This type of comparison, virtually absent from Irvings's tale (unless one considers the dream of the old Dutchman with his keg of spirits and the game of nine-pins in some idyllic glen in the upper reaches of the Catskills as serving this function) and only nominally present in The Odyssey, is quite important in the case of the prodigal American pilgrim. And as the returning expatriate compares his home to those places he has visited on his sojourn he is likely to find absent in his native land some of those things he had begun to feel at ease with, and value, even unconsciously, in his foreign residence.

After the arrival and the subsequent comparisons comes the attempt at reconciliation. The self, which has been growing as a transplant in foreign soil, begins the hard business of taking everything in and trying to adjust to the altered scene. The results of the return to origins are mixed. Some make the adjustment better than others, depending on their individual temperaments, the duration and nature of their time away, and the conditions they come back to. A review of various examples suggests that there might be some relation between the nature of the returning exile's response

and the literary form or genre representing the tale of the return (epic, comic fable, travelogue, satire, novel of manners). In one of the epigrams for this chapter we sense Redburn's exuberance. Irving's tale, too, it should be noted, ends on a relatively happy note. Rip is relieved, by the intervening death of his wife, of his previous hen-pecked condition, and installs himself on a bench outside the old inn where he leisurely spins his yarn over and over again, with slight variation in color, to any passer-by willing to listen. But Rip's return is not without its hardships, its feelings of sadness, nostalgia, and alienation. Like the returning expatriate, he returns to his old home guided largely by his memories of how things once were. These visions collide with the new reality at nearly every turn in the road and the old man must in some way reconcile himself to these changes.

The return of the "stranger" is sometimes met with suspicion bordering on hostility. Rip, for example, finds himself harrassed by politicians and accused of being a Tory, for voicing his loyalty to the King. "Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself alone in the world" (92). But Rip's return is not nearly as solemn as that of the hero of Homer's epic who comes back from one battle only to be faced with another, just at a time when all he really wants, after a very long journey, is rest.

A reading of Home as Found and an examination of its writer's personal experience will reveal that the reconciliation is not always a happy one, and Cooper's "Novel of Social Criticism and Observation" is a convenient form for the expression of this kind of

re-entry experience (much as was the travelogue for James and Miller, and the critical autobiography for Cowley). The Effinghams (and their author) return expecting to find the America they had left behind and dreamed of returning to. Instead, they find an America radically different from either their recollection or their ideal. The resulting disillusionment is crippling, for if one's visions of what an ideal America would be can be realized neither abroad nor at home, what choice is there other than a reluctant and sad abandonment of that cherished dream that there might be, in one's lifetime on earth, that place where one could live as one wishes?

II

James Fenimore Cooper landed in New York in November of 1833 after a six-year sojourn abroad. Following his return he wrote, in rather quick succession, three novels--The Monikins, Homeward Bound, and Home as Found--each of which can be thought of as having the return as its subject matter. Of the three, Home as Found seems the best and most suitable work for discussion in this context. While no one would recommend the novel as a model for any young writer interested in developing an intricate plot, refined style, or succinct prose, its value is nonetheless indisputable. As a chronicle of an exile's return it notes many of the sentiments that other repatriates (e.g. Miller, James) have expressed. A literal return to "native territory" heightens and sharpens not memory, but observation. Objects of Cooper's critical eye include, but are not limited to, the dismal state of manners in the country, a rampant

wave of land speculation which accentuated man's greedy nature, the proliferation of vulgar architecture, a habit of destroying rather than nurturing the sense of a shared, valued past, and government by the whim of the mob. The nature of Cooper's quarrel with his country, reflected to an extent in the views of the heroine of Home as Found, Eve Effingham, had a history; it had evolved during his absence, though the seeds of it might be seen even before he left. During his absence Cooper had changed and so had his homeland; those concurrent changes were neither particularly compatible nor complementary. Cooper left during the presidency of John Quincy Adams and returned during that of Andrew Jackson. During this absence the Erie Canal had been completed, there had been a very noticeable influx of immigrants, railroads had been expanded, the textile industry had grown, a large number of banks had been chartered, land speculation had become a national past-time, and the Whig party had gained strength by consolidating the interests of the nouveau riche.⁸

Meanwhile, Cooper's observation of European ideals and forms of governments, his various associations and the style of living he enjoyed abroad led naturally to a modification, or at least a clarification, of his attitudes toward the American version of democratic life. He had not been, to put it mildly, impressed by the British form of monarchy, supported by a tired, unimaginative aristocracy. In Italy, particularly in Florence, he observed a more agreeable solution to the issue of democratic versus feudal forms of government. In his friendships with Marchese Gino Capponi and Marchese Giuseppe Pucci, Cooper found Tuscan leaders who seemed to combine

aristocratic sensibilities and liberal values. In Italy, as in France later, Cooper's associations were largely with the highest ranking members of society. His vantage from France was especially rare due to the historical moment (He was in Paris after the compromise leading to the July Monarchy.) and the degree of his involvement in the political scenes abroad. He dined with Louis Napoleon and had the ear of the aging General Lafayette. Greece, Belgium and Poland were at the time also struggling to establish republican forms of government, to transform feudal societies into modern nations, and Cooper, probably far more aware of things in France, which was a center for radical activity in the 19th century, than he would have been had he remained in America, supported their national liberation efforts. In fact, he worked actively to raise money for the Polish resistance. He was also actively involved in the "Finance Controversy" in France--a matter primarily of French domestic concern, yet touching on America because supporters of the monarchy were using the American example to "prove" that democracy was more expensive than monarchy. Cooper openly disputed the claims in his writings.

In all of these political and personal dealings one senses Cooper's dilemma. He is attracted to the power and wealth associated with the inherited monarchical system, yet because of his American pedigree he has qualms about unflinchingly supporting any monarchy. Monarchy, in any case, Cooper knew, was far too often accompanied by a tyranny which thoroughly ran against his grain. In fact, Cooper meant to display the perils of autocracy in several of his European novels, notably in The Headsman, The Heidenmauer, and

The Bravo. At the same time, though, he grew increasingly uncomfortable with the prospect of a democracy of the masses. He had seen, among other things, the mob manipulation of Lafayette at General Lamargue's funeral. All these experiences affected his thinking on the American experiment, which, in his judgment, by the time he got home, was paying too little heed to the "natural aristocracy" in the country, and was going rampantly off course.

Cooper's aristocratic tastes were displayed not only in his friendships and associations, but in his choices of residences. His preoccupation with homes and living space perhaps rivals that of Henry James and Edith Wharton. In Sorrento, the Coopers took the Villa Tasso, a spacious residence with a grand staircase and a view of the Naples Bay. In France, for a time, they chose an old villa with walled gardens, in St-Ouen, on the right bank of the Seine where they enjoyed the services of a gardener and a porter. Of the Cooper home in France in 1831-32 Robert Spiller writes, "The establishment of Fenimore Cooper was the home of a gentleman of means and taste, and its door was open to all who had sufficient culture to appreciate true hospitality."⁹

It is necessary to tell something about Cooper's activities and life abroad not only because it shows what kinds of things Cooper enjoyed and became accustomed to when he was away, but also because the way this lifestyle was perceived (and construed by political opposition) greatly affected the reception he and his works got back home. His residence abroad no doubt buffered him from the criticisms of his countrymen. He was aware, nonetheless, before his return, that something was amiss in his relationship with his Ameri-

can audience. In a letter to William Dunlap of March 16, 1832, he expressed his bewilderment over the reports.

I know not why it is so, but all that I see and hear gives me reason to believe that there is a great falling off in popular favor at home. I rarely see my name mentioned ever with respect in any American publication, and in some I see it coupled with impertinences that I cannot believe the writers would indulge in were I at home . . . (Spiller 214)

The tone of these remarks indicates how deeply Cooper was affected by these reports. A negative reaction was particularly unexpected and incomprehensible when the author had thought that he was, in word and deed, guarding American interests in an exemplary fashion. He had, while abroad, published four romances using American material--two sea tales, The Red Rover (1828) and The Water-Witch (1830), and The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish (1829) and The Prairie (1827). In writing Notions of Americans (1828) he thought he was doing his country a service in having his central character, John Cadwallader, explain to his unnamed English guest a number of points widely misperceived by travelers from the Old World to the New. The Bravo (1831), The Heidenmauer (1832) and The Headsman (1833)--all wholly European novels--Cooper thought of as demonstrating the abuses of various forms of tyranny, and, hence, implicitly supporting democratic ideals.

What was all the fuss about, then? While Cooper's intent in Notions of Americans was clear, the type of American democracy Cooper outlined and defended in that work was not entirely consis-

tent with the views being shaped by many Americans at the time. The bachelor guide, Mr. Cadwallader, is a man of breeding and common sense, much in the mold of Edward Effingham of Home as Found, who admits to social inequalities based on natural differences. Reviewers of the novels with European settings had many complaints, one of the most common being that Cooper had, in yoking romance with his political message, become confused, and that the works simply were not good. One review of The Headsman, for example, read: "We fear that [Cooper] has been too much a sojourner in the old world, has become fascinated by its antique prejudices, and its feudal pomp. . . . The injustice, absurdity, and impolicy of hereditary and noxious privileges are admirably portrayed and insisted upon through the whole work."¹⁰ Dekker and McWilliams summarize the critical reception of Cooper's work in this way:

The same charges were endlessly repeated: Cooper's early novels were only amusing extravaganzas, but are superior to anything he has written since he turned his back upon America in 1826. Cooper is a querulous egotist, supersensitive to criticism, anxious to equal Scott, but unworthy of him. The European novels prove Cooper's neglect of his native land, whereas the social novels and political writings are an outrageous libel on the American character. Cooper is a social climber without any gentlemanly background, who nonetheless apes European aristocracy and longs to establish a political aristocracy in America. Cooper's libel suits are an attempt to destroy freedom of the press or to gain him the fame necessary for high political offices which have long

eluded him. Cooper's writings are inferior to Irving's, Cooper isn't selling any longer, and no one cares about Cooper, anyway. (16)

With attitudes such as these prevailing, it is no wonder the author became somewhat demoralized. Even though many of these charges were not wholly true, their currency affected the novelist's reputation and public image.

Cooper finally came home because there was little more he could do to help his interests financially in Europe, because his daughters had received their European educations, and because--we might assume--he had seen the Old World to his satisfaction and simply wanted to come home to America. After having grown accustomed, in Europe, to a certain degree of respect from the highest and to a manner of living, his cool reception in America must have seemed a particularly dismal letdown. Cooper had envisioned his literary career as one in which he would be able to guide and influence public opinion. The public, though, it seemed to him, had chosen to go its own way. Shortly after his return, in "Letter to His Countrymen" (1834) Cooper announced that since the country did not want him he would end his literary career, a vow which he stuck to about as firmly as a confirmed better at the tracks who has sworn off gambling. And if he had not picked up his pen again, Cooper scholars would be relieved of reading works such as The Deerslayer, The Chainbearer, The Crater and--we return to it now--Home as Found.

III

Home as Found is certainly a novel, like many of the others in this study, whose virtues seem to expand when it is put in the context of the expatriate experience from which it comes. One reason--beyond Cooper's legendary bumbling style--the book has not been understood well is because the situation from which it emerged--the expatriate's return--is not such a common phenomenon. It might even be argued that the style itself in this novel, not so unlike the later James, might put some American readers off because of its discernibly "European" quality. The rather sharp satire of American ways, too, is apt to create some discomfort among zealous and uncritical patriots.

The main theme of Home as Found is announced in the opening pages of the novel where we see the young American heroine, Eve Effingham, just returned from a sojourn abroad, preparing to meet her cousin, Grace Van Cortlandt, with whom she has been intimate throughout her youth. "They retained for each other," we read, "the tenderest love, though the years that had separated them had given rise to so many new impressions and habits, that they did not prepare themselves for the interview without apprehension."¹¹ Cooper doubtless thought it important that these two young women should be cousins, "born within a month of each other," to demonstrate the extent to which differences could emerge, after a long period of separation, between two so closely associated through familial and cultural ties. The invention resembles James's use of the double in "The Jolly Corner," where one self has lived at home all his life

and the other has been expatriated. Eve and Grace (just as Strether and Mrs. Newsome) can be thought of, furthermore, as symbols, respectively, for the prodigal child or repatriating American, and the welcoming mother country. Eve has fallen, by staying away from home so long, and is seeking Grace. Upon her return Eve, expectedly, would be asked, "Oh! Aren't you happy to be back home again?" with the desired repentent reply being "Oh, yes, there is nothing like America! I am so thrilled to be back again in this great land of freedom and beauty!" The hesitation, even apprehension, each young lady feels prior to their first "interview" is just this: Grace is not certain that Eve, in truth, will praise her native land, and Eve, knowing what is expected, fears that she may not be able to give the expected response honestly and convincingly. Cooper tells us of the reservations each young lady has of the other:

. . . Miss Effingham perceived certain peculiarities about Miss Van Cortlandt that she had rather were absent; and Miss Van Cortlandt would have felt more at her ease had Miss Effingham a little less reserve of manner on certain subjects that the latter had been taught to think interdicted. (4)

Nonetheless, the two enjoy enough natural affinity to greet one another warmly.

On a subsequent meeting, three or four days later (which Cooper jumps to with only slight warning) these initial, unstated apprehensions are articulated and thus gain more force. Grace pops the question which Cooper, in various ways, spends much of the novel answering: "I wish I knew your real opinion of us, Eve. . . . Why

not be frank with so near a relative; tell me honestly, now--are you reconciled to your country?" (6). With her immediate reply--that she has never quarrelled with her country--Eve politely deflects the question and is spared the ardure of revealing her true feelings, but her cousin persists and Eve, whose views bear quite a bit of resemblance to those we would imagine Cooper held, speaks about things the way she sees them. It is not long before it becomes apparent that the two hold divergent views on the American political system, New York social life, and many other things.

This, then, is the departure point for Cooper's novel, which takes on some of the characteristics of a cluster bomb. Its targets are diffuse and their locations are not always precisely known, so the explosions are a bit chaotic, as missiles zip off in myriad directions. It embodies that quality of satire implied by the reputed Latin etymology of the word--satura, meaning full. One contemporary reviewer of the novel in fact called it "the bursting out of superabundant bile, and that after the manner of a general deluge." He went on to complain that "every page has a fling at something which belongs to us, our architecture, our literary institutions, our scientific associations, our political anniversaries, our foreign ambassadors, our laws, our liberties, and our modes of life."¹² In addition to the criticisms mentioned, Cooper blasts the squabbling Protestant sects, and the selfish distortions of the media (newspapers). He ridicules local gossip and Fourth of July celebrations. To Cooper's treatment of some of these matters we shall now turn.

From the outset of the novel Cooper satirizes American manners.

Just after the opening scene we just looked at, the two cousins learn of the arrival of Aristabulus Bragg, who bears the brunt of so many of Cooper's biting barbs. Eve Effingham, who is eager to find out, before meeting him, something about this man who serves as the family's attorney, is directed by her cousin to the notebooks of Mr. Effingham where he has conveniently written that in Bragg there is "such a compound of shrewdness, impudence, common sense, pretension, humility, cleverness, vulgarity, kind-heartedness, duplicity, selfishness, law-honesty, moral fraud, and mother-wit, mixed up with a smattering of learning and much penetration in practical things" (10). What follows, nearly relentlessly, in the remaining four hundred pages of the novel, is a procession of indictments against the prevalent manners and customs of the motherland.

The gulf between returning expatriate and native is much greater between the young Miss Effingham and Bragg than between Eve and her cousin. Bragg is not family (though he presumptuously entertains the notion of marriage to Eve), he is of another class, and he is male. This very sense of difference is, in fact, what Bragg first notices and finds offensive and off-putting, for Bragg's democratic version of the world admits neither differences of kind nor differences in human quality. Refusing to acknowledge the sense of difference he observes, he affects an air of intimacy and familiarity, and becomes rather indignant when his friendly manner is met with "a distance he could not explain."

Eve's speech and manners, which evolved during her European sojourn, immediately distinguish her from her countrymen, Bragg in particular. Once John Effingham has returned and rescued the young

ladies from Bragg, they all sit down to dine. We are told that never before had Bragg dined at a table lit by candles, and when he begins to eat he "used his knife as a coal-heaver uses a shovel"

(17). The scene is filled out in the following description:

The service at Mr. Effingham's table was made in the quiet but thorough manner that distinguishes a French dinner.

Every dish was removed, carved by the domestics and handed in turn to each guest. But there were a delay and a finish in this arrangement that suited neither Aristabulus' go-ahead-ism, nor his organ of acquisitiveness. Instead of waiting, therefore, for the more graduated movements of the domestics, he began to take care of himself, an office that he performed with a certain dexterity that he had acquired by frequenting ordinaries--a school, by the way, in which he had obtained most of his notions of the proprieties of the table. One or two slices were obtained in the usual manner, or by means of the regular service; and then, like one who had laid the foundation of a fortune by some lucky windfall in the commencement of his career, he began to make accessions, right and left, as opportunity offered. (18)

The primary object of satire certainly is Bragg, though there may be a slight hint of mockery--intentional or otherwise--of the Effingham's rigid sense of propriety. The passage goes on; Cooper is often verbose. What is interesting to note in this passage is the way in which Bragg's brash manners are described in terms which associate "bad manners," or even the complete absence of manners,

with a dominant economic spirit where those who seek economic gain have absolutely no scruples and admit no constraints to their God-given right to rape/reap the material benefits of the land. Bragg is satirized, then, not only for his bad manners but for participating in the spirit of unscrupulous, unrestrained opportunism which was rampant then as it is yet today. Cooper slips his jabs in where ever he can. At the dinner table, Sir George Templeton, a guest of the Effingham's who has been with them on the Montauk trans-Atlantic crossing, asks what ventures lawyers are turning to if they are not practicing law. "'Some, our way, have gone into the horse line; but much the greater portion are just now dealing in Western cities. . . . In such articles, and in mill--seats, and railroad lines, and other expectations. . . . Great fortunes have been made on a capital of homes, lately, in this country" (21). We learn that Bragg himself has been out west speculating while he was supposed to have been minding the Effingham estate. In Bragg we see all the characteristics of the opportunist who arrogantly pushes ahead with his schemes, governed only by his desire to get the best return on his dollar, with neither a concern for good taste nor for public welfare. If there be any doubt of Cooper's own views of philosophies such as those Bragg holds, it is cleared up in authorial comments on the character such as: "With him everything was eligible that returned a good profit, and all things honest that the law did not actually punish" (22).

Cooper uses the Effingham's foreign guests, in this case the English nobleman Sir George, to register astonishment, incredulosity, or shock at American practices or customs which Cooper himself

is alarmed or disgusted by. Later in the novel, during a trip to the stock market, Mademoiselle Vieffville, Eve's French governess, naively asks "What are all these people running after so intently?" "'Dollars, I believe, Mademoiselle,'" Eve replies (100). John Effingham then takes time to explain to his foreign guests, Sir George especially, the law of his land: "'All principles are swallowed up in the absorbing desire for gain--national honor, permanent security, the ordinary rules of society, law, the constitution, and everything that is usually so dear to men, are forgotten, or are perverted in order to sustain this unnatural condition of things'" (103).

Cooper's views on the nature of the workings of the American economic system remind us of those expressed by James, Cowley, and Miller upon their returns to America. James and Miller, like Henry Adams, for example, while impressed by the vast amounts of energy exerted by the young nation, were deeply troubled by the objects toward which that energy was directed, the emphasis on selfish economic gain, heedless of aesthetic interest or greater purpose. Each enterprising entrepreneur went his way without much concern for what the other was doing. Echoing Madame de Vieffville, in The Air-Conditioned Nightmare Miller asks, "This frenzied activity which has us all, rich and poor, weak and powerful, in its grip--where is it leading us?"¹³

One finds, when one tries to unravel Cooper's social, political, and aesthetic criticisms--just as one finds in James's American Scene--that the strands do not separate easily. One suspects, even, that they are not meant to separate easily, for the actual subject

is the whole of American culture and each facet observed must be seen as in some way reflecting or affecting its neighboring facets. Cooper's thinking, though, seems to be guided by a few fundamental concerns. Perhaps the most basic of these involves the difference between what might be termed "mimetic" or "inherited" forms and "natural" or "organic" forms, a distinction which at once might rightly call to mind Shelley, Coleridge and other Romantic theorists of the constitutive properties of the imagination. Mimetic or inherited forms, in political, social, or aesthetic spheres, would be those cultural practices in which we merely copy from what has existed prior to ourselves. Organic or natural forms would be those which have sprung naturally from whatever circumstances surrounded them. The questions were certainly live ones for the young American nation. Of course (and this is what Cooper struggled with) neither practice precludes the other: the purely original is neither possible nor desirable; even the attempt to imitate exactly is bound to incorporate unintended deviations. Eric Sundquist, who has done much to give Cooper's novel prominence by taking its title as the title of his recent Freudian-based study of genealogy and authority in four representative 19th century American texts, has produced one of the most interesting, recent readings of Home as Found. In his reading, Sundquist shows himself to be keenly aware of the bind Cooper is caught in--between a seemingly endless cycle of repetition (biologically and psychologically determined) and the emergence of novel forms. "In Home as Found," he writes, "as in all his fiction, Cooper is concerned with the social clashes and the barriers that keep one group clean and cast out another." He goes on to say that

"what continually haunts Cooper is that too far outside of society [organic forms, Rousseauvian nature] is lawlessness and anarchy, but too deep inside it [imitation, incest] is denial of freedom if not outright suffocation."¹⁴ In other words, Cooper uncomfortably tries to situate himself between the chaos, at one end of the spectrum of movement, and stagnation at the other.

One first feels the tension between the mimetic force and the organic force in the descriptions of New York society, toward the beginning of the novel, as the Effinghams and their European guests, Sir George Templemore and Captain Truck, mingle socially at the Jarvis', the Hawker's, the Houston's, and Mrs. Legend's "literary" salon. "I am desirous to know," Sir George inquires before they set out, "if you have your sets, as we have them in London and Paris. Whether you have your Foubourge St. Germain and your Chausee d'Antin; your Piccadilly, Grosvenor and Russell Squares'" (32). Sir George is not the only one to measure the American social scene against the European. The Americans themselves, defensively, fearing that they might not meet the mark, want to be thought of as having everything their European counterparts have. The standard to which things must rise, then, is a European standard. Even if they have not consciously formed their patterns of social interaction on European models, even if those social doyennes have never heard of or seen their European counterparts, they are nonetheless influenced by an idea of what they are, and their own forms are in some way copies (lesser versions) of those original forms over there in Europe. Very early in the novel, when Grace asks Eve "'And is not this what is called society in Paris?'" Eve replies: "'As far from

it as possible; it may be an excrescence of society; one of its forms; but by no means society itself" (7). The problem, in social organization as well as with other matters, is that America wanted to assert her independence from Europe and at the same time win her acceptance as an equal.

In a scene at the Houston's ball, Cooper very pointedly satirizes what he takes as the American tendency to imitate blindly, without any thought as to taste or fitness. Mr. John Effingham has introduced Aristabulus Bragg and Captain Truck to Miss Ring, a young American debutante, and Miss Ring, mistakenly thinking them both to be European noblemen of some kind, is interested in hearing of their reactions to the party. Bragg responds:

"I find but a single fault with this entertainment, which is, in all else, the perfection of elegance in my eyes, and that is, that there is too little room to swing the legs in dancing."

"Indeed? I did not expect that--is it not the best usage of Europe, now, to bring a quadrille into the very minimum of space?"

"Quite the contrary, Miss. All good dancing requires evolutions. The dancing dervishes, for instance, would occupy quite as much space as both of these sets that are walking before us, and I believe it is now generally admitted that all good dancing needs room for the legs."

"We necessarily get a little behind the fashions, in this distant country." (73-4)

America here, insofar as she is represented by Miss Ring, gets it from both sides. She is first portrayed as being so naive and indiscriminate as to mistake one of her own fools for a man of taste; then she is portrayed as being willing, willy-nilly, to follow any new European fashion.

Cooper's social satire is not unlike that in Proust, Austen, or Wharton. While each deplores and ridicules the inanity and pettinesses of society, and heightens the hypocrisy which seems almost inevitably to accompany any society with competing, aspiring social gyrations, none would, if pressed, wish, God forbid, that the society suddenly stop making distinctions, offering invitations, putting on teas or balls, dressing fashionably, speaking publically around dinner tables, paying visits to one another, or leaving cards. For Cooper, as well as for Proust, social distinctions are a necessarily corollary to any kind of cultivated society. The grave danger (and the great occasion for irony and satire) is when people fail to recognize their natural positions and very clumsily pretend to be other than who they really are. Yet pretense, or imitation, is precisely what allows the debutante eventually to rise to other circles.

Cooper, like most satirists, is more concerned with exposing the inconsistencies and follies of society than with finding satisfactory resolutions. This is the case when it comes to Cooper's satire on American politics, too. While anyone who has studied Cooper will readily admit that his thinking on political matters is difficult to sort out, all concede that political organization and philosophy is one of his central concerns. Very often, in fact,

readers of Home as Found may forget they are reading a novel and think that they are reading a political science text book. But, the fact is that it is a novel, and that we get conflicting ideas on governmental forms, from different characters and even, sometimes, from the same characters. While we may often feel where Cooper's sympathies lie, we cannot always be sure, and since it is a novel, he is never forced clearly to tell us.¹⁵

The political debates in the novel seem to form around the relative merits of a populist democracy and patrician republican rule. The question for Cooper, and his characters, in the 1830's, was not whether or not a democratic system was best; it was, rather, what kind of democracy they favored. To get some sense of the issues we might look at statements made by various characters in the novel. Early in the novel Sir George Templemore, talking with Eve just after meeting Aristabulus Bragg, rejects in jest the notion that such a man could ever have any hopes of becoming President of the nation. "One cannot answer for that," Eve replies. "The instant you do away with the claims of hereditary power, the door is opened to a new chapter of accidents" (30). But a few pages later she suggests that "one has more reason to be proud of ancestors who have been chosen to fill responsible positions, than of ancestors who have filled them through the accidents, heureux ou malheureux, of birth" (35). We would assume that Cooper, like Eve, is wrestling with the positions expressed in these two statements. What Cooper seemed to have hoped would emerge from the American experiment was a system in which, those among each generation who were best qualified to rule and guide tastes would be naturally selected. Here again,

the issue turns on the value one places on "hereditary" forms (a traditional aristocracy) and the possibility for infusions of novel, fresh personalities and ideas, from wherever in society they may come. As in the case of social organization, the one practice leads toward stagnation, the other to chaos. Cooper would have been uncomfortable with either extreme, but more so with any system governed wholly by the whims of the majority, which sway hither and thither with any change in the wind. Some kind of natural aristocracy, revitalized every generation, was his ideal. His views would have come close to those Mr. Jarvis expresses after his wife has insisted that she has the right to be considered equal to anyone else in society: "'A republic does not necessarily infer equality of condition, or even equality of rights--it merely meaning the substitution of the right of the commonwealth for the right of the prince'" (43-44). A narrative comment later in the novel may even come closer to expressing Cooper's notion of republican democracy:

In America, the gross mistake has been made of supposing, that, because the mass rules in a political sense, it has a right to be listened to and obeyed in all other matters--a practical deduction that can only lead, under the most favorable exercise of power, to a very humble mediocrity. It is to be hoped that time, and a greater concentration of taste, liberality, and knowledge than can well distinguish a young and scattered population, will repair this evil, and that our children will reap the harvest of the broad fields of intelligence that have been sown by ourselves. (317)

The tension between copying and invention can be seen most clearly perhaps in the aesthetic realm. Cooper himself was self-consciously aware of the pitfalls and advantages of imitation as he began his writing career by reading Jane Austen closely and writing his first novel, Precaution. At various times in his career his name, like Irving's, was linked to Scott's with the adjective "second-rate" attached. The question for Cooper's generation of American writers, as is well known, was how much of Europe to incorporate and how much to abandon. And though Cooper may have begun by looking toward Europe, his concern was always for finding a novel way to represent distinctive American struggles within an American context.

In Home as Found the returning expatriates are appalled by the literary tastes of their homeland. What was bad was being applauded by fans and newspapers as being good. Cooper often satirically refers to the dismal state of popular tastes. One of the sections with the most intense concentration on the issue is at Mrs. Legend's literary salon, where the Effinghams have taken their illustrious European companion Captain Truck, whom rumor has made into a famous English author. The unwitting Americans gather round the cigar-smoking old salt, asking him his opinions on everything from Byron, Gatty (Goethe), Chat-to-bri-ong and, most importantly of all, the fashionability of smoking. The nature of the satire reminds one of Swift in The Battle of the Books. In describing who is present, Cooper proclaims his judgment on the state of contemporary American literature. In addition to Steadfast Dodge, the shifty, though popular, globe-trotting journalist who surfaces from time to time in

the novel, we are given a list of formidable talents:

Then there were the authors of "Lapis Lazuli," "The Aunts," "The Reformed," "The Conformed," "The Transformed," and "The Deformed"; with the editors of "The Hebdomad," "The Night Cap," "The Chrysalis," "The Real Maggot," and "The Seek no Further"; as also, "Junius," "Junius Brutus," "Lucius Junius Brutus," "Captain Kant," "Florio," the author of "The History of Billy Linkum Tweedle," the celebrated Pottawattamie Prophet, "Single Rhyme," a genius who had prudently rested his fame in verse on a couplet composed of one line. (83)

There is, in the satire, a clear indictment of the tendency to copy classical forms (significantly the play with titles involves various derivatives of the the word "form") thoughtlessly or to write proudly and grandly of the trivial.

Cooper brings up the issue of imitation more explicitly (and with more successful comic effect) as he creates a discussion of Byron. Mrs. Legend asks the Effinghams if they know Florio, an American poet whose chief characteristics are, in her words, "'Sentiment, pathos, delicacy, and all in rhyme, too.'"

"Why, Byron wrote an ode to Greece commencing with 'The Isles of Greece! the Isles of Greece!' a very feeble line, as any one will see, for it contained a useless and an unmeaning repetition."

"And you might add vulgar, too, Mrs. Legend," said John Effingham, "since it made a palpable allusion to all those

vulgar incidents that associate themselves in the mind with these said commonplace isles. The arts, philosophy, poetry, eloquence, and even old Homer, are brought unpleasantly to one's recollection by such an indiscreet invocation." (87-88)

Florio, wanting to improve upon Byron (America wanting to surpass Europe), it turns out, has written an ode not to Greece, but to England. And what are its opening lines? "Beyond the wave! beyond the wave!" "Now, Miss Effingham, that is what I call poetry!" Mrs. Legend bursts out, displaying fully her misguided judgment. Just as with the political issue, though, Cooper reaches no satisfactory resolution on the question of aesthetic or literary imitation. He is keenly aware that there must be imitation--we must continually read our past and be influenced by its forms--but what we create, after exposure, should, if it is to be of any value, respond pointedly to immediate cultural conditions.

Cooper, like James and Henry Adams, was a great reader of architectural forms, which are the most obvious concrete manifestations of a nation's values, the enduring structures which, every day of their lives, silently communicate with their human inhabitants and subtly shape their ideas. The nature of society might well be judged by the forms it constructs to live in. The dominant image in Home as Found is an architectural one--the Wigwam, the Templeton home to which the Effinghams are returning. When the home is first mentioned, by Aristabulus Bragg, we see how much Cooper (somewhat along the lines of Schiller in his Aesthetical Letters) considered aesthetic and political values to be inextricably interwoven. The

status of the structure is criticized by Bragg because "public opinion is not yet quite up to" the design. Eve cannot see where such matters should be any of the public's business. "I can understand that one would wish to see his neighbor use good taste, as it helps to embellish a country; but the man who should consult the whole neighborhood before he built would be very apt to cause a complicated house to be erected, if he paid much respect to the different opinions he received; or, what is quite as likely, apt to have no house at all" (15). Cooper's concern is that the creative ideas of genius could so easily be thwarted by people whose visions were fragmented and short-sighted. He also seemed to believe, as did Schiller, that good tastes led, ultimately, to a desirable moral condition. The architectural metaphor applies to all aspects of society.

On the question of architecture, too, comparisons are made between America and Europe. As Eve prepares for a visit to Mrs. Houston, Grace warns her not to compare the residence with those she has known abroad. "'Although Mrs. Houston has a very large house for New York, and lives in a uniform style, you are not to expect antechambers and vast suites of rooms, Eve, . . . such as you have been accustomed to see abroad'" (60). The warning does little good. Eve finds Mrs. Houston's quarters cramped. The architecture does not make room for an ample, free-flowing grace and elegance.

In many instances, judging by what some of the more sympathetic characters in the novel say, Cooper would have European architecture, and indeed European forms of society, copied and placed on American soil. Yet, the matter is not, for Cooper or for the

Effinghams, a simple one, for the writer recognizes as well that for forms to be enduring and truly expressive of a people and their condition, they must spring organically from the elements which are available in the native context. So, for example, just as he finds lacking many of the noble, grand features of European architecture, he deplores the unthinking imitation of Greek or Roman forms. On their boatripe up the Hudson River, from New York, the Effingham party discusses the proliferation along the route of structures modeled after Greek Temples. Ned Effingham judges it as particularly vulgar since incongruous appendages such as chimneys have been added and because the people seem to have no conception of the sacred form they are living in. There is even mention of a market-house made on the plan of the Parthenon, a gross disjunction of form and function. John Effingham later sums up the problem:

The fault just now is perhaps to consult the books too rigidly, and to trust too little to invention for no architecture, and especially no domestic architecture, can ever be above serious reproach, until climate, the uses of the edifice, and the situation, are respected as leading considerations."

(113)

Effingham's/Cooper's notions of an organic, native architecture which considers particular human needs and seeks a harmonious interaction between natural space and man-made structure seems to anticipate Frank Lloyd Wright, or perhaps even the contemporary Egyptian architect, Hassan Fathy.

Cooper's concern for comfortable, comforting, or pleasing

structures might have something to do with his psychological state as a returning expatriate. More than other species of men, perhaps, the returning vagabond, tired of movement, craves stability. Consequently, in light of this desire he may find the changes which have gone on and are going on to be unsettling. Well-known are some of James's aborted attempts to recover the traces of his childhood in places where he once lived as a boy. On Washington Place in New York he finds a garrulous modern structure, a shirtwaist factory, on the site of his birthplace, a discovery which gives him the feeling of "having been amputated of half my history."¹⁶ In Boston, for much the same reason, he tries to track down a former residence on Ashburton Place and finds "the pair of ancient houses I was in quest of had kept their tryst" (228). Yet, when he returned a month later "to see if another whiff of the fragrance were not to be caught," he "found but a gaping void, the brutal effacement, at a stroke, of every related object, of the whole precious past. Both the houses had been levelled and the space to the corner cleared; hammer and pickaxe had evidently begun to swing on the very morrow of my previous visit--which had moreover been precisely the imminent doom announced, without my understanding it, in the poor scared faces" (229). Earlier in the work James had written: "What was taking place was a perpetual repudiation of the past, so far as there had been a past to repudiate, so far as the past was a positive rather than a negative quantity" (53). He speaks more generally in The American Scene of phenomena "occurring in the historic void, as having to present themselves in the hard light of that desert, and as needing to extort from it, so far as they can, something of the

shading of their interest" (358). The past James speaks of is a personal past, the structure which had housed memory, as well as a cultural past. It might be argued that he felt the erosion of that past more acutely because he had, like Rip Van Winkle, been absent while it was going on.

Cooper, even earlier than James, was disturbed by the cult of impermanence which, like a wrecking ball, demolished old structures with no compunctions. Like James, he believed that the development of aesthetic and moral values depended on a degree of stability and the continuity of a tradition. If people were always moving around, they formed no loyalties. (For the same reason, we shall see, he believed strongly in private property.) Again, by manipulating the character Bragg, Cooper resorts to satire. In the same dinner-table conversation previously mentioned, Bragg talks about "movers" in society. And when Sir George asks Effingham just who these "movers" are and how many of them there are, he admits that there are a great many and their habit was continuously to move around, willy-nilly, trying to track down the best opportunity they could find. The conversation gravitates towards a discussion of the role history plays in Europe and America. Responding to Sir George, Bragg boasts:

Why, sir, in the way of history, one meets with but few incumbrances in this country, but he may do very much as interest dictates, so far as that is concerned, at least. A nation is much to be pitied that is weighed down by the past, in this manner, since its industry and enterprise are constantly impeded by obstacles that grow out of its recollec-

tions. America may, indeed, be termed a happy and free country, Mr. John Effingham, in this, as well as in all other things!" (23)

Bragg sees nothing which might be worth saving (not even money, it seems) and shows more glee than remorse over the fact that his own birthplace was torn down shortly after he was born. Cooper's own thinking, we can safely assume, was closer to the sentiments Sir George Templemore expresses: "We love to continue for generations on the same spot. We love the tree that our forefathers planted, the roof that they built, the fireside by which they sat, the sods that cover their remains'" (23). Cooper's concern was more than sentimental, it was far-reaching. He saw ahead the ruinous effects of an imprudent ethic of speculation. His might be thought of as an ecological concern as well as a concern for enduring values which lasted for more than a generation. When the Effinghams return to Templeton, "more than half of the forest of tall, solemn pines, that had veiled the earth when the country was first settled, had already disappeared" (201). Little thought was being given, Cooper felt, to what would be left for future generations.

The final, central concern of Cooper's I mention here, linked to buildings and political organization, is the relation between property and governance. This matter, as well as all those mentioned above, is squarely within the project the author has created, a project whose intentions are suggested in the work's title--Home as Found. "Home" figures in several ways within the novel: as an idea, as real estate or an actual property owned and lived in, and as country.

"Found" carries with it both the notion of "discovered after being lost" and "created or established." The whole novel is, it seems, an exploration of the meanings of home, and attempts, within the form, to effect some kind of bridging of difference.

The condition home--as idea, nation and property--was found in upon the expatriates' return was, especially at first, alarming. The controversy in the novel surrounding the Point is based, as is well-known, on parallel circumstances in the author's own affairs. During his time abroad a piece of land jutting out into Lake Oswego, owned by the Cooper family for several generations, had been used by the public. Upon his return, Cooper had a chain set up across the entrance, barring access to all those who had become accustomed to using the spot for recreation. This, along with proclamations Cooper published in the local paper, caused an uproar in the community, like the commotion and controversy in Home as Found. Subsequent law suits did little to calm the feelings on either side.

Toward the end of the novel, in a conversation with Mrs. Bloomfield, John Effingham is asked what the greatest shortcoming of our nation is. "'Provincialisms,'" he answers, "'with their train of narrow prejudices, and a disposition to set up mediocrity as perfection, under the double influence of an ignorance that unavoidably arises from a want of models, and of the irresistible tendency to mediocrity, in a nation where the common mind so imperiously rules'" (375). Throughout the novel Cooper seems to hold that the cosmopolitan, the returning pilgrim (for example himself or the characters who most staunchly represent his views in the novel) has a better vantage from which to make judgments and offer criticisms.

Miss Effingham voices this view very early in the novel: "These gentlemen [who have been abroad] having become familiar with better things in the way of the tastes and of the purely agreeable, cannot discredit their own knowledge so much as to extol that which their own experience tells them is faulty, or condemn that which their own experience tells them is relatively good" (31). How can a judgment of what is good, better or best be made, Cooper suggests, without any understanding of another term--either acquaintance with history or with other cultures? Very frequently Cooper tries to establish for the outsider a privileged position from which the truth can be more clearly discerned; one cannot see the field from within the field. "'One who had passed a life here would not have come so near the truth, simply because he would not have observed peculiarities that require the means of comparison to be detected,'" John Effingham says to Templemore on one occasion after the baronet has made a few observations on the nature of American women. And words uttered by Paul Powis, as he notes that American envoys abroad are often the most powerful critics of their homeland, coming out against even the most sacred political institutions, must embody some of the author's own views. Powis submits that these returning patriots no longer feel the "necessity for hypocrisy" and that "they very well know that no one will be able to expose them" (227, 338).

Yet, this view does not find much favor with the Americans in the novel. In fact, it is met with much resistance. Bragg tells Miss Effingham that she would be best not to express judgments concerning her homeland if they are not likely to coincide with popular thinking on matters. Grace shows a great distrust of those

'Hajjis' or American pilgrims returning from Paris (not Mecca); they tended to be arrogant and snobbish. Perhaps Emerson captured some of Grace's sentiments (and even those of Aristabulus Bragg) when, only a few years after this novel was written, he boldly proclaimed in "The American Scholar," "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe."¹⁷ Emerson, of course, had a purpose in mind when he spoke these words. We must remember that America, then, was more like a Third World country both awed by, yet struggling to become free from the dominant European powers.

The outcome of the novel is considerably more hopeful and neater than any kind of reconciliation Cooper himself was able to affect with his country. It is often felt that the ending of a work of art calls for neater conclusions than life can achieve. The Point controversy is resolved in the Effinghams' favor. Steadfast Dodge, the editor of The Active Inquirer, whose crassness and lack of integrity rival Mr. Bragg's, disappears. Bragg himself is dismissed by Effingham when Eve reveals that he has asked her to marry him. Eve finds in Templeton the home she has sought, ["In the Wigwam . . . there was more of keeping, and a closer attention to the many little things she had been accustomed to consider essential to comfort and elegance." (150)] and Eve marries Paul Powis, last seen in this novel's predecessor, Homeward Bound, as he was being whisked away by authorities from The Montauk. Powis mysteriously reappears and his identity, through an improbable and complicated sequence of admissions, guesses and production of evidence, is shown to be John Effingham's son. The marriage--within the family--then acts willfully to preserve a traditional order.¹⁸ The formulation

is, again, not a simple one. Paul Powis is seen by Eve as a likely candidate for marriage before his true identity is revealed. Likewise, John Effingham willingly chooses Powis as his heir before he knows that he is his legitimate son. In other words, the sequence described here replicates the nature of what Cooper would consider the best possible system of government and the secession of power. Rulers would be elected, and over time derive legitimacy from the discovery that they indeed, in a kind of natural hierarchy, were the best which could be found. If nothing else, it is an end philosophically compatible with the political ideas expressed in the novel.

The reconciliation at the end of Home as Found strikes the reader as being artificial, a deus ex machina brought in by the author simply to conclude. And certainly it is a happier conclusion than that in Cooper's own life. Robert Spiller in his book on Cooper notes an exchange between Cooper and one of his friends, an Englishman on a vessel in New York harbor, as the American author is leaving for Europe.

"How long do you mean to be absent?"

"Five years."

"You will never come back." (Spiller 100)

Jefferson, too, had once warned that a man should go abroad for no more than five years, lest he fall behind his nation. There is also Hawthorne's parable "Wakefield," which tells of a man who abandons his wife for some twenty years, living an amputated existence in a street next to his former home. "He has left us with much food for

thought," Hawthorne concludes the tale, "a portion of which shall lend its wisdom to a moral, and be shaped into a figure. Amid the seeming confusion of our mysterious world, individuals are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another and to a whole, that, by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever. Like Wakefield, he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe."¹⁹

The Englishman's prediction, at any rate, came true, though not in a literal sense. Cooper, the last decade of his life, struggled unsuccessfully to find a satisfying, appreciated place in American life. He never could adjust to the phase the nation was going through--Jacksonian democracy, the Westward expansion, etc. The later Cooper, for a multitude of reasons, may not have satisfied his readers as much as had the writer of the Leatherstocking tales--although Dekker notes that in the middle and late forties sales of Cooper's novels were at twenties levels, though royalties were down and newspaper and journal notices negligible.²⁰ Cooper may not be altogether blameless for the reception he received. Rather arrogantly he insisted on living in the same manner he had abroad and often stubbornly resisted the customs of his own land. Had he actually been a foreigner his anomalous behavior might have been tolerated; being an American he was expected to act like one. Home as Found chronicles Cooper's attempt to heal divisions--social, national and personal--which though perhaps always inherent in his character, were made all the more evident by his expatriation and return. As such, it stands as yet another literary expression of the American expatriate experience.

Notes to Chapter Seven

¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun (New York: Airmont, 1966), p. 313.

²Malcolm Cowley, Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920's (New York: Viking Press, 1951), p. 196. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

³Alfred Schutz, "The Homecomer," in v. 2 Collected Papers: Studies in Social Theory (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 106-7; 113.

⁴Hugh Ford, ed. and intro. to Harold Stearns, Confessions of a Harvard Man: 1920's and 30's (Santa Barbara, CA: Paget Press, 1984), p. xxiii. (Stearns' work was originally published in 1935 under the title The Street I Know.)

⁵Life and Letters of Washington Irving, v. 2 (London: George Bell, 1908), p. 490.

⁶Michael Seidel, Exile and the Narrative Imagination (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. xi. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

⁷Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle," in The Works of Washington Irving v. 1 (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1897), p. 89-90. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

⁸John P. McWilliams, Jr., Political Justice in a Republic:

James Fenimore Cooper's America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 186.

⁹Robert E. Spiller, Fenimore Cooper: Critic of His Time (New York: Minton, Balch and Co, 1931), p. 190. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

¹⁰Metropolitan Magazine (October 1833), p. 409-10, cited in George Dekker and John P. McWilliams, eds. Fenimore Cooper: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 171.

¹¹James Fenimore Cooper, Home as Found: A Novel of Social Criticism and Observation (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961), p. 3. Subsequent references to the novel will be from this edition.

¹²"Cooper's Last Works," New York Review iv. Jan. 1839, 209-221, cited in Dekker and McWilliams, The Critical Heritage, p. 184-7.

¹³Henry Miller, The Air-Conditioned Nightmare (New York: New Directions, 1945), p. 29.

¹⁴Eric J. Sundquist, Home As Found: Authority and Genealogy in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 8. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

¹⁵For more explicit statements on Cooper's political beliefs readers will be best served by the writer's American Democrat (New York: Knopf, 1931).

¹⁶Henry James, The American Scene (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 91. Further references will be to this edition.

¹⁷Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in Selected Essays (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 104.

¹⁸See Sundquist's discussion of the wedding in Home As Found, p. 31.

¹⁹Dekker and McWilliams, p. 23.

²⁰Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Wakefield," in The Complete Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Garden City, N.Y.: Hanover House, 1959), p. 80.

What is far off may be more familiar to us than what is quite near.
Marcel Proust, Guermantes Way

CONCLUSION

It remains for me to give the screw one more turn and, by so doing, draw together two traditions which I have, throughout the preceding pages, noticeably kept apart. I have argued that American expatriate literature, by virtue of its distinct features, can be characterized as constituting a kind of genre unto itself. These novels that I have been discussing do something quite different from novels which have their genesis in, and are set on, American soil. The point which remains to be made is perhaps already obvious: Insofar as the American expatriate novel places itself on the outside of the American experience, it somewhat ironically places itself in the center. It would seem that the American expatriate tradition is simply one manifestation of that dominant strain of American literature which from its early days has been concerned with describing the sense of being on the outside of something one is supposedly a part of. R.W.B. Lewis has suggested that the central theme of American literature seems to be loneliness and alienation. Ours is "the story of the hero in space," he writes.¹ And, the hero begins (and ends, sometimes) on the "outside of the world, remote or on the verges" (129). Could not, in some ways, works like Poe's Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, Thoreau's Walden, Melville's Moby Dick, Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, Twain's Huckleberry Finn, and much of Emily Dickinson's poetry, be con-

sidered, insofar as it is a literature of internal exile, akin to expatriate literature? It is no coincidence that large portions of some of these works actually take place away from the shore--on rivers or at sea; even those works set entirely on American soil dwell on the desire to escape the bonds of community. In the way of conclusion, then, I want to return to some of these American classics and see what they look like when put against the expatriate experience I have been discussing.

Thoreau begins his account of his life on Walden Pond by suggesting that the two years and two months he spent there was a kind of exile from mainstream society. And when, in the second paragraph of his first chapter, "Economy," he describes his view of what good writing is, the analogy he uses is that of travel to "a distant land." "I, on my side," he writes, "require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely it must have been a distant land to me."²

It might thus be said--and we can imagine Thoreau would not object--that Walden itself, given this definition of good writing, could be considered a travel book, an account of a mind withdrawn from society, probing its own nature and challenging its most basic presuppositions. When Thoreau alludes to travel, he most often uses it as a figure for an operation of mind. Even when, as in A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, he uses the excursion as an organizing narrative principle, his primary concern is for what the trope stands for. In his "Conclusion" to Walden Pond, Thoreau attempts to

clarify just what he means by traveling, and we find that his, like Emerson's, is primarily a mental traveling. Actual, physical travel, in fact, is roundly dismissed as frivolous:

The universe is wider than our views of it. Yet we should oftener look over the taffarel of our craft, like curious passengers, and not make the voyage like stupid sailors picking oakum. The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent. Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing, and the doctors prescribe for diseases of the skin merely. One hastens to southern Africa to chase the giraffe; but surely that is not the game he would be after. How long, pray, would a man hunt giraffes if he could? Snipes and woodcocks also may afford rare sport; but I trust it would be nobler game to shoot one's self.--

"Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find
A thousand regions in your mind
Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be
Expert in home-cosmography."

. . . Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. . . . It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar. Yet do this even till you can do better, and you may perhaps find some "Symmes' Hole" by which to get at the inside at last. . . . (212-13)

Thoreau applauds exploration to the hilt, but turns real geography into metaphysical geography, suggesting that the romance can be

"abroad" at home, and challenging the notion that truth is to be had "out there." Despite all his exhortations against "real" travel, Thoreau's own project--to set himself outside the usual world of the commerce and activity of his own society, and to think back on what it was he was apart of--embodies the same patterns and rationale we find in expatriate writing.

Home, as Thoreau realized, is a state of mind as well as a place inhabited: "The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent." It seemed slightly ridiculous to Thoreau, then, for a person to flee from his home, in search of home. Everything was to be had here! In a journal entry distinctly related to this point, he writes:

Think of the consummate folly of attempting to go away from here! When the constant endeavor should be to get nearer and nearer here. . . . A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in its calyx, like an acorn in its cup. Here, of course, is all that you love, all that you expect, all that you are. Here is your bride elect, as close to you as she can be got.³

In Moby Dick there is an impulse similar to that behind the experiment at Walden Pond. What sets Melville's castaway narrator, Ishmael, into motion, is a desire to get away from land. The idea of travel in Moby Dick, as in all quests, is both geographic and metaphysical. The narrative itself, by its very movement, suggests a departure from the simple transcendental notion of travel. Barely does Ishmael identify himself before he says there is "nothing to

interest me on shore."⁴ He distinguishes between the landlubbing love of security and the adventure-seeking sailor. "As for me," he tells us, "I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote. I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts" (16). These motives soon lead us into a narrative the vast bulk of which takes place at sea, away from America. If not, strictly speaking, an expatriate novel, it is at least a tale of being away from the mainland, and this small community aboard the Pequod, bound together by a maniacal search, takes on some of the characteristics of an expatriate community.

It might seem to be stretching the point to say that many of the fundamental conflicts in The Scarlet Letter are to be found as well in the American expatriate novel. Yet, the similarities easily can be admitted. The major tension in Hawthorne's classic is between the town and the forest. The town is the place where social moral codes are strictly insisted upon and punishment carried out. The forest is the place where secrets are revealed, witches meet and a kind of dark obscurity prevails. In other words, the Salem community might be thought of as representing "home," while the forest serves many of the purposes (psychologically and structurally) that "abroad" serves in the expatriate novel.

Certainly one of the great American novels about expatriation (of a sort) is Huckleberry Finn. As we all know, the dialectic in the novel is between shore and river, neither which can exist without the other, each which defines and shapes the other. From the outset of the novel Huck--not unlike Ishmael or many characters in expatriate novels, from Isabel Archer to Nelson Dyar--expresses a

desire to escape the limitations of life on the shore. Speaking of life with the Widow Douglas, Huck says "it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer, I lit out."⁵ Huck wishes to escape the sense of routine and drudgery, rules of conduct, reminders of his embarrassing, drunken father, and religious discipline. "All I wanted was to go some-where; all I wanted was a change, I warn't particular," he tells us. (8) Once the narrative moves away from the shore, the reader, along with the narrator, feels an ecstatic sense of liberation. On the river, there is freedom from social commitments, there is a continual movement, there is an abundance of play and little work. "Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft" (96). There is also, on the river, removed from the established mores of the shore, the possibility for kinds of camaraderie (black-white; male-male) which would have been beyond the bounds of propriety on the shore. The kind of friendship and loyalty which develops between Huck and Jim on the raft might remind us of that which develops between Jake and Gorton on their fishing trip in Northern Spain. Things happen, adrift, which could not happen on the shore.

Life on the river--this altered existence--results in a shift of perspective for Huck (and probably for Jim as well, though it is more difficult to gauge Jim's reactions in the narrative) which is not unlike the double consciousness which develops in Strether's mind. While romance is the condition sought after, it always is threatened by the exigencies of real, tangible facts. The "shore

mentality" (a monied economy, deceitfulness, feuding, law, marriage, bondage and religious constraint) always pushes in. Readers of Twain's novel cannot help noticing the growing sense of shore, closing in on the heroes as the book moves on, with the landing at the Grangerfords, the episodes with the Duke and the King and the return of Tom Sawyer at the Phelps's.

Huckleberry Finn, then, can almost be read as an expatriate novel. Lacking, perhaps (in degree at least), is a sense of foreign landscape, but present is a prevailing sense of difference and the relationship between Huck and Jim might even be considered a kind of cross-cultural interaction.

Ultimately, we may find ourselves wondering what the terms "home" and "abroad" mean. The dialectic may, in itself, be insufficient; it may defy a resolution. The understanding of the relationship between these two terms might be assisted when we consider just what is involved in the dialectic. Actually, the dialectic function allows us to identify a region--a space--in which an activity takes place. A definition of "home" comes as a result of an understanding of those forces which drive a person away from home. A child runs away from home, perhaps, because of increasing recognition of differences between his value system and that of his parents. Or perhaps he runs away simply because he detests parental authority. In either case, the act of moving away, of separation, can lead to an exploration of self; it can lead to discovery--both discovery about the structures left behind, and the self taken along (which inevitably contain elements of the structure left behind.) The point is that home cannot be understood without knowledge of its

opposing term. Between the space of "home" and "abroad," then, we identify a region of play. In writing about the nature of the two German words, Erinnerung and Aufhebung, Derrida says: "These words admit into their games both contradiction and non-contradiction (and the contradiction between contradiction and noncontra-diction)."⁶ The same kind of confusion takes place with the terms "home" and "abroad," for as we have seen, one can find one's self more at home abroad than at home, or one can be abroad while at home, or abroad when abroad, or home when home.

These kinds of disjunctions can be felt in the following poem by Emily Dickinson, another of our great American internal exiles.

Away from Home are some and I--
 An Emigrant to be
 In a Metropolis of Homes
 Is easy, possibly--

The Habit of a Foreign Sky
 We--difficult--acquire
 As Children, who remain in Face
 The more their Feet retire.⁷

When we read the first lines of the poem we hold two possibilities. The "I" will situate itself in a location separate from those "Away from Home," i.e. at home, or the "I" will attach itself, even though it is at home, with those "away from Home." The grammar of the poem confirms the latter possibility, and proposes a condition of a "Metropolis of Homes." "The Habit of a Foreign Sky" is, it seems, a

condition of being, not attached to a particular place, which develops along with patterns of retreat and absence, which have as much to do with longtime inclinations of the inner self as with actually living under a "foreign sky."

An unstated supposition throughout these pages has been that there is something enriching in the view from outside. That is the assumption of a belief in the value of the dialectical process. We don't fully know--can't fully know--what we are until we bring ourselves in contact with something radically different. As Fredric Jameson writes in his discussion of Sartre in Marxism and Form:

If I never leave the country, the notion that I am an American may strike me as rather abstract, purely formal one; and it is only when I realize in my own person the hatred and suspicion, the resentment, or on the other hand the condescension or the fawning sense of complicity, with which Americans in general and America in particular are received by people of other countries, that with a kind of scandalized reaction I begin to understand the concrete situation of struggle and judgment in which I am always implicitly engaged. The sense of scandal comes, of course, from the fact that "I" am not personally responsible for what America does, and that it is unjust to condemn the guilty and the innocent alike: but this distance between my self, felt from the inside, and the judgment passed on my objective being from the outside, is what characterizes all forms of this "alienation through other people" (in the Sartrean sense), this basic struggle

with the other in which we are always engaged, and in which I am always responsible, I am always guilty, if only on the grounds of my sheer existence itself. ⁸

Expatriation is a means by which a person dramatically allows that "other-ness" to be exposed, revealed for whatever it is. It is, in a way which should recall Hawthorne, a means through which we feel our own composition, and the composition of the country we are a part of, as a mixture of good and evil. It is a means of coming to terms with self and national identity, though certainly it is not the only means.

The writers I have dealt with seem to me to be a singular breed of American writers, though, like siblings within the same family, they doubtless show varied traits. What unites them is the course they have chosen to take in their search for self and artistic expression in relation to the country they are tied to psychologically and culturally, namely, America.

Notes to Conclusion

¹R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 49.

²Henry David Thoreau, Walden, or Life in the Woods (New York: New American Library, 1960), 7. Further references noted in parentheses.

³Henry David Thoreau, Journals, ed. Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen (New York: Dover, 1962), 17:275.

⁴Herman Melville, Moby-Dick (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1967), p. 12. Further references are to this edition and pages are noted in parentheses.

⁵Mark Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1977), p. 7. Subsequent references are to this edition and pages are noted in parentheses.

⁶Jacques Derrida, Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 121.

⁷Emily Dickinson, The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson, ed. by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., n.d.), p. 398.

⁸Frederic Jameson, Marxism and Form (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 303.

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