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ABSTRACT

I divide my study of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry James on the question of nationality into two broad categories: first that of the American at home, using Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance and James's Bostonians, and second the American in Europe, using Hawthorne's Marble Faun and James's Golden Bowl. In the first two chapters, I examine two novels, both set in America, which Hawthorne and James scholars commonly compare. I use this comparison to illustrate the common elements Hawthorne and James see in the American story told at home, specifically looking at the shared language of theatricality between the two texts. I then go on in my final two chapters to explore how the same authors treat their American characters when they are removed from this national context. While The Marble Faun and The Golden Bowl are not frequently compared in Hawthorne-James scholarship, I argue that the structural similarities between these two novels, as well as their parallel movement from the stage to depictions of inanimate art, indicate not merely a continuing relationship between the two authors but further a dynamic, developing one. I place particular emphasis on the dynamic between female characters, and suggest a growing interest on James's part in exploring Hawthorne's theme of the sinful versus the pure woman. Rather than revealing a pair of American authors best compared only on American soil, I find that mapping their movement from America to Europe illustrates a connection between Hawthorne and James that transcends the level of "influence" and instead demonstrates shared ideas of the American experience.

A Reimagined Influence:
Finding Nathaniel Hawthorne in Henry James

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INTRODUCTION: FROM STAGE TO STATUE

Hawthorne's career was probably as tranquil and uneventful a one as ever fell to the lot of a man of letters; it was almost strikingly deficient

in incident, in what may be called the dramatic quality. Few men of equal genius and of equal eminence have led, on the whole, a simpler life. (James, Hawthorne 1)

These words appear on page one of Henry James's biography Hawthorne, in which he describes the life and works of the "simple" American "man of letters," Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose specter continually haunts him. In 1880, when he published Hawthorne, James was at the beginning of what would become a literary career all his own, yet he feels the need to engage in an implicit comparison of himself with Hawthorne from the very first page. If Hawthorne's mundane American life is "strikingly deficient in incident," he implies, his own expatriate travels certainly are not. One of James's principle concerns about the man of "genius" and "eminence" that he knows Hawthorne to be is his comfort with his native land, both as a living place and a literary setting. James, who continually traveled in Europe and set many of his novels there, works consistently throughout his biography of Hawthorne to show the limited, "provincial" nature of his scope (Haw. 1).

Yet, in Jonathan Freedman's words, "Hawthorne is everywhere in James" ("Introduction" 13). The dynamic and pervasive way in which James's novels adopt and adapt Hawthornesque themes belies the superficial distancing we see in Hawthorne. James, as the above quotations suggest, is always aware of Hawthorne's presence in his writing, but he is not necessarily resistant to that presence so much as eager to adopt it on his own terms. Hawthorne uses the same paradigm of two women, one religiously innocent, the other beautiful but sinful, to structure both his American novel The

Blithedale Romance (1852), and his only “Italian” novel, The Marble Faun (1860). His preoccupation with the dual experience of the Puritan and the impure personality transcends geographical space. Indeed, as we will see below, an Italian setting heightens rather than dilutes this dynamic. James, however, sees the American who remains at home as a very different being from the one who lives abroad. The scrambling reformists of The Bostonians (1885), one of James’s relatively few novels set decisively in America, live in a “provincial” world that is certainly more comparable to that of Hawthorne’s localized Americans than the elegant London houses that the expatriates of his own final novel, The Golden Bowl (1904), inhabit. But even as James stages a cast of theatrical idealists in Boston who mirror Hawthorne’s would-be utopians at Blithedale Farm, he qualifies the comparison by creating a host of new character types that do not easily accommodate Hawthorne’s model of innocence and experience.

The connection between The Blithedale Romance and The Bostonians is one that critics have been eager to exploit in linking Hawthorne and James as American novelists. Both authors writing about reformists in America is a boon to scholars who struggle to incorporate Hawthorne’s New England forests into James’s British estates and Italian palaces. But the “American” quality that most profoundly links these two novels is not reform, or characters of the same nationality, but rather the theatrical roles these characters assign both themselves and each other. The stage is the focal point of both Blithedale Farm and the Bostonian feminist community, and the

language of performance connects Hawthorne's America to James's more effectively than the more superficial notion of shared geography. Shakespeare famously says in As You Like It, "All the world's a stage,/And all men and women merely players," and the world of New England reform that Hawthorne and James populate with actors has exactly this quality (Act II, Scene 7, ll. 138-139). Hawthorne aptly labels the drama of Blithedale a "Romance;" even when they intend to act out other stories, Priscilla, Zenobia, and Hollingsworth find themselves performing for one another. Similarly, James's three protagonists, Verena Tarrant, Olive Chancellor, and Basil Ransom, continually cast one another in roles that flatter themselves. Their worlds are all stages, even when they believe they have left the theater entirely.

But a crucial aspect of Hawthorne's "Romance" is absent in James's Bostonian pageant. Philip Rahv identifies "the dark lady" as a pervasive presence in Hawthorne's novels, including The Blithedale Romance ("The Dark Lady of Salem" 63). At Blithedale Farm, Zenobia embodies the very "rebel and emancipator," blessed with great beauty but plagued by a sinful arrogance, that Rahv describes (Rahv 63). Yet there is no such character among the Bostonians. Although James admires the quality of Zenobia tremendously, calling her "the nearest approach that Hawthorne has made to the complete creation of a person," "the wayward heroine of Blithedale" has no equivalent in his own New England drama (Haw. 130). Olive Chancellor, the figure who plays the role of the older sister in The Bostonians that Zenobia

holds in The Blithedale Romance, has none of the hypnotic allure of a “dark lady.” Instead, she is a frigid being with “fits of tragic shyness” that James seems to feel befit a woman who is unimpressed with Europe (James, Bostonians 9). America, James implies, is not the setting in which one might find a Zenobia. It is across the Atlantic, in a virtual gallery of exotic European artifacts, that we find James’s interpretation of the Hawthornesque “dark lady.”

This leap across the Atlantic is, for both Hawthorne and James, a movement from the world of stages to that of statues. There is a paralyzing quality of Europe that turns the American stage into what Jonah Siegel calls a foreign “museum” (Haunted Museum 149). This European museum features literal statues, such as the Faun of Praxiteles or the Cleopatra in Hawthorne’s Marble Faun, and further exhibits artifacts such as James’s mysterious Golden Bowl, but it also includes individuals who have been relegated to the sphere of objects. Two such people are Hawthorne’s Italian count Donatello, whose resemblance to the Marble Faun gives the novel its title, and James’s Prince Amerigo, the Roman nobleman that the wealthy expatriate Adam Verver essentially purchases as a husband for his daughter Maggie in The Golden Bowl. But Charlotte Stant is the prize in Adam’s extensive collection. She embodies the mystique of the “dark lady” Rahv identifies in Hawthorne, wrought on a new and opulent expatriate scale. Charlotte’s crime results from loneliness rather than hatred, but it serves to awaken the determinedly innocent Maggie to a reality she fears just as the murder of Miriam’s Model

alerts Hilda, “the daughter of the Puritans,” to a world of sin she frantically rejects (Hawthorne, Marble Faun 31).

It is this double theme of foreign influence (in the form of an Italian man) and the development of a new and frightening moral consciousness in response to a crime that leads me to draw this parallel not commonly developed in Hawthorne-James scholarship. The connection between Hawthorne’s Marble Faun and James’s Golden Bowl is not a generally held notion as is the relationship between The Blithedale Romance and The Bostonians, perhaps because The Golden Bowl is set in England rather than Italy. But the “Double Novel” (“The Defeat of Romance” 179), that Richard Millington identifies in The Marble Faun appears again in James’s final novel, both in the two sets of characters and in the fractured Golden Bowl, complete with two contrasting women, one conscientiously “light,” and the other “dark.” Italy for these expatriates is already a memory; the Italian romance that led to the determinedly innocent Maggie Verver’s marriage to the Italian Prince Amerigo has ended when we meet them on the eve of their wedding. They have stepped down from their stage, and are prepared to settle into a life of British indolence when the beautifully cosmopolitan Charlotte Stant arrives to complete the “doubling” process by marrying Maggie’s widowed father Adam Verver. Here, remembering Hawthorne’s Marble Faun is not merely useful but actually helpful in predicting the events of the novel, for we know, thanks to both Miriam’s example and Rahv’s “dark lady” formula that a

worldly, striking woman such as Charlotte, set opposite the religiously held moral tenets of Maggie, must result in a fall.

Like Hawthorne's "dark lady" abroad, Miriam of The Marble Faun, Charlotte is captivated by the material world of art. She, along with Amerigo, is the first to discover the Golden Bowl in its London shop. But instead of merely replicating Miriam's admiration for her countryman Kenyon's exotic Cleopatra statue, James literally transforms Charlotte into a work of art when she marries Adam Verver, who collects cosmopolitan treasures in human as well as material form. Charlotte, Maggie informs her father, will, like a good piece of art, "make us grander" (James, Golden Bowl 107). By investing her stepmother with this grandeur, and linking it to the static quality of the art gallery that she and Adam—the stagnating expatriates—crave, Maggie forces Charlotte into the mold not merely of Miriam but of the Cleopatra statue she reveres. While Hawthorne's Hilda and Kenyon return to America and a traditional Puritan marriage, and James's Maggie reclaims her own domestic space in London, Charlotte and Cleopatra find themselves dismissed and abandoned in punishment for the passion and beauty that originally made their patrons admire them. Kenyon offers to "hit poor Cleopatra a bitter blow on her Egyptian nose with this mallet" if it will win him Hilda's approbation, and leaves her to molder in his Roman studio without once looking back (Hawthorne, Marble Faun 235). James gives Charlotte a quite similar ending, in which she is shipped back to her detested homeland, to be relegated to the national warehouse that is American City. Over the course of their careers, we

find, both Hawthorne and James map the progression from center stage to outmoded prop.

The journey from stage to statue is an arduous one. James, originally resistant to the paradigm of “dark” and “light” in his heroines, must set Charlotte and Maggie across an ocean from their creative birthplace before he can use them to explore the flawed expatriate world of the Golden Bowl. Hawthorne’s final “dark lady,” Miriam, remains stranded in the poisonous atmosphere of Rome, imprisoned by her love for the Marble Faun. Hawthorne and James together acknowledge the dangers of Europe to the impressionable expatriate; they are dangers different from those of the American stage. While the Priscillas and Verenas of “provincial” New England are recast in the end as silent wives, the end for a “dark lady,” on either side of the Atlantic, is more final. If Charlotte ends her days as a version of Kenyon’s exotic Cleopatra, her transformation is nonetheless a product of James’s American inheritance: at the end of her smaller Blithedale romance, the drowned Zenobia, too, is cast in a lifeless “marble image” (Hawthorne, Blithedale Romance 209).

To read Hawthorne and James as American authors on both sides of the Atlantic, therefore, allows us to see American qualities in both writers that transcend geographical space. Despite their European backdrop, Maggie and Charlotte act out the older, Hawthornesque obsession with sin and purity that both Zenobia and Priscilla and Miriam and Hilda do regardless of setting. Despite her lack of Zenobian charisma, Olive Chancellor clings to Verena’s

staged persona with all the tenacity of a drowning woman. To be American, then, is to be a performer always in danger of being consumed by one's role. The stage and the statue are different fates, but they belong on the same theatrical continuum: that of the image designed for an audience.

I. STAGING THE HEROINE

Nathaniel Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance is, first and foremost, a story of self-presentation. It is a tale of theater and of the theatrical dimension of the lives of its three New England protagonists. In "'Who the Devel Aint a Dreamer?'" Richard Brodhead notes, "Hawthorne had trouble choosing a title for The Blithedale Romance—in addition to the one he finally selected he considered 'Hollingsworth,' 'Blithedale,' 'Miles Coverdale's Three Friends,' 'The Veiled Lady,' 'Priscilla,' 'The Arcadian Summer,' and 'Zenobia'—and it is not hard to discover the origin of his quandary" ("Dreamer" 91-92). The centrality of 'Miles Coverdale's Three Friends'—in other words, Hollingsworth, Priscilla, and Zenobia—clearly recurs as Hawthorne struggles to find a name for the novel that will become The Blithedale Romance. He returns again and again to the names of characters—both proper names such as Hollingsworth and Priscilla, and stage names such as the Veiled Lady or Zenobia—as potential titles for the work as a whole. He even considers naming the novel in honor of its passive narrator, Miles Coverdale, who watches his "Three Friends" as they act out the history of their failed "Arcadian Summer." Yet in the end Hawthorne chooses the name of the stage they share, Blithedale Farm, rather than any specific actor (or actress) to frame his dramatic trio.

This emphasis on the performative quality of the novel continues as Hawthorne develops the characters that will inhabit the Blithedale stage. The novel opens with the most obviously "characterized" of the "Three Friends":

the Veiled Lady (not yet known by her real name of Priscilla). In the opening of the first chapter, Coverdale describes the Veiled Lady's performance—in which “the spectator was further wrought up by the enigma of her identity” behind the veil that “was supposed to insulate her from the material world” (Hawthorne, BR 40-41)—as a “wonderful exhibition” that intrigues both himself and the city as a whole (BR 40). The Veiled Lady's American audience is fascinated by her anonymous façade, and it is in the wake of this otherworldly performance that Coverdale prepares to make his journey out of Boston and into the countryside to begin his sojourn at Blithedale Farm.¹ But Hawthorne takes pains to assure the audience that his narrator is not leaving his fondness for the theater behind when he abandons Boston in favor of the socialistic experiment at Blithedale. Coverdale emphasizes to Old Moodie, on the eve of his departure, his enthusiasm at the prospect of meeting the feminist author Zenobia, who will also participate in the farm community's “scheme for beginning the life of Paradise anew” (BR 43). He thus links his interest in Blithedale with the staged world of the Veiled Lady when he characterizes its resident celebrity as a bearer of the same illusory quality: “Zenobia...is merely her public name; a sort of mask in which she comes before the world, retaining all the privileges of privacy—a contrivance, in short, like the white

¹ In “Self-Culture: Margaret Fuller and Hawthorne's Heroines,” Paul John Eakin emphasizes the autobiographical aspect of Blithedale Farm and Zenobia in particular, noting Hawthorne's brief stay at Brook Farm (an unsuccessful socialist community much like Blithedale), and Zenobia's resemblance to Margaret Fuller. Dan McCall also describes the parallel Hawthorne makes between Margaret Fuller and Zenobia in “Emerson, Blithedale, and The Bostonians,” where he cites Henry James's rather snide comment from the Hawthorne biography that naturally Hawthorne had to use Fuller as his “model” for Zenobia, as she “was ‘the only literary lady of eminence whom there is any sign of Hawthorne having known’” (quoted by McCall 76).

drapery of the Veiled Lady, only a little more transparent” (BR 42).

Accordingly the novel begins with the juxtaposition of two stages: that of the Veiled Lady in Boston, and that of the “more transparent” lady at Blithedale.

Hawthorne’s decision to use his “veil” image to further his various stages (in other words, allowing Zenobia’s “contrivance,” for example, to function as well as a literal veil) indicates the importance of theatricality not merely for the Veiled Lady herself but for the greater Blithedale community. As Brodhead explains,

In the silvery veil Blithedale contains an object potentially as rich in symbolic overtones as the scarlet letter, but Hawthorne does not organize his book’s presented world so cohesively around this symbol, nor does he ever force us to encounter it directly as a symbol....He gives up the suggestiveness of a symbolic mode for the sake of achieving a new realism of dramatic presentation. (“Dreamer” 96)

The “veil,” which Hawthorne could so easily have made a more limited icon of the Veiled Lady’s fate, has literally become a prop on the stage that the three Blithedale Farm performers occupy together. As a mode of achieving “dramatic presentation,” it is just as significant when it is offstage as when it is on. Small, meek Priscilla without the veil, after all, plays an entirely different role than the Priscilla “accustomed to be the spectacle of thousands” (BR 185). And of course, because it is not a “symbol” but rather a costume, the “veil” does not have to be a literal piece of fabric at all. The “single flower...So brilliant, so rare, so costly” that Zenobia wears each day immediately helps Coverdale to see the role in which she has cast herself at Blithedale: “it was more indicative of the pride and pomp, which had a

luxuriant growth in Zenobia's character, than if a great diamond had sparkled among her hair" (BR 47-48). Her final condemnation of her prospective lover, Hollingsworth, refers to his theatrical guise: "You have embodied yourself in a project. You are a better masquerader than the witches and gipsies yonder; for your disguise is a self-deception" (BR 197). These props are all "veils" of one sort or another, in that they are significant pieces of the characters' costumes, which reveal aspects of their identities.

Priscilla, as Coverdale begins the novel by noting, is a more overtly theatrical version of Zenobia. Unlike the older, more beautiful woman, who truly does believe in "the advocacy of women's rights" (BR 42) that she champions through her pseudonym, Priscilla becomes an entirely new being when she performs the role of the "Veiled Lady." Finding herself at Blithedale suddenly barefaced and confronted with two people whose admiration she desperately craves—her enthralling sister Zenobia and the charismatic would-be reformer Hollingsworth—the briefly unveiled lady struggles to find a persona that will allow her to impress both the feminist and the handsome opportunist. Richard Millington, in "Romance as Attack: The Blithedale Romance," describes Priscilla as actively aware of this process: "Priscilla sets out to achieve an identity by displacing herself, by colonizing the selfhood of another" ("Attack" 162). And she does indeed develop the same romantic interest in Hollingsworth that characterizes Zenobia throughout the novel. But this theory of the Veiled Lady as deliberately "colonizing" Zenobia or Hollingsworth, when they wield such great social and personal power over

her, seems inadequate. Priscilla does not intend to be a parasite. As a “staged” being temporarily deprived of her costume, she is left only “the tactic of achieving identity by substitution” (Millington, “Attack” 163). She has no notion of how to create a persona all her own.

Priscilla, we find, cannot maintain an identity outside of her veiled persona. When she is not a “staged” woman—when “her Sibylline attributes” (James, Hawthorne 132), to use Henry James’s phrase, are removed, and her face exposed—Priscilla still remains in many ways a “Veiled Lady.” Upon his first view of the bedraggled young woman, who his friend Hollingsworth has brought to Blithedale through a winter storm, Coverdale romantically characterizes her as “some desolate kind of a creature, doomed to wander about in snow-storms...[in] a human dwelling, she would not remain long enough to melt the icicles out of her hair” (BR 57). Priscilla, he suggests, is intrinsically unsuited to the traditional, domestic world that Coverdale and his companions at Blithedale Farm inhabit. Even on the soil of what the eager utopians would call social revolution, he considers Priscilla’s abstracted, “desolate” demeanor dehumanizing. Coverdale refers to her not as a person but as “a creature,” suggesting that without a helpful distinguishing symbol (such as a veil, a flower, or a social ideal), even a devoted audience member like our narrator does not know how to place her. She is separated from the other members of the Blithedale community by a “doom” that keeps her on the periphery of their gathering; she must remain spiritually in the “snow-storm,” even when she is literally within the house. The warmth of the

Blithedale hearth does not seem adequate to thaw her persistent social “icicles.”

Yet it is this theatrical dimension, in which she cannot participate properly without her veil, that first draws Priscilla to Blithedale. As Nina Baym says of Coverdale’s own covert motive for becoming a Blithedale socialist, “Zenobia, who unites sex, art, and nature in one image, is that symbol” which compels his attendance (“The Major Phase III” 190). Likewise the Veiled Lady, “who represents a decadent exploitation of spirituality,” is drawn to a woman whose performative role complements her own: “at the farm, Zenobia is the goddess in residence” (Baym, “MP” 188). Priscilla arrives at Blithedale solely for the sake of meeting the charismatic Zenobia: the much-celebrated half-sister who, in Coverdale’s words, possesses “as much native pride as any queen would know what to do with” (BR 46). By casting Zenobia as a “queen,” Hawthorne foreshadows the subservient form into which the older sister will attempt to mold the younger. This demand for deference exemplifies the character of Zenobia, the woman Philip Rahv labels a “dark lady” (Rahv 63).² As a “dark lady,” a dramatic woman who rejects social constraints, Zenobia immediately grasps the theatrical value of the wretched, shivering “creature” who so obviously worships her. Zenobia exerts

² “The dark lady” is a category Rahv uses to describe a number of Hawthorne’s romantic heroines. She “is a rebel and an emancipator,” whose social power and sexual energy are undermined by a past sin or other flaw (Rahv 63). Rahv admires the “dark lady” profoundly, and considers her a great improvement upon less colorful characters such as Priscilla, who he rather spitefully labels “the Prissy of the tale” in “The Dark Lady of Salem” (Rahv 70). Another “dark lady,” Miriam, will appear below in my discussion of The Marble Faun.

her shadowy influence to turn Priscilla into her subject: the dull, downtrodden contrast to her own “exotic...rare beauty” (BR 47).

The younger sister’s gracelessness and her fringe of “icicles” are icons that contrast dramatically, as Zenobia is well aware, with her own ornaments: the “single flower” and the “one glimpse of a white shoulder” that so captivate Coverdale (BR 47). Her awareness of this contrast becomes even more apparent when she begins to apply her own accessories to Priscilla’s less suitable person. In a chapter ironically entitled “Modern Arcadia,” Coverdale finds her “decking out Priscilla” in “anemones in abundance, houstonias by the handful, some columbines, a few long-stalked violets, and a quantity of white everlasting-flowers,” along with “the maple-twigs” and part of a “cherry-tree” (BR 79). At first, Coverdale seems prepared to think this overabundance of plant life “charming” (BR 79).³ He even seems prepared to think Zenobia generous in her efforts, despite the fact that “As for herself, she scorned the rural beds and leaflets, and wore nothing but her invariable flower of the tropics,” proving her own disdain for the costume she is constructing (BR 79). But his voyeuristic eye quickly finds that “along those fragrant blossoms, and conspicuously, too, had been stuck a weed of evil odor and ugly aspect... There was a gleam of latent mischief... in Zenobia’s eye, which seemed to indicate a slightly malicious purpose in the arrangement” (BR 79). Zenobia is a woman always aware that she is performing. Her “decking out

³ Henry James will later use this image of excessive bedecking when Maggie Verver of The Golden Bowl, suspecting the infidelity of her husband Prince Amerigo, weighs herself down with jewels and too much rouge in an attempt to make herself desirable. Zenobia seems to have a similar idea as she festoons Priscilla in flowers, knowing perfectly well that her own single bloom is superior.

Priscilla” in a costume so unsuited to the girl’s own character—which A.S. Byatt might, in another context, call her “vanishing quality” (“Introduction,” The Bostonians xvi)⁴—reflects Zenobia’s tendency to cast other characters in roles that complement rather than overshadow her own (BR 79). And Priscilla, having no identity outside her staged one, and eager to show her admiration for her sister, accepts the weeds as well as the flowers.

II. STAGING THE HERO

But Zenobia will only acknowledge Priscilla’s affection when she has the proper audience. Although dismissive, and even cruel, toward the younger woman when only the undesirable Coverdale is watching, the entertainer in Zenobia knows she must present a better face when the coveted Hollingsworth attends her performance. “[S]he knocks, with a very slight tap, against my own heart, likewise” (BR 61), claims “the goddess in residence” (Baym, “MP” 188), knowing the much-admired Hollingsworth’s “interest in” Priscilla (BR 61). But Zenobia’s temperament, like the flower in her hair, changes every day. Her elitist dismissal of Priscilla reflects her own domineering ideology: “She is neither more nor less...than a seamstress from the city, and she has probably no more transcendental purpose than to do my miscellaneous sewing; for I suppose she will hardly expect to make my dresses” (BR 61). Zenobia, accurately observing that Priscilla has no particular identity of her own, attempts to create for her a specific character that will repel rather than

⁴ When Byatt writes of a “vanishing quality” in her “Introduction” to James’s Bostonians, she refers not to Priscilla but to James’s performing heroine, Verena Tarrant. That the term applies equally well to Priscilla, despite the many differences between Hawthorne’s heroine and James’s, is the beginning of an answer to the question of the way in which these two novels complement one another.

attract Hollingsworth. Knowing Hollingsworth's goals for penal reform, and the financial support he needs to realize this dream, she defines the younger woman in terms of her low socioeconomic status, and translates her labor in the metropolis into humble work that she will do for Zenobia specifically, as a means of reinforcing the older woman's own higher social and financial rank.

Zenobia, then, becomes the center of the system of labor she has constructed for her young admirer. Priscilla—as she is allowed to exist in Zenobia's world—is a deliberately subdued image, designed to highlight the “queenly” qualities in her sister. Robert Emmet Long says of the social world of Blithedale that “there are suggestions of masquerade,” but this is an understatement (“Society and the Masks” 116). Zenobia constructs the entire community of Blithedale as a mode of characterizing herself. She entirely overshadows the passive Priscilla with the glow of what Rahv admiringly calls her “brunette vitality” and “greater sexual power” (Rahv 69). This is the role that Zenobia has chosen for herself: that of the “queen” of the great “masquerade” taking place at Blithedale Farm. She plays this role with confidence and animation, reminding critics such as Long that “Zenobia's name is itself a mask” (Long 116). “Zenobia” is merely her literary pseudonym, but unlike Priscilla's divided persona, in which she is only the Veiled Lady when under the veil, Zenobia has turned her everyday life into a performance. She transforms the whole of Blithedale into a dramatic production, and labels herself its heroine. Priscilla, with the other utopians, is at best a supporting actress.

Yet Zenobia's primary wish is not to oppress Priscilla, but rather to relegate her to the appropriate place in her own romance with Hollingsworth. The "dark lady" in Zenobia fears Priscilla's influence over the man she desires for herself. She alters her first brusque response to the frozen girl's devotion when it occurs to her to ask Hollingsworth, "Is she a protégée of yours? What can I do for her?" (BR 58). As a "protégée" of the strangely compelling Hollingsworth, Priscilla has the power to deprive her sister of the romantic destiny she covets. However, as Millington defines the Veiled Lady, "her power is accompanied by all the trappings of subordination" ("Attack" 167). In order to retain her hold on Hollingsworth, Priscilla must orient her life around "his project of self-adoration" (Millington, "Attack" 163). In Millington's words, "he describes for Priscilla a vision of womanhood as idealized vicariousness" ("Attack" 163). She ought to want everything he wants, because his happiness ought to inspire her own. Thus when Priscilla returns to the theater, swathed once more in gray, she is performing two roles. She still embodies Westervelt's lucrative "clairvoyant," and now also the new role of Hollingsworth's obedient woman in love (BR 40). "He bade me come," says Priscilla of Hollingsworth, when Coverdale demands why she has returned to Boston (BR 163). Thus the stage is set for Priscilla's "rescue;" Zenobia means to obscure Priscilla, to hide her from Hollingsworth's gaze, but to Hollingsworth Priscilla's willingness to subordinate her own identity in favor of his goals is endearing rather than obsequious.

But the Hollingsworth we meet at Blithedale is not a man who prides himself on heroically rescuing objectified women. He wears his single-minded reformist agenda throughout The Blithedale Romance just as Zenobia wears her elegant flower: it freezes his identity.⁵ This dubious hero⁶ defines himself through the consummately American medium of political activism.⁷ But his “masquerade,” unlike Zenobia’s, is twofold; not only does he define his identity only in terms of what Zenobia scathingly calls “a project” (BR 197), he further plans to undermine Blithedale’s socialist experiment if it will help to realize his personal goal. “I see through the system,” he snaps at the shocked Coverdale, who implies that perhaps it is traitorous to infiltrate the farm for his own ends, “It is full of defects—irremediable and damning ones!” (BR 135). He has only one ideal: a “grand edifice for the reformation of criminals” (BR 215). Other political themes, such as Zenobia’s rather inconsistent form of feminism, or the socialistic experiment that is Blithedale Farm do not interest the single-minded penal reformer. And Hollingsworth articulates his reformist conviction with a “magnetism” that literally

⁵ Nina Baym notes that coldness, both literal and figurative, is a recurring quality in Hollingsworth: “From the beginning, Hollingsworth is imagined in terms of fire, ice, animals, and iron. In his great snow-covered coat he looks like a polar bear” (Baym, “MP” 193). Thus, he is literally freezes into character; like ice or iron, he is hardened against external forces.

⁶ Brenda Wineapple tells us in her biography Hawthorne: A Life that Hawthorne originally wanted to name the novel after Hollingsworth (Wineapple, “Citizen of Somewhere Else” 253).

⁷ This medium of political activism is one that James will adopt from Hawthorne in his own “very American tale” (as quoted by A.S. Byatt, “Introduction”), The Bostonians. Significantly, however, James does not draw a direct parallel between Hollingsworth’s activism and that of his own (also dubious) hero Basil Ransom. Instead, Hollingsworth’s single-minded conviction regarding a solitary theme reflects the mindset of Olive Chancellor, the militant feminist who is utterly unable to understand Verena Tarrant’s idea that marriage and a public life might be compatible with one another.

mesmerizes his audience (BR 136).⁸ When he fiercely demands of the staring Coverdale, “Will you devote yourself, and sacrifice all to this great end, and be my friend of friends, forever?” it requires all the less passionate man’s strength to refuse (BR 137). “It is a mystery to me, how I withstood it” (BR 136), observes Coverdale in retrospect, “One other appeal to my friendship... would completely have subdued me” (BR 137). Hollingsworth is hypnotic in his conviction; he moves both the characters on the Blithedale stage—Priscilla and Zenobia—and the man in the audience—Coverdale—with the magnitude of his words.

Yet as a romantic being, Hollingsworth directly opposes the passionate Zenobia, who embodies “the inextricable union of art and Eros” (Baym, “MP” 192). In keeping with his frigidly Puritan resistance to “Eros,” he designates no place for a woman in his reformist schemes. The objective of his mesmeric performance is not marital but financial. “I have the funds—as much, at least, as is needed for a commencement—at command... They can be produced within a month, if necessary,” he announces to his skeptical friend, whose mind immediately leaps to the wealthy and besotted Zenobia (BR 134). When Coverdale questions how he has “prevailed with such a woman to work in this squalid element,” Hollingsworth’s reply is determinedly moral rather than sexual: “Through no base methods, as you seem to suspect... but by addressing whatever is best and noblest in her” (BR 136). Hollingsworth actively dismisses Zenobia’s overt sexual presence—the first quality

⁸ To further complicate the parallel between Hollingsworth and Ransom, James makes the repellent Selah Tarrant, rather than the attractive Ransom, a professional mesmerist.

Coverdale sees in her when he arrives at Blithedale—in favor of what he considers “best and noblest in her:” her capacity to fund his enterprise. Despite her claim that when she listens to Hollingsworth she is not merely “an auditor” but “an auditress,” it is Zenobia’s aggressively feminine quality (what Rahv calls the “dark lady” persona) that divides her from Hollingsworth from the start of their relationship (BR 53).

In this sense, Hollingsworth strives to be the director of the Blithedale romance, rather than an actor in it. It is Hollingsworth who “bade me come,” says Priscilla, when Coverdale discovers her return to the city and the stage of the Veiled Lady (BR 163). Hollingsworth, conveniently devoid of romantic motive, is able to recast himself as Priscilla’s savior when events of the novel transfer Zenobia’s wealth to her younger sister. As Baym assesses the situation, “When the fortune shifts from Zenobia’s to Priscilla’s possession, so does Hollingsworth’s allegiance, and he rescues Priscilla from the clutches of the villain only a few days after he agreed that she might be delivered to him. Despite his rhetoric, Hollingsworth is a man of things, power, money, and material” (“MP” 195). Thus, Hollingsworth’s “rescue” of Priscilla is necessitated by a situation his acquisitive nature created for her. Priscilla is hidden behind her theatrical veil because Hollingsworth “bade” it. But Hollingsworth, unlike critics such as Brodhead, “is a man of things,” who accordingly sees the veil as a mere piece of symbolic fabric. To “rescue” Priscilla, he believes, he need only remove the veil.⁹ And indeed Priscilla

⁹ When James rewrites Hollingsworth and Westervelt’s plan for Priscilla in Ransom’s desire to conceal Verena from the vulgar public sphere, he makes the Southerner’s intentions a more

seems to interpret Hollingsworth's grand statement—"Come!... You are safe!" (BR 186)—as proof of her salvation. "She threw off the veil... uttered a shriek and fled to Hollingsworth, like one escaping from her deadliest enemy, and was safe forever!" narrates Coverdale, who is obviously moved by Hollingsworth's seeming heroism (BR 186). Priscilla, the "symbol of purity and innocence," in this moment adopts a new role, which reflects her admiration of Hollingsworth (Baym, "MP" 196). Instead of the Veiled Lady, she will take on a new role of performative purity: that of Rescued Lady, a monument to her future husband's nobility.

III. STAGING THE MARTYR¹⁰

Hollingsworth does not consider "reform" in terms of marriage, but his decision to marry Priscilla is intimately tied to his desire to "re-form" his own material goal. Back at Blithedale Farm, which has been transformed from an attempt at Utopia into a frenzied parade of pagan performers, including "an Indian chief... the goddess Diana... a Bavarian broom-girl... a Shaker elder... grim Puritans, gay Cavaliers... [and] the renowned old witch of Lynn" (BR 191), Zenobia expresses the extent of Hollingsworth's own deceptive performance.¹¹ "I was willing to realize your dream, freely—generously, as some might think—but, at all events, fully—and heedless though it should

insidious version of Hollingsworth's, for there is no material veil, no physical symbol, for his scheme. James's purely intangible social façade that "veils" Verena suggests a form of influence that is much more difficult to identify than that of the more obviously objectified Veiled Lady.

¹⁰ Below, we will see Sara Blair label Olive Chancellor of *The Bostonians* a "revolutionary martyr" when she replaces Verena Tarrant on the stage at the Music Hall at the end of the novel ("James and *The Bostonians*" 165).

¹¹ Robert Emmet Long discusses this scene in "The Society and the Masks: The Blithedale Romance and the Bostonians."

prove the ruin of my fortune,” she declares, as proof her own sincerity (BR 196). But sincerity, in a chapter entitled “The Masqueraders,” is difficult for the woman whose very name is a performance to demand.¹² The characters are all so deeply immersed in their performances that the dialogue between them cannot help but sound theatrical. Even as she prepares to explain her very real grievances to him, Coverdale returns to his preferred language of props and costumes to note that “[Zenobia’s] part among the masqueraders, as may be supposed, was no inferior one...with her jewelled flower as the central ornament of what resembled a leafy crown, or coronet” (BR 193-194). Despite the genuine deception she has undergone, Coverdale focuses instead on the continuing masquerade, in which Zenobia has again tried—this time unsuccessfully—to cast herself as queen.

The medium of her undoing, of course, is the very person whom Zenobia at first cast in a role meant to reinforce her own station. Now, in their final act, appropriately entitled “The Three Together,” the dynamic has shifted so that Zenobia, rather than Priscilla, is tyrannized victim (BR 193). Zenobia knows that Hollingsworth has condemned her for her lost wealth, and thus deprived her of the romantic role she coveted, but more importantly she has realized the performative quality of his relationship with her. “I am awake, disenchanted, disenthralled!” she informs the mesmerist (BR 197). She now

¹² Baym reinforces the Blithedale “masqueraders” struggle to express true feelings apart from their performances when she observes, “Imagery of masks and veils, much noted in the criticism, contributes to a dreamlike atmosphere of uncertain identities...The carnival, or pageant...is not playacting at all, but the moment of revelation...” (Baym, “MP” 187). The characters, as we see, cannot express genuine “revelation” separately from their theatrical revelry.

understands the nature of Hollingsworth's past attachment to her, and his present attraction to her newly wealthy sister. The marriage that Priscilla offers is a conduit to her future husband's ultimate ideal: the institution that will rehabilitate America's criminals. She can present to Hollingsworth more than simply what "is needed for a commencement" of his venture, which he acknowledged Zenobia could contribute, but the full potential to turn it into a reality (BR 134). In response to Zenobia's bitter demand, "Do you love her?" there is nothing for Hollingsworth to say but, "Had you asked me that question a short time since...I should have told you—'No!'...[But now] I do love her!" (BR 197). To the "disenthralled" Zenobia, he may confess the truth: his "love" is for a political ideal rather than a person.¹³

In Zenobia's words, bitter but accurate, Hollingsworth's marriage is not so much to Priscilla as to an aspect of himself: "It is all self!... Self, self, self! You have embodied yourself in a project!...your disguise is a self-deception!" (BR 197). Hollingsworth, as Zenobia reveals, has not only succeeded in turning the various tenants of Blithedale into a mob of unruly "masqueraders," but has managed the even more insidious feat of turning his selfish "project" into a domestic success. The romantic "disguise" that conceals his "project" becomes the basis for his marriage. Millington calls this "his project of self-adoration," and suggests that Hollingsworth's marriage to Priscilla represents not merely an attraction to her money but to

¹³ Here, again, is a foreshadowing in Hollingsworth of James's Olive Chancellor, the women's rights activist who loves Verena Tarrant solely because "her voice had magic in it," and that "magic" has the capacity to further her single reformist ambition (James, The Bostonians 336).

her willingness to vindicate his deception with her love (“Attack” 163). Like Millington, the “disenthralled” Zenobia sees through the superficiality of Hollingsworth’s “vision of womanhood” (Millington, “Attack” 163).¹⁴ Her knowledge of the misleading role in which Hollingsworth cast her throughout the supposed “Arcadian Summer” (Brodhead, “Dreamer” 92), and the realization of her own emotional and financial victimization, leads Zenobia to feel for the first time a solidarity with Priscilla—a solidarity that coexists uneasily with her antipathy for her sister’s milder form of femininity.

Her words to her sister after Hollingsworth’s declaration are both an admission of Priscilla’s power and a deprecation of her own feminine naiveté. Zenobia’s farewell to the former Veiled Lady is,

You stood between me and an end which I desired.... You have been my evil fate; but there never was a babe with less strength or will to do an injury. Poor child! Methinks you have but a melancholy lot before you, sitting all alone in that wide, cheerless heart, where, for aught you know—and as I, alas! believe—the fire which you have kindled may soon go out. Ah, the thought makes me shiver for you! What will you do, Priscilla, when you find no spark among the ashes? (BR 199)

Zenobia confesses the way in which she literally veiled her sister, and placed her on a stage, in order to achieve “the end which I desired.” But she does not seem so much interested in that old veil, that abandoned stage, as she is in the new veil—the wifely veil whose material will be “embodied” by Hollingsworth himself—that Priscilla has chosen. This veil, she suggests, will alienate her as completely as Westervelt’s staged caricature of the

¹⁴ Here, Zenobia attains the state in which James places Olive Chancellor in The Bostonians: the state of disillusionment with the world of masculinity (BR 197).

supernatural did. Her own ideal of marriage lost, Zenobia attempts not to belittle Priscilla but instead to impart a lesson about marriage, about womanhood, and the unromantic, utilitarian vision Hollingsworth has of the two. But it is not a message that the Veiled Lady, starved for affection as she is, can be made to hear, particularly when Zenobia herself continues to act toward Hollingsworth in a manner that Paul John Eakin defines as “the tell-tale posture of hero worship” (“Self-Culture” 68).

Even in the midst of absolute grief, Zenobia cannot abandon her role as the heroine in Hollingsworth’s romance. As Brodhead defines this seemingly paradoxical theatricality in response to real emotions, “The majesty of her suffering is not diminished but magnified by the element of self-conscious theatricality in her behavior....[I]n the middle of her passion, Zenobia is seen as taking pleasure in Coverdale’s admiration of her beauty” (“Dreamer” 112).¹⁵ Despite the fact that we know her despair to be sincere, she is unable to cease to be aware of her audience. Zenobia herself seems to feel this tragedy and, having no other recourse available to her, responds to it in the manner of an actress in the role of the “dethroned princess” (BR 198): “Settling upon her knees, she leaned her forehead against the rock and sobbed convulsively; dry sobs they seemed to be, such as have nothing to do with tears” (BR 200).

¹⁵ In the same paragraph quoted above, Brodhead goes on to say, “In her stature and her complexity of response Zenobia is here reminiscent of Shakespeare’s Cleopatra. Nothing is allowed to interfere with her final grandeur” (“Dreamer” 112). This Cleopatra connection foreshadows the “dark lady” of Hawthorne’s “Italian” novel, *The Marble Faun*. Miriam, the lady in question, befriends an American sculptor whose Cleopatra statue shares with her the qualities of ferocity and passion. She goes on to fall in love with a man who resembles the Marble Faun, reinforcing the connection between her own identity and Zenobia’s final role as a “marble image” (BR 209).

This “dethroned” heroine allows Hawthorne to depict a vision of an illusory social state—her role as the “queen” of Blithedale—taken to the extreme. Zenobia, however, is not merely recast in a less flattering role by her unreciprocated love for Hollingsworth, but literally obliterated by it. The prophetic Priscilla, in answer to her sister’s question of what she will do when she finds she has lost Hollingsworth’s love, replies that she will “Die!” (BR 199)—and this is indeed the fate that Zenobia, the supposed advocate of the rights of women, chooses when she is deprived of her romantic ideal. For Hawthorne, death is the natural outlet for Zenobia, the only way of reconciling her emotional extremism with the world outside of her “masquerade.” Rahv goes so far as to call Hawthorne’s drowning of Zenobia not merely a method of plot resolution but more importantly a form of moral retribution: “The dark lady is a rebel and an emancipator; but precisely for this reason Hawthorne feels the compulsion to destroy her” (Rahv 63). To be “a rebel and an emancipator” in The Blithedale Romance is to enter the fatal theatrical world of “masquerade” and insincerity. Zenobia’s death represents a punishment for stepping outside of social boundaries of morality and demanding that she be labeled a “queen.”

Coverdale’s language as he narrates the retrieval of her corpse from the river reflects this idea of punishment. He is struck by the morbid religiosity of her appearance: “Her wet garments swathed limbs of terrible inflexibility. She was the marble image of a death-agony. Her arms had grown rigid in the act of struggling, and were bent before her, with clenched hands;

her knees, too, were bent, and—thank God for it!—in the attitude of prayer” (BR 209). The “terrible inflexibility” of Zenobia’s character in life is reflected in her “marble...death agony.” Coverdale sees her enforced posture of submission—“the attitude of prayer”—as evidence of her potential for salvation. This religious language—the assumption that Zenobia will be judged for her unfeminine conduct—reflects Hawthorne’s own preoccupation with the themes of sin and repentance in the social world. “Of religion, indeed, he knew little beyond its fears,” says Rahv, rather condescendingly (Rahv 59). But the fact of Hawthorne’s interest in a set of cultural mores that receive social and divine sanction is undeniably present in his literature.¹⁶ Coverdale’s belief in Zenobia’s “Judgment” reflects Hawthorne’s vision of a social world in which certain forms of femininity are more morally acceptable than others, but it further serves to empower him as a member of the audience (BR 209). He is a Judge rather than a performer, he assures himself as he gazes upon her grotesquely contorted corpse. His end will not be hers.

Indeed, to find an ending to the Blithedale “masquerade” which calls itself The Blithedale Romance, the reader must abandon its more dramatic heroine, and re-cover the woman perpetually concealed. When Hollingsworth approaches the Veiled Lady’s stage and tells the girl behind the “shroud,” (BR 40), ““Come!...You are safe!”” and thereby shatters Zenobia’s illusive hopes, another, more material veil is also lifted: Priscilla “threw off the veil...uttered a shriek and fled to Hollingsworth, like one escaping from her deadliest

¹⁶ The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne’s most famous work, is predicated upon this question of the place of “sin” in a religious society.

enemy, and was safe forever!” (BR 186). But this unveiling does not lead to an end to Priscilla’s theatricality, but merely to a new, smaller stage.

Coverdale’s last view of Priscilla occurs years later, after her marriage to Hollingsworth. In Coverdale’s words, she has become “the slender woman whose arm was within [Hollingsworth’s]...In Priscilla’s manner there was a protective and watchful quality...but, likewise, a deep, submissive, unquestioning reverence, and also a veiled happiness in her fair and quiet countenance” (BR 214). The duty Priscilla now “performs” is domestic rather than theatrical, but perform it she clearly does. With Hollingsworth as her audience, Priscilla’s persona of “deep, submissive, unquestioning reverence” becomes a reassurance and a compliment. Her “protective and watchful quality” reminds him of her role as his shield against the judgments of a society he no longer dreams of “reforming.”

But perhaps the most striking quality of the former Veiled Lady in her new role as Priscilla Hollingsworth is her “veiled happiness.” This is the moment at which Hawthorne and Coverdale seem most aligned as author and narrator; Priscilla evidently does feel that Hollingsworth has “rescued” her from the Veiled Lady’s uncomfortable limelight. Her “veiled happiness,” her return to a domestic sphere as opposed to an affected death, is her “reward” for choosing a remote, domestic “stage” over the theatrical one Westervelt created for her—but, as Coverdale’s description of “her fair and quiet countenance” suggests, it is also a representation of her nature. Although she no longer wears “the misty drapery of the veil” (BR 40), Priscilla will never

be without an icon that symbolizes her identity; Hollingsworth clings to her arm as Zenobia's flower clings to her hair, and this new appendage defines her just as clearly as the flower defined her sister. Priscilla's silent "reverence" is the result of a lifetime of self-effacement and willingness to love in response to kindness. She "beholds the Absolute" (BR 185) in Hollingsworth, just as Westervelt once claimed she saw it from behind her veil, and both Coverdale and Hawthorne seem to agree that her ending—in her own eyes, at least—is a happy one. "Veiled happiness" is the most any member of the Blithedale "masquerade" may expect.

CHAPTER TWO: THE UNVEILED LADY

I. THE (IN)VISIBLE LADY

Henry James's first task in The Bostonians, the novel that critics commonly compare with Nathaniel Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance, is to unveil his leading lady. Unlike the ethereal Veiled Lady, Verena Tarrant the feminist performer is most easily defined through her intense visibility. Introduced to her audience, including the skeptical Southerner Basil Ransom, for the first time, she is arrayed in a perfectly brilliant, even vulgar display of color: "She wore a light-brown dress, of a shape that struck him as fantastic, a yellow petticoat, and a large crimson sash fastened at the side," set off with a "big fan" (James, Bostonians 57). Verena is an overtly theatrical being; her defining characteristic seems to be her ability to catch and hold the public eye. Yet A.S. Byatt defines Verena, poised in her gaudy apparel in the role of "the young prophetess" (Bost. 57), in terms of "her unformed and vanishing quality" (Byatt xiv): her costume and accessories cause her to "vanish" rather than highlight her presence. James's narrator calls this "vanishing quality" her "singular hollowness of character," and links it specifically with the many garish props—the fan and the sash, for example—that Ransom notices so quickly when she takes the stage (Bost. 59). Despite the passionate feminist "doctrine" she proclaims from her place in the limelight, Verena herself is obscured from view (Bost. 59).

While her costume contributes to this paradoxically vivid invisibility, the greatest quality Olive Chancellor, a militant feminist who attends Verena's

speaking engagement at Miss Birdseye's house, observes in Verena's performance is the nature of her voice. With her compelling tones, Verena adopts the persona of the "prophetess," the herald of a new era for the American woman (Bost. 57). In this guise—an ironic reworking of the Veiled Lady's oracular function—she appears to embody the answer to Olive's craving for "universal sisterhood" (Bost. 58). As Olive later feverishly concludes, "her voice had magic in it" (Bost. 366). Verena's "magical" prophetic voice, unlike the nature of her staged character, provides a lens through which critics can see a version of Hawthorne's theatrical novel. As Richard Brodhead says in "James, Realism, and the Politics of Style," "In The Bostonians as in Blithedale sexual presence gets channeled into and communicated through the speaking voice, so that here as there oratory's effect is always the creation of desire—as Verena's first speech at Miss Birdseye's leave Olive 'with a red spot in each of her cheeks' (67)" ("Realism" 149).¹⁷ The reaction of her audience proves the power of Verena's stage presence. Her own "sexual presence" inspires a temperature change in Olive—doubly significant when we remember Olive's usual "fits of tragic shyness" (Bost. 9)—and further, as Brodhead reminds us, convinces Ransom that "he was falling in love with her" (as quoted by Brodhead, "Realism"

¹⁷ This interpretation of Olive's response to Verena's voice as sexual rather than merely politically savvy is a relatively new idea; Robert Emmet Long's 1964 essay "The Society and the Masks: The Blithedale Romance and the Bostonians" posits an earlier view of Olive Chancellor as a purely sexless being (he cites "the intimation of premature age" [Long 110] in Olive in the early stages of the novel as proof of this assertion). In Long's reading, with the exception of Basil Ransom, Verena's suitors (of whom Olive is not one) "cannot equal her sexual vitality; in the end she chooses the only man who can, Ransom, and fulfillment as a woman" (Long 121). Thus, the idea that Verena's voice initiates the following courtships—by both Olive and Ransom—is not an inevitable conclusion, although it seems an insightful one.

149). What Olive—again, tragically—forgets in her passion for her political ideology is that the hypnotic speaker is on a stage at all. Verena the feminist is a character that the girl’s professional “miracle-monger” father has constructed in an effort to gain publicity for his mesmeric healing skills (Bost. 54). Olive’s total unawareness of the fact that Verena is performing (a fact that no character in Blithedale, as we have seen, can ever entirely forget) creates the basis for James’s “very American tale” (as quoted by Byatt xi).

As Verena’s own identity—never concrete—becomes more and more entangled with her “stage” character, she increasingly shows signs of what Richard Millington, in his analysis of The Blithedale Romance, calls “the self’s permeability to others” (“Romance as Attack” 162). Finding herself adopted into Olive’s world of reform in dour Boston drawing rooms, Verena struggles to accommodate this new political audience with the aesthetic and domestic expectations of her more chauvinistic admirer, Basil Ransom. Perhaps because he is already an outsider in Boston, Ransom, unlike Olive, immediately grasps Verena’s role as performer and his own as audience, and strives to represent a private social and sexual sphere that (he claims) will allow Verena to be an individual rather than a puppet of the feminist masses. “It isn’t you, the least in the world,” he assures Verena of the role she plays in Olive’s movement (Bost. 328). Verena’s decision to allow Ransom to cast her in this alternative role, on a domestic stage rather than in Olive’s activist scene, represents James’s reworking of Priscilla’s abandonment of Zenobia in favor of Hollingsworth. In James’s theatrical world, there is no literal “veil”

symbol, whether a white sheet or an exotic flower, that Verena may set down as an indication that the act is over. Characters (with the exception of the Southern interloper, Ransom) constantly forget that Boston is a stage. Indeed, what the conservative, condescending Ransom finds most amusing about “this pernicious craze” of the Bostonians is their conviction that they are influencing anyone offstage at all (Bost. 328).

Through the conflict over Verena, then, James finds a new way of constructing the Hawthornesque theme of the novel as a performative space. Hawthorne’s all-encompassing stage is everywhere in The Bostonians, but it is often difficult in James’s world to determine who is an actor and who is in the audience. In Brodhead’s words, “The Bostonians is emphatically localized”—a crucial quality in a novel written by an author who prefers to hastily relocate his American heroines to Europe (“Realism” 155).¹⁸ But this “local” quality contributes also to the theatrical nature of the tale. If Boston is their stage, and the Bostonians are the actors, then for whom are they performing? At various moments, both Olive—who sits in the front row at all of Verena’s speaking engagements—and Ransom—who rediscovers Verena on a stage in New York—deliberately characterize themselves as members of

¹⁸ Isabel Archer, of Albany, New York, is one such example of James’s fondness for exporting beautiful American women to more interesting locations. Her expatriate aunt, Mrs. Touchett, discovers Isabel in her dreary, empty house, surrounded by pouring rain—and, with Jamesian initiative, immediately announces that they must go to Italy, thus creating the basis for the plot of Portrait of a Lady. Paul John Eakin argues in “New England In Extremis” that Isabel’s character, international though it is, is implicit in James’s construction of Verena Tarrant: “In Verena Tarrant James expressed those qualities of Isabel Archer which had captured the imagination of her admirers—her innocence, her vivacity, her spontaneity—while he embodied her capacity for an inner life in Olive Chancellor” (Eakin “New England” 203). This idea of the divisive quality of Isabel will become central below, when I address the role of a European space for James’s (and Hawthorne’s) characters. Here in The Bostonians, Eakin’s idea that Verena and Olive are aspects of the same personality seems important. (I will discuss this idea of divided personas below in my analysis of The Golden Bowl.)

the audience. Yet neither is content to remain in the background while the other steals the limelight: Olive hurtles to the front of the Music Hall in Boston when it becomes apparent that Verena will not be performing; Ransom hovers around Verena's political stage, ready to feed her his own script of gendered ideals the moment she steps down.

Unlike the Veiled Lady, the appeal Verena's staged "character" depends on the assumption that she is an inherently unveiled lady; she has no stage name or literary persona. Her devoted listeners, including her parents, her new "sister" Olive, and the vast swarms of people who ultimately arrive in Boston to hear her lecture cannot see that she is performing, that her words are only superficially her own. They attend her lectures because they hope that her pageant of gender reform will break the bounds of the stage and become a reality. By re-forming Hawthorne's Veiled Lady as a speaker and celebrity, James suggests the dangers of confusing a performative project with genuine identity. As Sara Blair observes in "James and The Bostonians," "the 'German' tomes and 'big books from the Athanaeum' with which Olive schools Verena in 'the fields of literature' seems to constitute a bulwark against real and social experience (1132, 960)" (Blair 155). In other words, Olive (and, as Blair also notes, Ransom with his "distinctly Anglo-Saxon cultural texts") attempts to re-form Verena's mind so that her offstage "character" will better reflect her onstage performance (Blair 155). Verena, however, at first seems to interpret such scholarly exercises as further preparation for her role on the stage, rather than understanding the depth of

the transformation Olive desires that she make. When Verena observes to her devoted patron, “Do you know, Olive, I sometimes wonder whether, if it wasn’t for you, I should feel [the cause of women] so very much!” (Bost. 152), Olive is overjoyed at this evidence of her own importance to Verena’s character: “you have never yet said anything to me which expressed so clearly the closeness and sanctity of our union,” she declares (Bost. 152). Verena’s role as orator (or, as Zenobia might say, oratress) allows Olive to cast herself in the character of a champion, not merely of Verena but more importantly of the movement she stands for. “You are my conscience,” Verena tells her, and Olive exultingly adopts this new and flattering persona (Bost. 152).

Olive’s role is thus fundamentally dependent upon Verena’s for its meaning. She can only play the role of the younger girl’s “conscience” as long as Verena remains upon the stage of her choice. And, as Olive discovers to her horror, Verena, with her beauty and the strange “magic” of her voice, is much sought-after as a performer (Bost. 366). Her would-be sister Olive, and her prospective husband Basil Ransom represent the most extreme ends of the theatrical continuum available to her. Both see Verena as a means of embodying a cultural ideal they hold central to defining themselves. In Ransom’s case,

The deepest feeling in Ransom’s bosom in relation to [Verena] was the conviction that she was made for love...She was profoundly unconscious of it, and another ideal, crude and thin and artificial, had interposed itself; but in the presence of a man she should really care for, this false, flimsy structure would rattle to her feet...” (Bost. 322)

The “false, flimsy structure” in question, of course, is Olive’s zealous feminist “crusade” (*Bost.* 35)—a “crusade” which, far from ending in marriage, concludes with what Blair calls Olive’s martyred “performance,” alone on the stage meant for Verena (Blair 165). The two social outlets for Verena’s talent are thus composed around the question of whether she is “made for” the domestic sphere of marriage or the vocal, political sphere of the activist—neither of which imply that she herself might have any agency in this process. The political aura that Olive builds around Verena is predicated on her theatrical role as the voice of their movement. Thus, the battle over Verena must necessarily take place around her “staged” identity. As the novel progresses, James enlarges the concept of the “stage” as a social realm, which encompasses both the trappings of Verena’s identity and the objectification that these theatrical façades have imposed upon her.

Her ability to turn even mundane Boston drawing rooms into theaters heightens the brilliantly convincing quality of Verena’s performance. The novel’s characters first see her not as a person but as a performer in a specific role at Miss Birdseye’s house. Olive, unlike Zenobia, encounters her spiritual “sister” for the first time when Verena is already the object of an audience’s gaze. As the irreverent Ransom describes the scene,

...presently she was in possession of her part. She played it with extraordinary simplicity and grace...he could see only that it was all about the gentleness and goodness of women, and how, during the long ages of history, they had been trampled under the iron heel of man. It was about their equality—perhaps even (he was not definitely conscious) about their superiority. It was about their day having come

at last, about the universal sisterhood, about their duty to themselves and each other. (Bost. 58)

Verena's attractive abstractions—"gentleness," "goodness," "history," "equality"—are inextricably tied to her theatrical aura, her "possession of her part." Olive sees the "simplicity and grace" that she brings to her role, as Ransom does, but unlike her cousin does not see a distinction between Verena's words, the projection of her hypnotic voice onto her audience, and any personality she might have apart from her stage persona of feminine activist. Olive needs Verena's onstage persona to be her personality, because the persona, the ideology of "sisterhood," that Verena embodies before Miss Birdseye's guests is the one that will grant Olive herself a chance at political and personal empowerment. If there is indeed a "universal sisterhood," then Olive is, necessarily, a member. If the rightful place of women has been historically denied them, Olive should be one of the recipients of mankind's reparations. If women have a "duty" to one another, then surely Verena must have some sort of "duty" to her profound admirer. Olive wants Verena's "play" to be a reality, her prophetic vision to be truth, to vindicate her own place within the movement.

Thus, Verena's position on the stage, like Priscilla's, is advantageous to the woman who becomes her mentor and guide. When Olive begs: "Will you be my friend, my friend of friends, beyond everyone, everything, forever and forever?" she is not merely asking for Verena's personal pledge, but for a place within the younger girl's world of theatrical (that is to say, political)

success (Bost. 79). This plea by Olive is a very close rewriting of Hollingsworth's plea to Coverdale regarding his own reformist enterprise: "Will you devote yourself, and sacrifice all to this great end, and be my friend of friends, forever?" (Hawthorne, BR 137). It is significant that James resists the obvious one-to-one comparison of Ransom and Hollingsworth, the charismatic American men, in favor of the more complicated connection between the masculine and feminine reformists. While Brodhead is correct in asserting that The Bostonians "makes a...sustained [and] detailed allusion to Hawthorne," the distinction that James makes between his own novel's form and Hawthorne's is critical ("Realism" 147). Olive's reformist fixation, indeed, bears a much greater resemblance to Hollingsworth than to the magnetic Zenobia, whose "feminist stridency waxes and wanes, following the involuted course of her emotional life," according to Brodhead's "Who the Devel Aint a Dreamer?" (Brodhead 103). Within the dialogue, then, is a reminder from James to his own audience not to take the parallel with Blithedale further than it really goes.

Indeed, the Hawthorne parallel James draws, while undeniable, is often defined not by resemblances but by overt oppositions between characters. In the form of her theatrical success, Verena at first appears to be the antithesis of the Veiled Lady. She possesses "the hope of fame," the desire for grandeur, in which the voiceless Veiled Lady is so conspicuously lacking (Bost. 153). Under the limited direction of her father, the classless, tasteless "mesmerist" who so offends Olive with his mercenary aims, her appearance

borders on the ludicrous, despite the compelling nature of her voice. Her clothing, far from unprepossessing gray, is comprised of, “a light-brown dress...a yellow petticoat, and a large crimson sash fastened at the side...[and] a double chain of amber beads” (Bost. 57). In marked contrast to Zenobia’s eagerness to render Priscilla’s stage persona as alienating as possible, for the sake of repelling Hollingsworth, Olive’s self-appointed “duty” includes the removal of such tawdry trappings, and to improve Verena’s lectures, so that they better reflect “the divine idea” of her cause (Bost. 153).

II. THE UNMARRIED LADY

Verena, in her activist state, becomes a more appealing version of Olive, “resolved...into a magical voice, became again the pure young sibyl” (Bost. 153). Her role is to make Olive’s political vision attractive. Like the Veiled Lady, there is an oracular element to Verena; she is to foretell the future of the American woman. But she does so in an accessible way, drawing not upon the past but instead adopting every element of modernity available to her. Jonathan Freedman identifies the complexity that James brings to Verena’s role when he claims, “James is a uniquely double figure, one richly situated in the cultural possibilities of his own moment but able to rework them in ways that seem profoundly prescient” (“Introduction” 2). Rather than limit his heroine to the role of speaker, James uses Olive’s roles as scriptwriter, manager, and supporting actress to emphasize the corresponding commercial element of her success. Verena’s form of “prescience” is the product of “the cultural possibilities” he sees around her. The “several

irrepressible effusions of applause,” the repeated appearance of the italicized word “now” (Bost. 258), and Verena’s allusions to worldly, material aspects of politics—“bread and meat and wine...the key of vaults and treasure-chests heaped up with gold and silver” (Bost. 259)—all serve to remind us of the audience paying to witness her performance. Olive creates in Verena a marketable “prophetess,” whose role is to sell convictions about women’s place in American society. But there is a second side to the equation: that of the consumers who purchase her words. And Olive, from her place “in the front row of chairs,” vicariously partakes in both the role of the feminist performer and the “rapturous” audience (Bost. 258).

Olive’s understanding of her power is very different from Zenobia’s, as we have already seen. Zenobia gives Priscilla to Westervelt in an effort to lessen the “large-eyed little woman[’s]” appeal to Hollingsworth (BR 73). But Olive worries obsessively over the opposite problem. She fears the effect of Verena’s charisma upon handsome bachelors, who might tempt her away from her grand calling: “she was haunted, in a word, with the fear that Verena would marry” (Bost. 115). As the older “sister” frantically exhorts the younger, “perhaps I am cruel; but we must be hard if we wish to triumph. Don’t listen to young men when they try to mock and muddle you. They don’t care for you; they don’t care for us” (Bost. 130). Olive fears the sundering power of masculinity; it is the only threat she sees to her “union of soul” with Verena (Bost. 78). What Long calls “The morbidity of Olive, particularly her sexual implication” is perhaps a hyperbolic way of identifying Olive’s

dismissal of the physical world in favor of the ideological, but it does reflect her inability to comprehend Verena's flattered response to the offers she receives from her suitors (Long 119). These potential husbands fail to see the importance of Olive and Verena's "union"—a union that Olive identifies as spiritual, as opposed to a sexual contract such as marriage. According to Olive's ideal of "sisterhood," Verena ought to feel antipathy for the alternative "union" represented by a Pardon or a Burrage. Verena's inability to perceive this enmity makes such men still more dangerous. Any "union" that is incompatible with "us"—the combination of Olive's ideology and Verena's voice—represents to Olive an attack not only upon herself but upon the feminist movement as Olive perceives it.

The "union" Olive desires with Verena, the sisterly bond more absolute than marriage, is in fact quite comparable to the "union" Priscilla, temporarily free of her veil and introduced to the community of Blithedale, aspires to share with her own sister Zenobia: "that she will shelter me...that she will always let me be near her!" (BR 58). Olive wishes to "shelter" Verena, and begs her to "Promise me never to marry!"—in other words, to retain the role she has already adopted as Olive's feminist "sister" (Bost. 131). Brodhead, too, sees this conscientious "casting" of Verena in a non-marital role as crucial to understanding their theatrical relationship; "In choosing a cast politicized around the issue of sex roles and gender identification...James is striving...to find the forms of personality and relationship...that will most fully exhibit the strains" inherent in their precariously staged world

(“Realism” 140). Olive knows that there is no bond in her society so privileged as that of marriage. Her panic derives from the fact that, in a world of “sex roles and gender identification,” her theatrical contract has very little romantic weight. She attempts to imbue it with grandeur through titles such as “universal sisterhood” (Bost. 58) and “union of soul” (Bost. 78), but the specter of marriage continues to loom. If Verena marries, their “union,” their performative contract, and therefore Olive’s entire life, will be “fatally” undermined (Bost. 153).

In keeping with her insistence upon seeing Verena’s staged persona as her real one, Olive clings to her ideal of “universal sisterhood” through her theatrical “sister’s” public life (Bost. 58). As Brodhead notes, James uses the personal “strains” between Olive’s reformist and Verena’s theatrical pursuits as a means of characterizing their relationship (“Realism” 140). The “strain” Olive constantly undergoes is the result of her efforts to expand the feminist stage so that it will become a world. All of Olive’s passion, all of her personal relationships and individual convictions, are channeled through her vision of the ideal American “sisterhood.” She “perceived how fatally, without Verena’s tender notes, her crusade would lack sweetness,” and this perception galvanizes Olive to attempt to use the stage more effectively in her machinations (Bost. 153). Her desire to shield Verena from the world outside of their own “union”—the world that includes men, marriage, and sexuality—leads Olive to deliberately construct Verena’s stage to contain her. By the end of the novel, before her aborted performance at the Music Hall, the Tarrants

have literally “locked themselves in” a small room at the theater in an effort to isolate Verena from the determined pursuit of Ransom (Bost. 424). Olive wishes to be able to conceal Verena at will, dictate her appearances and disappearances, control not only the audience’s reaction to Verena, but also Verena’s response to her audience, who will “try to mock and muddle” her if they can (Bost. 130). Olive’s theatrical ideal for Verena bears a notable resemblance to the older form of womanhood that the Veiled Lady summons with her classical talent for the oracular. The Veiled Lady attracts attention, holds the gaze of her audience, but does not provoke proposals from handsome bachelors. All men’s efforts “to make the Veiled Lady sensible of their presence” are in vain (BR 185). Far from understanding that Verena’s appeal is based upon her ability to captivate such bachelors, Olive wishes to take on the role of a Hollingsworth, and conceal her from them.

But James does not allow such simplifications. Olive’s own distaste for marriage does not negate its potential as a social option for Verena. For James’s modern Unveiled Lady, marriage cannot be conveniently removed from the equation. Olive’s technique for staging Verena the activist, then, is inherently flawed. Even as she encourages Verena to advocate a new political role for women, Olive desires that the young “prophetess” embody an older, more subservient form of femininity that would allow her to dictate Verena’s thoughts and wishes. When she literally purchases Verena, exchanging for “a cheque for a very considerable amount” the right to separate her new sister from the repellant Tarrant family, Olive attempts to relegate her companion to

the sphere of a silent product (Bost. 160-161).¹⁹ This covert monetary realm is the sphere of “visible obscurity” (BR 185)—a sphere painfully at odds with Olive’s need to place Verena in the greatest possible limelight. She wishes Verena to be dependent upon her as Priscilla is dependent on Zenobia: eager first and foremost for a “nearness” so profound that it can negate the potential for other relationships.

The flaw in Olive’s “casting” of Verena is its utter rejection of the notion that Verena might have a different persona when “offstage.” For Olive, there is no offstage. While Olive fears the possibility of marriage for Verena, she originally fears it in an abstract way. Many men seem to pose this threat to Olive, whether or not they have actually proposed to her beautiful activist “sister.” She strives to keep her attractive cousin away from Verena on principle, knowing his disdain for American feminism, which he calls role of “the new old maid” (Bost. 328). But her influence does not prepare Verena to evaluate the vision of her future that Ransom presents to her. Olive’s relationship with Verena is based upon the assumption that the younger girl craves her staged persona, that her belief in the cause of women is synonymous with her pleasure in being the focal point of an audience’s gaze. Olive encourages Verena to believe “that when she left her mother is was for a noble, a sacred use”—again suggesting the religiosity, the universality, that she sees in their vocation (Bost. 164). Ransom’s success in convincing Verena of the superficial nature of her place in Olive’s struggle is the result of his

¹⁹ As Dan McCall says of the “odious” language of exchange between Olive and Selah Tarrant, “The matter-of-factness is chilling” (“Emerson, Blithedale and The Bostonians” 89).

ability to literally give voice to her own lack of agency in the theatrical world of political activism.

Instead of telling Verena that is first and foremost a performer, or that she belongs to a larger feminine collective that she serves with her vocal and prophetic talents, Ransom tells her the opposite: “You stand apart, you are unique, extraordinary; you constitute a category by yourself” (Bost. 328).

Ransom has turned Olive’s own language of oppression against her. He agrees Verena is marginalized, imprisoned, but insists that it is another form of woman, the repressive “new old maid,” Olive Chancellor, who has incarcerated her (Bost. 328). By claiming to admire her individuality, her separateness from the performing feminine masses, Ransom captures Verena’s attention:

...you ought to know your connection with all these ranting and ravings is the most unreal, accidental, illusory thing in the world. You think you care about them, but you don’t at all. They were imposed upon you by circumstances, by unfortunate associations, and you accepted them as you would have accepted any other burden, on account of the sweetness of your nature. (Bost. 328)

Ransom here uses domestic language to recast Verena in a new role: that of the victimized maiden. Lionel Trilling calls Verena “a sort of Iphigenia in Tauris” (Trilling xiii); this is exactly the sort of self-image that Ransom wishes to instill in her. As a gentle girl “imposed upon” by a “ranting” feminist rabble on account of her “sweetness,” it is easy to imply that Verena

needs a champion to save her from the “unreal” theatrical world of Olive and her cohorts.

According to Ransom’s social standards, Verena is not a representative of womanhood fighting for a collectively denied equality, but a lone woman, misled by the “ranting and ravings” of a disfigured form of femininity. These hysterical “rangers and ravers” have arbitrarily latched on to her and determined to make her their figurehead. In essence, Ransom depicts Verena’s “stage” in a manner that reveals its alienating influence. It is true that Olive “imposed” both herself and her political vision upon Verena; “the sweetness of [her] nature,” her willingness to oblige is also undeniable. When Ransom insists, “It isn’t you, the least in the world,” he punctures the weak point in Olive’s veil of rhetoric, and loosens its hold upon Verena (Bost. 328). His first impression of Verena continues to characterize her throughout the novel: her wish is not to educate, or even necessarily to perform, but rather “to please every one who came near her, and to be happy that she pleased” (Bost. 59). This happiness in pleasing others is the basis for her “hope of fame” (Bost. 153). Ransom, despite his own treacherous biases, is correct when he claims that the words and gestures of the staged activist are not representative of Verena herself. Her performance continually reflects the desires of her audience.

What makes Ransom dangerous not merely to Olive’s beloved movement but to Verena personally is that he, too, has a role in which he would like to cast “my dear Miss Tarrant” (Bost. 328). Although he

proclaims, “if it’s a question of pleasing, how much you might please some one else by tipping your preposterous puppet over and standing forth in your freedom as well as in your loveliness!” he does not actually intend for Verena to be “free” (Bost. 328). By proving that Olive’s “preposterous puppet” is a mere “illusion,” Ransom implies that his own formula for determining Verena’s ideal role must be correct. If Olive’s stage is imprisoning, then his own must be liberating. But his ideal, like Olive’s, is based upon Verena’s ability to “please” him, to live up to a feminine ideal he has constructed for her. In Ransom’s production, instead of being the ideal activist, she would play the ideal wife. Instead of applying herself to the cause of thousands, she would devote herself to an audience of one. She would exchange her theatrical costume of words for one of silence and submission. But Ransom, even knowing his own plans for Verena, “that she was meant for something divinely different—for privacy, for him, for love,” is shrewd enough to claim that his intentions, unlike Olive’s, will set her free (Bost. 261).

“Freedom,” however, is not the model Ransom considers most important, and which he chooses Verena to embody. Ransom sees Verena as a romantic object: “The deepest conviction in Ransom’s bosom in relation to her was the conviction that she was made for love, as he had said to himself while he listened to her at Mrs. Burrage’s” (Bost. 322). Ransom sees the same desirable qualities in Verena that Olive and her fellow reformers do, but he sees them as belonging to a domestic rather than an activist paradigm. “Love” is the theme Ransom returns to over and over again considering it the best “stage”

for Verena's beauty and capacity for devotion. The institution of marriage functions as his political ideal, the (reactionary) antidote he sees to Olive's "false, flimsy structure" of feminism (Bost. 322). As he later announces, "She's mine, or she isn't, and if she's mine, she's all mine!" (Bost. 429). Possessing Verena utterly is as crucial to Ransom as to Olive; both have selected her as the standard of an ideal of womanhood, the icon of their moral and political stages. But Ransom's awareness of his specific wish to recast Verena, to silence her and remove her from Olive's "vulgarising influences," allows him to succeed where Olive ultimately fails (Bost. 328). His claims about the arbitrary nature of Verena's current role stay with her because they acknowledge her "stage," her costume of rhetoric, and her present "hollowness" (Bost. 59); "these words, the most effective and penetrating he had uttered, had sunk into her soul and worked and fermented there. She had come at last to believe them, and that was the alteration, the transformation" (Bost. 372). Without consciously intending it, she internalizes the new casting of herself that the Southern outsider has proposed.

Ransom, with his "conviction that she was made for love" (Bost. 322) and his "effective and penetrating" rhetoric, embodies the sexual antithesis of Olive's purely spiritual "union of soul" (Bost. 78). Even canonical readers of James, such as Trilling in his "Introduction" to The Bostonians, fall into the trap that Ransom intends for Verena, and suggest that Ransom is a superior alternative that James has offered to the oppressed pseudo-feminist.²⁰

²⁰ Trilling defines Ransom in terms of his masculine Southern heritage: "He has the courage of the collateral British line of romantic conservatives—he is akin to Yeats, Lawrence and

“[C]ertainly he is the only man in the book—Verena’s poor suitor, Burrage, lives under the shadow of his mother...” (Trilling xiii), Trilling argues. In his schema, the dispute over Verena cannot legitimately be between Ransom and Olive, the “deteriorated Minerva” who is an enemy of heterosexuality (Trilling xiii). Instead, the true competition must be between men—and Ransom, the independent man with supposed literary potential, “magnificent eyes” (Bost. 4), and undeniable stage presence, must inevitably triumph over the weak, pathetic Burrage.

As the above characterization of Olive (unflattering though it is) suggests, it would be a mistake to impose Hawthorne’s version of feminine morality—what Philip Rahv would call the fear of the “dark lady” (Rahv 63)—upon the gender dynamic James creates between Olive and Verena.²¹ If he had wished, James could have made Olive reflect the persona of Zenobia, the character he most admired among Hawthorne’s literary creations (James, Hawthorne 130), and who disappears in favor of Priscilla, the “Sibylline” wraith who James calls “infelicitous” (Haw. 133). But Olive Chancellor, despite her passion for the cause of women, is not a “dark lady.” The “pale girl, with her light-green eyes, her pointed features and nervous manner” that

Eliot in that he experiences his cultural fears...[as] sexual fear, the apprehension of the loss of manhood” (Trilling xii). As a “romantic conservative,” Ransom’s disgust with Olive’s movement, and its fierce efforts (not always successful) to exclude men, represents a return to tradition and social hierarchy. By paralleling Ransom with unequivocally successful authors across the Atlantic, Trilling implies that the Southern gentleman is a remedy for the scrambling feminist masquerade of Boston, and the frail form of masculinity it supports.

²¹ This dynamic, as we have seen, is under critical dispute. While Brodhead’s suggestion of Olive’s intense feelings toward Verena as a staged character (whether sexual or otherwise) seems much more grounded in James’s text than Trilling’s suggestion that Olive is not competing with Ransom for Verena’s allegiance at all, no scholarly consensus has been reached on this point.

we meet at the beginning of the novel bears no resemblance to Hawthorne's hypnotic beauty with her exotic floral adornment and hint of bare shoulder (Bost. 10). James is interested neither in deliberately rewriting Hawthorne's novel nor in limiting Olive to a shrewish presence meant to inhibit Ransom and Verena's romance. Olive is a feminist, but she is more generally an educated, aristocratic woman who is frustrated with her limited place in society and chooses this particular political lens as the outlet for that frustration. She is not a "rewriting" of the "dark lady" that haunts Hawthorne's text—nor does Rahv suggest that this is the case. The romantic fascination that compels Zenobia to pursue Hollingsworth only vaguely resembles Olive's passionate attachment to Verena—an attachment that lasts only as long as does her place on the reformist stage. Miss Chancellor's connection with Zenobia appears only at the end of their respective tales, when they enact their respective martyrdoms.

III. THE TRAGIC LADY

Even then, however, Olive's idea of "martyrdom" does not require death, or religious trappings, but rather invokes her dread of an entirely secular (and of course theatrical) catastrophe. As she has proven throughout the novel, Olive lacks Zenobia's flair for the theatrical. At the very last, like Zenobia, Olive tries to adopt a role that will gain her pity, but her groveling plea, "I'll do anything—I'll be abject—I'll be vile—I'll go down in the dust" has no power over Ransom, a man unable to sympathize with her form of womanhood (Bost. 430). As Blair describes her ending, "Olive mounts the

stage her ambition has erected,” knowing that she is not the vocalist the audience desires (Blair 164). Her ascent into the limelight is not a scripted moment but an act of despair. “Importantly, Olive’s heroism is made manifest precisely in the failure of the multitude to insist on the appearance of the real heroine,” Blair observes (Blair 164). In the moment Olive becomes truly aware of her stage, and the central place she must take upon it, the audience allows her to cast herself in the role of “the real heroine.” And indeed, it is possible that she rises to this occasion. But The Bostonians’ audience, unlike Olive’s, will never have the advantage of knowing whether Olive makes an authentic “heroine,” for we are not allowed to see her performance. James, Blair reminds us, “suggests what must be lost” when the reader, “provisionally occupying [Ransom’s] vantage point,” is forced to leave the Music Hall with the hooded, distressed Verena (the woman Ransom insistently casts as the heroine of his own tale), rather than hear what wisdom Olive might have offered (Blair 166). While Olive’s social trappings, that of “masquerade” and a staged sister, belong to the same world as Zenobia’s, the fears and struggles James grants her belong only to herself.

Olive’s greatest fear, of course, is the loss of her chosen “sister,” the articulate Verena. Perhaps because of her own inability to make prophecies or captivate audiences, she believes that Ransom intends to steal Verena’s theatrical gifts as surely as Hollingsworth will appropriate Priscilla’s monetary ones. As she hysterically decides upon learning of Ransom’s proposal and the secret Verena made of her time with him in Boston, “he only

wanted to smother her, to crush her, to kill her...It was because he knew that her voice had magic in it" (Bost. 366). This fear on Olive's part of the humanization of Verena, the "smothering" of her innate "magic," connects their relationship again with Byatt's discussion of "the American tendency to think in parables and fantastic tales"—an attribute she ascribes to both James's Bostonians and Hawthorne's writing (Byatt xviii). Indeed, she states that this is a quality that, "Hawthorne noted of himself, and James observed about him" (Byatt xviii). Olive considers Ransom's offer a "devilish malignity," counter to her companion's "purest, holiest ambitions"—bringing a complex panorama of religious and supernatural qualities into the battle with her secular adversary (Bost. 366-367). Like Zenobia, Olive sees a genuine threat posed by her sister's future husband, but can only express this threat in the grandiose, theatrical language that she associates with Verena's personality. It is true that Ransom wants to silence and "smother" Verena. But, also like Zenobia, Olive has lost her ability to communicate this danger to her dependent "sister," who by this time has rather dolefully allowed herself to be recast as Ransom's ("smothered") future wife.

Even at the individual level of Verena's decision to wed herself to a man versus a feminine collective, Olive cannot remove her vision from the dramatic, theatrical implications for her cause. Her "most passionate protest was summed up in her saying that if Verena were to forsake them it would put back the emancipation of women a hundred years" (Bost. 367) Unlike Zenobia, in the moment when she speaks to Priscilla without a veil between

them, Olive does not try to imagine her “sister’s” bleak future as Ransom’s wife. Instead, she pleads for the return of the activist persona: the characterization that has so successfully publicized Verena’s (really Olive’s) feminist cause. When Long identifies Olive as the “spokeswoman” for Boston, he forgets that her need for Verena is predicated upon her own inability to speak for her beloved cause (Long 117). She sees Verena only in terms of the empty costume she would leave, the silence where her “magic” voice used to be on the deserted stage. For Olive, there is only one form of enslavement: that of the woman who cannot vote, who feels marginalized in a society made up of articulate men who easily dismiss her. She cannot communicate to Verena the different form of objectification that Ransom, the silencing, domineering Southern gentleman, wishes to inflict upon her, because her relationship with Verena is limited to the realm of the feminine reformist; there is no place for men, or marriage, in Olive’s theatrical production.

Indeed, Verena herself seems unable to visualize the future that Ransom proposes to her. “I don’t understand—where shall we go? Where will you take me?” (Bost. 433), she asks as Ransom marches her out of the hall where she was meant to enlighten and inspire “The city of Boston” (Bost. 428). Her words have concealed her true self, but they have also been her means of connecting with people. Her social place has been based upon the character Olive created for her; the stage has become her element and her identity. “I could soothe them with a word!” she begs Ransom when the

audience, as addicted to her activist persona as Olive is, begins to “howl and thump” at her absence (Bost. 433). Unlike Hawthorne’s oblivious Priscilla, who “Within that encircling veil...was [in] as deep a seclusion as if this forsaken girl had, all the while, been sitting...in the Blithedale woods,” James allows Verena to know the power of her role (BR 186). Even as she acknowledges its restrictions (and acknowledge them she does, when she allows Ransom to draw her from the Music Hall), Verena understands that she could use her influence, in this moment, to calm “a raving rabble” (Bost. 432). Yet without Ransom’s consent she cannot do so.

As she tells her oppressive suitor, “if I attempted to speak—with you sitting there—I should make the most shameful failure” (Bost. 432). Ransom’s insidious rhetoric of “freedom” through subjugation, his conviction in an ordained hierarchy of “love” rather than a collective movement against the current social order, has pervaded her being, and transformed her stage. James has taken Hawthorne’s theme of compulsive performance and applied it not to vast, abstract concepts such as institutional reform, but to the literal stage that either Verena or Olive must occupy at the end of the novel. Ransom is a stifling presence, with a heavy ideological costume of his own for Verena. “My darling child, haven’t you a shawl or a mantle?” he asks chauvinistically, and proceeds to envelope her in “a long, furred cloak” (Bost. 433). While this piece of fabric may at first appear innocuous in comparison to the oppressive script Ransom follows in his treatment of Verena, the function of this “cloak” as a silencing, concealing mechanism identifies it as a new form of the

Hawthornesque veil. This “heavy” veil is designed to do what Priscilla’s veil did before Hollingsworth inspired her to (symbolically) discard it: isolate her completely from all human contact outside of its confines (Bost. 433). “Keep your soothing words for me—you will have need of them all, in our coming time,” Ransom commands her triumphantly; in the heavy new “cloak” of his ideals, her voice can reach no further (Bost. 433).

It is Olive, whose attachment to Verena centers upon her own inability to captivate the masses, who finds herself in a “rush to the front” of the stage that Verena has abandoned (Bost. 436). After “literally praying to her kinsman” (Bost. 429) fails to change his resolve, Olive, like Zenobia’s frozen corpse, finds herself involuntarily groveling to a greater force—not a divine figure but, perhaps even more alarmingly, Ransom himself. “I’ll do anything—I’ll be abject—I’ll be vile—I’ll go down in the dust,” she beseeches, eager to know “what sacrifice he imposed” as the price of her deliverance from universal scorn (Bost. 430). The divine judgment that Hollingsworth imposes upon Zenobia transforms, in James’s hands, into Olive’s plea for mercy from a human antagonist. But Ransom’s response to Olive’s invocation of “sacrifice” refers not to his cousin but to his future wife: “you shouldn’t expect that, wishing to make Verena my wife, I should say to her, ‘Oh yes, you can take an hour or two out of it!’” he exclaims (Bost. 430). Ransom sees Verena in fundamentally visual terms (appropriate in this world of stages); her beauty and “vitality” (Long 121) are the “sacrifices” that appeal to him, not Olive’s unromantic offer to “go down in the dust.”

This compulsion for “sacrifice” on Olive’s part is the defining element of her character. Blair writes of Verena’s “revolutionary martyr” sister that, “Olive Chancellor becomes an authentic heroine” through her own ascent to the stage (Blair 165, 164). Olive would be pleased by Blair’s characterization of her frantic recasting of herself as the act of a “revolutionary martyr.” This is indeed the impression she has of herself as she approaches the stage; “I am going to be hissed and hooted and insulted!” she predicts—the worst conceivable outcome for the woman who prides herself upon scripting the success of Boston’s most celebrated performer (Bost. 435). But Olive’s future as a “heroine” remains clouded; the last we hear of her is the expectant silence when “the hush was respectful, the great public waited, and whatever she should say to them...it was not apparent that they were likely to hurl the benches at her” (Bost. 436). Like Coverdale’s ambivalent assessment of Zenobia’s chances at a more literal “Day of Judgment” (BR 209), it is impossible to know whether Olive succeeds as a “martyr,” bereft, as she, is of Verena’s coveted voice.

But where is Verena in this country of veils? As she leaves her world of “amber beads” (Bost. 57), colorful garments, and dramatic speeches in favor of Ransom’s more claustrophobic theater, “beneath her hood, she was in tears” (Bost. 436). She embodies not Priscilla’s “veiled happiness” but what might be called “hooded sadness.” Blind to any alternative that will allow her to exist without representing some other more compelling person’s vision of her self, Verena chooses the role that will allow her to reflect only one

person's ideal, rather than a faceless multitude's. But her choice leaves her hidden within a "furred cloak," crying quietly, with no hope of a better future. As James concludes the novel, in the sentence following her "tears," "It is to be feared that with the union, so far from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these were not the last she was destined to shed" (Bost. 436). Mrs. Ransom's will be a romantic role, albeit a tragic one.

Verena's is an American story, told by an author whose American heroines are usually shipped promptly off to Europe. Stranded in the country of her forefathers, her social options are very different from those of the wealthy Isabel Archer or the captivating Charlotte Stant. What makes The Bostonians important, and what makes its relationship with The Blithedale Romance crucial, is its exploration of what it means to be a woman in a country of masqueraders. Disguise and deception abound in both novels, but it is not always deliberate; rather, the characters seem to deceive themselves inadvertently as often as consciously in their quests for the ideal role. As Brodhead says, James rearticulates Hawthorne's "notion of the origin of political passions" ("Realism" 162), proving the inextricable connection between the two. America, in this respect, is largest stage of all, the context in which every character, male or female, silent or articulate, attempts to project an image of something different, more compelling, than his or herself. In this country of veils and costumes, James and Hawthorne agree, the self is always in danger of being lost.

CHAPTER THREE: ST. HILDA AND HER STATUES²²

I. THE PURITANS AND THE PTOLEMIES

Perhaps it is the dangers they see in the all-encompassing American pageant that causes Nathaniel Hawthorne's expatriate protagonists to travel to Rome. But the world of The Marble Faun possesses fearful enigmas all its own. In Hawthorne's Italy, we quickly find, time does not progress as it does elsewhere. The "magic peculiarity" of the ancient marble Faun of Praxiteles's resemblance to the youthful Italian Donatello suggests a world built of antiquity, in which the immortal faun of marble and the man "miraculously softened into flesh and blood" may inhabit the same being (Hawthorne, Marble Faun 3). "It perplexes me," said Hilda thoughtfully, and shrinking a little. "Neither do I quite like to think about it" (Hawthorne, MF 5), she continues, as she regards the two figures, with their air of a "congenial race of rustic creatures" that have never inhabited her beloved New England woods (MF 3).

Like Donatello's marble "self" versus his living one, Hilda and the Italian Donatello (who may or may not in fact be a faun) share both remarkable similarities and profound differences.²³ Scholarship on Hawthorne's Marble Faun agrees upon the importance of its two sets of

²² "St. Hilda's Shrine" was one of the titles Hawthorne considered for The Marble Faun, according to Brenda Wineapple's biography Hawthorne: A Life. Also according to Wineapple, it was the title "which Ticknor used when he advertised the book in America" (Wineapple, "Things to See and Suffer" 318).

²³ These shared qualities and profound differences foreshadow Henry James's marriage of a "Hilda" character (Maggie) with a "Donatello" character (Amerigo) in his final novel, The Golden Bowl.

protagonists: Hilda and Kenyon, and Miriam and Donatello.²⁴ Likewise, the uneasy sisterhood of Miriam and Hilda, and even the tenuous alliance between Miriam and Kenyon, has its place in analyses of the canonical American writer's "Italian" novel. But the connection between the devout "daughter of the Puritans" and the flighty, irreverent "rustic creature" that so resembles the ancient Marble Faun is more elusive (MF 31). "Neither do I quite like to think about it," agrees Hilda. It is indeed difficult to imagine a world that can hold both Hilda's aggressively religious, American mode of being and Donatello's immortal Italian spontaneity. To understand Hawthorne's purpose in placing these disparate people together—linked temporarily by their shared attraction to the exotic Miriam—in his simultaneously ancient and innocent Italian world, is to grasp the extent of his project in placing his fiercely Puritanical heroine in a country so unlike her own.

The tension of the book's dual purpose as both a depiction of Italy and a character sketch of the Americans adrift there begins with its title.²⁵ "The Marble Faun" was the result of much contention, as Brenda Wineapple explains in her biography, Hawthorne: A Life. As Wineapple describes the process of creating a name for the completed manuscript, "The book had no

²⁴ Nina Baym's chapter "English and Italian Years, 1853-1859," in The Shape of Hawthorne's Career refers to the four characters and their division into couples (p. 231); Richard Millington in his chapter "The Defeat of Romance: The Marble Faun," calls it a "Double Novel," which is actually two stories, that of Miriam and Donatello, and that of Hilda and Kenyon; Emily Schiller's essay "The Choice of Innocence: Hilda and The Marble Faun" describes Miriam's relationship with both Hilda and Kenyon; Brenda Wineapple, in her biography Hawthorne: A Life, refers to the strains of Sophia and Una that link Miriam and Hilda with Hawthorne personally.

²⁵ This duality will reappear in James, at the end of his career, in The Golden Bowl. The basis for both the determinedly innocent Maggie's and the more cosmopolitan Charlotte's marriages is their desire to carve for themselves a specific social place within their expatriate community.

title. Hawthorne toyed with several, including ‘Monte Beni; or, The Faun: A Romance’ He also played with ‘The Romance of a Faun,’ ‘Marble and Life; a Romance,’ ‘Marble and Man; a Romance,’ and his favorite, ‘St. Hilda’s Shrine,’ which Ticknor used when he advertised the book in America” (“Things to See and Suffer” 318). This list reflects the centrality Hawthorne intended for the faun and the Puritan “saint” in his narrative. “The Marble Faun” won out in the end, in the American edition—a compromise with Smith & Elder’s wish to publish it in Britain under the name “Transformation” (Wineapple, “TSS” 318). But Donatello, unlike his own feminine ideal, Miriam, does not pay homage at Hilda’s shrine “to the idea of divine Womanhood” (MF 31). Indeed, for all his friends’ involvement in Hilda’s tower and the altar she has committed to tend for the Virgin Mary, Donatello himself, whether by instinct or design, seems to avoid the place.

This severe division between Hilda and Donatello, both at the level of the novel’s title and of the physical space they occupy, reflects Richard Millington’s idea of The Marble Faun as a “Double Novel,” in which there are really two separate stories being enacted: that of Miriam and Donatello, and that of Hilda and Kenyon (Millington, “The Defeat of Romance” 179). But Miriam and Kenyon traverse the spatial and moral distance between Hilda’s tower—her “Dovecote” (MF 31)—and Donatello’s tower—his crumbling ancestral seat at Monte Beni—at will, while Hilda and Donatello remain voluntarily divided by both land and stone walls. The true basis for the “Double Novel” of The Marble Faun seems to be not simply the two couples,

but further the two individuals at extreme ends of Hawthorne's cultural continuum. "Hilda's gentle courage had brought her safely over land and sea," the narrator tells us, but it was not a desire to experience a new country or mode of being that led her to Rome (MF 32). Unlike Donatello, whose only object of worship is the splendidly beautiful (and indisputably living) Miriam, Hilda comes to Italy in order to immerse herself in the works of now-deceased ancient artistic masters. Nina Baym identifies this motive as the basis for Hilda's personal zealotry, "She did...mistakenly think that the Old Masters, the Renaissance artists whom she so reverently copied (while bowdlerizing their work), were the proper authority. She misunderstood them, because she was innocent" (Baym, "English and Italian Years" 241). Hilda's determined innocence, her insistence upon seeing the work of the masters she copies in only one way, blinds her to the works' true potential, and makes her a lesser artist than either the painter Miriam or the sculptor Kenyon.

Yet, despite her artistic limitations, Hilda remains the object of Kenyon's romantic interest, rather than the more creative Miriam. "I sometimes fancy...that Rome—mere Rome—will crowd everything else out of my heart," she warns her admiring countryman as they wander through the city, in an attempt to divert his obvious attention to her (MF 67). "'Heaven forbid!' ejaculated the sculptor" in response to this statement (MF 67). Kenyon's defining characteristic throughout the novel is his desire for a place in Hilda's heart. The product of a socially and religiously conservative culture, he repeatedly cites her "pure" spirit and "saintlike" character as

qualities that draw him to her (MF 257). Richard Brodhead, in his “Introduction” to the Penguin edition of The Marble Faun, says of the Puritan maiden, “Hilda is the high priestess of the art-historical sublime” (“Intro” xx). In other words, her art is of a religious rather than a creative nature, and in this way Hawthorne grants it a power that Miriam’s paintings, supposedly without “technical merit” but overflowing with “warmth and passionateness,” do not possess (MF 10). If Hilda is not “passionate”—and Hawthorne assures us she is not—she is made proportionately more “sublime,” and this spiritual quality that draws patrons to her copies likewise draws Kenyon to her person. The religiosity—what Brodhead calls her “high priestess” persona—that she brings to her artistic production makes Kenyon (and, it seems, Hawthorne) view Hilda as “higher” than Miriam, both as a woman and as an artist. As the novel progresses, Kenyon attempts to “re-form” himself both personally and artistically to reflect Hilda’s vision of “the art-historical sublime” (Brodhead “Intro” xx).

A comparison between Hilda’s work and that of her suitor, Kenyon, thus at first seems more appropriate than a contrast of her own hierarchical ideology of art with Donatello’s uncritical love of beauty. Hilda, who despite her stated aversion to Catholicism pays her respects “to the idea of divine Womanhood” through her “shrine” to Mary, idolizes a profoundly different feminine ideal from that which Kenyon expresses in his sculpture of Cleopatra (MF 31). Miriam evaluates Kenyon’s modern Cleopatra in terms of her profound difference from the sculptor’s adored Hilda: “What I most marvel

at...is the womanhood that you have so thoroughly mixed up with all those seemingly discordant elements. Where did you get the secret? You never found it in your gentle Hilda, yet I recognize its truth” (MF 77). Kenyon’s art, under the dual influence of classical Rome and American social mores, attempts to express both the sincerity and, as Miriam calls it, “the fury of her love” (MF 77). His Cleopatra is both passionate and authentic: a real person as opposed to a saint. The ancient aura of Rome has inspired brilliant sculpting on the part of the American artist, but it has not removed him from his contemporary reality: “He must re-create classical goals by modern means of expression...” says Baym. “Remaining within the limits of decorum (the statue, for example, is fully and magnificently clothed), it still celebrates the anarchic eroticism of the queen” (Baym, “EIY” 239-40). Whether or not Kenyon (and Miriam, who admires the statue) is intentionally celebrating “anarchic eroticism,” his Cleopatra certainly represents a form of womanhood that is not dependent upon the divine for its beauty.²⁶ Hilda would despise her.

The scathing nature of Hilda’s virtue renders her the focal point of much of the criticism on The Marble Faun, both currently and in its own time. Henry James, in his biography Hawthorne, combines his analysis of Hilda’s character with a compliment to her creator:

²⁶ The marble Cleopatra, who is both passionate and frozen into one attitude, reflects Hawthorne’s description of Zenobia’s corpse, after it has been removed from the water where she drowned in The Blithedale Romance: “She was the marble image of a death-agony” (Hawthorne, Blithedale 209). Hawthorne describes Zenobia, like Kenyon’s Cleopatra, largely in terms of her physical appearance and her sexual presence. Like Zenobia’s sister Priscilla, Hilda is unable to appreciate or participate in this form of femininity.

The character of Hilda has struck me as an admirable invention—one of those things that mark a man of genius....This pure and somewhat rigid New England girl, following the vocation of a copyist of pictures in Rome, unacquainted with evil and untouched my impurity...has done no wrong ; and yet wrong-doing has become a part of her experience, and she carries the weight of her detested knowledge upon her heart. (James, Haw. 162)

Like Hawthorne, James immediately singles out the quality in Hilda that is most integral to her character: her New England heritage.²⁷ Kenyon's Cleopatra personifies Hilda's idea of "wrong-doing." The ethnic implications of her "full Nubian lips" and the feminine implications of her personality "implacable as stone and cruel as fire" (MF 76) combine to dismay the "daughter of the Puritans" (MF 31) as she gazes upon the "daughter of the Ptolemies" (MF 76). James perceives the basis for Hawthorne's "genius" in the tension he poses between Hilda's genuinely "pure" qualities and her paradoxical ability to recognize forms of "experience"—in this case a non-Puritanical form of womanhood—that she, "the fair-haired Saxon girl," does not want to understand (MF 32). James is right to qualify Hilda's "knowledge" of sin—both in the form of Kenyon's Cleopatra and Miriam's murdered Model—as "detested." Her "rigid" moral code condemns Kenyon's artistic crime with as much confidence as her denunciation of the murder Donatello commits for Miriam's sake.

Yet the novel (and Hilda, the most powerful force in the novel) treat Kenyon's artistic crime as more understandable than Donatello's, because it is

²⁷ James's own literary interest in the "pure and somewhat rigid New England girl" appears in his first novel, Roderick Hudson, in the guise of the rather grimly virtuous Mary Garland, who instantaneously rejects the society of the lively, urbane, and utterly un-Puritanical Christina Light (James, Hawthorne 162).

the result of his American identity coming into contact with a wider, more dangerous world. Kenyon's Cleopatra bears a remarkable resemblance to a Cleopatra sculpture that Hawthorne records in his Italian Notebooks in a February 14th entry. This Cleopatra is the creation of his fellow American William Story, and she is staged in implicit comparison to a statue that Hawthorne seems to find more favorable, "of Goethe's Margaret...a type of virginity and simplicity" (Hawthorne, Notebooks 56). Cleopatra, not noted for either "virginity" or "simplicity," "is as wide a step from the little maidenly Margaret as any artist could take; it is a grand subject, and he is conceiving it with depth and power, and working it out with adequate skill" (Notebooks 56). Like Kenyon's Cleopatra, Story's is visually compelling, a "grand subject"—yet she falls short of the feminine ideal captured by "the little maidenly Margaret." Story's Margaret and Cleopatra, as Hawthorne depicts them, reflect the dynamic between his own Hilda and Miriam: Miriam the more physical and Hilda the more angelic beauty. The compulsion to create a beauty more sexual than divine in the Roman artistic world is thus not a phenomenon Hawthorne invented, but one that he observed during his time in Italy. His creation of Hilda, virtually a living Margaret, who is conscientious to the point of brutality in advocating "virginity" and "simplicity," offers Kenyon a remedy for the "peculiar quality of malignity" that pervades Rome (Notebooks 46). Hilda would support Hawthorne's assertion of the poisonous "atmosphere" (Notebooks 46)—and she counteracts it with the best weapon that her Puritan creator can bestow upon her: her militant purity.

But this intensely dogmatic morality, and its implicit contrast with Miriam's unseemly "passionateness" (MF 10), renders Hilda unable to see beyond the limits of her idolization of the forms of art and womanhood that her Puritan culture has labeled "moral." In "Late Hawthorne or the Woes of the Immortals," Brodhead sees her morality as intrinsically connected to these artistic values: "Through this characterization, Hilda's worship of the Masters is revealed as part of a larger project for erecting subordination-demanding institutions" ("LH" 75). To Hilda, "the Masters" is a concept not limited to art, but also present in a moral form, as the teachers of correct behavior. Hence, her insistence on seeing the works she copies in only one manner: the Masters are moral, and so their art must embody morality. Because she sees herself as moral, Brodhead posits a natural mental step to seeing herself as a monitor of morality in others: in other words, as a "subordination-demanding institution" with the right to subject another person—in the case of the offensive Cleopatra, Kenyon—to her aesthetic preferences. If Kenyon wishes to have a place in Hilda's moral hierarchy, he must allow her to be his "Master."

In the end, Hilda's rejection of the system of beliefs that creates a Cleopatra who is both sexual and beautiful overcomes Kenyon's short-lived artistic career. Her words to Kenyon on the subject of good and evil confirm her inability to reconcile her coveted innocence with any positive form of experience: "If there be any such dreadful mixture of good and evil as you affirm—and which appears to me almost more shocking than pure evil—then

the good is turned to poison, not the evil to wholesomeness” (MF 239). All that is not absolute purity, absolute innocence, must, in Hilda’s eyes, be corrupt. If he is to remain with Hilda, Kenyon must adopt her own conception of “divine womanhood;” she cannot be compelled to accept a compromise. As Baym says of Kenyon’s upcoming marriage to “St. Hilda” (as the novel’s original title defined her [Wineapple “TSS” 318]), “Whether or not Kenyon will actually give up art in his American future, he will certainly produce no more feline Cleopatras or broodingly beautiful fauns” (“EIY” 247). Hilda will not permit this production of a sensual rather than religious form of art. Baym sees this artistic restriction in Freudian terms, saying that it reflects Hilda’s horror at the idea of people, particularly her own parents, as sexual beings (“EIY” 243), but it can more simply be seen in cultural terms: Hilda rejects notions of beauty or femininity that fall outside of her own Puritanical New England sphere.

The strength of New England as a cultural and psychological influence renders Kenyon an unfit contrast to Hilda, for the simple reason that he is willing to bow to this label when she imposes it. He is an American before he is an artist. If he must choose between marriage to Hilda, the “daughter of the Puritans” (MF 31), and artistic inspiration in Italy, then he is willing to “hit poor Cleopatra a bitter blow on her Egyptian nose with this mallet” (MF 235). Although superficially they appear to represent different sides of the artistic spectrum—she traditional and conservative, he more experimental—Kenyon is in fact eager to adopt any role that will bring him closer to Hilda. His

willingness not only to sacrifice his “feline Cleopatra” but further to claim it is not a sacrifice at all, proves that Kenyon, far from representing a social or artistic persona opposed to Hilda’s, desires to reform himself to reflect what he sees as her higher standards for him (Baym, “EIY” 247).

II. THE FALLEN FAUN

These high standards for Kenyon as a moral being combine uneasily in Hilda with her impatience for viewing the treasures of Rome. Hawthorne introduces her as an insightful judge of art, who agrees with Kenyon that the Faun of Praxiteles resembles the mortal Donatello. But her ability to appreciate such art is limited: “‘Ah, the Faun!’ cried Hilda, with a little gesture of impatience. ‘I have been looking at him too long; and now, instead of a beautiful statue, immortally young, I see only a corroded and discolored stone. This change is very apt to occur in statues’” (MF 8). This “impatience,” while also helpful in developing her character, is perhaps most significant for the bond it illustrates between Hilda and Hawthorne himself. James rather snobbishly characterizes Hawthorne’s Italian Notebooks by saying, “...we are unable to rid ourselves of the impression that Hawthorne was a good deal bored by the importunity of Italian art, for which his taste, naturally not keen, had never been cultivated” (Haw. 155).²⁸ While on the surface this statement appears to be mainly self-flattery on James’s part (he conspicuously implies that he was never “a great deal bored by... Italian art”), Hawthorne himself

²⁸ As if in reaction to Hawthorne’s supposedly inferior ability to appreciate Italy, when James adopts the structure of The Marble Faun (four protagonists, three American and one an Italian nobleman) in The Golden Bowl, he conspicuously relocates his characters to London, where their inability to appreciate the significance of one single artifact—the flawed Golden Bowl—is their undoing.

acknowledges his inability to truly appreciate Hilda's "Masters" in a January 24th Italian Notebook entry: "My receptive faculty is very limited, and when the utmost of its small capacity is full, I become perfectly miserable, and the more so the better worth seeing are the things I am forced to reject" (Notebooks 43). Like his Puritanical heroine, Hawthorne is liable to find himself confronted with "corroded and discolored stone" where he wishes to see art (MF 8). Thus, when Hilda claims that the "change...very apt to occur in statues" has transformed the Marble Faun to meaningless rock, she is also referring to a personal experience of Hawthorne the American confronted with the dubious splendors of Rome.

But is it not merely the carved Marble Faun that undergoes this devaluation in Hilda's eyes. Unlike her high standards for Kenyon's artistic production, Hilda has no social expectations at all for Donatello. The complete absence of any statement from Hilda on Donatello's character, even after she witnesses his crime, speaks for itself. If Hawthorne, in James's words, "washes his hands of" Roman art at times, Hilda equally clearly "washes her hands of" Donatello (Haw. 155). Paul John Eakin, in "The Tragedy of Self-Culture," calls Hilda's total dismissal of things she cannot (or will not) understand Hawthorne's "revaluation of the girl's Protestant heritage" (Eakin "TSC" 77). But it is a "revaluation" in which "he stops short of the conclusion implied by her inadequate response to the dark knowledge of evil" ("TSC" 77).²⁹ Hawthorne, according to Eakin, is trying to understand

²⁹ Eakin makes the further interesting point that "Unlike [James's] Isabel Archer with her fine gift of consciousness, Hilda has no resource to deal with the experience of evil excepting the

the psychological state of knowing evil without being corrupted by it, but, like Hilda, he cannot imagine knowledge of evil without also imagining corruption. In his determination to keep his New England heroine moral, therefore, Hawthorne sacrifices her ability to “know” certain truths. Donatello, unlike the Faun of Praxiteles, is not “corroded and discolored stone,” but a living being (MF 8). Yet Hilda treats him throughout their (albeit divided) novel as no more than the aged and rather banal marble: in other words, as nothing at all.

Despite Donatello’s membership in the group that includes her future husband and former best friend, Hilda does not seem to find his existence relevant to the story of her own life in Rome. Even the terrible moment when she witnesses his murder of Miriam’s so-called Model does not impress upon her any particular insight into Donatello’s character. Instead, Hilda projects her revulsion at the crime upon Miriam: “A look passed from your eyes to Donatello’s...It revealed all your heart, Miriam...A look of hatred, triumph, vengeance, and, as it were, joy at some unhopd-for relief” (MF 129). Hilda sees Miriam as a contaminating force, whose entire moral being is encompassed in the look that supposedly compels Donatello to kill the oppressive Model. Emily Schiller sums up Hilda’s condemnation of Miriam by saying, “Hilda fears contagion... Like Donatello, she is given the

defensive strategy of repression” (“TSC” 78). In other words, Eakin claims that James’s heroine of Portrait of a Lady is able to do successfully what Hawthorne’s Hilda fails to achieve. I will address whether James does indeed succeed in his depictions of “repressed” Americans in Italy, and more particularly whether he allows his heroines to successfully “deal with the experience of evil” (both in Portrait and more particularly in The Golden Bowl), below.

opportunity to learn more about humanity and thus more about herself. But Hilda learns only part of the lesson” (Schiller 383).³⁰

Hilda is not emotionally or intellectually equipped to hold the knowledge of sin in her mind without being convinced of her own guilt by association. Yet she stubbornly continues to assert her own identity as “the stainless maiden,” even as she proclaims, “It seems a crime to know of such a thing, and keep it to myself” (MF 129). She learns the reality of a very serious crime but, unlike the repentant Donatello, does not change any of her own beliefs to accommodate this knowledge. The closest she comes to change is her seeming regression to childhood as she describes Miriam’s fall (a behavior which Baym also notices): “Oh, my mother—my mother! Were she yet living, I would travel over land and sea to tell her this dark secret, as I told all the little troubles of my infancy” (MF 129). But even this reflects a recurring theme in her personality; Hilda yearns for confession, a trait that makes her American religious sensibility vulnerable to the toxic Catholicism in Rome.

Donatello, in marked contrast to Hilda (although neither mentions the other’s behavior, and possibly is unaware of it), utterly transforms himself in response to the death of the Model. Yet, both before and after his transformation (another possible title for the novel that became The Marble Faun [Wineapple, “TSS” 318]), Donatello remains apart from the static

³⁰ While she is useful in terms of a close reading of Hilda’s character, Schiller’s argument as a whole is more problematic. At times she seems to agree with Baym’s assertion that Hilda is “narrow” and “merciless” (Baym, “E1Y” 248), qualifying this view only with a claim that Hawthorne himself dislikes her as much as the reader does. At other moments she seems to attempt to cast Hilda in a more positive light. Thus, while the above quotation is useful in terms of thinking about what Hilda might have learned and why she cannot learn it, the larger question of Schiller’s ultimate purpose in posing the question remains unclear.

“daughter of the Puritans” (MF 31). Unlike his American friends, the Italian man is not a producer of any cultural product: he does not create art. As he first appears, in his innocent, faunlike state, Donatello’s manner of being does seem to mirror Hilda’s; as she worships her idea of the “Old Masters,” so Donatello worships Miriam. “You are yourself, and I am Donatello. . . . Therefore I love you! There needs no other reason” (MF 47), he proclaims, echoing Hilda’s desire to “catch and reflect some of the glory” she sees in ancient art, which her nature is so suited to appreciate (MF 33). It is Donatello’s nature to love the form of womanhood he sees in Miriam. Millington writes of this couple’s half of the “Double Novel” that “the crucial moments of the novel inhabited by Miriam and Donatello take place under the sign of romance” (“Defeat” 179). Donatello loves Miriam in a simplistic, “romantic” way, without attaching to her any moral or social ideology. His worship differs from Hilda’s in this sense; Hilda does not seek a “romantic” relationship with her muses.

But Donatello’s “romance” with Miriam has its own worrisome qualities. His response to her half-mocking questions about his resemblance to the Marble Faun, and his declaration of his love for her, do not express a wish to comprehend either his sentiments or her own: “. . . [H]e did not seem quite to understand their mirthful talk, nor to be disposed to explain what kind of creature he was, or to what divine or poetic kindred his companion feigned to link him” (MF 46). His admiration for Miriam, like Hilda’s admiration for Raphael, does not require that he know her inner being or personal intentions.

Much as Baym claims that Hilda “bowdleriz[es]” (“EIY” 241) the intentions of the artists she copies, Donatello seems content to gaze upon Miriam without needing to “understand” her. But Donatello does not need to “understand” himself any more than he needs to “understand” the woman he believes he loves. In perfect opposition to the “daughter of the Puritans” (MF 31), Donatello lacks an ideology to support the attraction he feels to Miriam. “Perhaps...his character needed the dark element, which it found in her,” the narrator hypothesizes (MF 47). Across the Atlantic from Blithedale Farm, Philip Rahv’s “dark lady” reasserts herself (Rahv 63). This inclination toward “the dark element” (a term that, significantly, comes from the narrator rather than from the Count of Monte Beni himself) differentiates both Miriam and Donatello absolutely from Hilda. Hilda’s role as a copyist is predicated on her compulsive desire to belong only to the light—to what has already been deemed “high” and spiritually exalted by her culture. Donatello, equally innocent, may “bowdleriz[e]” the already ambiguous identity of Miriam, but he does not attempt to construct her as his moral superior (Baym, “EIY” 241). “You are yourself, and I am Donatello,” he says, and that is the sum of his feelings (MF 47).

Of course, the other aspect of Donatello that places him in Miriam’s half of the “Double Novel” rather than Hilda’s is his great change from innocent to sinful being. Hilda, with her unstated reluctance to attribute agency to Donatello himself, cites the “look” with which Miriam instigates the Italian man’s crime, indicating her own conviction of the “dark” quality in the

Cleopatra-like woman, but the fact remains that it is Donatello, and not Miriam, who “literally overthrows” the horrifying Model (Millington, “Defeat” 180).³¹ This action affects his “Transformation:” a moment so pivotal that it became, in Britain, the title of the book (Wineapple, “TSS” 318). Schiller (rightly) says of Hilda that “her discovery of sin is never a self-discovery” in implicit comparison to Donatello’s much more personal realization (Schiller 384). Donatello, the innocent almost-immortal whose countenance so resembles that of the artless Marble Faun, alters immediately when he becomes aware of his personal capacity for destruction: “It had kindled him into a man; it had developed within him an intelligence which was no native characteristic of the Donatello whom we have heretofore known. But that simple and joyous creature was gone forever” (MF 105). When the living Marble Faun encounters sin, more particularly when he encounters this blight in his own being, he shifts from faunlike to manlike; he develops a human “intelligence,” and abandons intrinsic joyousness for a consuming remorse. Millington—who, like Baym, sees the psychology of the novel in a Freudian light—summarizes Donatello’s new persona as the development of “the authority of conscience within the psyche” (“Defeat” 180).

But, as the narrator warns us, Millington’s “authority of conscience” is “no native characteristic” of the former faun (MF 105). Indeed, what is “native” to Donatello is far more difficult to determine than his “simple”

³¹ Kenyon reminds us of this fact in the “Postscript” of the novel, when he says, “her crime lay merely in a glance! She did no murder!” (MF 291).

personality at first suggests. He is set apart from his friends from the very beginning, at the level of nationality. What is “native” to Hilda, the “daughter of the Puritans,” or Kenyon, her compatriot and prospective spouse, does not apply to the uncultured Italian. Italy is a different world, Hawthorne explains, as he draws the vivid contrast between the American mentality of production—Kenyon, Hilda, and even the ambiguous Miriam are all producers of art—and the archaic Italian landscape of the Marble Faun. Donatello’s “native” place is his ancestral home at Monte Beni, surrounded by a verbose plebeian “populace” that is constantly communicating and interacting, yet never accomplishing anything; “So many words are not uttered in a New England village throughout the year...as are spoken here, with no especial purpose, in a single day” (MF 183).

The Italian “psyche,” Hawthorne implies, is not suited to “purpose” in the manner that the American mind, specifically the mentality of New England, is. While superficially the Monte Beni peasants may seem to be engaged in a much richer village life than their New England equivalents, with their swiftly flowing words filling the days, the truth is that their activity masks what Hawthorne considers a cultural lethargy, of which Donatello is the product. In terms of his relationship with his American friends, the Italian man is not a producer of art but a product; “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,” the narrator claims (MF 184). Donatello is a Marble Faun in more than his mere physical

resemblance to the Faun of Praxiteles; he is also a being objectified by his nationality, an artifact representing the abstract concept, “Italy.”

Kenyon in particular is eager to understand the new persona of Donatello in light of his national origin. If the attraction of artistic interest does indeed indicate the “waning to decay and ruin” of a people, then Donatello himself is on the brink of oblivion; Kenyon is swiftly inspired to sculpt him when he sees the new knowledge combined with the old beauty of the Count’s face. Kenyon’s sculpture shows symptoms of both Hilda’s and Miriam’s influence—personifications of the two very different ways of understanding the fallen Donatello. His first attempt at a bust represents a judgment directly from Hilda’s “narrow...merciless” (Baym, “EIY” 248) perception of Donatello the murderer: “It were a sin to let the clay which bears your features harden into a look like that. Cain never wore an uglier one,” he exclaims in dismay (MF 169). As he mingles his American sensibility with his understanding of Donatello’s developing consciousness, however, Kenyon returns to the frame of mind that allowed him to construct the (ultimately doomed) Cleopatra which so impressed her “dark lady” sister (Rahv 63). “A wonderful process is going forward in Donatello’s mind...Out of his bitter agony, a soul and intellect, I could almost say, have been inspired in him,” he tells Miriam (MF 175). Here, Kenyon (who “can...produce...as art what [he] cannot compass in experience,” says Millington [“Defeat” 191]) advocates what Millington calls “the ‘fortunate fall’” in Donatello (“Defeat” 181). The “progress” of the naïve Italian into a thinking being who can converse with

Kenyon is a “wonderful” occurrence. In the bust, Kenyon indicates that “agony” and ensuing regret were necessary to bring about this positive change from Marble Faun to living human. The new Donatello is both flawed and penitent (hallmarks of Kenyon’s own upbringing in New England).

III. THE RETREAT OF THE PURITANS

But, as Millington reminds us, Kenyon’s theory of a “fortunate fall”—the system of belief that would allow Donatello to work through sin as a learning experience rather than an irrevocable descent from grace—is only possible when he is “on vacation from Hilda and her world of constraint” (“Defeat” 181). On Donatello’s side of the continuum, amid the crumbling vestiges of another world, Kenyon is tempted away from his Puritan, American mode of thinking by the poetic (and, as Hilda discovers, insidiously Catholic) Italian world around him. But whenever the question of nationality arises, the specter of Hilda looms again. The best antidote Kenyon can imagine for his depressed friend is an American mindset: “You should go with me to my native country....In that fortunate land, each generation has only its own sins and sorrows to bear....If I were to...suffer any misfortune here—methinks it would be impossible to stand up against it, under such adverse circumstances” (MF 188). In other words, Donatello’s fundamental problem is not that he has committed an irredeemable sin, but that he has done so in a foreign environment that has not given him the means to absolve himself. It is the very qualities that made him so innocent—his ignorance of his age, his lack of any particular education or occupation—that render Donatello unable

to think critically about his crime, and thus come to an understanding that would make his a “fortunate fall.”

Hilda, in implicit contrast to Donatello’s depression, which results from his newfound capacity to condemn himself, possesses a distinct aptitude for absolving herself. As Baym observes, when Hilda, in a fit of spiritual hysteria, confesses to the American Catholic priest, “she confesses the sins of others and fiercely insists that she is blameless....Tattling rather than confessing, she exemplifies the way in which socialized people act as cultural police” (“EIY” 244). Hilda’s culture has taught her that purity is paramount; to confess a personal sin would be to damn herself. Bereft of her own New England society, Hilda attempts to make the trappings of Catholicism function for her as a means of relieving her confused conscience. As Hawthorne describes the scene when she first enters St. Peter’s, the desperate New England girl nearly participates in the ritual of crossing herself with holy water, constrained only by the fancy that “her mother’s spirit...were looking down upon her child, the daughter of Puritan forefathers, and weeping to behold her ensnared by these gaudy superstitions” (MF 218). To Hilda, the past generations that Kenyon claims do not haunt Americans as they do Italians are very much present in her mind. Her alien setting exacerbates her spiritual conflict: the desire to confess versus the knowledge that her Puritan heritage forbids it.

Italy itself endangers Hilda’s Protestant soul, specifically because of the power of its images. Hilda is the product of an austere religious culture;

she is dependent upon the religious setting available to her, and this one is full of impressive images. Kenyon characterizes her as “a rare mixture of impressibility, sympathy, sensitiveness to many influences, with a certain quality of common sense...” which renders her vulnerable to the soothing ideas of confession, ritual, and elaborate religious architecture (MF 228). “Hilda fears contagion,” says Schiller...but the true “contagion” Hawthorne sees for her is not carried by people but by place (Schiller 383).

This “contagion” of place is what leads to the ultimate split of the novel: Donatello’s confinement to Italy (where he, and therefore Miriam, is imprisoned), and Hilda’s return to America with Kenyon. Alarmed both by her knowledge of Donatello’s (and, more important to her, Miriam’s) crime, and by her own worrisome “Catholic propensities” (MF 229), Hilda observes that “In Rome, there is something dreary and awful, which we can never quite escape” (MF 231). The weight of what Hawthorne would consider the dying country’s history, and its resemblance to pagan idolatry, renders Italy a hazardous environment for the unsuspecting New Englander. In order to remain moral and pure, Hilda must remove herself from the influence of what she sees as immorality: the culture that enables Donatello to be both faun and man, and which encourages her to abandon her own heritage in favor of “gaudy superstitions” (MF 218). Hawthorne rather pedantically concludes, “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...It is wise, therefore, to come back betimes, or never" (MF 287). The assumption in this statement that no land can be better than one's homeland is one that a later American in Italy, Henry James, would find perhaps as "narrow" (Baym, "EIY" 248) as Hilda herself—but Hawthorne sees a danger in Italy that is real to the Hildas and Kenyons across the Atlantic. It is Donatello's world, the world of the Marble Faun, made capable of murder through its very innocence. As long as Hilda and Kenyon retain the values of America, Italy must always be "a foreign shore" to them.

The fearfully alien nature of Rome renders Hilda and Kenyon's departure for America (and a Protestant marriage) an escape as much as a return. The blissful couple's last view of Miriam is her "gesture of benediction" to them from across the Pantheon—"across" rather than "at" the Pantheon because "They suffered her to glide out...without a greeting; for those extended hands, even while they blessed, seemed to repel" (MF 287). Schiller's "contagion" now emanates from the fallen woman (whose fall was instigated by a mere "look" [MF 129]). Miriam is now chained to "decay[ing]" Italy by Donatello's imprisonment, and the two untainted Americans wisely choose not to risk moral infection by associating with her further (MF 184). They flee, and save themselves from artistic enslavement to the corrupting "atmosphere" of Rome: the "atmosphere" that made Hilda a copyist rather than an artist, and caused Kenyon to produce a Cleopatra incompatible with his future wife's religious values (Notebooks 46). This escape is a version, Brodhead suggests, of Hawthorne's own homecoming:

“...the more he accepted his place as classic author, the harder he found to make his own work. When Hawthorne returned to America in 1860 he built a tower onto his house with a writing-room on its top floor” (“Late Hawthorne” 80). The label “author,” combined with the exhaustive display of Roman art, marks the close of Hawthorne’s literary production. Like Hilda’s “tower,” Hawthorne’s “tower...with a writing-room on its top floor” represents an effort to find a safe, isolated place in which to produce his work. And Hawthorne, like Kenyon, finds himself content within the limits imposed by his “Dovecote” (MF 31).

America, then, becomes Hilda and Kenyon’s “Dovecote.” When Kenyon suggests his ill-considered hypothesis, “Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him. Is sin, then...merely an element of human education...? Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his?” (MF 286), Hilda is there to impose limits on his too-inquisitive mind. Only what is known, what is doctrine, is safe. Hilda is an upholder of religious doctrine; Adam’s fall must never be anything but a tragedy. To believe that Donatello’s crime is not a “sin” would be to incriminate themselves, as well. As Brodhead says of this dogmatic New Englander, “What makes Hilda different from Phoebe or Priscilla is that in this incarnation, the pale maiden is centrally associated with a will toward a specific sort of cultural organization” (“Late Hawthorne” 73). The “specific sort of cultural organization” that Hilda promotes is much more active than anything the frail Priscilla might have attempted. This “cultural” aggression, Hawthorne implies, is the result of

Hilda's more threatening environment. Her yearning for "the native air" reflects Hawthorne's assertion that "between two countries, we have none at all" (MF 287). If they remain in Italy, yet try to maintain their American morality, Hilda asserts, "it annuls and obliterates...precepts of Heaven" that are most fundamental to their being (MF 286). Hilda fears the idea of "sin" as "an element of human education," and so she initiates a return to her national "tower" (America), where the ocean will serve as a barrier between herself and the crimes of Miriam and Donatello. Her most gracious concession is to bring Kenyon with her, so that her superior "spiritual identity," to use Eakin's term, will shield them both ("Self-Culture" 59).

And so the "Double Novel" (Millington 179) that is The Marble Faun concludes by dividing the fates of the willfully innocent "daughter of the Puritans" (MF 31) and the fallen pair, the "dark" Miriam and the living statue (Rahv 63). "Donatello's bust...has ever since remained in an unfinished state" (MF 237), of course, as Kenyon has returned to Hilda's sphere, where there is no "dark" influence to inspire his art. Hawthorne does not presume to tell his audience what the finished product would resemble. Perhaps enlightenment is an ongoing process; perhaps Donatello, now that he has begun, will never stop transforming. Hilda's character, however, is the result of a strenuous effort to maintain stasis. Italy throws new light on these efforts,³² but in the end both Hawthorne and his American characters seem to find this country of images

³² Phoebe Pyncheon, for example, never had to struggle against Catholicism in her quest to be moral in The House of the Seven Gables; within her more insular American context, her Protestant faith leads her to become the "youthful, fresh, and thoroughly wholesome heart" of the dreary House of the Seven Gables (Hawthorne, House of the Seven Gables 137).

and shadows inadequate for their social and spiritual needs. This inadequacy of Italy as a space for an American romance abroad foreshadows James's own abandonment of Italy as the backdrop for his last novel, The Golden Bowl—a novel that, ironically, builds itself around the “doubled” Italian structure that Hawthorne uses to create The Marble Faun.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE BROKEN BOWL

I. DIVIDING ISABEL

Henry James's final novel, The Golden Bowl, begins in the world that comes after an Italian romance. At its simplest, it is the story of two couples who marry for the sake of appearances. The narrative opens with the Italian Prince Amerigo's satisfaction at his approaching marriage to Maggie Verver, the wealthy daughter of an American businessman, Adam Verver, who has abandoned the financial world in favor of collecting European antiques. As James characterizes Amerigo, who he also refers to as "the Prince," "he was one of those Romans who find by the Thames a more convincing image of the truth of the ancient state than any they have left by the Tiber" (James, The Golden Bowl 1). But even as Amerigo visualizes the "image of the truth" he is about to marry in the form of American gentility, we learn of an even earlier Italian romance, which took place between the Prince and Maggie's poor but splendidly cosmopolitan countrywoman Charlotte Stant. This tale, prior even to the Roman courtship of Maggie and Amerigo, remains cloaked in mystery throughout much of the novel; Maggie does not know of it when she marries Amerigo, and her father does not know of it when he himself later proposes to Charlotte. Yet the unseen Italian drama, prior to the London marriages for the sake of aristocratic titles, international connections, and nostalgia for "the ancient state," undermines the fragile foundation of the Ververs' expatriate world.

Maggie, the heroine James's narrator calls "a timid tigress," depends upon the "old golden Rome" of her courtship to define her relationship with Prince Amerigo (GB 249). It is the idyllic land of their past, and the basis of their marriage. Yet Rome is never tangibly present to the novel's four protagonists, who limit themselves to the elaborate English houses that Adam provides for his daughter, son-in-law, and newly acquired wife, Charlotte. Charlotte, who returns from the wasteland of America for her schoolfriend Maggie's wedding, is a fundamentally "Italian" being, despite her nominal American citizenship: "Nothing in her definitely placed her; she was a rare, a special product" (GB 32). Indeed, her status as "a special product" leads Adam Verver to marry her. But even the diminutive Maggie, with her resistance to movement and firm attachment to aristocratic London, recalls with fondness "the ever-to-be-loved Italy" from whence her marriage came (GB 118). Italy looms as a memory and a destination, but it is never the setting of The Golden Bowl—like the literal Golden Bowl, with its insidious flaw, it is set in London. First Amerigo and Charlotte, and then the unsuspecting Maggie, discover this Broken Bowl, and find that it reveals imperfections in their own lives. Like the "old golden Rome" that brought the three expatriates and their Italian Prince together, the Golden Bowl offers only the illusion of wholeness (GB 249).

This shadowy, elusive vision of Italy-by-proxy (in memory, just outside the novel's frame, and of course embodied by Amerigo) contrasts

strikingly with James's many more obviously "Italian" novels.³³ While The Golden Bowl tells the story of a group of expatriates and the divisions among them, an earlier "Italian" novel, The Portrait of a Lady, represents James's preference for actually sending his American heroine, Isabel Archer, to "the romantic and historic sites, such as the land of Italy abounds in" ("Author's Preface," Portrait 3). Paul John Eakin considers the advent of Isabel, an independent woman abroad, an "Abandon[ment] of the use of paired heroines which had been central to Hawthorne's explorations of the New England mind" (Eakin, "The Tragedy of Self-Culture" 169). Unlike the "dark lady" (Rahv 63) that Philip Rahv identifies in Hawthorne, who necessarily has a "light" counterpart, Isabel embodies both the "light" and the "dark lady" when she embarks for Europe. But, although she herself is not a "paired heroine," Isabel shares with Maggie and Charlotte an idolization of European shores.

"[T]o go to Florence...I'd promise almost anything!" she proclaims to her aunt, Mrs. Touchett, when the older woman suggests they go together to visit the Continent (James, Portrait 37). The lure of Europe draws Isabel from her dismal, rain-drenched existence in Albany, New York, first to the splendors of aristocratic England, then to the hypnotic realm of Italy itself, where she marries and commits to the expatriate life that so many of James's characters lead. But the Italy she thinks she loves during "the visit she paid to

³³ In addition to Portrait of a Lady, which I will discuss below, James's first novel, Roderick Hudson, takes place almost exclusively in Italy; his novella The Aspern Papers is set in Venice; and another work from the end of his career, The Wings of the Dove, takes place in large part in Italy (the wealthy American Milly Theale lives in an Italian palace). These examples alone prove his enthusiasm for an Italian stage. His change for The Golden Bowl, then, from a privileged Italy to a subtler Italy, represents a large stylistic shift from James's traditional "Italian novel."

Mr Osmond's hilltop" (Portrait 222)—a grandiose place that pretentiously echoes John Winthrop's "city on a hill"—is not the Italy she finds herself inhabiting in "the dark massive structure" that becomes her home with Osmond (Portrait 313). Isabel in her Italian palace, surrounded by the trappings of an empty aristocracy she did not intend, is a divided being whose goodness coexists uneasily with the blindness that led her to marry the vindictive Osmond, whose "egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers" (Portrait 367). Eakin indicates the quality of Isabel that leads her to see the "flowers" rather than the "serpent" when he says, "Isabel in her innocence responds not directly to experience but rather to a series of ideal pictures of it formed by her imagination" ("TSC" 175). Like her later incarnation, Maggie Verver—who literally marries Italy in the form of Amerigo, even as she transplants him into her father's English estate—Isabel is a devotee of the Italian "aesthetic" ("TSC" 175). For Maggie, Isabel's "ideal picture" ("TSC" 175) is the "old golden Rome" in which she discovers her Italian Prince (GB 249). Yet the presence of the Golden Bowl, an icon not of the "ideal" but of the "real" state of the Ververs' dual marriages, provokes as much alarm as enlightenment among the James's final set of characters.

Isabel, for all her individuality, clings to the "'image' of...her ideal," even when that "image" has been blighted by reality (Eakin, "TSC" 184). When James returns to the Italian theme in his final novel, he provides Maggie, Charlotte, and their respective husbands with a symbol for their illusions: the subtly-flawed Golden Bowl. But now, at the end of his literary

career, James's vision of the place of Italy in the expatriate American psyche has changed. The world of flowers and serpents—the insidious, seductive vision of Italy that Hawthorne offers in The Marble Faun—returns in The Golden Bowl in the form of memories and illusions. Richard Brodhead argues in “Late James: The Lost Art of the Late Style” that, in his later writing, “...Hawthorne becomes newly important to James....The supersignified style James formulates for his late works is clearly derived from Hawthornesque precedents. And curiously, but very strikingly, Hawthorne's presence in that style seems to be part of what makes it, in James's terms, adequately late” (“LJ” 175). The “late” James, as Brodhead calls him, has returned to the earlier model of Hawthorne—what Eakin calls “the use of paired heroines” (“TSC” 169)—but in doing so discards his own traditional use of Italy as a romantic setting. Italy in The Golden Bowl is as illusive as the truths the painted crystal conceals. And, like the flaws the Ververs hide from themselves and each other, the “crack” in the bowl is nonetheless profoundly real (GB 71). The “style” James adopts when he places the four Ververs in opposition to each other (following the Marble Faun theme of four interrelated protagonists) is very much “Hawthornesque,” but the “Italy” he creates for them is a new and subtle one. Indeed, it appears that, in order to adapt Hawthorne's “pairing” technique effectively, James feels the need to shift the setting, maintaining the aura of his own and The Marble Faun's Rome, but revising the stage upon which it is set.

This duality of composition reflects the connection Brodhead sees between the “late” James and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Numerous scholars have observed Hawthorne’s tendency to create his heroines in pairs: both Zenobia and Priscilla of The Blithedale Romance, and Miriam and Hilda of The Marble Faun follow this model.³⁴ But, while James’s early novels sometimes feature opposing forms of womanhood (for example the dramatic Christina Light and the reserved Mary Garland of Roderick Hudson), these dissimilar forms of womanhood do not tend to be the center of the story. As Eakin says of the early Jamesian “heroine,” “she had usually been presented from the point of view of an expatriate American, frequently an artist, and potentially her lover” (“TSC” 168). In James’s earlier, more peripheral effort at “pairing” heroines, Christina Light and Mary Garland are aesthetic beings meant to represent a choice on the part of the real—and male—protagonist. A privileged feminine protagonist such as Isabel Archer stands alone with her fragmented psyche that encapsulates both “light” and “dark” qualities. In this respect, The Golden Bowl represents a reworking of James’s Italian theme of Portrait in his new, “late style”—a style in which Hawthornesque “paired” heroines replace the singular Isabel. Where Isabel traverses the dusky social landscape of marriage, children, and morality alone, Maggie Verver and Charlotte Stant do so in relation to one another. Thus, in order to write The

³⁴ Philip Rahv identifies this pattern when he labels Zenobia and Miriam, among other Hawthornian heroines, as embodiments of “the dark lady,” a woman of dramatic, passionate nature, who contrasts with her more subdued, Puritanical counterpart (such as the submissive Priscilla or the obsessively pristine Hilda) (Rahv 63). Nina Baym calls Hilda “a wholly different case, a deliberate contrast to Miriam,” and also cites her similarity to Priscilla, Zenobia’s constant shadow (“EIY” 241). Richard Millington’s use of the phrase “The Double Novel” to describe the two separate stories, one for Hilda and one for Miriam, that make up The Marble Faun is perhaps the most helpful articulation of this model (“Defeat” 179).

Golden Bowl, James must fracture the whole he created in Portrait: he must divide Isabel.

II. DISTILLING MAGGIE

This division connects The Golden Bowl stylistically to Hawthorne's "Italian novel," The Marble Faun, where Miriam embodies "the dark element" (MF 47) and Hilda monopolizes spiritual virtue. In Hawthorne's novel the quality of this division is so distinct that Richard Millington calls the book a "Double Novel" ("Defeat" 179), in which there are in fact two stories being told, one for each of the two distinctive heroines. In contrast to this fundamental division, James describes his conception of Portrait, in the "Author's Preface" to the New York edition, as founded "altogether in the sense of a single character, the character and aspect of a particular engaging young woman..." (James, "AP" 4). But by his "late" period, "a single character," even the character of "a particular engaging young woman" overflowing with personality, is not adequate for James to express the influence of Italy (now an Italy in absentia) on the American psyche. The Golden Bowl is James's own "Double Novel:" a reworking of Hawthorne's model of uneasy sisterhood. (It is even divided into two parts, that of "The Prince" and "The Princess.") Like the sundered halves of the Golden Bowl, Maggie and Charlotte belong to the same national mold—the expatriate American woman in Italy—but as their post-Italian tale unfolds, they stray further and further apart. Maggie's innocence slowly congeals into experience, while Charlotte's worldliness spirals gradually and tragically into

helplessness. This “Double Novel,” like The Marble Faun, constructs itself around the theme of rupture.

This divisive quality, of course, would be impossible without the dynamic relationship between Charlotte and Maggie. In his examination of “the motif of the double” in The Uncanny, Sigmund Freud cites “the connections that link the double with mirror-images, [and] shadows,” and goes on to claim that “The double was originally an insurance against the extinction of the self” (Freud 142). Thus, James’s project in dividing his two heroines in essence means creating an Isabel, but also giving character to her “shadow,” or reflection: in this manner, Charlotte is born. This model allows the “Double Novel” of The Golden Bowl to center not merely upon two distinct heroines, but upon two women who are aspects of one another. Superficially, this Janus-like structure seems to be a more sophisticated version of Hawthorne’s “doubling,” in which Hilda so emphatically rejects all of Miriam’s “dark” characteristics. But Freud’s use of the “shadow” as a representation of the “double” indicates that James is still within what Rahv would call the Hawthornesque world of the “dark lady.” These “mirror-images,” Freud indicates, serve as a means of distilling shared qualities between two separate figures: “They involve the idea of the ‘double’ (the Doppelgänger), in all its nuances and manifestations... This relationship is intensified by the spontaneous transmission of mental processes from one of these persons to the other...” (Freud 141). This “transmission” of personal characteristics from one half of the “double” that is Maggie and Charlotte to

the other reflects the need Maggie in particular (like the Puritanical Hilda) feels to distance herself from the unpleasant revelations about herself and her marriage that her friend embodies.

Maggie conscientiously divides herself from Charlotte by calling herself “small” and her exotic friend “great” (GB 108). Indeed, even at the level of her name—always “Maggie,” never once “Margaret”—Maggie insists upon her own diminutive social stature. This label of “smallness” in The Golden Bowl reflects a theme James addresses in Portrait of a Lady (the “pre-doubling” Italian novel). Upon learning of her engagement to the belittling Gilbert Osmond, Ralph Touchett informs his naïve cousin Isabel, “I can’t get over the sense that Osmond is somehow—well, small...I think he’s narrow, selfish” (Portrait 297). Isabel’s marriage to Osmond represents a paradoxical attempt to realize “the great self she would like to become” (Eakin, “TSC” 179) through the medium of a “small,” “narrow,” self-absorbed husband. But, where Isabel finds herself attempting to embody both qualities—the “great” woman and the “small” wife—Maggie and Charlotte distill these elements between them, much as do Hawthorne’s Hilda and Miriam. Far from wanting to rise above her “narrow” domestic world, Maggie marries a man who will allow her to live as a wife in the same limited domestic sphere she occupied as a daughter. Brodhead further posits a connection between Osmond’s social “smallness” and that of a “small” femininity when he states in his “Introduction” to The Marble Faun that “Gilbert Osmond is Hilda revealed as a dilettante and a snob” (“Intro” xxviii). A quality that was external to Isabel,

then, becomes part of the psychological realm of the “pair” that is Maggie and Charlotte. While Osmond’s “smallness” is so alien to Isabel that she cannot at first even identify it, Maggie’s is a conscientious choice that she uses as a way of differentiating herself from her “double,” Charlotte. By dividing Isabel’s “smallness” and “greatness” into two distinct women, James is able to explore a theme that Hawthorne evokes repeatedly through his “paired heroines” (Eakin, “TSC” 169): the clash between the “small” and the “great.”

Charlotte Stant is a great woman. “Great in nature, in character, in spirit. Great in life”, declares Maggie, as she attempts to articulate to her skeptical father the exact quality that makes Charlotte herself (GB 108).³⁵ Dissatisfied with the portrait she has painted, Maggie completes her illustration of Charlotte with a comparison to herself: “I’m a small creeping thing,” she asserts (GB 108). Charlotte’s is the realm of the “great,” as Maggie calls it. But that greatness can only be realized through Maggie’s own self-confessed “smallness.” These two expatriate women are fundamentally opposed to one another—the “great” versus the “small”—and yet they are also necessary to one another, for without an idea of the “small” there is no concept of the “great.” Like the deceptively unified Golden Bowl, which “might have been a large goblet diminished,” between them Maggie and Charlotte embody the paradoxical qualities of the “large” and the

³⁵ Charlotte shares this “greatness” with her British equivalent, Kate Croy of James’s The Wings of the Dove, who attaches herself to the wealthy Milly Theale, and attracts the admiration of the less charismatic American girl. James’s decision to cast his new “Kate” as American rather than European, making her better mirror the dynamic of Hawthorne’s Miriam and Hilda, suggests his growing interest in reflecting the “Doubling” theme that Hawthorne uses, both in The Marble Faun and elsewhere.

“diminished” (GB 67). But the Golden Bowl, as the “superstitious” Amerigo somewhat hysterically informs his former lover Charlotte when she considers purchasing it as a wedding gift for his future bride, Maggie, is in truth a Broken Bowl: “it has a crack” (GB 71). Unlike the indivisible Isabel Archer, Maggie and Charlotte, like the two pieces of the seemingly singular bowl, are fundamentally divided, despite the dual intermarriages that render them so painfully close to one another. As Jonathan Freedman suggests in “What Maggie Knew” (a play on the title of James’s novel of childhood innocence, What Maisie Knew), the story of Maggie is a tale “of the persistence of her flawed innocence” (“WMK” 105). No goblet, whether “large” or “diminished,” may hold so many “great” and “small” illusions when “it has a crack.”

Illusion, it turns out, is the metaphorical thread that binds The Golden Bowl’s four protagonists together. The novel takes place predominantly on a British stage, and perhaps for this reason critics of James have not seen fit to compare it, except at the limited level of Hilda and Maggie, with Hawthorne’s “Italian novel,” The Marble Faun.³⁶ But, as the transplanted Amerigo observes from his new, tenuous place in the expatriate American community of

³⁶ There are, of course, myriad books and essays written on the subject of James and Italy, some of them in conjunction with Hawthorne’s Marble Faun. Paul John Eakin writes on Hawthorne and James, but chooses Portrait of a Lady as the best James novel with which to argue a Hawthorne connection. Richard Brodhead references Portrait, but notably not The Golden Bowl, in his “Introduction” to the Penguin Marble Faun. In his own “Introduction” on The Golden Bowl, R.P. Blackmur digresses into another “late James” novel, The Wings of the Dove (an obvious “Italy” novel due to its Italian setting) without mentioning the word “Italy” once. Jonah Siegel illustrates a connection between Maggie, Hilda, and Mary Garland of Roderick Hudson, who together supply the Italian connection where Maggie alone, it seems, cannot. Nevertheless, at the level of character and in particular the level of structure, The Golden Bowl is, I argue, a profoundly “Italian” novel, and, when read in conjunction with Hawthorne’s Marble Faun, perhaps indeed is one of the most deliberately Italian novels by James.

England, “his old Roman life... seemed to hang in the air of mere iridescent horizons...with large languorous unaccountable blanks” superimposed upon the Ververs’ British world (GB 199). In Laurence Holland’s words, the many facets of the Ververs’ story are “Held together by its strange symmetry” (Holland, “The Marriages” 347). Amerigo, in his married state, now inhabits two “symmetrical” social worlds: worlds that also mirror the illusory “symmetry” of the Golden Bowl itself. It is, to use Holland’s word, a “strange” hybrid existence that struggles to incorporate both the “old Roman life” of his courtship with Maggie, and the “new” British life of his marriage with the Verver family. R.P. Blackmur characterizes the marriage that Maggie creates for her Italian Prince in England as “a fresh and novel instance of wanting to eat her cake and have it too” (Blackmur 10). She wants to transpose the aura of “their old golden Rome” (GB 249)—the site of their romance, which James does not allow the reader to see—upon their new, supposedly “golden” life in London. She does not understand that her efforts to maintain this dual life are in fact fracturing it. The beautiful Golden Bowl, like her illusions, is always really a Broken Bowl.

The “strange symmetry” of the novel is not limited to any one character or artifact, however. The Golden Bowl as a whole is “strangely symmetrical” with Hawthorne’s Marble Faun. This “symmetry” is most obvious at the level of structure; Millington’s “Double Novel” (“Defeat 179) paradigm applies beautifully to the two sets of couples who, as Brodhead notes, are constantly forming “unions designed to re-pair them” (“LJ” 191).

The error that the Ververs make at the level of language, of course, is to assume that to “re-pair” themselves will “repair” anything. Brodhead’s “re-pairing” represents the means James uses to build upon Hawthorne’s theme of two distinct sets of protagonists in The Marble Faun. In Hawthorne, the “Double Novel” divides sharply down the middle: there is Hilda’s story of purity and Miriam’s story of sin. The “pairs” are set in marble as surely as is the Faun of Praxiteles itself. James, who so successfully integrated sin and purity in the form of Isabel Archer, now enthusiastically adopts the idea of “pairs” in The Golden Bowl, but will not allow those pairs to remain static. Jonah Siegel identifies the new, over-doubled form that the Jamesian version of the “Double Novel” takes when he says, “Some kaleidoscopes are made with colored glass; some of the most striking, however, like this novel, are constructed out of the unstable, though symmetrical, juxtaposition of untinted mirrors” (Siegel, Haunted Museum 157). The “Double Novel” has now become kaleidoscopic, reflecting the myriad “doubles” that result as Maggie, Charlotte, and their respective husbands Amerigo and Adam “re-pair” and reflect one another.

Amerigo’s visions of the “iridescent horizons” (GB 199) of Rome on the London landscape are only one version of the national duality that divides him from both “small creeping” Maggie and “Great...brave and bright” Charlotte (GB 108). He calls the “old Roman life” a “languorous” one, which appears “to have been loose and vague and thin” compared to the bustle and activity of the “solid shining British” space he now inhabits (GB 199). But his

admiration for this new, “shining” London only serves to alienate “the Prince” from the modern world he seeks to join. In the voyeuristic Fanny Assingham’s words, “He is, profoundly, a Prince” (GB 240), a relic of Roman antiquity, and as such he does not find himself incorporated into the progressive British metropolis. Amerigo believes “a world so constituted was governed by a spell” and, as he does not know it, he contents himself with the outmoded “courage and good-humor” that led him to become the husband of a Verver (GB 199).³⁷ Like a better-socialized version of Hawthorne’s blithe Donatello, Amerigo is objectified by his noble Italian heritage, which translates in urbane London into a gaudy, unreal world of “spells,” “gods,” and “poetry” (GB 199). Despite “his remarkable displays of assimilative power” (GB 266), Amerigo finds himself in the same position that Charlotte does before Adam Verver proposes to her: “adrift” alongside the social world that he had believed marrying the Ververs would allow him to enter (GB 130). Like Osmond in Portrait, Adam is the gatekeeper of a culture that shimmers like a mirage before the hapless Italian outsider. No matter whom he marries or how perfect his English, Amerigo will never be welcomed onto the Ververs’ “hilltop” (Portrait 222), any more than Hawthorne’s Donatello could have survived in Hilda’s rigid, Puritanical homeland.

But the American world that Amerigo hopes to inhabit on the eve of his marriage is as incomplete as the Italian world he tries to abandon, and the

³⁷ “Ver,” the Latin root for “true” (“verus”) and “truth” (“veritas”) is an ironic name for the family Amerigo and Charlotte marry into; like the halves of the Golden Bowl, it presents itself with what Holland would call “strange symmetry,” but truly breaks down into two parts (“The Marriages” 347).

British world he despairingly observes. His connection to Amerigo Vespucci, whom Fanny Assingham labels “the pushing man, the make-believe discoverer” (GB 47), supposedly contributes to the Ververs’ attraction to the Prince, but aside from a perfunctory honeymoon trip to the dismal United States, the American connection is completely absent for Amerigo. Yet it is a (fictitious) version of America that the Prince originally imagines in Maggie:

He remembered to have read, as a boy, a wonderful tale by Allan Poe, his prospective wife’s countryman—which was a thing to show, by the way, what imagination Americans could have: the story of the shipwrecked Gordon Pym, who, drifting in a small boat further toward the North Pole—or was it the South?—than anyone had ever done, found at a given moment before him a thickness of white air that was like a dazzling curtain of light, concealing as darkness conceals, yet the color of milk or of snow. There were moments when he felt his own boat move upon some such mystery. (GB 12)

The quality of the explorer is evident in Amerigo, as is the childishness with which he tries to realize his boyish dreams of reaching some distant Pole (it does not matter which) through the more passive medium of marriage. Amerigo’s “boat” tugs at its British anchor occasionally (as in his affair with Charlotte), but is not bold enough to risk the open ocean alone. And so the “make-believe” (GB 47) explorer now finds not a new world but “a dazzling curtain of light, concealing as darkness conceals.” There is no enlightenment waiting for Amerigo at the end of his more limited voyage. Blackmur—who has much in common with the Hawthorne critics who critique the spiritual brutality of Hilda in The Marble Faun—asserts, “the reader . . . may even think of Greek tragedy and The Golden Bowl at the same time. But if the reader

does so he had better think of Prince Amerigo, not of the Princess Maggie, as the hero of the tragedy” (Blackmur 11). Amerigo remembers his boyhood reading of Edgar Allan Poe, and thinks it “was a thing to show, by the way, what imagination Americans could have,” but slowly begins to recognize that the American family he has married claims neither “imagination” nor adventurous destinations. The Ververs manage to overcome their aversion to movement in order to reach the European side of the Atlantic, but their idea of voyage, Amerigo finds, is different from that of other Americans—such as Poe’s hero, or James’s Isabel or Charlotte—who travel for the sake of exploration.

The compulsion for voyaging, which brings James’s expatriates to Europe, thus devolves into two forms of voyager. Isabel Archer travels with a specific destination in mind; hastening back to England from Rome on the eve her cousin Ralph’s death, she observes, “Gardencourt had been her starting-point, and to those muffled chambers it was at least a temporary solution to return” (Portrait 475). Yet “[s]he performed this journey with sightless eyes...Her thoughts followed their course through other countries...” (Portrait 474). Isabel, from the moment she leaves Albany for the imagined glories of Florence, blinds herself to her surroundings in favor of her destinations. Like Charlotte Stant, who discovers the Golden Bowl through a conscious search, Isabel glories in motion; even sitting motionless on her journey to Gardencourt, her mind travels “through other countries.” But by the end of her novel, Isabel is not merely voyaging when she leaves for England but fleeing

Rome specifically. Her “sightless eyes” no longer value the “series of ideal pictures” (Eakin, “TSC” 175) she passes through on the Continent. This “sightless” travel, in which she becomes momentarily lost without actually moving, foreshadows the incarnation of the static voyager, Maggie Verver, who fosters the illusion of unfamiliarity in a small space she knows well. “To wander a little wild was what would truly amuse her...keeping clear of Oxford Street and cultivating an impression as of parts she didn’t know” leads Maggie to the Golden Bowl as surely as did Charlotte and Amerigo’s systematic search of antiques shops (GB 337). Of course, the ease with which it appears to her proves how close Maggie was to the Broken Bowl throughout her stay in London, without ever discovering it. This is the “passive” exploration that Amerigo finds so inadequate after his vision of illustrious voyages to found new lands and built new societies. Despite his alliance with Maggie, the Prince continues to favor Charlotte’s more active adventures. After all, he accompanies Charlotte, but not Maggie, on her journey to discover the Bowl.

Maggie, far from embodying the voyager persona that her Italian husband expects of a wealthy expatriate whose country his ancestor discovered, rejects even the language of movement. When Amerigo looks at London, or at his memories of reading Poe, he sees activity, whether in the form of consumer culture or transcontinental voyages. But Maggie and her father, he begins to discover, decisively resist the idea of voyaging. “Do?” she incredulously echoes her Prince on their way back to Europe from “the

visit to America that had immediately succeeded her marriage... ‘Isn’t it the immense, the really quite matchless beauty of our position that we have to ‘do’ nothing in life at all?’” (GB 172). Maggie believes that the need to “do” anything is an evil that she—and, by extension, Amerigo—has fortunately escaped. These two, the narrator tells us, are “a conscientious, well-meaning, perfectly passive pair” (GB 173): the result, perhaps, of a “languorous” courtship in Rome (GB 199). Maggie and her father are expatriates because they do not adhere to the American idolization of action; with the fortune that Adam has already amassed, they do not need to. Instead, they are devotees of “taking everything as everything came, and all as quietly as might be” (GB 172-3). In this father and daughter align themselves against the inquisitive Italian suitor, relegating his wish for voyage to the other side of the rift that divides the Prince and Princess’s supposedly “golden” union.

Maggie’s ideal of “taking everything...as quietly as might be” (GB 172-3) is rooted in James’s portrayal of the consummate expatriate in Italy, Gilbert Osmond. Osmond convinces Isabel of the nobility of his cloistered, Hilda-like existence by choosing “to be as quiet as possible....Not to worry—not to strive or struggle” (Portrait 231). The difference between the two is that Maggie’s “innocence” (Freedman, “WMK” 105) cannot—or will not—understand the enormity of the stasis she is proposing when she rejects Amerigo’s suggestion that they “do” something. Like Hawthorne’s Hilda, once Maggie is convinced of the virtue of her course, there is no changing it. Maintaining the status quo becomes a moral tenet for her, just as copying

rather than creating becomes a religious experience for Hilda. Maggie's "innocent" obtuseness is, in this respect, a version of the arresting force that changes Isabel's life in Portrait. As Eakin describes the deception Isabel undergoes, "Observing that she hangs upon his words ('quiet?' ...)...Osmond obliges her by defining his life as the decisive consequence of a considered act of will..." ("TSC" 182-3). In other words, where Maggie convinces herself that the Prince will be content in the luxurious existence she proposes to him, Osmond quite deliberately mystifies Isabel when he claims that indolence can be an ideal actively performed. Both Osmond and Maggie—and, indeed, Hilda, who refuses to produce new art—believe that "doing" will somehow diminish them.

This is the force that Italy exerts, for both Hawthorne and James, upon the American psyche: a compulsion for stagnation. Just as Hilda retreats to her Roman tower to escape the events around her, Maggie retreats into Osmond's rejection of "struggle" (Portrait 231). This "Italian" mental state belies the seemingly British setting of The Golden Bowl, and proves the duality in Maggie herself: she wants to live in London, the new seat of empire, yet she clings to the exhausted Roman ideal of Hilda the copyist. Yet in order to live up to the bustling London world, as Amerigo has already suggested, some "doing" is required. Maggie is well aware, as we have seen, of her own "smallness," and so logically summons the aid of a woman who will "make us grander" (GB 107). Charlotte's role will be to "do" what Maggie so conspicuously does not: create a "life" for the Ververs. "We don't at any rate,

it seems to me, lead half the life we might. And so it seems, I think, to Amerigo,” Maggie tells her father (GB 104). Adam could “repair” their limited social life, she suggests, by “pairing” himself with Charlotte: a woman so “grand” that she will lend grandeur to all four of them. Conveniently, to be “grand,” as Maggie understands the word, will require no effort at all on the part of herself or her father. As she assures the dubious Adam, who is alarmed by the energetic picture of change that his daughter of has painted, “Charlotte, at any rate, has done nothing, and anyone can see it...” (GB 109). Being “great,” Maggie implies, ought to assuage Amerigo’s worries about so-called “social limitations” (GB 105), and it has the added advantage of not involving “vulgar” (GB 111) inconveniences such as being reformed (or reformed). And so, delighted with his daughter’s solution, the senior Verver goes about “re-pairing” himself.

III. DISTILLING CHARLOTTE

But the “re-pairing” that occurs when Adam marries Charlotte is more profound than he realizes. At the level of romance, Brodhead is correct in asserting that “the unions designed to re-pair them in fact throw the Prince and Charlotte back together” (“LJ” 191). But at the more complex and fundamental level of nationality, the project of adding Charlotte to the already intricate expatriate and Italian equation becomes daunting. On the surface, of course, it seems perfectly natural that Charlotte should marry a wealthy expatriate American such as Adam Verver. As Fanny Assingham says of the poor but charismatic Charlotte Stant, “she hates America. There was no place

for her there—she didn't fit in" (GB 40). Like Adam, who fled the "vulgar" (GB 111) world of the American businessman in favor of the more "languorous" (GB 199) character of a "collector" (GB 407) of antiques in Europe, Charlotte "wasn't in sympathy" with her native country (GB 40). Holland identifies the cultural allure that draws expatriates such as Adam and Charlotte away from their unsophisticated homeland: "With their hired cabs, butlers, and well-appointed tea-things...[they] are a world away from Hester's New England forest" ("Marriages" 192). If one looks at the "crack" in the Golden Bowl as a version of the Atlantic Ocean, dividing the two continents, Charlotte and Adam ought to agree that they prefer the same side (GB 71).

What Charlotte does not understand when she marries Adam, the businessman who turns into "the consummate collector," is that he collects people as well as artifacts (GB 407). When he urges Charlotte to marry him, Adam cites Maggie as his "motive:" "To put her at peace is therefore...what I'm trying, with you, to do" he insists, explaining that she will be able to make both herself and her friend "positively happy" by being the fourth member of the Verver quartet (GB 132-33). But this "re-pairing" (Brodhead "LJ" 191) potential is only part of what Charlotte brings to the Ververs. "[S]he was a rare, a special product" (GB 32), and Adam's defining quality is his eagerness to acquire "rare, special products." As a "product," she has an "aesthetic" value for Adam in much the same way that Eakin suggests Isabel's fortune commands an "aesthetic" allure for Osmond ("TSC" 175). But Adam, like a less deliberate Osmond, does not choose to communicate this second

“motive” to his expatriate bride before their marriage. As the new Mrs. Verver finds herself relegated again to Amerigo’s company, she admits the mistake she has made in believing she could have a domestic life with Adam independent of her status as a complement to Maggie. In response to the Prince’s admission of “how they [the “true” Ververs] adore together my boy,” Charlotte replies, “Ah, if I could have had one--! I hoped and I believed...that that would happen. It would have made perhaps some difference...I’m sure he hoped and intended so. It’s not, at any rate...my fault....And now I’m too sure. It will never be” (GB 183). What Adam can offer Charlotte is thus considerably less than she “believed.” In a marriage apparently devoid of traditional components such as sexuality or children, Charlotte is left with nothing but her place “inside the museum” of Adam’s relic-laden houses (Siegel, HM 149).

But the “Europe” that Adam collects in the form of heirlooms and trinkets is different from the “Europe” that Charlotte inhabits. She belongs not to the Ververs’ staid “museum” world but to the very Italian “horizons” (GB 199) that the Prince glimpses when he feels most alienated from his Anglo-American surroundings. Amerigo, the only genuine European of the four, finds himself “insisting that some strictly civil ancestor—generations back, and from the Tuscan hills if she would—made himself felt, ineffaceably, in her blood and in her tone” (GB 33). The Prince even goes so far as to align her own nationality with his, “noting, on her lips, that rarest, among the Barbarians, of all civil graces, a perfect felicity in the use of Italian” (GB 32).

Charlotte is no “Barbarian” (American), such as the inauthentic Ververs. To use James’s word, she is “special” (GB 32)—a fact that differentiates her from Maggie, who resists being “special” in favor of being “quiet” (GB 172). In this she represents a continuation of another theme in James’s “Italian” novels; in Wings of the Dove, the “quiet” American beauty in Italy, Milly Theale, is considered profoundly unoriginal: she is “a mere little American, a cheap exotic, imported almost wholesale” (James, Wings 142). Yet, like Princess Maggie, she is likened to a “wandering princess” (Wings 146), whose strangely divine aspect (like Hawthorne’s Hilda, she is a “Dove”) divides her from her companions even as they passively admire her.

Maggie and Milly both belong to the school of Hawthornesque women epitomized by Hilda. While James’s heroines adopt the title of “princess,” Hilda’s Puritanical pedigree influence leads Brodhead to call her “the high priestess of the art-historical sublime” (“Introduction” xx). While Maggie and Milly sequester themselves in their palaces, Hilda (more financially limited than James’s extravagant characters) retreats to her tower when confronted with realities she does not want. Maggie is particularly interesting to look at in terms of Hilda because of the presence of Amerigo, a more sophisticated version of Miriam’s Donatello, who Hilda scorns. By creating in his “Hilda” character the need to marry a form of Italian nobility (something the “daughter of the Puritans” [MF 31] would never consider), James illustrates the American need to possess some aspect of an adopted country, and the dangers inherent in this task. Maggie is a further-developed idea of the American

“princess,” in that—unlike the “almost wholesale” Milly—she can literally claim the title through Amerigo (Wings 142). Clearly aware of the danger of becoming “cheap exotics,” Maggie and her father have done their best to legitimize their European life through the Italian connections available to them. Of course, this means that Charlotte has an impossible dual role to perform as she exudes her aura of “greatness.” She must be “special,” because her new duty will be to lend her “Italian” aura to the bland “true” Ververs, but she must temper that specialness with deference to Maggie’s royal station. The allure that Amerigo associates with descendants of “the Tuscan hills” makes Charlotte both desirable to the Ververs, and impossible for them to respect as they do each other (GB 32-33).

Thus, when she enters the Ververs’ “re-pairing” game, Charlotte finds herself divided from the beginning: her fear of becoming “a horrible English old-maid” leads her to marry into a family where her Italian sensibilities will be transformed into commodities (GB 130). As she admits to Adam, she dreads being left “adrift” with the misery of the title “Miss,” and this anxiety leads her to accept his dubious proposal (GB 130). Unlike Maggie, Charlotte does need to “do” something: she needs to find a way of filling her empty future. But the very exoticism that renders her appealing to Amerigo leads to the flaw in Charlotte’s marriage to Adam: Mr. Verver “had in him the spirit of the connoisseur,” and she (like the Prince before her) is an attractive Italian artifact (GB 82). When she finds herself collected, objectified, rather than “married” as she had imagined, Charlotte enters the “re-pairing” web that her

husband and stepdaughter have already begun to weave, and returns to “the compensatory companionship” of Amerigo (Holland “Marriages” 343).

The manner in which the other Ververs hand Charlotte back and forth among themselves relegates her literally to the role of an aesthetic “product” (GB 32). Like Portrait’s Rome, in which Gilbert Osmond’s elegant trinkets are as much fixtures in the scene as Isabel and Pansy, Charlotte’s transplanted “Rome” places her in the position of a piece of art. This imposed artistic value forces her into a role even more objectifying than that of Rahv’s unfortunate “dark lady” (Rahv 63); as she gradually loses agency, Charlotte increasingly begins to resemble not merely Miriam of The Marble Faun, but more alarmingly the Cleopatra sculpture that Kenyon first creates and then, at Hilda’s command, forsakes. We learn of the Egyptian woman that “there was a great smoldering furnace deep down in [her] heart,” but, despite the “fierceness” of her “repose,” “[i]t was the repose of despair...for Octavius had seen her, and remained insensible to her enchantments” (MF 76). The “rare” (GB 32), passionate Charlotte, like the inanimate Cleopatra, has an enormous capacity to “enchant,” but Adam, like Octavius, is “insensible” to the “despair” that makes her unhappiness as genuine as Maggie’s (MF 76). Adam marries Charlotte for Maggie’s sake—the sake of appearances—and Charlotte’s resemblance to the beautiful but absolutely static statue reflects this superficiality.

Of course, as befits the daughter of a man married to a statue, Maggie can only tolerate what Brodhead calls “engaging in the fabrication of

appearance” when she is not the victim of the “fabrication” (“LJ” 195). “They pretended to love me,” she decides of Charlotte and Amerigo, only pages before the ultimate sundering of “the gilt cup” that was once known as the Golden Bowl (GB 340). When Fanny Assingham breaks the Bowl along its concealed fault line, she reveals duality of the “Double Novel,” and Maggie is appalled to find that the Prince and the Princess, despite their nominal tie, are not on the same side of the divide. This is the moment when James goes beyond The Marble Faun; for rather than march Amerigo back to America to be cured of his idolization of a mere piece in her father’s “museum,”³⁸ Maggie attempts to restore not the unity of the Bowl, which she knows to be false, but the appearance of unity. Like a more theatrical Isabel Archer, when Maggie realizes the flaw in her marriage, she acts not to correct it but to conceal it. As she scrambles to retain at least the pieces of the “old golden Rome” of her marriage, Maggie abandons her “timid” (GB 249) persona in favor of a more calculating one, which will enable her to defeat the threat Charlotte poses to the fragile “Double” life she shares with her husband and her father.

Even before Maggie discovers the literal Broken Bowl, however, her suspicions cause the binary of her “smallness” and Charlotte’s “greatness” to shift. Maggie’s “small still passion for order and symmetry” transforms into a fierce, strident command the return of her ideal (GB 336). The “American blood” that previously reflected the tame domestic pursuits of the “dusting and polishing New England grandmothers” (GB 336) abruptly begins to show

³⁸ Siegel describes the “museum”-like quality of the Ververs’ life at length in his book The Haunted Museum.

aspects of what Rahv calls Hawthorne's "dark lady" (Rahv 63). As she moves forward on her journey toward knowledge, Maggie "overcharged herself with jewels, wore in particular more of them than usual, and bigger ones, in her hair...[and there was] the bright red spot, red as some monstrous ruby, that burned in either of her cheeks" (GB 336). This dramatic transformation is all Hawthorne; even at her most distressed, Isabel, like the resolutely serene Charlotte, never gives the impression of "burning." Maggie transforms into a "monstrous" reinterpretation of the dazzling Hawthornesque heroine Zenobia, whose single "jewel" is a brightly colored flower in her hair. To be sure, the Princess does not possess the charisma of a "dark lady"—a Zenobia, a Miriam, a Cleopatra, or even a Charlotte—but she is beginning to see her failing, and clumsily tries to rectify it through the artificial means she does possess: gems and rouge. For all her painfully "bedizened" (GB 336) appearance, the new Maggie, bereft of her "golden" illusions, becomes formidable.

And, armed with her righteous indignation and her "creeping" quality, Maggie is able to successfully defeat the enemy she sees in Charlotte (GB 108). "If Charlotte doesn't understand me, it is that I've prevented her. I've chosen to deceive her and lie to her" (GB 451), she informs her husband, after relegating Charlotte to "the long miles of ocean and the dreadful great country, State after State," where her beauty and Italian charisma will no

longer cause trouble (GB 425). With Adam as her jailer,³⁹ Charlotte will see America “through the chinks of the shutters” (GB 425), but she will not be the glorious woman whose voice rings with the echoes of “Tuscan hills” (GB 33). In order to contain Charlotte in this country of outcasts, Maggie must become the kind of person able to confound and imprison a woman that she herself has called both “great” and “courageous.” The new “bedizened” (GB 336) Maggie, who “drops false modesty and uses precisely the language of card-playing” (Freedman, “WMK” 102) no longer fits into the “light” and “dark” categories that Charlotte, a Hawthorne-like heroine, understands. It is Maggie’s ability to abandon the “small” social role she created for herself—“to change the rules,” as Freedman says (“WMK” 109)—that makes it possible for the Princess to outmaneuver her socially adept adversary.

This “imprisonment” (“WMK” 107) in the “dreadful great country” (GB 425) of Maggie’s “New England grandmothers” (GB 336) reflects a larger Jamesian theme of exile at home. In many of James’s Italian novels, America functions as a penal colony: the place set aside to punish those who have transgressed.⁴⁰ Madame Merle, the mother of Gilbert Osmond’s daughter

³⁹ Jonathan Freedman emphasizes the “language...of imprisonment” (“WMK” 107) in Maggie’s assessment of Charlotte, after she discovers her stepmother’s relationship with Amerigo (past and present).

⁴⁰ This theme of the return to America as a punishment or tragedy begins with James’s first novel: in Roderick Hudson (1875), the return to Northampton, Massachusetts, represents failures both artistic and romantic on the part of Rowland Mallet—his promising sculptor Roderick Hudson has died, and Mary Garland remains uninterested in marriage. Later, in Portrait (1881), Madame Merle returns to America as penance for her cruelty to Isabel. Lambert Strether’s continuing project in The Ambassadors (1903) is to convince the reluctant Chad Newsome to make this journey back to New England, where he will go into business rather than court the folly of an indolent life in Europe. In an ironic reworking of this trend, the Baroness Eugenia of The Europeans (1878) attempts to exile herself to America in response to her failed marriage, but finds the punishment too great, and retreats again “to Germany—by the first ship” (James, Europeans 167).

Pansy, imposes this exile upon herself when she understands the extent of the punishment she has inflicted upon Isabel. “I shall go to America,” she promises, in penance for her machinations (Portrait 474). This penance, and its profound connection to The Golden Bowl, appears in her last scene with the victorious Osmond. Madame Merle, herself a devotee of antiques, requests of her former lover, who examines an “attenuated coffee-cup” that belongs to her, “Please be very careful of that precious object,” to which he dismissively replies, “It already has a wee bit of a tiny crack” (Portrait 445). Here, in the “attenuated coffee-cup” of a defeated expatriate woman is the beginning of the Broken Bowl. Like the rift that foreshadows the sundering of Charlotte and Maggie on opposite sides of the Atlantic, the “crack” in the coffee cup prefigures Madame Merle’s disgraced retreat to the country set aside for those who “Have...been so vile all for nothing” (Portrait 445).

Thus, when James creates the Golden Bowl, and the Hawthorne-like “Double Novel” structure it represents, he is not returning merely to The Marble Faun but to an aspect of his own novelistic history.⁴¹ Jamesian characters often find themselves divided by vast distances, both ideological and geographical. Christina Light, transformed into the Princess Cassamassima, remains in Europe, while the rigidly virtuous Mary Garland returns home to Northampton, Massachusetts; Isabel Archer, demoted to the role of Mrs. Osmond, returns to her claustrophobic Roman palace while Madame Merle makes the journey back to her long-abandoned homeland. But

⁴¹ In Brodhead’s words, “James as I read him continues to be a highly derivative author...But late James is not derivative in anything like the same fashion....To the extent that his late novels do revise earlier works, those works tend to be James’s own...” (“LJ” 175-176).

the return of James's most Hawthornesque "dark lady," Charlotte, is distinct from these other returns, in that it is instigated not by herself but by external forces (Rahv 63). Charlotte, who has a particular sensibility for Italy just as Isabel does, goes to America as vanquished as Isabel's antagonist, but her exile is not voluntary. "You make me feel as if American City would be the best place for...me and Charlotte," Adam informs his daughter, and promptly takes his Cleopatra back to the dreaded shores of his ancestors (GB 406).

This return is both a rewriting and a critique of Hawthorne's restoration of Kenyon and Hilda to America in The Marble Faun. To Hilda, the New England woods represent their salvation: she will be cured of her insidious Catholic leanings, and Kenyon, in Nina Baym's words, "will certainly produce no more feline Cleopatras or broodingly beautiful fauns" ("EIY" 247). As Hawthorne's narrator concludes, "the years, after all, have a kind of emptiness, when we spend too many of them on a foreign shore" (MF 287). Similarly, Maggie interprets Charlotte's removal as the salvation of her marriage to Amerigo, but it is Charlotte rather than the Princess who must sacrifice herself in the "unhappy" world of American City. "It's as if her unhappiness had been necessary to us—as if we had needed her, at her own cost, to build us up and start us," Maggie pedantically explains to Amerigo (GB 450). She has claimed the European frontier—an "Italian" marriage and the "little silver cross...blest by the Holy Father, that [she] always wear[s], out of sight, next to [her] skin" (GB 311)—for herself. Much as Hilda and Kenyon eagerly accept Miriam's sacrifice of Donatello at the Pantheon,

Maggie places Charlotte in the role of a martyr to the cause of her obsession with appearances.⁴² But the aspects of her life that Maggie believes she is saving are perfectly opposed to Hilda's. Where the "daughter of the Puritans" (MF 31) is eager to return to her native land, the Princess specifically desires to remain "on a foreign shore" (MF 287). Far from hoping to remove herself from the influence of Catholicism—a religion her own "dusting and polishing New England grandmothers" (GB 336) would likely find as abhorrent as Hilda's—Maggie wears its influence "next to [her] skin."

But even for Maggie, who achieves the victory she sought over both Charlotte and Amerigo, the division between her "golden" illusion and the less idyllic reality remains. She achieves the status of an Italian Princess through her marriage, the dubious role of an almost-"dark lady" (Rahv 63) by bedecking herself with jewelry, and a complete liberation from the dreary land of American City, where her rival will be contained. Yet as she considers the fate of her "double" in the prison she has built (with the help of her father the purchaser of exotic figurines), Maggie compulsively asks Fanny Assingham, "Is that what I wanted?" (GB 425). Unlike the utterly confident Hilda, "She had to confirm, day by day, the rightness of her cause"—a cause that Fanny assures her has fettered Charlotte so securely that "she can't speak, or resist, or move a little finger" (GB 424-425).⁴³ Even Hawthorne—the author who, as Rahv points out, is so fond of destroying his "dark" heroines—does not

⁴² Paul John Eakin defines this quality in Isabel as the clinging to "ideal pictures...formed by her imagination" ("TSC" 175).

⁴³ Fanny Assingham, who halfheartedly offers to return to America herself, "as a sacrifice" (GB 425), after Maggie's victory is assured, seems to function as a "crack" between Maggie and Charlotte throughout the novel, as she constantly emphasizes the divisions between them.

demand of his “dark ladies” the sort of moral abasement that Fanny believes Charlotte owes to Maggie. Indeed, Maggie’s constant need to “confirm” her power seems most reminiscent of Gilbert Osmond’s insistence that Isabel repeatedly conform to the “half dozen ideas” (Portrait 367) that he, “the Prince in exile from America” (Holland, “James’s Portrait” 38) has decided to embody as an Italian nobleman.

This “Princely” quality in Maggie represents the means by which this thoroughly entangled “Double Novel” resolves itself into two halves, one for each side of the Golden Bowl, and one for each side of the Atlantic. By taking on the role of an Osmond—the part of Isabel that most craves appearances—Maggie is able to align herself with the Italian nobility that was previously the province of the effortlessly cosmopolitan Charlotte. And naturally, as The Golden Bowl is structurally a version of Hawthorne’s Marble Faun, this realignment in Maggie must correspond to an equal change in her “untinted mirror,” Charlotte (Siegel 157). Just as Maggie discovers a means of becoming “dark” and flawed to match Amerigo, she finds a way of labeling Charlotte an American in the same sense that Adam is. When she begins the sentence regarding “The ‘successful,’ beneficent person, the beautiful, bountiful, original dauntlessly wilful great citizen,” Maggie might at first seem to be describing Charlotte, the passionate and “dauntless” beauty, rather than the staid Adam Verver (GB 407). It is only as the description goes on to call him “the consummate collector and infallible high authority” that the personality of Adam imposes itself upon her language (GB 407). Through this

alignment of her father with qualities that seem at first to belong to Charlotte, Maggie is able to convince herself that Adam—a “great citizen” echoing the “greatness” she once ascribed to her close friend and future stepmother—is American in “that he wasn’t a failure” (GB 407). And, with so many labels in common with her husband—“beautiful,” “bountiful,” and “original”—Charlotte must belong in America, as well, on his side of the Broken Bowl that is the Ververs’ divided world.

Thus, like incorporating Osmond’s “smallness”—a quality exterior to Isabel—into Maggie, James brings to Charlotte this imprisoning experience of Madame Merle’s exile in America. By making Maggie’s supposed “goodness” and Charlotte’s supposed “greatness”⁴⁴ into aspects of a fundamentally “Double” novel (Millington 179), James returns to Hawthorne’s theme of “paired heroines” (Eakin, “TSC” 169) as a means of solving the problem of Madame Merle’s abandoned tale. When he invests so many qualities, both “good” and “great,” in Isabel alone, James is able to reveal only one half of the story of the expatriate woman. For every Isabel whose tragedy we witness, there is a Madame Merle who disappears into American oblivion. By dividing his heroine, James is able to offer a “Double” ending that reveals the fate of both halves of the Broken Bowl. In this he privileges The Marble Faun’s form over that of Portrait; Hawthorne’s concluding scene serves to remind us of the other story that Hilda has abandoned: “What was Miriam’s life to be?” (MF 288). Likewise, James’s

⁴⁴ “I may be as good, but I’m not so great,” says Maggie of her relationship to Charlotte (GB 108).

final novel ends with a reminder of the quality of absence that will define the world of the “Italian” Ververs. We will never know whether Amerigo continues to see the “iridescent horizons” of Rome superimposed upon the new, emptier London in which he lives alone with Maggie (GB 199). All James offers us is a version of the Prince’s boyhood vision of “conceal[ment]” (GB 12) at the end of a voyage: “I see nothing but you” (GB 464). Thus the curtain falls, and we conclude where we began: in the opaque realm of the obscuring veil.

CONCLUSION: THE RETURN OF THE VEIL

When Maggie veils Amerigo against the possibilities of an active world beyond her static Roman oasis in London, she re-imagines the “misty drapery” of the Veiled Lady’s costume into being on her own side of the Atlantic (Hawthorne, BR 40). The Prince, as he has just confessed, can “see nothing” outside the limits of her “small” world, just as the Veiled Lady is unaware of the audience on the other side of the fabric (James, GB 464, 108). Yet even as the veil leaps from Hawthorne’s false utopia and James’s Bostonian Music Hall into the land of the Prince and Princess, it remains anchored in America as well, concealing the doomed Charlotte Stant, who must view the dreary landscape “through the chinks of the shutters” (GB 425). Like the pervasive miasma of sin and Roman air that blankets Miriam as she watches her countrymen depart the Pantheon, Hawthorne’s American idea of sightless seclusion “is everywhere in James” (Freedman, “Introduction” 13).

Yet the veil as James constructs it, like the “dark lady” in his hands, becomes his own as well as Hawthorne’s (Rahv 63). “James as I read him continues to be a highly derivative author...But late James is not derivative in anything like the same fashion...To the extent that his late novels do revise earlier works, those works tend to be James’s own...” declares Richard Brodhead (“Late James” 175-176). Indeed, James does not abruptly transplant Hawthorne’s themes into his novels, but rather lets his own work grow to accommodate them. When he divides Isabel into her “light” and “dark” extremes, he revisits (and “revises”) his own heroine to create the dynamic we

see in Hawthorne's "paired heroines," rather than simply cloning Hawthorne's expatriates Miriam and Hilda (Eakin, "The Tragedy of Self-Culture" 169). When Verena adopts the stage that once belonged to the Veiled Lady, James reinvents her to reflect the oracle as he sees her in contemporary Boston: a performer more than a "clairvoyant" (BR 40). These forms—the "paired heroines," the "dark lady," the insidious stage—are his legacy from Hawthorne; the content within the pattern belongs to James.

To say merely that Hawthorne "influenced" James, therefore, is to oversimplify an ever-transforming literary relationship. James does not limit himself to simply invoking Hawthorne, but instead continually reimagines him in new local and expatriate contexts. The vying forms of womanhood we see in Maggie and Charlotte are James's closest match to Hawthorne's Hilda and Miriam, but we see the seeds of that duality in Isabel over twenty years before. Thus, there is no one way to read Hawthorne in James, we find, but many. James does not rewrite the language of theatricality that links The Bostonians with The Blithedale Romance in his European novels, but instead considers the specific dangers and temptations of Europe—embodied by his "serpent in a bank of flowers" in Portrait (367). And in doing so, he discovers a place in his own work for Miriam, Zenobia, and even the marble Cleopatra.

James is undeniably an expatriate author, but he is always an American expatriate. The themes of sin, purity, and uneasy or undesired knowledge that Hawthorne addresses throughout his literary career are indeed forces that move James's expatriate heroines. But they are part of a self-

awareness that comes to an Isabel or a Maggie only when she abandons her native shores in favor of the strange land of living statues and broken bowls. Neither Verena nor Olive is able to share in the revelations of her sisters across the Atlantic. Like the actors masquerading as utopians at Blithedale Farm, James's American woman at home are unable to step down from their all-encompassing stage. The tragedy of the Bostonians is their inability to see their performance for what it is, while the tragedy of Isabel or Charlotte is the opposite. They end their stories knowing only too well the lesson that Hilda (Maggie's literary forebear) fled Rome to escape: they are beings with the potential to fall.

Is James, then, a less "American" novelist than Hawthorne? Does his continued interest in the American experience abroad dilute his own exploration of the concerns that recur in his "provincial" predecessor's texts (James, Hawthorne 1)? The answer must wholeheartedly be No. "Hawthorne is everywhere in James," but more important than the simple fact of his presence is the dynamic way in which James engages this heritage (Freedman, "Intro" 13). As we have seen, James does not limit himself to one way of reading Hawthorne, or one geographical setting in which to contain him. Instead, his own use of Hawthorne, like the movement from New England to Europe that this thesis maps, develops and transforms over time. By 1904, when Maggie Verver appears in all her faux Zenobian splendor, it seems James has decided that, after all, Hawthorne was not utterly "deficient in...the dramatic quality" (James, Haw. 1).

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